Anna Eerika Pöysä

Decolonisation in Mozambican Literature

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UNIVERSIDADE DE COIMBRA

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Tese de Doutoramento em Pós-colonialismos e cidadania global, apresentada à Faculdade de Economia da Universidade de Coimbra para obtenção do grau de Doutor

Orientadores: Prof. Doutor António Sousa Ribeiro e Prof. Doutora Margarida Calafate Ribeiro

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This thesis is dedicated to Antti, Päivi, Rainer and Vítor.

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Um homem deve ler de tudo, um pouco ou o que puder, não se lhe exija mais do que tanto,

vista a curteza das vidas e a prolixidade do mundo.

José Saramago, *O Ano da Morte de Ricardo Reis*

x

ABSTRACT

This thesis discusses the concept of decolonisation in the context of Mozambican literature. The concept has its roots in the debate about how African writers could write literature that would not rely on European models, and had as its central topics the language of African literatures, the role of the African writer and the use of narrative techniques that would be drawn from oral tradition. These perspectives provide a background to the debate regarding Mozambican literature, and to the literary analysis of novels by Ungulani Ba Ka Khosa, Paulina Chiziane, João Paulo Borges Coelho and Mia Couto. Bringing up the questions that emerged in the debate regarding decolonising African literatures provides a new perspective on Mozambican literature, which has not yet been widely discussed from this point of view, although obviously the questions related to colonialism and its continuities have been present in much debate. Moreover, considering decolonisation in the context of Mozambican literature also widens the perception of literary decolonisation. By introducing both postcolonial perspectives and approaches from the social sciences, the work also builds up an interdisciplinary dialogue. In order to discuss decolonisation from a wider perspective, the earlier discussions on it are reviewed and then complemented by a discussion regarding postcolonial theories in the widest sense. The different phases of Mozambican literature are discussed so that the differences between African literatures and their phases become visible, and provide a context for the analyses of the novels. The research reveals that the emphasis has shifted from discussing Western influence towards less dichotomous perspectives. There are processes that diversify the views regarding past and bring up and discuss myths, cultures and traditions that have been disregarded due to colonialism and modernity. At the same time current issues are present, such as globalisation and continuities of colonialism. It also becomes visible that there has been a shift in the role of the writers, related to deconstructing the role of intellectuals and social hierarchy. The analyses reveal that in order to discuss current literatures, such as the Mozambican, it is important not to marginalise the writers through considering them solely as postcolonial or African writers. The popularity of and interest in the writers reflect a decolonisation when it comes to the attitudes of the readers. Through this analysis, it becomes visible that literature has an important role in diversifying

the cultural field, dismantling problematic approaches towards African cultures, and questioning the epistemological continuities of colonialism. This, moreover, reveals that decolonisation as a perspective towards discussing Mozambican literature provides a more comprehensive picture of the shifts in literature, but also of the shifts in the relationship between literature and society. The research also contributes to the discussion regarding dismantling the continuities of colonialism by revealing how literature can take part in it in a specific way, by literary means. By introducing new aspects such as epistemological questions to the discussion regarding literature, the thesis provides new views towards not only Mozambican or African literatures, but literature in general.

Keywords: Mozambican literature, African literatures, decolonisation, postcolonial studies, colonialism

RESUMO

A presente tese discute o conceito de descolonização no contexto da literatura moçambicana. Este conceito tem as suas raízes no debate sobre a possibilidade de uma literatura africana independente de modelos europeus. Os temas principais deste debate eram a questão da escolha da língua, o papel do escritor africano e o uso de técnicas narrativas inspiradas na tradição oral. A discussão destes temas serve de pano do fundo para uma abordagem da literatura moçambicana e para a análise de romances de Ungulani Ba Ka Khosa, Paulina Chiziane, João Paulo Borges Coelho e Mia Couto. A partir das questões suscitadas no debate sobre descolonização das literaturas africanas, é possível uma perspectivação da literatura moçambicana de um ponto de vista ainda pouco explorado, enquanto obviamente o colonialismo e as suas continuidades têm sido discutidos. Além disso, a discussão do problema no contexto da literatura moçambicana permite alargar a noção da descolonização literária. Baseando-se tanto em perspectivas pós-coloniais como em abordagens das ciências sociais, o trabalho constrói um diálogo interdisciplinar que visa discutir a descolonização a partir de uma perspectiva larga, complementando a revisitação de discussões anteriores com uma discussão sobre teorias pós-coloniais num sentido amplo. A abordagem das várias fases da literatura moçambicana revela as diferenças entre as literaturas africanas e a sua periodização, permitindo a contextualização das obras analisadas. A pesquisa mostra que o fulcro do debate se tem deslocado da discussão das influências ocidentais para uma abordagem menos dicotómica. Há processos que diversificam a visão do passado, chamando a atenção para a necessidade de ter em conta mitos, culturas e tradições que foram ignorados por causa do colonialismo e da modernidade. Ao mesmo tempo, temas actuais, como a globalização e as continuidades do colonialismo, estão presentes. Também se torna visível que houve uma mudança no papel dos escritores, relacionada com a desconstrução da posição dos intelectuais e da hierarquia social. As análises das obras revelam que, para discutir literaturas actuais como a moçambicana, é importante não marginalizar os autores considerando-os exclusivamente como escritores pós-coloniais ou africanos. A popularidade dos escritores e o interesse que suscitam reflecte a descolonização no que toca às atitudes dos leitores. A análise literária demostra que a literatura tem um papel importante na diversificação do campo

cultural, em desmontar abordagens problemáticas às culturas africanas e em questionar as continuidades epistemológicas do colonialismo. Isso também revela que usar a descolonização como perspectiva para a discussão da literatura moçambicana oferece uma perspectiva mais abrangente sobre as mudanças na literatura, mas também sobre as mudanças na relação entre a literatura e a sociedade. A pesquisa também contribui para desmantelar as continuidades do colonialismo mostrando como a literatura participa nesse processo de uma forma específica, pelos meios que lhe são próprios. Introduzindo novos aspectos, como as questões epistemológicas, na discussão sobre a literatura, a tese oferece perspectivas novas sobre não só literaturas moçambicanas ou africanas, mas sobre a literatura em geral.

Palavras-chave: Literatura moçambicana, literaturas africanas, descolonização, estudos pós-coloniais, colonialismo

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INTRODUCTION

> Our basic assumption [...] is that contemporary African culture is under foreign domination. Therefore, on the one hand, our culture has to destroy all encrustations of colonial mentality, and on the other hand, has to map out new foundations for an African modernity. This cultural task demands deliberate and calculated processes of syncretism: one which, above all, emphasizes valuable continuities with our pre-colonial culture, welcomes vitalizing contributions from other cultures, and exercises inventive genius in making a healthy and distinguished synthesis from them all.
>
> Chinweizu, Onwuchekwa Jemie & Ihechukwu Madubuike, *Toward the Decolonization of African Literature*

The topic of this work is to discuss Mozambican literature from the perspective of decolonisation. The question of decolonising literature has been most visibly discussed in the context of African literatures, and furthermore, most explicitly in the context of Anglophone African literatures. In order to describe this earlier discussion regarding decolonisation of African literatures, two works are illustrative: Kenyan writer Ngugi Wa Thiongo's *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature* (1986) and the polemic *Toward the Decolonization of African Literature* (1983) written by three Nigerian researchers: Chinweizu, Onwuchekwa Jemie and Ihechukwu Madubuike. Although these works were published in the 1980s, the discussion regarding the relationship between European and African literatures started to take form in the 1960s. Literary decolonisation as a process is a part of a wider discussion regarding African literatures and African writers, which is not uniform and not limited only to English speaking countries. Many of these ideas were present and discussed in the earlier works of postcolonial (literary) theories, and Ngugi draws heavily on Frantz Fanon's work, which brings important perspectives to the discussion too.[1] Ultimately, the debate regarding decolonisation of African literatures has also added up to

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[1] I have chosen to use the expression postcolonial instead of post-colonial. As Leela Gandhi argues, post-colonial refers to a temporal cut, whereas the unbroken form "is more sensitive to the long history of colonial consequences" (Gandhi 1998: 3). Further on, for example in Mozambique the concept is hardly ever used, and the researchers tend to use the term "post-independence", which has a closer relation to periodising and not so much to the relation with colonialism. It is, however, as such already a statement: it emphasises the independence instead of colonialism. The problematic of the term will be discussed in detail further.

some stereotyped and generalising views regarding African literatures and the way they are read and researched. The ideas regarding decolonising literature that emerged from these debates serve as a background for the discussion of literary decolonisation in Mozambique.

In *Toward the Decolonization of African Literature* the contrast – and inspiration – is provided by the Eurocentric literary criticism, which pointed to the differences that were found in African literature in comparison to European literature (especially English literature and colonial literature) as emerging from the lack of skill of the writers.[2] The writers describe their objective in the following words: "In undertaking this work we set ourselves the limited task of probing the ways and means whereby Western imperialism has maintained its hegemony over African literature, and the effect of that hegemony over African literature" and aim purposefully at provoking discussion (Chinweizu *et al.*, 1983: xi). Ngugi (2011: 2, 9) discusses two opposing forces: an imperialist tradition and a resistance tradition and emphasises the role of language. He also points to the alienation caused by the teaching of a foreign culture and its values, in a foreign language. Literature was a means of reinforcing the colonial dominance: "Thus language and literature were taking us further and further from ourselves to other selves, from our world to other worlds" (*Ibid.*: 12). Ngugi's work is known particularly due to its participation in the discussion regarding the language of African literatures: it explains why he changed the language of his writing from English to his native Gikũyũ. In both works, the principal topics discussed are questioning the forms of writing that are assumed as European, and in that context, the language of African literature and the role of oral tradition in African literatures. Novels, in particular, are seen as a genre that was closely aligned with imperialism by transmitting its values, and it was considered that not only their content needed to be decolonised, but their form too. The question of content is related to the role and responsibilities of the 'African writer'. While there are significant differences in the approaches of Ngugi and Chinweizu, Jemie and Madubuike, the central dilemma is the same: how to gain distance from the assumed European tradition of writing fiction and how to gain cultural independence.

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[2] Using the terms 'African literature' and 'European literature' reflects the dichotomous view of the authors, and using these terms is problematic since it effaces the diversity of both. The use of the terms can be questioned, and hence, when used, I have opted to use the plural.

However, there are further aspects to literary decolonisation, which cannot be tackled by changing the language, by changing the aesthetic values or by having a different approach towards the reader. It is more challenging, for both reader and writer, to raise and discuss the more profound consequences and continuities of colonialism. Ultimately, in the background there are processes that have been going on in science and culture since the sixteenth century scientific revolution, as, for instance, Boaventura de Sousa Santos points out. At this time the main influence was in natural sciences, but in the eighteenth century the thinking reached also the social sciences. It was established that knowledge produced in Europe was universally valid and rational. In this same process, the humanities and common sense were seen as irrational (Santos, 2001: 10). Since the nineteenth century there has been a double reduction: science, in serving capitalism, became the only valid and valued knowledge, and at the same time, the field of science diminished to questions to which this science could give an answer to. In other words, questions that would undermine or question the nature of this science were not valid and hence, such topics as happiness, good society or the meaning of life became invalid. Such topics were, however, previously discussed 'scientifically' in such areas as philosophy and theology (Santos, 2009: 453). Similar aspects are brought up by Patrick Chabal (2012), who calls for a profound discussion regarding the concept of rationality which theory – and hence our thinking – rely on, and which severely limits our possibilities to understand and analyse our surroundings.

Colonialism produced a situation whereby the local knowledges were no longer valid as knowledges, and the 'valid' knowledges were not available to the majority. In the longer run this has had a significant impact, since the alternative knowledges have not been transmitted and the access to the 'valid' knowledges remained and remains limited: there are no legitimate forms of knowledge to be learned available to large numbers of people. These epistemological aspects are at the centre of this work. Therefore, I am interested in exploring the possibilities literature, such as that of Mozambique, can have in raising, discussing and translating epistemologies that have been in the shadows, or that have been silenced, due to Eurocentric modernity, colonialism and their continuities. These aspects can be considered through the concept of 'epistemologies of the South', "conjunto de intervenções epistemológicas que denunciam essa supressão, valorizam os saberes que resistiram com êxito

e investigam as condições de um diálogo horizontal entre conhecimentos" (Santos & Meneses, 2009: 13). Caution is required though, in order for not to build another dichotomy, or an essentialist or a romantic view regarding these epistemologies.

While the nuances of the discussion regarding a literary decolonisation will be discussed later, the short description allows a comparison between the context of Ngugi and Chinweizu, Madubuike & Jemie with that of Mozambique. As will be seen, the literary history of Mozambique is different from that of Kenya or Nigeria for social and political reasons, which reveals the inherent problem with the term 'African literature'. While these issues were being discussed in Kenya, Mozambique was politically still a province of Portugal, and written Mozambican literature was slowly emerging. It could be said that the 'necessity' to formulate theories regarding decolonisation in Mozambican literature on the part of the writers is not as strong for historical reasons. Mozambican writers did not face the kind of Eurocentric criticism the Nigerian researchers describe, and neither did they systematically study European literature as Ngugi and Chinua Achebe did, or follow the European models of writing, for example.

The situation therefore was different, but not less problematic, and the phases will be discussed in detail in chapter two. Maria Benedita Basto argues that Mozambican literature written before independence was considered as Portuguese literature from the perspective of the coloniser and, hence, the local colour or expressions would just place the fiction in a specific context, without questioning the unity of Portuguese literature. Therefore, in the 1970s Mozambican literature was still seen as a part of overseas literature at least in theory. In this phase it could be said that the strategy was one of devouring the literary production of Mozambique and in this way making it harmless. However, although all Mozambican languages and cultures were officially part of the Portuguese universe, they never represent civilisation and are not permitted to contain any political functions (Basto, 2006: 255-264). However, as Mendonça (2011: 134) points out, these views were also questioned by Portuguese reseachers such as Alfredo Margarido and Manuel Ferreira. Also, seen from the Mozambican perspective the picture is very different, and regardless of the rhetoric of the coloniser, these phases mark the first steps towards the formation of literary field in Mozambique – or national literature. Moreover, these approaches became questioned by

writers such as José Craveirinha and the fight for liberation and combat poetry marked a significant shift, but the discussion took place principally within the writing. The current writers, who might be considered as the pioneers of the Mozambican novel, did not have to defend themselves against the kind of criticism the Nigerian researchers discuss, and neither were they considered from the perspective of Portuguese tradition, which may have led to the absence of strong positions and discussions regarding the presence of the so-called Western tradition.

However, there has been a process related to, or perhaps part of, the social and political changes in the country that can be seen as literary decolonisation. This process has not been established as a programme, as Ngugi did, but it could be seen as emerging in the context of questioning colonialism and then breaking away from it, especially with regards to content. There are also shifts in terms of language and form – in the case of the latter, most notably from poetry and short stories towards novels. This process is the topic of this work, and it will be discussed in order to discover how it was and how it is currently; how it is related to Mozambican society and to theoretical approaches towards Mozambican literature. It is a process that discusses the past, not only colonialism, but also the the liberation fight of FRELIMO, *Frente de Libertação de Moçambique*, the atmosphere during the first years of independence from 1975, and the civil war (1977-1992).[3] It also discusses the present day and often points to the future too. While the context here is Mozambique, many of these considerations could be applied to other contexts too. Moreover, discussing decolonisation from this perspective permits new views towards Mozambican literature but also towards (African) literatures in general. It also adds new perspectives to the discussion of decolonisation and to the wider discussion on African literatures, which is often focused on Anglo and Francophone literatures, in this way creating new dialogues.

While the earlier debates regarding decolonisation of literature were related to bringing up and questioning the adoption of European literary values, both aesthetically, but also in terms of content, it could be argued that in what is nowadays considered Mozambican literature, there are no or few examples of literature that strictly follow the European model

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[3] FRELIMO refers to the liberation front, whereas Frelimo refers to the political party established in 1977.

and values, as was the case in other countries where African writers emerged earlier. Furthermore, it could be argued that there has been a strong process of questioning the principles of revolutionary literature, which also poses interesting questions. Ngugi's first works, which aimed at an expression and form he had learned while studying English literature, are an example of this earlier literature. Religious topics were also popular because of the preferences of government and mission-controlled press on which much publishing depended (Ngugi, 2011: 69-70). Not surprisingly, the earlier discussions regarding literary decolonisation, especially that of Ngugi's, were based on dichotomies. While dichotomous views were strongly present in Mozambican writing prior to, during and soon after the revolution, currently the approach towards the European heritage is not as dichotomous, and hybridity is present on many levels in all of the novels discussed in this work. Moreover, this is not related only to the European heritage, but to other heritages and encounters too. This can also be seen as part of the decolonisation process, since it can be seen as decentralising the role of colonialism in the country's (literary) history.

The discussion around the decolonisation of literature was initially closely related to the research of literature, and one of its principal aims was that of correcting the Eurocentric perspective of the reader/researcher. This aspect is considered in this work too. However, instead of deconstructing the approach of Eurocentric criticism, here at the centre are the subtler, but still generalising or marginalising views regarding African writers and literature. Furthermore, the discussion regarding decolonisation of literature was also closely related to society and it was considered that literature had a significant role in society. Ngugi, for example, has discussed his commitment towards the Kenyan people, while the Nigerian critics attack Western criticism for considering the role adopted by the writers as a failure (Ngugi, 2011: 28, Chinweizu *et al.*, 1983: 8). While currently few writers would consider their role so militantly, it is interesting to consider the relationship between society and literature and the shifts in it.

Decolonisation is seen here from two perspectives. The first one is that of theoretical discussion regarding decolonisation. It can be argued that there is still a search for 'decolonial' approaches that would, instead of emphasising the colonial relationships and the heritage of colonialism, look instead towards the future. Therefore, from the theoretical and

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methodological perspective, I am interested in searching for decolonial approaches that go beyond the process of decolonisation, currently understood in literature mostly as discussing Western influence in African literatures. This kind of approach does not require ignoring the influence of colonialism in the area of culture, but it is not seen as the only influence through which to approach literature. On the other hand, the view on colonialism is widened to include its continuities too, which justifies the employment of the concept in a situation that is less polarised than earlier. This aspect is brought up by discussing both the theorists mentioned previously and their views regarding decolonisation, and postcolonial studies in a wide sense, including views that question and criticise it that can be loosely defined as decolonial approaches. Although the field of postcolonial studies is very diverse, all the approaches discussed can be seen as taking part in what Robert J.C. Young (2011: 170) describes as the principal task of postcolonial studies: "Postcolonial studies constitutes the reorganization and reinterpretation of the knowledge of the world away from the Western bias on which academic knowledge has been organized since the eighteenth century".

The second line of investigation focuses on literature itself and on its possibilities to be part of what can be called decolonisation from a wider perspective. Consequently, this approach is closely related to literature's role and position in the society, or rather, societies. However, literature is not seen solely as reflecting society or as a tool for social change – and therefore aesthetic aspects are brought up too. Hence, the literary analysis aims to provide a thorough view of the novels discussed, from multiple perspectives. The literary analyses will cover the works of Ungulani Ba Ka Khosa, Paulina Chiziane, João Paulo Borges Coelho and Mia Couto. These analyses are preceded by a discussion of Mozambican literature more generally, which includes a short analysis of combat poetry, João Dias' *Godido e outros contos* (1952) and Orlando Mendes' *Portagem* (1966). I have chosen to limit the dissertation to discuss principally novels, although other genres are referred to in order to contextualise current Mozambican literature. Novel is the genre whose assumed European bourgeois origins were emphasised in the discussion on literary decolonisation. Moreover, in Mozambican literature longer prose has gained more space next to short stories and poetry, and, interestingly, it is also the genre that, seen from abroad, seems to have gained most attention. Many foreign readers become familiar with Mozambican literature by reading novels.

Literature can also be considered as an interesting platform for discussing globalisation and the 'heritages' of colonialism in a way that may not be possible within other areas of knowledge, through metaphors and (imagined) life stories, for example. Besides working towards bringing up epistemologies of the South or questioning the limited view of rationality, they can widen perspectives towards the past and introduce experiences that have been silenced by the 'grand narratives' regarding Mozambique. However, the role of the Portuguese language, especially as the language of writing in Mozambique, makes it difficult to construct a comprehensive picture of the country's literary expression since it necessarily causes silences and exclusions (Ribeiro & Meneses, 2008: 10). Although the work is limited to literature written in Portuguese, traces of the diversity can be also found in the novels in Portuguese. As Margarida Calafate Ribeiro and Maria Paula Meneses (*Ibid.*: 15) conclude, "[l]ibertar Moçambique é, também, um acto de libertação cultural múltiplo e ainda em curso, pelo que trazer novos imaginários ao diálogo literário passará, sem sombra de dúvida, pelo resgate das diversidades culturais e linguísticas que compõem Moçambique". The process of decolonisation in this sense deconstructs the hegemony of Western thought, bringing up the diversity of world views and knowledges. This process is closely related to that of counter-hegemonic, alternative globalisation. Discussing these aspects can also be seen as a form of complementing – or questioning – the earlier theories regarding decolonisation of African literatures. Hence, another central theme is the possible social dimension of literature in questioning Eurocentrism and neo-liberal globalisation.

However, it is worth pointing out that the significance and role of African literatures in the societies they come from is limited, as in Mozambique, for example, it is most often written in Portuguese, which is not the principal language of large numbers of Mozambicans. This aspect was thoroughly discussed by Ngugi, who, in order to write to the Kenyan people, switched the language of his writing. For similar reasons, Senegalese Ousmane Sembène stopped writing novels in French and started making movies in Wolof. Besides, in many African societies illiteracy and other social issues limit the numbers of local readers – reading and buying literature is mainly available to the most privileged. These literatures also have an important role beyond the continent, not least because for a long time, many people constructed their idea of Africa through the literature written by Europeans who had been to

the colonies, or through other Western writers, as Nigerian writer Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie points out in her speech *The Danger of a Single Story* (2009). Hence, African literatures bring up stories that will eventually question the power of the single story regarding Africa and work towards decolonisation in this sense too.

The dissertation is divided in three main chapters. The first chapter serves as a discussion regarding the principal theoretical approaches and methods. It will build a dialogue between the central themes of the so-called decolonisation debate and the postcolonial theories in their widest sense. The second chapter focuses on the earlier phases of Mozambican literature by contextualising and discussing it in relation to the changes in Mozambican society. These two chapters also provide the context and background for the final chapter, in which current Mozambican literature is discussed by analysing four novels by four different authors.

The writers whose work will be analysed, Ungulani Ba Ka Khosa, Paulina Chiziane, João Paulo Borges Coelho and Mia Couto are, without doubt, the best-known Mozambican novelists in Mozambique, and outside the country too. They also belong to the same generation: Ba Ka Khosa was born in 1957, while the other three writers were born in 1955. On the one hand, this justifies the inclusion of these four in the literary analysis, but it also raises some questions. To avoid excluding other voices, some of the most recent Mozambican literature will be discussed briefly in order to compare the themes and literary means with the already-established canon of Mozambican literature. The choice of the specific novels – one by each of the four writers – aims at bringing up different themes that allow for a discussion on many different aspects within the framework of decolonisation in Mozambican literature. However, different choices would have also been possible, especially since all the writers have many published works. Although the works are quite recent, except for *Ualalapi* (1987), I have chosen not to select the most recent works in order to be able to place the works in the context of the overall production of each writer.

There are also themes in common in the novels: they all deal with Mozambican society, with the country's future and past and all of them discuss the 'traditional' world views and myths (sometimes invented, most probably) in some way, often in relation to the 'modern' world views. Implicitly, they all also bring up the question of genre since they are novels that

have a close relationship with both short stories and the oral traditions. Furthermore, all of them take place mostly in a rural setting, which is of interest from both the perspective of some of the stereotypes around African literature, and of excluding the urban and suburban context which is present in some works by Chiziane and Borges Coelho for example. It is also interesting to discuss the role of the (sometimes unreliable) narrators and the relationships between literature, history and society they describe, and the aesthetic approaches that the writers have opted for in terms of oral tradition, for example. Memory also has a significant role in all of them. Monika Reif-Huelser, discussing South African literature, quoting Italo Calvino argues that literary texts

> [...] hold up a mirror to transitional processes, offering a space whereas fears and misgivings which may not have a place in official discourse can be thematized. Acting as a container and giving a 'name to what has no name, especially to what the language of politics excludes', literature acts as 'one of a society's instrument of self-awareness... (Calvino, 1986 *apud* Reif-Huelser, 2012: 130).

Ungulani Ba Ka Khosa's *Ualalapi* brings attention to various interesting themes, such as the way history is written unequally. This is of interest, since it can be argued that literature can have a role in questioning the silences – even those related to far past. It can also be argued that in the novel the role of colonisation is seen as one form of exploitation among others that in Ba Ka Khosa's view seem to continue to exist. *O Último Voo do Flamingo* (2000) discusses the difficulties the novel's Italian character has in understanding the people in Tizangara and their world views, so it seems logical to bring up the question of translation in this context. Couto's novel also represents a new approach since instead of discussing colonialism it takes a look towards globalisation and the future. João Paulo Borges Coelho's *Duas Sombras do Rio* (2003) has a strong presence of spirits, myths, traditional medicine and world views, in an interesting coexistence with a discussion regarding corruption and capitalism. It can be argued that his work takes a step beyond the realm of colonialism and pays attention to other encounters that have marked the country. Chiziane's *O Alegre Canto da Perdiz* (2008) projects the future discussing the influences of colonialism through the question of skin colour. It also brings up the views of women regarding colonialism and its various aspects, reaching into the most intimate and influencing families and relationships.

1 BACKGROUND: THEORIES, METHODS AND CENTRAL QUESTIONS

> This single story of Africa ultimately comes, I think, from Western literature. [...]
> [W]hen we reject the single story, when we realize that there is never a single story
> about any place, we regain a kind of paradise.
>
> Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *The Danger of a Single Story*

This chapter is divided into three subchapters and aims to provide a theoretical background for the following chapters which focus on the Mozambican context. The first subchapter is divided into three further subchapters, which deal with the question of novel, the question of social commitment and the role of African writers, and the question of language of African literatures. The second subchapter focuses on postcolonial theories and is divided into two further subchapters. The first one introduces so-called decolonial approaches, while the second one takes a look at the 'traditional' postcolonial theories and the debates regarding them. The last subchapter discusses the role and responsibility of the readers and researchers of African literatures. The chapter hence establishes an approach towards African novels that will later be used in the literary analysis and in discussing Mozambican literature's background and contexts. Some comparisons are made to the Mozambican context, although it will be discussed in more detail in chapters two and three.

1.1 Decolonisation of African literatures: principal questions

The discussion regarding novels in Africa was earlier closely related to the topic of decolonising African literatures. While Ngugi brings up the language of theatre and the Nigerian researchers discuss poetry, in their work the novel is presented as the genre that has the most direct link with colonialism and the values related to it. The European novel, from the nineteenth century principally, was the one that was taught to students in the colonies, and was also the one that African literature was compared to. Some novels also had a significant role in

establishing views regarding the colonies and their inhabitants, while, obviously, the whole genre cannot be considered as "colonialist". Moreover, as will be discussed further, in the Portuguese context poetry and epic had a significant role in this sense. The idea of literary decolonisation sprang from the need to create autonomous African literature and to avoid the ideology represented by the literature supporting imperialism and the imperialist visions of the European metropolis. For this reason, understandably, the discussion regarding novels is limited to Africa and Europe, and ends up ignoring other locations, as well as literature that doesn's position itself within this discussio. The view regarding the novel as a European invention is also well established in Western education, while the meaningfulness of the question regarding the origins of such a diverse concept can be questioned.

The principal questions regarding the decolonisation of African literatures emerge from this context, and are further related to the "insistence on the social role of the African artist and the denial of the European preoccupation with individual experience" (Ashcroft *et al*., 1989: 125). Here three overlapping questions will be raised, which to some extent apply to other genres too. The question of the novel refers to the discussion regarding the values and form of the European novels that were emphasised through education. There was a quest to liberate African literature from repeating the bourgeois values of the European novels, and also to find writing techniques that would be closer to the local traditions of narration. Another question that has caused much discussion is the question of social commitment and the role of the African writer, which was brought up in a negative light in the Eurocentric literary criticism, discussed by Chinweizu, Jemie & Madubuike, but which was also discussed within postcolonial studies. This aspect is related to the aesthetic questions too, as well as to the question of audience. These two aspects are central also in the question of the language of African literature, which is often seen through the perspectives of abrogation, represented by Ngugi's choice of abandoning English as the language of his writing; and appropriation, represented by Chinua Achebe's use of English, moulding it in order for it to serve to represent African realities and world views. In this sense, the process of decolonising African literatures is essentially a process of moving the specific European traditions of narration from the centre to the margins and replacing them with the local traditions of narration – without abandoning the genre of the novel.

1.1.1 Decolonisation and the 'European novel'

The novel as a concept is not simply defined, even when the discussion is limited to Europe. Moreover, there is no comprehensive definition for a novel, and often novels are defined by different characteristics – depending on the novel in question (Saariluoma, 1989: 11). Loosely, a novel can be defined as a long, fictional narrative. Further definitions are problematic due to the diversity of the genre. It is also important to bring into discussion the 'European origin' since, due to the Eurocentrism in the theories of the novel, it is hard to say how much it has influenced the emergence of long fictional texts outside the continent. These views also disregard, for example, the Chinese novel, although its history is considered as starting in the fourteenth century and it has its own established traditions.

It must be asked whether the emergence of novels is simply a result of the presence of the tools that allow the writers to express themselves through the medium of long fictional texts, permitted by the development of the printing industry and its availability to more writers discussing a variety of subjects. It is, after all, only possible to discuss those novels that have been published – who knows what kind of long texts have remained in desk drawers. In the case of Mozambique, the emergence and wider writing of novels cannot be explained in simple terms, and while it can be seen from the perspective of marketing literature or the maturing literature, it may also be related to the wider acceptability in terms of diverse topics, which marks a difference from colonialism or the years of the fight for independence and the revolution. As Ngugi points out, concerning the earlier African novel: "The printing press, the publishing houses and the educational context of the novel's birth were controlled by the missionaries and the colonial administration. The early practitioners of the African novel, particularly in South Africa, were products of missionary educational institutions" (Ngugi, 2011: 69). This also meant that people here had been exposed to a very limited type of literature, excluding writers such as Tolstoy, Balzac or Dickens. If considered without the question of origin, the history of novels could be seen as an answer to the question of how writers or intellectuals could in general express themselves, and often to some extent discuss their societies, and then distribute their work to other people in an accessible form. The novel, regardless of where it was 'born', suits this necessity and has gone through many changes and been used in many different ways in order to suit specific contexts, writers and societies.

An alternative view on the novel could have a similar starting point as Mozambican researcher Nataniel Ngomane's view regarding the relationship between Latin American and Mozambican literatures. His work can be seen as continuin the work initiated by Gilberto Matusse, who discussed these relations in his Master's thesis in the early 1990s. Ngomane argues that the question of origins and influences constructs hierarchies, and in order to avoid that, he analyses the similarities in the contexts from which similar (in his analysis, literary) approaches have emerged (Ngomane, 2004: 8-9). Borrowing this view for literary genres, it could be argued that the emergence of the novel, or long fictional texts, is related to certain social factors (as the above mentioned possibility of publishing and printing texts), and does not only depend on the genre's presence in Africa through colonial education. This approach would not mean that there is no dialogue between European writing and African writing, which is inevitable due the long presence of the former. Paying attention to other continents and their processes would provide interesting comparisons, and would also deconstruct the Eurocentrism of the discussion regarding the novel in Africa.

Moreover, the discussion about novels can be enriched by considering transculturation, which Ngomane (2004) applies to his analysis of Mozambican and Latin American literatures, and which points to a merging of cultures instead of appropriating a new culture and abandoning another.[4] From this, then, results a new culture in which various elements are present. The concept of transculturation was applied to narratives by Uruguayan Ángel Rama, who insisted on taking into account the selectivity of the processes of transculturation: not all aspects of the different cultures are appropriated, and the process is not a passive one. He points out that the benefit of the approach lies in its capacity to show how the 'traditional culture' is not simply receiving the 'new culture' and destined to losses, without the capacity of answering back creatively. Moreover, Rama points out that the 'traditional culture' is not just a collection of norms, habits, beliefs and cultural objects, but it has its own creative energy and is in constant flux (Rama 2008: 40-41, 45).

Besides, it could also be questioned how useful it is to proceed to divisions according to the continent, since it silences the diversity of approaches and creates unnecessary divisions

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[4] Transculturation was first discussed in the 1940s by Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz.

too. While for Ngugi's discussion it is essential and has introduced important topics to the debate, and can be understood from his context, its continuous application can also distort approaches. It would, for example, be interesting to compare topics that writers from different continents share, instead of separating the writers by geography. Here it is interesting to consider that Mozambican writers do not consider the question of the novel and its Western roots as something of relevance to them. For them, writing novels is rather a practical question. For example, Ungulani Ba Ka Khosa argues that he writes novels simply because they permit more depth, characters and time periods than short stories (Ba Ka Khosa, 2012). Also, in the Mozambican case there has been an important dialogue with Latin American writing, which will be discussed further and which Ngomane has brought up from a new perspective.

It is generally agreed that the novel transforms itself according to time and space – and even more importantly, that there is no such finished, defined concept as the 'novel'. It is in constant movement and change according to the location it is being written in, according to the writers' and audience's aesthetic views, according to the necessities felt by the writers as a part of society, and not least, according to how writers see themselves in society. Because of this, philosophical shifts influence literature too. This implies that writing novels in various locations is addition to the concept, instead of misinterpreting or misappropriating an 'original' concept. Mikhail Bakhtin sees that the novel can include other genres too, can renew them, and can be critical towards itself (Holquist, 1987: 6-7). Therefore, if following Bakhtin's views, the novel would also have these capacities in the case of African literatures – and one of the genres it may include is oral literature. According to Bakhtin, the continuous movement is an essential element of the novel:

> The study of the novel as a genre is distinguished by peculiar difficulties. This is due to the unique nature of the object itself: the novel is the sole genre that continues to develop, that is as yet uncompleted. The forces that define it as a genre are at work before our very eyes: the birth and development of the novel as a genre takes place in the full light of the historical day. The generic skeleton of the novel is still far from having hardened, and we cannot foresee all its plastic possibilities (*Ibid*.: 3).

Ngugi's views, however, offer a background to the specific discussion regarding the novel in the context of decolonisation. While he too points to the appropriation of inventions and the variety of uses they can be given, his central argument is that when he started writing,

the invention – the European novel – was not appropriated, but rather copied. This was problematic, not least since the novel is seen to represent values that were essential in the process of colonialism:

> [T]he novel, at least in the form that reached us in Africa, is of bourgeois origins. It arose with the emergence of the European bourgeoisie into historical dominance through commerce and industry, with the development of the new technology of the printing press and hence commercial publishing and above all with the new climate of thought that the world was knowable through human experience (Ngugi, 2011: 65).

However, Ngugi considers that the novel is based on "earlier traditions of oral tales and of epic poetic narratives" which "were certainly the artforms of the peasantry" (*Ibid*.: 69). Hence, he does not see the genre as an issue and asks: "Why should not the African peasantry and working class appropriate the novel?" (*Ibid*.: 68). Ngugi does not consider the appropriation that is often raised within postcolonial theories, represented by the rewriting of European literature by African writers – perhaps because he considers them as still ignoring the African tradition and working within the European tradition. However, this approach will be discussed in the context of Mozambican literature, and can be considered as a part of the so-called literary decolonisation.

The reason for the appropriation not taking place is related to colonial alienation resulting from colonial education, although it must also be pointed out that novels questioning the values of the coloniser would not get published either. Ngugi (2011: 91) explains that this education emphasised writers such as Shakespeare and Jane Austen, "who had the sharpest and most penetrating observations on the European bourgeois culture, [but] were often taught as if their only concern was with the universal themes of love, fear, birth and death". He considers literature as one of the core elements in imposing foreign values, especially at school, which leads to colonial alienation as result of the child's language of education and learning being a foreign language, while at home he or she would still speak another language, that of his or her own culture. Moreover, the education would establish Europe, its history and culture as the centre of all things, while the child's own culture would be often represented in racist terms – including in the literature read at school. (*Ibid*.: 16-18). The same process is discussed by Ribeiro & Meneses:

> [A] força das armas ocultou frequentemente a eficiência da escola na imposição do poder colonial, mas ela foi fundamental para que as outras línguas em uso na região – com as suas imagens, símbolos, cosmogonias, sons – se fossem esvanecendo e modificando e, com elas, outras imagens sobre o mundo, sobre os sentidos de pertença, sobre os sentidos da vida e da morte foram-se também modificando (Ribeiro & Meneses, 2008: 9-10).

In order to understand Ngugi's position, it is interesting to consider the views regarding the emergence of the novel he discusses. Andrew Milner too considers that the birth of the novel is related to print culture – and print-capitalism. Novels (and newspapers) require mechanical mass production, which also makes it possible to write longer prose, which in turn makes the novel "more interiorised and more prosaic than any previous literary form" (Milner, 2005: 121, 126). Although Cervantes' *Don Quixote* (the first part was published in 1605) or Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) are often considered as the first novels, the novel became established in the nineteenth century, when the mass production of newspapers and literature also widened (*Ibid.*: 122, 126). The concept of *Don Quixote* or *Robinson Crusoe* as the first novels is related to the way they are constructed around an individual. On the other hand, as mentioned earlier, by taking into account the Chinese novel and its traditions, the Eurocentrism of these views becomes visible. As Chinweizu, Jemie & Madubuike (1983: 18) point out, "[...] what is misleadingly called 'the novel' is really the European or Western novel. This is implicit in the practice of referring to European or the Western novel as 'the novel,' whereas other regional novels are routinely qualified as 'African novel,' 'Chinese novel,' etc".

The novel as a genre has often been defined by comparing it to the epic. This was the approach of both Bakhtin, and Georg Lukács, in his early work *The Theory of the Novel* written in 1914-1915. Bakhtin argues that the epic is a completed genre, which has "fixed pre-existing forms into which one may then pour artistic experience" (Holquist, 1987: 3). He compares studying other genres besides the novel as studying dead languages, while the novel is like a young and alive language (*Idem*). Lukács points to the epic hero never being an individual. Rather, what is at stake in epics "is not a personal destiny but the destiny of a community" (Lukács, 1988: 67). In the novels the case is the opposite, although the approaches towards individuality differ within the novels he discusses, such as *Don Quixote*, Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* and Tolstoy's works. Ultimately, novels discuss

the individuals in their journey of finding themselves, which is further related to epistemological shifts: the Christian god had lost its earlier significance. Another essential difference is related to time – unlike in the epic or in the drama, in novels time has a power of transformation. In novels, memory can affect and transform the characters which does not take place in traditional epics. Lukács' views are also of interest for the time when he was writing his theory: for him, for example, the chivalrous novel preceding *Don Quixote* ceased to exist because of historic-philosophical shifts and became an empty shell (Lukács, 1988: 67, 80-81, 101, 103, 126-128). However, while the novel in its individualist form also became questioned for similar reasons, these shifts are still considered as shifts within the genre, unlike what Lukács seemed to consider: "Dostoevsky did not write novels, and the creative vision revealed in his works has nothing to do, either as affirmation or as rejection, with European nineteenth-century Romanticism or with the many, likewise Romantic, reactions against it. He belongs to the new world" (*Ibid*.: 152).

It is also interesting to consider that for Lukács the boundaries between the genres are not always clear; for him Dante represents both genres because it is an epic in which the characters are individuals. He also argues that great novels are often actually epics (Lukács, 1988: 68, 129). Milner, however, refers to Franco Moretti's *Atlas of the European Novel 1800-1900* (1998) and adds that there are so-called modern epics, which differ from the earlier ones since in these the interest is not in nation-states, but rather on whole continents or on the state of the world. Moretti gives as examples Gabriel García Márquez's *Cien Años de Soledad* and James Joyce's *Ulysses* (Moretti, 1998 *apud* Milner, 2005: 133-134). It is also often considered, as will be discussed further, that the African novels focus on nations and in them characters often represent social powers. If comparing these two approaches it could be suggested that – as is characteristic for novels – the genres actually overlap and hence it would not be necessary to question the genre of the novels such as the above mentioned Mozambican ones.

In Portugal the phases are somewhat similar, and one of its first novels is considered to be Almeida Garrett's *Viagens na Minha Terra* (1846), which brings new psychological depth to Portuguese literature and its characters. The novel emerged in the context of Portuguese romanticism, which was related to the willingness to take a step away from

religiosity and embrace new, profane literature. These themes were also discussed by Alexandre Herculano, who wrote several historical novels in the nineteenth century. However, according to Basto, it was especially poetry and Luís de Camões' *Os Lusíadas* that had a significant role in colonial policies. This is not surprising, since Portugal's national epic, published in the sixteenth century, describes the Portuguese discoveries. Portugal was considered a country of poets, and hence poetry was seen as having an important role in its civilising mission and in constructing the correct kind of mentality in the colonised, especially during the Portuguese New State (1933-1974), whose policies and discourses will be brought up in more detail later. It is tempting to consider whether this is related to the less problematic approach towards the novel as a genre. As Basto points out, and as will be discussed in more detail in the context of Mozambican literature, there were poems written by the soldiers of the liberation fight that took as their model *Os Lusíadas* and re-wrote it (Basto, 2006: 191-213, 271).

The individualism expressed in the novels is an aspect that became central in the discussion around decolonising African literature, as Ngugi's comments above reveal. As Saariluoma argues, the individualism is visible in the way the characters are described and in how the structure of the novel is focused on the character and her/his personality. The attempt to create psychologically credible, 'round' characters is also visible (Saariluoma, 1992: 36-37). Ngugi describes his struggle to find a way of questioning the individuality in his own novels. His earlier novels, which he wrote under the name James Ngugi – *Weep Not, Child* (1964, written while he was studying in England) and *The River Between* (1965) – were closer to the kind of novel he grew up reading: they had a linear plot and they were focused on one central character, described by an omniscient narrator. However, he quickly became unsatisfied with this approach and found new inspiration from writers such as Conrad and George Lamming in terms of narrative techniques (Ngugi, 2011: 75-76).

By broadening his narrative techniques, Ngugi was also able to distance himself from the focus on one principal character: "In *A Grain of Wheat* [1967] all the main characters are of almost equal importance, and the people – the village people – in their motion in history are the real hero of the novel" (*Ibid*.: 77). The novel also marked his abandoning of Christianity and his turn towards Marxism. The presence of various principal characters applies too to the

Mozambican novels that will be discussed in detail: all of them discuss various characters and offer the reader various perspectives. However, in the earlier texts that will be discussed here, João Dias' *Godido e outros contos* (1952) and Orlando Mendes' *Portagem* (1966), the focus is on one principal character. Whether the shift should be considered as a process of decolonisation similar to Ngugi's is an interesting question. It seems that it is principally related to narrative techniques that allow the transmission of more perspectives and aspects of the topic of the novels.

Chinweizu, Jemie & Madubuike (1983: 7) offer another perspective: "For instance, with respect to technique, some African novels are said to suffer from inadequate description or inadequate characterization, motivation, psychology and depth [...]". The Eurocentric critics explain this assumed shortcoming as a result of the (negative) influence of oral tradition on African writing, which the Nigerian researchers prove wrong by quoting passages of (oral) epics – to which in their view, novels should be compared to instead of stories. They claim that these charges are related to misconceptions regarding oral traditions and stereotypes regarding the nature of African communities, which is seen as leading to the characters representing specific forces in the narration, instead of being 'round' and psychologically developed. Chinweizu, Jemie & Madubuike argue that the expectations of the reader and critic are based on Eurocentric literary values and tastes, and hence do not do justice to African novels: "[W]e must ask: who says a novel must focus on an individual rather than on a group or community? Is this sheer bourgeois individualist prejudice? Is it even part of the Western definition of the novel that it must deal with 'one person'?" (*Ibid*.: 112). Moreover, they also suggest that in many cases the charges are not accurate – and furthermore, that these charges would apply to much of European literature too (*Ibid*.: 33-123). In the Mozambican case, it also seems rather inappropriate to discuss the characterisation from the perspective of oral tradition and while the texts seldom discuss one main character, it does not prevent the creation of credible characters – João Paulo Borges Coelho's novel *Crónica da Rua 513.2*, which discusses a large number of characters living on the same street, could be mentioned as an example. Through them, many aspects of the challenges of the socialist phase are brought up, while a focus on one character would have provided a much more limited view.

These earlier literary values have been questioned in much Western literature too. Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922*)*, which is seen as one of the key modernist novels, is one such example. Compared to the earlier realist literature and its individualist tone, here the 'round' characters have been abandoned, as well as a cohesive world-view. If in the modernist novel the characters have lost their autonomy, the postmodern novel comes to question the whole role of the main characters in literature, as Saariluoma points out. Moreover, in the modernist novel the subject was still the force that kept the story together and this is the main difference from the postmodern novel, which she defines as the post-individualist novel (Saariluoma, 1992: 20). In this context, it is interesting to consider Mia Couto's remark: for him, nowadays many African novels are closer to the traditional novels than the more experimental Western novels (Couto, 2012). It could also be argued that this applies to writers such as Chiziane, who nevertheless argues that she is a story teller and not interested in the questions related to literary genres (Martins & Caldeira, 2011 and Chiziane, 2012). While there are shifts in the degree of emphasis and depth of the characters and the number of them, the role of the characters is not questioned and rarely does the literature reflect itself or the process of narration (of fictional characters), for example.

The Nigerian critics argue that regardless of the changes in the European or Western novel, the point of comparison in the Eurocentric criticism of African literatures was the European nineteenth century novel, while "the revolution in the techniques of the European novel initiated by Proust, Joyce, Kafka, and extended by Faulkner, Hemingway, Beckett and many others" is disregarded (Chinweizu *et al*., 1983: 87). Hence, while these writers' works became classics, the approaches through which the African writers questioned the values of the earlier novels were not acknowledged and were seen as shortcomings. This feature can be considered through Santos' concept of monocultures, or modes of producing non-existence. One of them is monoculture of linear time, which establishes the idea of history having one known direction (Santos, 2006: 96). This means that the Western countries and their knowledges are in front, whereas the rest follow, are labelled as backwards and are not considered contemporary to the West or global North. Furthermore, this monoculture also denies the possibility of alternative ways of forming literary traditions – it is seen that the only legitimate and valid way is to go through the same stages as the Western canons of literature.

This is pointed out by the Nigerian critics too: "Eurocentric criticism of African fiction stems from colonialist attitudes whereby these critics see the African as an apprentice European whose literary production has no other canons to adhere to but those of whichever part of the Western tradition the critics happen to subscribe to" (Chinweizu *et al*., 1983: 8).

For Ngugi, the innovations in the narrative techniques of the writers above were not relevant in his later novels, which is related to a principal theme in his discussion regarding decolonisation: "Could I write for an audience that had never read a novel in the same way as I would write for an audience that had read or was aware of James Joyce, Joseph Conrad, Wole Soyinka or Ayi Kwei Armah?" (Ngugi, 2011: 75). Instead, for him the process of moving away from the European models was necessarily a shift towards the oral tradition. He wanted to search for narrative models that would be familiar to the readers who were more used to the structures and techniques of oral tradition. However, this would not mean a return to the linear plot:

> Now my own observation of how people ordinarily narrated events to one another had also shown me that they quite happily accepted interventions, digressions, narrative within a narrative and dramatic illustrations without losing the main narrative thread. The story-within-a-story was part and parcel of the conversational norms of the peasantry. The linear/biographical unfolding of a story was more removed from actual social practice than the narrative of Conrad and Lamming (*Ibid*.: 76).

Hence, he constructed the plot following his observations in order to create a narrative technique that would be more familiar to the readers he wanted to reach than the narrative techniques of Western novels.

Moreover, in order to get closer to his readers, Ngugi added elements from oral tradition: "I also borrowed heavily from forms of oral narrative, particularly the conversational tone, the fable, proverbs, songs and the whole tradition of poetic self-praise or praise of others" (Ngugi, 2011: 78). This aspect is also related to moving the centre of the tradition from Europe to the local traditions of narration: "The African novel as an extended narrative in written form had antecedents in African oral literature" (*Ibid*.: 69). While for Ngugi this is a part of decolonisation, it has been widely discussed in other contexts too. However, it is also curious that oral tradition is not often defined or discussed in its diversity, which is what the Nigerian critics call for (Chinweizu *et al*., 1983: 86). As it becomes visible, for Ngugi it

includes everything from a conversational tone to songs, which can become problematic. There are also significant differences in the way it is applied among the writers – and in some cases it is not visible at all and remains in the background. This, moreover, points to the diversity within African novels.

Many other writers have discussed combining oral tradition and written literature too. Many of them, such as Angolan Manuel Rui Monteiro, consider that current African literature is inevitably a result of the encounter between the oral tradition and the written (European) tradition, which is not an encounter between two equal traditions. The European invader comes to Africa without stopping to listen to the 'oral text', and decides to attack with two weapons: cannons and written text (Monteiro, 2008: 27). Monteiro (*Ibid*., 28) holds that the African authors search for a way to write that would include the liveliness of oral literature:

> Como escrever a história, o poema, o provérbio sobre a folha branca? Saltando pura e simplesmente da fala para a escrita e submetendo-me ao rigor do código que a escrita já comporta? Isso não. No texto oral já disse não toco e não o deixo minar pela escrita arma que eu conquistei ao outro. Não posso matar o meu texto com a arma do outro. Vou é minar a arma do outro com todos os elementos possíveis do meu texto. Invento outro texto. Interfiro, desescrevo para que conquiste a partir do instrumento escrito um texto escrito meu, da minha identidade. As personagens do meu texto têm de se movimentar como no outro texto inicial. Têm de cantar. Dançar.

An example of bringing the oral tradition to the novel is to present the story as told by a storyteller, which is interesting from the point of view of the narrator of the Western novel. This is visible in Ngugi's first novel written in Gikũyũ, *Devil on the Cross* (1982), but also in Paulina Chiziane's *Ventos do Apocalipse* (1996), although in the more recent literature this approach is not used very often. Many writers have also used proverbs and songs in their novels. However, as researcher Ana Mafalda Leite points out, sometimes the discussion regarding oral tradition as something originally and naturally African echoes the views expressed in the Negritude movement. Furthermore, she points out that African literature has been influenced by various literatures and cultures, not only from the European, as might appear from Monteiro's text which builds a strong polarisation (Leite, 1998: 13, 15).

In Mozambique the phases of literary history have been different, as was already mentioned, and the decolonisation of literature has not been discussed explicitly, at least not widely. While the phases will be discussed in the following chapters, it is interesting to make some comparisons that may explain the different perspectives. One of them might be related to

the difference in genres, in terms of the preference of the coloniser: in the later phases of Portuguese colonialism, Camões' work had an important symbolical role, which has also been discussed in Mozambican literature in many occasions. Hence, novels did not have such a strong role. However, there are other significant details too. Access to education was very limited: Newitt describes how in 1930 only one of the 208 students in the secondary school of Lourenço Marques was African. In the 1950s only approximately a quarter of African children studied in the adaptation schools. The situation improved slightly in the 1960s when the first university was opened (1962) and attending school became compulsory. During Salazar's rule education provided by the colonial state was reserved for Catholics, who represented 15% of the population of Mozambique (Newitt, 1997: 383, 414-416).

Besides that, novelists like Ngugi, and Nigerians Chinua Achebe and Wole Soyinka were born in the 1930s, Ousmane Sembène in the 1920s. In Mozambique, as will be brought up further, the emergence of novels can be dated to the 1980s and the writers discussed here were all born in the 1950s. However, while Ngugi describes his process explicitly as a process of literary decolonisation, similar questions have been brought up elsewhere too, such as the question of the role of oral tradition discussed previously. Ngugi's views (and those of Chinweizu, Jemie & Madubuike) provide an insight into the processes elsewhere too, but do not mean that a literary decolonisation could not take place on other terms and in different conditions. Rather, it is a process that is related to political and social shifts and can be detected even though the writers themselves would not explicitly bring it up. Moreover, discussing recent Mozambican novels reveals the changes in the approaches and the shifts in the importance given to different themes and, for example, the changes in the presence of oral tradition in the novels. While Ngugi is focused on the current situation, many of the Mozambican novels also discuss the past, offering new perspectives to it and pointing to its significance to the present moment too. There is also a tendency to question the 'official' narratives regarding the past and the views regarding future too. However, the problems related to globalisation are strongly present as well. Since the 1980s, when Ngugi and Chinweizu, Jemie & Madubuike published their polemic texts, and when Mozambican literature went through significant changes, not least in terms of appearance of the first novels, significant changes have taken place.

1.1.2 Decolonisation and the question of social commitment

What is here called 'the question of social commitment' refers to a set of questions that were considered in depth by Ngugi and Chinweizu, Jemie & Madubuike. It includes questions related to the role of the writer, the role of literature in society and the content. It is also related to the question of the readers of African literatures. These questions were brought up explicitly by Chinua Achebe and are visible in, for example, Ousmane Sembène's novels too. It is related to a specific moment in the history of the respective countries, although in Ngugi's work this aspect becomes stronger later – culminating in his *Devil on the Cross* which he wrote while imprisoned in Kenya. It is also a question that has antecedents in both the discussion regarding anticolonialism and in European novels. While Ngugi, Achebe and Sembène all wrote novels, this approach in Mozambique was most visible in combat poetry, often written by those participating in the fight for liberation that started in the early 1960s, while earlier writers, as will be brought up in further chapters, took this kind of a role too.

Indeed, in the earlier phases of written literatures in Africa, many writers were openly concerned about their societies and took social responsibility. Chinua Achebe wrote in 1965 that "[t]he writer cannot expect to be excused from the task of re-education and regeneration that must be done. I for one would not wish to be excused. I would be quite satisfied if my novels (especially the ones set in the past) did no more than teach my readers that their past – with all its imperfections – was not one long night of savagery [...]" (Ashcroft *et al.*, 1989: 125-126). It is interesting to compare Achebe's approach with Antonio Candido's (2006: 90) view regarding the pioneers of Brazilian literature:

> Decorre que os escritores, conscientes pela primeira vez da sua realidade como grupo graças ao papel desempenhado no processo da Independência e ao reconhecimento da sua liderança no setor espiritual, vão procurar, como tarefa patriótica, definir conscientemente uma literatura mais ajustada às aspirações da jovem pátria, favorecendo entre criador e público relações vivas e adequadas à nova fase.

Candido's considerations show how the role of the writer is related to the changes in societies. He also points to the necessity to create a literature for the past; a respectable tradition to join, even though younger than the European. It is a contradictory process: on the one hand, there is eagerness to create something new, on the other, there is a wish for old ascendancy (*Ibid.*: 179). This can be grasped in a dialogue with the situation of Portuguese intellectuals after the Carnation Revolution in 1974, discussed by António Sousa Ribeiro. He considers that the

writers, who had expressed anti-fascist views before the revolution felt especial legitimacy to express their views in the new, democratic space (Ribeiro, A., 1993: 486).

However, in the case of African literatures this tradition is usually seen in oral tradition and the challenge is to combine it with the written tradition. In Ngugi's career this is also related to the necessity to reconsider his readers, which made him further consider the aesthetic aspects of his work, related especially to the form of narration, as was seen above. Ultimately, this is the reason that made him change his language of writing to Gikũyũ, his Kenyan mother tongue. His strict position – considering literature written in African languages as African, and that written in European languages as 'Afro-European' – caused widespread discussion, of which a closer look will be taken in the following subchapter, in order to complete the discussion regarding literary decolonisation and its principal theme (Ngugi, 2011: 27, 75-78). It also reflects a uniform view regarding writing coming from Africa and the expectations towards it.

Although didacticism does not equate to the writer taking a stand with regards to social issues, there are times when it turned out as such. This is, moreover, a question related to the writer's idea of and approach towards the assumed readers. As Chinweizu, Jemie & Madubuike (1983: 134) argue, the didactic approach of the African writers was seen as a lack of skill: "This charge usually amounts to a claim that the moral or social purposes of the novelist are overtly rather than intrinsically expressed". They point out that these critics themselves consider that the literary tastes of the Western reader have changed since the nineteenth century so that the didactic elements do not please them – and hence appear as a sign of backwardness. However, it is pertinent to ask whether the problem is didacticism itself, which the critics see as not having disappeared from Western writing, or the values it represents (*Ibid*.: 134-135). They quote Jorge Luis Borges: "'Those who say that art should not propagate doctrines usually refer to doctrines that are opposed to their own'" (Borges, 1968: 87 *apud* Chinweizu *et al*., 1983: 135). Later this approach was no longer judged, but rather it became one of the staple differences that was – and is – brought up when discussing African literatures. This is visible in Fredric Jameson's text from 1986 regarding what he calls 'third-world literature'. However, before proceeding to a discussion about the role given to African writers in the fight for liberation and regarding Jameson's text, it is interesting to take

a look at European literature from this perspective, which builds a dialogue between the comments of Chinweizu, Jemie & Madubuike.

In the twentieth century there were ideas (expressed within the academic world by the professor of English Literature in Oxford, George Gordon) that literature should save England, which had become 'ill' since religion had lost its significance as a unifying force in society and social reforms were slow. Literature should save the souls and heal the state. It could take the role of offering, spreading and supporting the values that could unite the people. Literature was also seen as a tool for controlling and educating the working classes, this way preventing political rebellion. Reading would make the lower classes appreciate and respect the achievements of the higher classes (Eagleton, 1997: 36-39). However, it is also useful to take into account Antonio Candido's (2006: 54-55) remarks of how the influence of literature and its social impact cannot be completely controlled by the writer or the audience. It is also related to the literary aspects of the work; the way it positions itself with regards to cultural values, for example. Moreover, the impact is not tied to a specific moment in history, but can change or re-emerge in different phases.

How was literature to affect the readers then? It was considered that since reading is a solitary activity, it would make the readers contemplate their lives and keep them away from politics, which on the contrary, is a collective activity. Since literature was to take on the unifying role that religion had had, Eagleton considers that it also works in the same way as religion: through emotions and experiences. Because of this dimension, literature serves well for ideological purposes. As Eagleton puts it, ideologies were not expressed directly, but literature could make the people understand and support ideologies by literary means. Literature also has another dimension in terms of experiences and emotions. Through reading, people have access to experiences that they otherwise would not have. As such it would not be required to enhance the situation of the lower classes so that they could have a richer life – they could, for example, satisfy their curiosity towards foreign countries by reading travel literature (Eagleton, 1997: 39-40). Although the success of literature in this specific case can be questioned – it did not silence the working classes – it cannot be denied that it can support ideologies by evoking emotions. It could be further suggested that by evoking emotions, literature can have a role in social change or social emancipation – or work against it too.

Eagleton also refers to the education that the colonial administrators received. Among other subjects, they studied English literature, which reinforced the nationalist feelings of the students who would then travel to the colonies equipped with national pride and with certainty of the (cultural) superiority of the metropolis (Eagleton, 1997: 42-43). Therefore, if literature served British imperialism, it can be said that literature has also had a role in dismantling the empires. While the process and the purpose that literature was used for were different, the means might not have been very different, as an analysis of the views of Amílcar Cabral and Frantz Fanon shows. Their views also reveal how culture was one of the areas through which colonialism imposed itself. It is also interesting to take a look at their views since Cabral's position reveals a view from the context of Portuguese colonialism and the fights for liberation, and Fanon's views influenced Ngugi's views thoroughly.

Amílcar Cabral has mentioned the significance of culture in national liberation on several occasions. In a speech delivered on February 20th, 1970 as part of the Eduardo Mondlane Memorial Lecture Series at Syracuse University in New York, Cabral brings up the role of culture:

> A história ensina-nos que, em determinadas circunstâncias, é fácil ao estrangeiro impor o seu domínio a um povo. Mas ensina-nos igualmente que, sejam quais forem os aspectos materiais desse domínio, ele só se pode manter com uma repressão permanente e organizada da vida cultural desse mesmo povo, não podendo garantir definitivamente a sua implantação a não ser pela liquidação física de parte significativa da população dominada (García, 1999: 100).

Cabral underlines that the coloniser, when referring to assimilation, is simply denying the culture of the colonised. This weakens the cultural resistance, which then enables colonialism. As an example of the racism and denial of the cultures of the colonised, Cabral refers to Salazar's statement that Portugal did not have colonies, but overseas provinces: "No caso português, em que Salazar afirma que a *África não existe*, atinge mesmo o mais elevado grau de absurdo" (García, 1999: 101).[5]

The fight against oppression is in Cabral's view often anticipated in culture:

> O estudo da história das lutas de libertação demonstra que são em geral precedidas por uma intensificação das manifestações culturais, que se concretizam progressivamente por uma tentativa, vitoriosa ou não, da afirmação da personalidade cultural do povo dominado como acto de negação da cultura do opressor. Sejam

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[5]Italics in all quotes are from the original texts.

> quais forem as condições de sujeição de um povo ao domínio estrangeiro e a influência dos factores económicos, políticos e sociais na práctica desse domínio, é em geral no facto cultural que se situa o germe da contestação, levando a estruturação e ao desenvolvimento do movimento da libertação (García, 1999: 104).

For Cabral, the vast majority of the colonised never lost touch with the local cultures or accepted colonialism – they maintained a critical position towards colonialism: "Eis porque o problema de um 'retorno às fontes' ou de um 'renascimento cultural' não se põe nem poderia pôr-se para as massas populares, visto que elas são portadoras da sua cultura própria, são a fonte da cultura e, ao mesmo tempo, a única entidade verdadeiramente de preservar e de criar cultura – *de fazer a história*" (*Ibid.*: 128-129). The upper classes, however, turn towards their own cultural roots due to a disappointment with the coloniser since they, regardless of their efforts, did not gain access to the same privileges as the coloniser has. However, their work is not an act of fighting as such, since for Cabral (and Fanon too) the actual culture emerges from the fight, and the fight is also a cultural act (*Ibid.*: 126-130). Similarly, regarding the Mozambican situation, Basto (2006: 72) shows how combat poetry and revolution were seen as the same process with the same objectives – cultural and political liberation.

Although Cabral does not mention any specific form of culture and his view of culture is very comprehensive, literature is one of these forms. Cabral himself wrote a number of poems and considered that literature has a central role: "O cabo-verdiano, de olhos bem abertos, compreenderá o seu próprio sonho, descobrirá a sua própria voz, na mensagem dos Poetas" (Andrade, 1978: 29). An example of the role of literary expressions can be made from the activities of Portugal's Casa dos Estudantes do Império, where Cabral played an important role. Many writers were part of CEI, which published texts (poems, prose) of authors such as Mozambicans José Craveirinha and Noémia de Sousa, and Angolans Agostinho Neto and Luandino Vieira. Ironically, CEI was originally founded by Salazar's government to gather all of the students from the colonies under the same organisation, so that they could be better controlled. However, CEI ended up bringing together many future African politicians and offering them a platform for discussing their anticolonial views (Castelo, 1997: 24-25). On the other hand, this kind of perspective on culture, as will be discussed further, set expectations on the writers and significantly limited their choice of legitimate topics.

Frantz Fanon argues that colonialism, in its denial of the culture of the colonised, also affected the view of the colonised of their own history. However, for Fanon the acknowledgement of the existence of culture before colonialism is not enough – it only leads the Western-influenced African intellectuals to search for inspiration from the past, to which Fanon refers as a banal search for exoticism (Fanon, 2003: 183, 192). He considers that the writer is on the right track only when she/he has stopped imitating the Western culture, corrects her/his view regarding the past and starts to write for her/his own people to alert them, in preparation for the fight for liberation. Both Cabral and Fanon refer to the cultural alienation that causes problems in the liberation movement – the intellectuals have become alienated from their own culture and people. In order for the movement to gain force, these intellectuals need to be re-Africanised. As Cabral puts it,

> A contestação cultural do domínio colonial – fase primária do movimento de libertação – só pode ser encarada eficazmente com base na cultura das massas trabalhadoras dos campos e das cidades, incluindo a «pequena burguesia» nacionalista (revolucionária), reafricanizada ou disponível para uma reconversão cultural (García, 1999: 109).

It is interesting to consider that a view is implicitly constructed – present in Ngugi's theory too – in which African values (which is an absurd concept as such) seem to be close to socialist values, reflecting a generalised view regarding the past, and ignoring the hierarchical systems from the past prior to colonialism. This, moreover, could also be brought up when discussing the question of epistemologies of the South too. Cabral's and Fanon's views can be seen as a background for the 'theory' regarding social commitment in African literature and by African writers. Since much of the African nations' (autonomous, written) literary history emerges with the liberation movements, with antecedents written during colonialism, such as Dias' short stories or Craveirinha's poetry, the emphasis on the social dimension of the literature is easy to understand. However, as Ngugi's process and Fanon's comments reveal, this 'emerging' literature has as its background the earlier traditions, such as oral literature.

For Ngugi (2011: 78), hence, it was not enough to modify his narrative techniques and add elements of oral tradition to his texts:

> Language; plot; realism of social and physical detail; features of oral narratives: all these were elements of form and I knew that form by itself, no matter how familiar and interesting, could never hold the attention of my new kind of reader for long. [...] A proper marriage of content and form would decide the reception accorded the

> novel. So the most important thing was to go for a subject matter, for a content, which had the weight and the complexity and the challenge of their everyday struggles.
> And this brought me to the next problem: my relationship to my material, that is to the historical reality of a neo-colony.

Following Fanon's 'programme' of not diving into the past, but rather searching for ways to discuss the present that would be related to the traditions of narration, Ngugi (*Ibid*.: 81) describes the absurdities of neo-colonial politics through familiar themes, curiously partially from the Bible, which is not discussed further. It could, to some extent, be considered as a form of re-writing Western narratives that had their role in colonialism too.

> And then one day I got it. Why not tell the story of men who had sold their soul and that of the nation to the foreign devil of imperialism? Why not tell the story of evil that takes pride in evil? Why not tell the story of robbers who take pride in robbing the masses?
> That was how I came to write the novel *Caitaani Mũtharabainĩ* in Gikũyũ language.

Ngugi considers that due to the changes in his approach he was now able to reach the local audience, while in terms of reception and numbers this is difficult to verify.

The reception of his novel, as it is described by Ngugi, also points to a move away from reading as a solitary activity, to which Eagleton refers above as a contrast to politics as a collective activity: "A family would get together every evening and one of their literate members would read it for them. Workers would also gather in groups, particularly during the lunchbreak, and they would get one of them to read the book. It was read in buses; it was read in taxis; it was read in public bars" (Ngugi, 2011: 83). He even describes "professional readers" who read the novel in a bar as long as they were offered drinks (*Idem*). However, while Ngugi points out that the audience enjoyed his novel, it is difficult to say whether it had an impact in a broader sense. As Candido (2006: 85) remarks: "Finalmente, a posição do escritor depende do conceito social que os grupos elaboram em relação a ele, e não corresponde necessariamente ao seu próprio. Este fator exprime o reconhecimento coletivo da sua atividade, que deste modo se justifica socialmente".

Interestingly, Ngugi's description here is close to the traditions of the Chinese novel in its earlier phases. Chinese novels were a popular form of entertainment, often enacted in public places:

This oral element of the Chinese novel has also led to authors not only imitating the oral style but also retaining the plot-driven chapter-based structure, although the novel could be composed primarily for reading in private. Even today *shuoshu ren* ("book talkers"), who read, or rather enact novels for an audience, still exist (Wang, 2011: 178-179).

Ngugi also described his new kind of plot in similar terms. Comparing these approaches, instead of comparing African novels to European novels, could provide interesting results. It also shows how the novel as a genre is much more diverse than it may appear.

It could be also argued that the process Ngugi describes is related to the further questioning of the novel and its reception. Candido (2006: 43) considers that the poetry of today has forgotten the listener and is aimed at a reader who reads carefully and silently reflects what he has read and meditates on it in his own corner. This was the kind of implicit reader of the so-called European novels too. The role of the readers and their reception of the novel have often been excluded from debates regarding the role of the writer and literature in the context of decolonisation. Rather, it is based on the views of the producers and their hopes for the reception of their work, while the instability and impossibility of controlling this reception is often omitted. In practice, it is difficult to assess the reception (especially if it is considered that the readers are like Ngugi's, who wouldn't express their views publicly on the literary pages of newspapers). However, in Candido's words (2006: 48), the readers are the ones who make the literary work what it is and also give it its meanings – without them the writer does not accomplish his task. Hence, the readers are the connection between the author and his or her work.

However, the emphasis on the role of the writer and his commitment to the readers has also had other kinds of consequences. Fredric Jameson (1986: 69), writing in the same decade when Ngugi's and Chinweizu, Jemie & Madubuike's texts regarding decolonisation were published, argues that

all third-world texts are necessarily, I want to argue, allegorical, and in a very specific way: they are to be read as what I will call *national allegories*, even when, or perhaps I should say, particularly when their forms develop out of predominantly Western machineries of representation, such as the novel.

Jameson sees in his influential text that this is the most significant difference between the Western novels (seen as the Western genre) and 'third-world texts'. He also points to the assumed Western idea of separating the private and the public, and refers to the apolitical

literature produced by Western authors (*Idem*). While Jameson does not present his views as criticism towards the African writers, he points to exactly the same aspects that Chinweizu, Jemie & Madubuike discuss as Eurocentric criticism of African literature. Hence, these aspects have become a stereotype that emphasises the differences between the 'third-world literatures' and the rest.

Aijaz Ahmad, in his response to Jameson's text, sees that by basing his argument on binary oppositions, Jameson ends up ignoring all of the diversity of the literatures from the areas he is discussing. It can also be added that this kind of approach ends up marginalising these literatures and seeing them as outsiders of other literary movements and canons. Ahmad argues that third-world literature as an object of knowledge cannot exist due to this diversity, and considers that Jameson, in the above quote, ends up even further generalising his view by claiming that all third-world texts are national allegories. This leads Ahmad to consider that Jameson would argue that only that type of text would be genuinely 'third-worldish' – and that the writer's location would simply imply that she/he would write only texts that could be interpreted as national allegories. Furthermore, Ahmad continues, Jameson argues that it is the colonial experience that links all of these countries and continents. Although Jameson's text is an attempt to widen the field of literary studies, he ends up building a dependency between the ex-colonisers and the ex-colonies on at least two levels: he does not acknowledge the possibility of literature that would not be so closely related to the consequences of colonialism, and he also implicitly emphasises literatures that are available in European languages. Ahmad's example of this tendency is shown in how Salman Rushdie, for writing in English, becomes the voice of the whole continent (in his case Asia), although there may be many other writers discussing similarly important issues, but who are left without attention for not writing in English, and he sees the same thing happening to African literatures written in African languages (Ahmad, 1987: 3-12). It could be argued that Jameson, involuntarily, comes to tell once more a single story – not only regarding Africa, but also of the so-called third-world.

In respect of the role of the writers, such as Ngugi and Sembène writing after the independence of their countries, Jameson (1986: 81) says that they "have a passion for change and social regeneration which has not yet found its agents", which in his view is also an

aesthetic dilemma. This problem arises when the oppression comes from within the society – previously the enemy, the coloniser, was easily represented for he spoke a different language, looked different and had a specific place in the society. Also, since cultural imperialism is often seen as the 'enemy', representing it requires other means than those familiar from realist novels. Jameson mentions that it is the issue of representation that drives the authors to search for alternative forms of expression – and mentions satirical fable as one of these (*Ibid*.: 81-82). However, these alternative forms of expression could also be seen as emerging from a questioning of the 'Western' aesthetic values and searching for alternative traditions – as Ngugi describes the writing process of *Devil on the Cross*.

It is also interesting to compare writers in order to build a more accurate view regarding the positions of writers. For example, José Saramago's novels are critical of the state of Western societies, which he has also criticised in interviews. His position as an intellectual is very similar to the position that many African writers have taken. These writers see that it is their obligation to inform their people and/or deliver them alternative views on the situation of their societies. It is interesting to compare Saramago's position to that of Mia Couto, whose view on the social responsibility of the author is simple, and also exhaustive:

> A pergunta poderia ser: qual é a responsabilidade do escritor para com a democracia e com os direitos humanos? É toda. Porque o compromisso maior com o escritor é com a verdade e com a liberdade. Para combater pela verdade o escritor usa uma inverdade: a literatura. Mas é uma mentira que não mente (Couto, 2005: 59).

In an interview with Elena Brugioni, Couto also provides another perspective towards the presence of social questions in his prose, which could be extended to many other writers:

> Eu acho que aqui [Moçambique], estamos tão próximos da história que é impossível que a escrita não responda a estes factores. Até porque estes mesmos são também factores ficcionais; este é um país que se está a escrever, em estado de ficção. Este contexto político mexe tanto com a nossa vida que tudo isto passa inevitavelmente pela literatura. De resto, todos os meus livros foram respondendo a situações de transição diferentes de Moçambique (Couto, 2008 *apud* Brugioni, 2012: 83).

In this sense, Candido's (2006: 28) questions are relevant too: "Neste ponto, surge uma pergunta: qual a influência exercida pelo meio social sobre a obra de arte? Digamos que ela deve ser imediatamente completada por outra: qual a influência exercida pela obra de arte sobre o meio?".

Jameson (1986: 69) also assumes that it is this difference – the novels being national allegories and the commitment of the writers – that causes a 'strangeness' that Western readers may feel when reading African literature. The mentions of these differences in various contexts may also have influenced the way readers approach and interpret African literature, and it seems that these approaches still exist, although the literature itself may have changed. It could also be suggested that emphasising these dimensions reflects the interest of Western readers towards the consequences of colonialism – a theme that ironically brings the Western audience and African writers together in a vicious circle, supported by the publishers of African literature in Europe. Furthermore, regardless of the emphasised social dimension of some African literature, it should not be forgotten that the novels are literature, not social testimonies or simple political statements of their authors.

It is also worth pointing out at this stage that Ba Ka Khosa, Borges Coelho, Chiziane and Couto (2012) all explained in interviews that they don't write with social responsibility in their minds, even if they are later given this kind of role by readers. Therefore, the responsibility of the author can be seen as related to specific phases of African literatures and societies and not necessarily a general characteristic of it – similarly it is not a characteristic of Western literature, although in some situations these elements have been more strongly present, and some authors point more directly to social or political issues. It is, first and foremost, an option of the writer and depends on their view regarding writing and the position of their work in society. However, this approach can also be seen as a stereotype regarding 'African literature' and its writers, which also influences its reception – and which has been sustained by writers like Achebe and Ngugi. It is one of the mechanisms that keeps African literatures marginalised and does not allow them to be seen in the context of literature in general, although if this took place it shouldn't mean that its specific characteristics should be ignored.

Phillip Rothwell's (2004) discussion of Mia Couto's works demonstrates one way towards a reading that manages to avoid overemphasising colonial and postcolonial approaches, although Couto has rarely been discussed from the above mentioned 'traditional' perspectives, as will be shown in more detail further. Rothwell acknowledges that Couto's work plays with and refers to the Portuguese literary history by, for example, bringing up

allusions to Camões, or by taking on the myth and image of the sea which is familiar to the Portuguese tradition. However, rather than focusing on these elements as elements of Portuguese heritage, Rothwell manages to avoid a Eurocentric reading – by paradoxically seeing Couto as a postmodern writer. In this way he is able to focus on Couto's work against the wider backdrop of questioning the Western fixed 'truths' in the context of postmodernism. This provides a fresh approach since, as Rothwell (2004: 171) himself argues: "[b]y focusing on Couto's postmodernism rather than the postcolonial and linguistic aspects of his texts, I block the trend that, in essence, reads Couto's Mozambique solely as a reaction to Portugal's presence in Africa." If the work of writers such as Couto were seen as postmodern, wouldn't that lead to another way of Eurocentric appropriation of African literature? On the other hand, it is possible to see African writers' work as part of the process of deconstructing the European 'truths' and shaking off the grand narratives together with other writers from other parts of the world.

1.1.3 The language question of African literatures

The language question is one of the principal elements of the debate regarding the decolonisation of literature. It is principally related to the use of European languages in African literatures. It also refers to the question of whether African languages should be used for writing African literatures.[6] The debate has taken place principally among African writers and researchers, although it is commented on also in postcolonial theories. On the other hand, these questions have not been very widely discussed within the Lusophone context. While the language question may seem irrelevant since all Mozambican literature, with very few exceptions, is written in Portuguese, and there has been little conversation regarding the use of national languages in literature, the way in which the Portuguese language is used to write Mozambican literature has been problematised.

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[6] Here, African languages refer to the so-called native or local languages, and in the context of this thesis, most often Bantu languages. In Mozambique these are called national languages, while Portuguese is the only official language. However, there are views that European languages spoken in Africa are African languages too, and my approach in this thesis does not discuss Arabic and Creole languages, for example.

However, to have a somewhat correct view on the languages of African literatures, it is important to pay attention to the literatures that are written in African languages. Robert Cancel mentions several examples of, for example, Somali and Swahili literatures. For a long time, Somali literature was written in Arabic, and when the Somali language did begin to be used in literature, Arabic script continued to be used. The Somalis have a long tradition of oral poetry too. Arabic script was also used originally in Swahili texts with the first poem in Swahili written in the seventeenth century. Tanzanian writer Shaaban Robert (1909-1962) also wrote significant works in Swahili. Cancel also refers to literatures written in Xhosa (South Africa), Pemba (Zambia) and Yoruba (Nigeria) (Cancel, 1993: 289-302). Angolan poet and politician Mário Pinto de Andrade (1998: 47), discusses two Mozambican mission-educated writers, Samu Mukhomba and Yohona B. Abdallah, who wrote in their mother tongues in the early twentieth century, while Bento Sitoe has published novels in Tsonga in the 1980s. As will be discussed in detail further, some of the Mozambican national languages were also used in the press prior to independence, for example.

For Ngugi the process of decolonisation would not be complete if he hadn't started to write in his Kenyan mother tongue, although he translates his own work into English as well. He has also written and directed theatre plays in Kenya in Gikũyũ, which preceded his imprisonment. The choice of language in this instance is related to those topics discussed: without changing the language from (sophisticated) English to Gikũyũ Ngugi would not reach the people he writes to and about whom he writes (Ngugi, 2011: 72). Most African writers have less radical opinions. Chinweizu, Jemie & Madubuike (1983: 243) argue that the debate regarding which language to use is not fruitful – and it should instead focus on how to use the European languages: "[…] to write well in English today it is necessary to write clearly, using contemporary 20th century diction and idiom, so that anyone literate in the language can make literal sense out of every sentence or line that is written".

These different approaches towards the language question are undoubtedly related to different perceptions of language. Ngugi (2011: 14-16) defends the use of African languages on the basis of languages being carriers of culture, which for him differs from the use of language as a means of communication:

Culture embodies the moral, ethical and aesthetic values, the set of spiritual eyeglasses through which they come to view themselves and their place in the universe. Values are the basis of a people's identity, their sense of particularity as members of the human race. All this is carried by language. Language as culture is the collective memory bank of a people's experience in history. Culture is almost indistinguishable from the language that makes possible its genesis, growth, banking, articulation and indeed its transmission from one generation to the other.
[...]
Language carries culture, and culture carries, particularly through orature and literature, the entire body of values by which we come to perceive ourselves and our place in the world. How people perceive themselves affects how they look at their culture, at their politics and at the social production of wealth, at their relationship to nature and to other beings.

However, colonialism came to disturb the harmony between the language and culture of the African peoples by imposing another language and it could be added – its superiority. Ultimately, as the Mozambican linguist Armando Jorge Lopes (1998: 474) too points out, the African mother tongues are seen as the languages that keep the local traditions alive. He sees that these languages are the "vehicle for transmission of the facts of life and of legends, ancient knowledge of nature [...]" and a vehicle for knowledge about the surrounding environment (*Idem*). This aspect is often disregarded when defending the use of European languages, however one could argue that translation of these world views can take place in European languages. Yet, the translation can only take place if the languages are kept alive and the different world views and concepts are acknowledged and carefully translated.

The question of language is also at the centre of Ngugi's criticism towards other writers who, regardless of their critical approach, write literature in European languages: "But to whom was it directing its list of mistakes made, crimes and wrongs committed, complaints unheeded, or its call for a change of moral direction? The imperialist bourgeoisie? The petty-bourgeoisie in power?" (Ngugi, 2011: 21). Here, though, it might be worth bringing up Ngugi's current position as part of the academic elite in the United States. While he has worked with locals – the theatre project implemented in the 1970s with the locals of Kamiriithu is documented in *Decolonising the Mind* – it can be asked whether he is speaking for the 'people' or peasants, or speaking as a part of them.

Ngugi denies the possibility of appropriating European languages and criticises the writers who "tried to get out of the dilemma by over-insisting that they [European languages] were really African languages or by trying to Africanise English or French usage while

making sure it was still recognisable as English or French or Portuguese" (*Ibid*.: 22). Moreover, he points out that due to this approach, a curious phenomenon was created: "This European-language-speaking peasantry and working class, existing only in novels and dramas, was at times invested with the vacillating mentality, the evasive self-contemplation, the existential anguished human condition, or the man-torn-between-two-worlds-facedness of the petty-bourgeoisie" (*Idem*). For Ngugi (*Ibid*.: 23), the peasants, who in reality continue speaking their mother tongues, also show an exemplary attitude towards the European language: "In fact, when the peasantry and the working class were compelled by necessity or history to adopt the language of the master, they Africanised it without any respect for its ancestry shown by Senghor and Achebe [...]". However, in this context the Creole languages of some African countries is not considered.

Hence, Ngugi could not continue writing in English. However, he does accept the changing nature of languages: "It is the peasantry and the working class who are changing language all the time in pronunciations, in forming new dialects, new words, new phrases and new expressions" (Ngugi, 2011: 68). But according to his view of language, it seems this is a process that takes place within the language that carries their values and culture, and hence cannot take place within a language (of the coloniser), carrying its values and culture. Not surprisingly, Ngugi's approach has inspired much debate and criticism. Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin (1989: 53) consider that an essentialist notion of language, such as Ngugi's,

> [...] is false because it confuses usage with property in its view of meaning, and it is ultimately contradictory, since, if it is asserted that words do have some essential cultural essence not subject to changing usage, then post-colonial literatures in English, predicated upon this very changing usage, could not have come into being.

For them, English, for example, is a versatile tool "continually changing and growing because it realises potentials which are then accorded to it as properties" (*Ibid*.: 40). They continue: "post-colonial writing abrogates the privileged centrality of 'English' by using language to signify difference while employing sameness which allows it to be understood" (*Ibid*.: 51). Ashcroft (1995: 301) also argues that the meanings of the words can be learned and explained to speakers of different languages. For him, "language is coextensive with social reality, not because it causes a certain perception of the world, but because it is inextricable from that perception" (*Idem*). The criticism could be extended to Ngugi's position too, since he

translates his works into English while writing in Gikuyu has become his 'trademark', which could also be considered in terms of approaches towards African literatures that underline a certain form of exoticism. However, Ngugi's view emphasises the specific situation regarding language after and during colonialism, which needs to be contextualised, especially by paying attention to the power relations between the languages.

Moreover, Mozambican linguist Gregório Firmino argues that the African languages are not neutral. Since the different communities or ethnic groups were not equal, there are also languages that are related to these power relations. This is visible in current politics too – in some countries some ethnic groups are better represented and more powerful than others. Firmino criticises Ngugi's view of language and points out that the language situations are constantly changing – and so is the role of the European languages in Africa (Firmino, 2002: 20-23). Although the critical voices such as Ngugi's have brought up an important question, and it could be said that many critics have also simplified Ngugi's views in favour of their own views, he does draw a simple and static picture of the language situations. Moreover, according to Ngugi's view of language, the colonial language is also bound to remain in the position which it had during colonialism, and by changing the language of his writing Ngugi is rather acknowledging this position, instead of questioning it. It also ignores the diversity within the speakers of the same language – such as the existence of a working class whose only language is English, French or Portuguese. What about the urban working classes in African capitals who in some cases can only be united through the language that colonialism left behind? Is language in this case merely a form of communication and hence its use is fine, or is language in this case related to values and cultures too? Moreover, the changes within African languages are not discussed properly and thus it appears that, according to Ngugi, they are always related to positive values and protected from globalisation and neocolonialism.

Understandably, most of African writers have not followed Ngugi's example. Many of them, even those who know some African language(s), learned to read and write in European languages, and for many a European language is the principal tool of written expression. Besides this, many authors know the European language better. There are also African languages with such small numbers of speakers that it is understandable that authors want to reach larger audiences. While translation could help in overcoming these issues, the

means to implement these kinds of processes without the availability of the literature suffering does not exist. Moreover, some of the languages are not written languages, and in the case of some of the written forms of languages there are issues due to the written form originating from the work of missionaries instead of native speakers. Although Ngugi's analysis is deep and pays attention to various aspects of the language question in societies, it remains strictly in his own context – that of an English-speaking writer who has as a mother tongue a relatively widely spoken Kenyan language.

However, some of the approaches that are more moderate than Ngugi's can be problematic too. Achebe, who is usually seen as representing more practical and subtle views than Ngugi, ends up underlining the concept of world languages and the power of English in this context. He defends the use of English language in writing: "I feel that the English language will be able to carry the weight of my African experience. But it will have to be a new English, still in full communion with its ancestral home but altered to suit its new African surroundings" (Achebe, 1994: 434). It is interesting to compare Achebe's views with those of José Craveirinha (1922-2003), whose work will be discussed in more detail later. He wrote poems during a time when the Portuguese had labelled their colonies as overseas provinces, which in theory meant that all the languages spoken in the 'province of Mozambique' would also be – Portuguese languages. Hence, it would not be problematic to include expressions and words from these languages in literature that would describe the specific 'province'. Rather, they would serve to add a local colour. Craveirinha, opposing this view, saw that vocabularies that were added (as he did) questioned the idea of one language coloured by different 'regional' languages. Instead, these expressions and grammatical experiments served for questioning the position of Portuguese. Moreover, they would also have a significant role in the interior of the text instead of just adding colour. This can be seen as a way of decolonising literature, as Basto too argues. She sees it also as a process of deconstructing the hegemonic space of the Portuguese language by opening the language up to conflict. For Craveirinha, this was a process that took place within the language and did not question the place of the Portuguese language, which he considered as an old, beautiful and historical language (Basto, 2006: 266, 269).

Achebe (1994: 431) emphasises the role English has as a tool of communication in countries where many smaller languages are spoken. However, he seems to ignore the fact that writing in English excludes many readers. It is of course not necessary to believe that all writers should write principally for their own people, or for the peasants and workers as Ngugi argues, but it still brings attention to the fact that literature is mainly available for the English-speaking classes in Nigeria. Although the language situations vary significantly in African countries and are changing in the direction of more and more people knowing the so-called European languages, omitting the question of audience seems problematic. Those who don't speak or read English (or in other contexts, Portuguese or French) are not considered a part of the discussion, whereas Ngugi's merit is in bringing these people's voice to the discussion too.

It is also interesting to compare the debates from different contexts, keeping in mind the later independence of the Lusophone countries and the small number of Portuguese speakers of them at the time of independence. In the Francophone context the language question has caused much debate too. For example, Sembène started writing in French, in Kesteloot's view in order to give legitimacy to African literature (Kesteloot 1990: 52 *apud* Woodward, 1993: 177). Later, as was mentioned earlier, he opted to make movies, first in French and later in Wolof, his mother tongue. Sembène's choice to make movies reflects his willingness to reach the locals and he has pointed out, when *L'Harmattan* (1963) was published, that it is contradictory to write Senegalese national literature in French. He also considered that using French should only be a temporary solution. Many other authors, such as the Togolese Victor Weka Yawo Aladji, have also considered French a useful tool, although Aladji ultimately believes that African national literatures should be written in African languages. Writers have also been criticised for using a very conservative style – there are views that writers should use simpler language to make it more accessible for the local readers. There are also authors that transform the language by including African languages and Arabic, such as sentences from the Koran, in the French text (Woodward, 1993: 180-181, 187-188).

The presence of Arabic and Islam is visible, for example, in Algerian writer Assia Djebar's work. For her, French is a language of liberation: she would not have become a writer if she hadn't had access to French language through her colonial education. For her

> [t]he written account of the conquest of Algeria that she uncovers from the archives is French and male; the oral account that she assembles from interviews with participants is Arabic and female. Most important, in this endeavour écriture and kalaam – the written word in French, the spoken word in Arabic – are unknown and unintelligible to the other. Djebar uses her language skills, translating, transcribing, interpreting, to bridge the gap between the two (Mortimer, 1990: 150-151).

The need to discuss these issues from a new perspective is visible also in the French context. The relationship between the Francophone and French literatures was discussed in the context of a manifesto regarding world literature in French. The manifesto was signed by various writers in order to question the idea of the French language related to France as a nation. It also questions the necessity and legitimacy of *francophonie*. The discussion can also be seen in the context of literary movements in the sense that it is related to a certain criticism towards very academic, inward literature that discusses only itself, and the promotion of more accessible literature (coming from the previous colonies) (Moura, 2007: 104).

While the language situations vary in the former Portuguese colonies in Africa, Portuguese continues to be an extremely important language in these countries – even in Mozambique where large number of Bantu languages are spoken and in Cape Verde, where Creole has a strong position. In all of the five former colonised countries only a limited amount of books have been written in Creole and Bantu languages. Portuguese was the language chosen by the new leaders of the new independent countries for the role of the official language – other options weren't viable. It was thought that the Portuguese language could be 'cleaned' of its colonialist connotations. For example, Amílcar Cabral saw the Portuguese language as one of the best things that the presence of the Portuguese had left to Cape Verde. Cabral saw the role of language as a mere instrument of communication (Ferreira, 1988: 19. 64-65). Currently, an important arena for the discussion regarding language is *lusofonia* and its concretisation in the creation of the CPLP – Comunidade dos Países de Língua Portuguesa. This development is somewhat problematic, since it could be seen as obscuring and silencing issues related to the choice of language of literature and the challenges of using a language that in the country has colonial roots. These issues will be considered in more detail in chapter two.

Leite argues that the language of writing is seen differently in the Lusophone context since many writers have Portuguese origins and live in the urban areas of the ex-colonies.

These writers do not have such intimate contact with rural areas and most do not know any of the national languages very well. In other former colonies in Africa the writers are more often of local origin (Leite, 1998: 30). Leite (*Ibid*.: 31) also sees that due to the urbanisation that has occurred after the countries become independent, the distance from the (linguistic) rural realities has grown:

> Por estas e outras razões, que têm a ver com a história própria e específica de cada uma destas sociedades e suas literaturas, a relação com as tradições orais e com a oralidade é, à partida, uma relação em "segunda mão", resultante, na maioria dos casos, não de uma experiência vivida, mas filtrada, apreendida, estudada.

Hence, it can be argued that it is for these reasons that writers such as Mia Couto or Angolan Luandino Vieira write in a way that, rather than including oral tradition in their work, they use this tradition in a very creative way, while also being significantly influenced by the urban ways of speaking Portuguese. These urban forms have influences from the national languages (for example Kimbundu in Luanda and Xironga in Maputo). Moreover, and as will be discussed further on in more detail, Couto, for example, finds his inspiration in the creativity of the local speakers of Portuguese, but instead of imitating them, he experiments with the language. In this sense, the situation of authors such as Chiziane and Luís Bernardo Honwana, who have a closer connection to the national languages, is different, and they often tend to use local expressions but rarely re-create the language in the same way as Couto.

It is also worth pointing out that language use varies, not only due to the languages the writers spoke, but also due to different writing techniques and approaches towards languages in general – as happens in other literatures too. The language of literature is different from spoken language or the written language used in the press, for example. It is in itself a field of experimentation and a part of the novel, not an invisible medium of expression. Hence, for example, Couto's writing should also be seen in terms of literary language instead of seeing his approach stemming exclusively from the language situation in Mozambique, even though it has a significant role in the way Couto creates his literary expression. In this sense, the presence of oral tradition can also be seen differently. It ceases to be oral tradition when it becomes a part of written work, and on the other hand, describing oral tradition as such does not mean that it becomes part of the narrative technique. As in J.M. Coetzee's novel about a fictional writer, *Elizabeth Costello*, the principal character points out: "A novel about

people who live in an oral culture, she would like to say, is not an oral novel. Just as a novel about women isn't a women's novel" (*Elizabeth Costello*: 53).

Although writing in the national languages is not often raised in the context of Mozambican literature, other questions related to language use are of interest. In the Lusophone or Mozambican context, two approaches regarding language have been dominant. There is plenty of discussion regarding the language use of Mia Couto, for example. This analysis often sticks close to the text itself and does not consider the 'social' dimension of the language use, or language use from the perspective of the question of decolonisation. On the other hand, the social aspects of the language situation in Mozambique have been discussed by the above-mentioned Gregório Firmino, for example. This discussion is related to social issues: although Portuguese is the only official language in the country, it is not spoken by all the citizens, which causes many kinds of problems. This issue is further complicated by the division between the rural and urban populations, and the social hierarchy of languages in Mozambique. These perspectives serve also to widen the discussion regarding the language of Mozambican literature, even when limiting the discussion to Portuguese language.

The approach towards the language question in Mozambique is also related to the language situation of the country. Mozambique is a country of significant linguistic diversity, as it does not have a majority language that is spoken by more than 50% of the population of the country. In Mozambique the most spoken language, Emakhuwa (also spelled as Makhuwa and Macua), is spoken by 24.8% of the population. There are many different opinions on the number of languages spoken in Mozambique. In 1989, NELIMO (Núcleo de Estudos de Línguas Moçambicanas) listed 20 different languages and in 1996, Ethnologue listed 32 languages. As Gadelii notes, there is a problem in counting languages that are spoken mostly outside Mozambique as Mozambican languages and, on the other hand, in giving some dialects the status of a language (Gadelii, 2001: 7). This kind of diversity points to the difficulties and the limited numbers of readers a writer who would write in one of these languages would face. Moreover, even those writing in Portuguese still have a limited number of readers in their home country. Another aspect of the use of the Portuguese language in a wider sense is that it eases the complications that might emerge in such a diverse language

situation. This aspect can also be seen as the background for the challenges of implementing the use of national languages in education.

A study from 1999, discussed by Mozambican linguist Hildizina Norberto Dias (2002: 150-152), reveals that Portuguese is the mother tongue of 6.45% of the population and 38.95% speak Portuguese – in the urban areas this percentage is 71.57% and in the countryside 24.98%. On the other hand, Lopes (2001: 236) mentions another study from the end of the 1990s that shows that at that point, Portuguese was the mother tongue of 3% of Mozambicans, of which 90% lived in urban areas. Another element of the problematic nature of the language situation is illiteracy: in 1993 the rate of illiteracy in Mozambique was 66.5% (Enders, 1997: 110). Another source published in 2005 mentions that 72.1% of women and 40.7% of men in Mozambique are illiterate (*Atlas Universal Expresso: África*, 2005: 59). Furthermore, it is not easy to access reliable or accurate information regarding the number of speakers of Portuguese in Mozambique. Phillip Rothwell discusses a revealing article published in the newspaper *Savana* in 1995 that was written by Francisco Rodolfo. In the article Rodolfo argues that the numbers regarding illiteracy are not correct since they only refer to reading and writing in Portuguese. He states that there are many people, most of them elderly, who can read and write in some of the national languages but don't know Portuguese. For Rothwell, this also reflects the association of European languages with writing – and the African languages with 'orality' (Rodolfo, 1995, *apud* Rothwell, 2004: 44-45). Rothwell does not discuss the role of Arabic here, but it is also spoken (and written and read) in Mozambique.

Moreover, Mozambique can also be seen as an example of how the roles of languages have changed in recent decades. FRELIMO emphasised the role of Portuguese as a unifying force of the people of Mozambique, which also legitimated its use in the country. The role of other languages, then established as the national languages, was considered later. While attitudes towards them probably became more tolerant, as towards diversity in general, in practice many of the plans for their use in formal contexts have not been implemented. Hence, the problems related to the language situation remain to be resolved – perhaps also in order to avoid issues and contradictions the attempts to do so might provoke. Besides that, the diversity within Portuguese language raises questions too, since there is a Mozambican variety (or

rather varieties), but European Portuguese continues to be the most prestigious. The national languages have a significant role in terms of access to the knowledges that escape and escaped the Western hegemony (Lopes, 1998: 474). As Firmino (2002: 111, 150) argues, for many Mozambicans their African mother tongue is closely related to their ethnic identity and to the idea of a genuine Mozambican identity. The linguistic diversity and tolerance towards the national languages has not, however, deconstructed the prestige associated with Portuguese language.

Therefore, it seems that the language question is still closely related to questions of power which can be seen as one of the continuities of colonialism. Regarding the position of Portuguese and other so-called former colonial languages, Walter Mignolo points out that they gained the position as the languages of Western modernity and replaced Latin and Greek. He continues that what was conceived as science, was inseparable from the language: besides being related to the identity and culture of peoples, it is also the place where the scientific knowledge is located. Knowledge 'located' in other (non-European) languages is considered irrational – following the wider logics of modernity and its central element, colonialism. In the same process, Arabic, also spoken in Mozambique, lost its position as a language of science or knowledge. Hence, language was – and is – a significant part of epistemological discrimination (Mignolo, 2003: 632-633).

The discussion about the language of literature shows that languages have importance in terms of culture, values, epistemology and identity. Hence, even writers who don't think that using European languages is problematic tend to question the use of the European norm. This way of questioning the centrality of European languages is also visible in the work of many Lusophone writers. However, the sharp confrontation between Ngugi and Achebe and the dichotomous approach do not leave much space for discussing language from a perspective that would not eventually be used to judge the writers for their language option. Most of the discussion has had Ngugi's views as their starting points, which has led to defensive or dismissive replies from both African researchers, as well from those that can be considered as being part of the postcolonial canon, like Bill Ashcroft. Ngugi's choice and firmness when it comes to defending the use of African language was obviously an important step for starting a conversation regarding an important issue, but perhaps it is necessary to take

a step further and reread the situation through the lens of globalisation and wider social consequences. This approach should also not be in contradiction with promoting and preserving the national languages.

1.2 Deconstructing Eurocentrism: decolonial and postcolonial approaches

Both decolonial and postcolonial approaches critically discuss colonialism and its continuities. The first refers to the theories that originate from, and discuss especially Latin America, having the idea of 'coloniality of power' as one of its principal concepts. The term in this context was discussed by Anibal Quijano and has been further discussed by Walter Mignolo, Immanuel Wallerstein and Rámon Grosfoguel, for example. Quijano (2009: 74) describes it in the following words:

> A colonialidade é um dos elementos constitutivos e específicos do padrão mundial do poder capitalista. Sustenta-se na imposição de uma classificação racial/étnica da população do mundo como pedra angular do referido padrão de poder e opera em cada um dos planos, meios e dimensões, materiais e subjectivos, da existência social quotidiana e da escala societal. Origina-se e mundializa-se a partir da América.

There has also been an important dialogue with Portuguese postcolonial thought, and Boaventura de Sousa Santos' work, especially, can be discussed in this context too. The work of the theorists referenced above offers alternatives to postcolonial theory, here understood in a narrow sense. Grosfoguel (2009: 384-385), for example, has called for a subaltern critique of Eurocentric critique, which would be the basis of decolonial critique: it requires abandoning Western canons of thinking (on which for example Homi Bhabha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak rely) and paying attention to the thinking coming from the global South, including, for example, racial/ethnic and feminist subaltern perspectives.

Although these perspectives rarely focus on literature or culture alone, they can be used for discussing literature too. However, postcolonial studies are relevant too, and have a closer relationship with literary studies and discussions of culture. Postcolonial studies are often considered as initiated by Edward Said, Homi Bhabha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. However, it is difficult to draw a line between these two approaches, since they could all be seen as a part of the diverse and multidisciplinary field of postcolonial studies, which is an

established concept in comparison to decolonial approaches. "In simple terms, all postcolonial studies is saying is that there can be other points of view than the European one", Robert J.C. Young (2011: 170) argues. However, he sees Edward Said's work as the initial move towards the process of questioning the relationship between power and science, and seeking new forms of knowledges or 'counterknowledges', which had sometimes become illegitimate due to not falling into the framework of the European concept of knowledge (*Ibid*.: 169-170). While Said's *Orientalism* (1978) is essential for this debate, the initial point of these processes can, however, be seen in the earlier works too, such as Fanon's.

1.2.1 Quest for a decolonial critique

Mignolo (2007: 452) mentions Fanon, Cabral and Ngugi as those who have discussed decolonisation in a way that it reaches a state where it no longer remains within the Eurocentric (postcolonial) paradigm. Hence, it is interesting to discuss their views together with the 'decolonial' approaches. Moreover, one could search for an alternative for postcolonial literary theories by starting to analyse these theorists, who have all discussed the role of culture and literature in changing the (colonial) societies, although it should be mentioned that regardless of Young's comment above, they have also been brought up in the field of postcolonial studies. However, Candido's (2006: 27-28) remarks are relevant here too: when applying sociology to literature, it is important to keep in mind that literature is not just a reflection of society, but rather it operates in a specific language and tools – which makes it literature – and it is then returned to society.

Fanon, Ngugi and Cabral have all discussed the role of culture in the fight against colonialism (and its continuities in the case of Ngugi). However, it is also of interest to consider what leads Mignolo, for example, to consider them as representing the decolonial perspective. Firstly, all of them write principally for a local audience, as well as for a wider African audience. Although this might not sound very dramatic, it is of interest when considering that most of the earlier Western-educated academics tended to appropriate the Eurocentrism which was present in their education. Hence, they would position themselves according to the Eurocentric standards and the Western audience would be the preferred audience. Jean-Paul Sartre argues in the foreword of Fanon's *Les damnés de la terre* that it is

remarkable how Fanon uses the French language, appropriates it in order for it to answer to the new challenges, and directs his words only to those fighting against colonialism and for liberation. He continues that Fanon turns his back to Europe, without any interest in its destiny (Sartre, 2003: 11-12). Similarly, Xosé Lois García (1999: 17) points out that Cabral is not very interested in Europeans and colonialism, but tries to sketch a future in which a socialism, with influence of traditional, so-called African values, replaces Eurocentric coloniality and capitalism. Ngugi takes a step further since for him the process of liberation is essentially a matter of language.

Much of what Ngugi and Fanon see as necessary steps in the fight for liberation still remains to be taken, which also makes their work interesting and relevant in the present moment. For Fanon, decolonisation means creating new people and with them a new rhythm of life, a new language and a new humanity. The colonised become these new human beings in the process of liberating themselves from colonialism. The people that stick to the old traditions, for Fanon, are those who colonialism has stopped in time and in this way they can easily be controlled. Their social structure remains as it was as long as they don't participate in the liberation process (Fanon, 2003: 34, 99). In many ways this process also reflects the view Ngugi and Fanon both hold regarding culture: past can well be present, but only when the artist/writer takes from the past in a way that it serves the current situation, and only when it becomes a part of the wider framework of work towards liberation, does it come to have real significance. However, sometimes these views have been taken to an extreme by formally disregarding the continuities of pre-colonial cultures and traditions as signs of backwardness, as happened in Mozambique during and after the revolution in the name of creating a 'new man', which will be discussed in detail in chapter two.

Somewhere between these lines one can see the core problem of decolonisation: what should be rescued from the pre-colonial past and how much of what colonialism brought should be questioned or avoided? The question can also be considered through transculturation, which was discussed earlier and which permits bringing up the selectivity of the process and considering the 'tradition' as an active element in the cultural transformation, while the notion of 'tradition' in its diversity should also be discussed, which will be done in

the following chapters. Furthermore, as Santos (2006: 39) points out, many of the results of Western thought were used for fighting against colonial oppression.

Cabral emphasised how it is important to bear in mind that in the case of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde the fight for liberation was not aimed against the Portuguese people, most of whom were also suffering:

> [N]ão são todos os estrangeiros que nos dominam e, dentro de Portugal, não são todos os portugueses que nos dominam. Aquela força, aquela opressão que está a ser exercida sobre nós, vem da classe dirigente de Portugal, da burguesia capitalista portuguesa, que tanto explora o povo de Portugal, como explora o nosso povo. E, como sabemos bem, a classe dirigente de Portugal, a classe colonialista de Portugal, está ligada à dominação do mundo por outras classes doutros paises, formando juntas, a dominação imperialista (Andrade, 1978: 156).

Cabral underlines that the struggle in Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde is a part of a larger framework of struggle against imperialism, which also requires solidarity among those fighting against it in different locations (*Ibid*.: 161). He also points out that there are positive accretions from the culture of oppressor and other cultures that should not be underestimated or thrown away in the name of nationalism (García, 1999: 105). These aspects raise the need for a more detailed analysis of the situation, which Fanon provides.

Fanon argues that at some point of the fight it starts to become visible that the fight is not a question of Manichean settings; colonisers against the colonised or blacks against whites. The picture becomes sharper: the 'colonisers' are not all equal – some of them even support the fight for liberation – and some local 'colonised' see the liberation struggle as a threat towards the benefits they have gained from colonialism. The fight against colonialism is in this sense free of racial prejudices (Fanon, 2003: 127-128). Ngugi (2011: 2), writing at a time when Kenya was already independent, sees the issues through different oppositions: "I shall look at the African realities as they are affected by the great struggle between the two mutually opposed forces in Africa today: an imperialist tradition on one hand, and a resistance tradition on the other". He points to a class struggle, in which the opposed are "international bourgeoisie" and "patriotic students, intellectuals, soldiers and other progressive elements of the petty middle class" (*Idem*). He also argues, in the same tone of the decolonial critics, that "[i]mperialism is total: it has economic, political, military, cultural and psychological consequences for the people of the world today" (*Idem*).

A central aspect of the approaches discussed here is the emphasis on taking into account the various elements that constitute the continuities of colonialism and modernity as its wider background. Grosfoguel (2009) emphasises that it is important to see all of the sides of the colonial power matrix, from the economic aspects to cultural ones. This has also been called for in various critiques towards postcolonial theory, often focusing on the field of culture. Ania Loomba has referred to the importance of not separating economic, ideological and cultural aspects, and argues that it is "imperative for us to weave the economic realities of colonialism with all that was hitherto excluded from 'hard' social analysis – sexuality, subjectivity, psychology and language. They remind us that the 'real' relations of society do not exist in isolation from its cultural or ideological categories" (Loomba, 1998: 37).

This perspective also allows for a discussion of globalisation as an extension of modernity and colonialism. Moreover, globalisation is a topic that is present in the novels that will be discussed in chapter three. Hence, the processes that were discussed as the fight for liberation can be seen as having continuity in the anticipation and construction of an alternative, counter-hegemonic globalisation, which can only be possible if the divisions created by colonialism/coloniality are overcome, for example, through intercultural translation which Santos suggests on various occasions (Santos, 2009: 56). For Santos (*Ibid.*: 42), the alternative or counter-hegemonic, bottom-up globalisation questions the top-down, neo-liberal globalisation. The latter is a construction which, while appearing to be a universal and all-embracing term describing a global process, is actually a product of small Western enterprises, a local way of thought that 'globalised' itself and hence, echoes modernity. The alternative process is coined by Santos as 'subaltern cosmopolitanism', which "[c]onsiste num vasto conjunto de redes, iniciativas, organizações e movimentos que lutam contra a exclusão económica, social, política e cultural gerada pela mais recente incarnação do capitalismo global, conhecido como globalização neoliberal" (*Idem*). Cultural expressions, such as literature, can have a role in revealing the processes related to globalisation. Moreover, literature can be seen as a form of intercultural translation too.

Ngugi's views in this sense come close to Santos' views, although his terminology is different. For him, it is necessary that those who write in African languages don't isolate themselves, but rather join the tradition of resistance of other countries and peoples, and in this

way join "the vast democratic and socialistic forces daily inflicting mortal blows to imperialist capitalism" (Ngugi, 2011: 103). This sort of decolonisation would also necessarily take place outside the former colonies, not least in Europe. Furthermore, this could bring up the possibility of 'decolonising' the ongoing struggle, by not seeing it simply as an anticolonial struggle, which in a way is a Eurocentric view – it is not a fight for creating a system that would be the opposite of colonialism, but rather a fight for creating something new. As Ngugi (*Ibid*.: 107) puts it: "This sentiment [of changing the world] is in keeping with the vision of all 'The Wretched of the Earth' in Africa, Asia and Latin America who are struggling for a new economic, political and cultural order free from imperialism in its colonial or in its more subtle but more vicious neo-colonial form". Literature, then, can have a role in imagining what this new, emerging globalisation would look like.

In this sense, the 'South' here should not refer to the location or origin of the approaches, as Santos too points out. Santos argues – similarly to Cabral, Fanon and Ngugi – that it is more useful to focus on the difference between the oppressors and the oppressed, instead of the difference between those, who from different perspectives and locations, fight against oppression (Santos, 2006: 32). Hence, the concept of South can be used metaphorically, referring to the human suffering caused by capitalism (*Ibid*.: 25), or, as defined later in the introduction of *Epistemologias do Sul*, "como um campo de desafíos epistémicos, que procuram reparar os danos e impactos historicamente causados pelo capitalismo na sua relação colonial com o mundo" (Santos & Meneses 2009: 12). However, it is also worth pointing out that the group that appear as 'oppressed' may not coincide with possessing or representing alternative or critical perspectives. Santos & Meneses (*Ibid*.: 12-13) also argue that the metaphorical South partially corresponds to the geographical South (with exceptions such as Australia and New Zealand), but acknowledge that in the geographical North there are groups of people that have been subject to capitalist and colonial domination, and that on the other hand, there are spaces of 'North' in the geographical South.

While epistemologies of the South, as was mentioned earlier, bring attention to the epistemologies (diverse as such) that were destroyed or marginalised during colonialism, other researchers have presented similar approaches in order to overcome coloniality and continuities of Eurocentric thinking. Grosfoguel (2009: 405) suggests Walter Mignolo's

concept of border thinking for this purpose. Thinking at the borders, paying attention to or creating hybrid, transcultural knowledges, question coloniality and its far-reaching consequences: "Estas são formas de resistência que reinvestem de significado e transformam as formas dominantes de conhecimento do ponto de vista da racionalidade não-eurocêntrica das subjectividades subalternas, pensadas a partir de uma epistemologia de fronteira" (*Idem*).

In terms of literature, these knowledges could be found in African novels, for example, and other genres, too. However, reaching these knowledges poses a challenge to the readers and researchers of literature. It requires conscious avoidance of Eurocentric paradigms and a search for elements that lie outside the perspectives usually introduced. On the other hand, one can also consider that analysing African literatures (in their diversity) is learning 'at the border' when read against the European canon, trying to pay attention to those elements and aspects that may question the Eurocentric views and bring to the surface silenced voices and knowledges. Border thinking is, as Grosfoguel (2009: 408) argues, thinking that avoids both fundamentalism (totally excluding anything related to coloniality) and Eurocentrism – and furthermore, this way it is possible to "imaginar mundos alternativos para lá do eurocentrismo e do fundamentalismo". Literature can be a powerful tool for expressing this kind of imagination. It can also help with understanding the social processes and consequences of political decisions.

Mignolo has also introduced the concept of de-linking, which is closely related to both border thinking and epistemologies of the South. For Mignolo (2007: 460)

> [d]e-coloniality, then, means working toward a vision of human life that is not dependent upon or structured by the forced imposition of one ideal of society over those that differ, which is what modernity/coloniality does and, hence, where decolonization of the mind should begin.

De-linking is part of the process of decolonisation and refers to the change of the "terms and not just the content of the conversation", which has already changed various times, from Christianity to liberalism and Marxism (*Idem*). In this process, it is necessary to look at what is at the exteriority of modernity, but also to create alternatives to it:

> Such alternatives and decolonization are not mere fantasies or the imagining of another utopia. Liberation and decolonization are currently being enunciated (in writing, orally, by social movements and intellectuals, by artists and activists) from nodes in space-time (local histories) that have been marginalized by the temporal and spatial colonial differences. Although silenced in mainstream media, multiple

fractures are creating a larger spatial epistemic breaks […] in the overarching totality of Western global and universal history that from Hegel to Huntington was successful in negating subjectivities from non-Western, non-capitalist, non-Christian nations (*Ibid*.: 492-493).

As above, one can argue that literature can have a role in this process too.

The concepts of 'sociology of absences' and 'sociology of emergences' are relevant in this process as well, and can be seen together with epistemologies of the South. Santos' concepts, discussed in his article "Uma sociologia das ausências e uma sociologia das emergências", refer to two approaches aimed at questioning several aspects of Western rationality, imposed as the only legitimate one, and the one through which knowledge is validated. In this process the 'other' rationalities have been dismissed by various forms of silencing, and in this way large amounts of knowledge and social experience have become invisible. For Santos, a new cosmopolitan rationality is necessary for fighting against the waste of social richness, for which he proceeds to a criticism of Western rationality and suggests new approaches. The sociology of absences aims to liberate the experiences and knowledges from the relationship that causes their absence and to make them present, and furthermore, to act as alternatives to the hegemonic experiences and knowledges (Santos, 2006: 97). This process of silencing is also brought up in more practical terms in Chabal's *The End of Conceit* (2012), which brings up concrete examples of the consequences of the idea of one rationality in the 'West' – and instead of arguing that the 'West' has maintained this position, points out that in the current situation it is going through a phase of insecurity.

The sociology of emergences, then, refers to the future, the area of uncertainty: "Enquanto a sociologia das ausências se move no campo das experiências sociais, a sociologia das emergências move-se no campo das expectativas sociais" (Santos, 2006: 110). This approach means paying attention to new, emerging tendencies that are not in line with the hegemonic views, showing a path towards new, alternative forms of social emancipation. These expectations are not grandiose and universal like the modern expectations. Instead, they are carefully measured and considered: "Não se trata de minimizar as expectativas, trata-se antes de radicalizar as expectativas assentes em possibilidades e capacidades reais, aqui e agora" (*Ibid*.: 111).

The sociology of absences fights the Western 'monocultures' by ecologies, meaning a diversity resulting from interaction between different entities. Santos names five monocultures, such as the above-discussed monoculture of linear time, and five ecologies which question them such as the ecology of knowledge, questioning the hegemonic concept of knowledge and scientific value. The latter does not mean disregarding scientific knowledge, but points out that this is not equally distributed, and hence it often serves only some people. It also means discussing the absences by questioning the validation of knowledge exclusively through the standards established within modern science. As an example, Santos mentions modern medicine and 'traditional' medicine, but it should be possible to consider that literature and culture in general can have a role in working against wasting social experiences and knowledge, and in establishing a situation of diversity (Santos, 2006: 95-107). Chabal's argument can be seen as complementing this perspective. He argues that the notion of rationality and the secular nature of it is "a hindrance in the understanding of a range of human and social issues for which matters of belief and faith are central. By considering those as 'irrational' we constrain our ability to think" (Chabal 2012: 32). As discussed, literature – not under the same requirements of rationality as sciences – can bring attention to knowledges that are not widely known, or that have been labelled as alternatives to the 'official' knowledge. Furthermore, discussing literature also permits a consideration of the role of language in these processes.

For Santos, translation is the key to creating mutual understanding of different kinds of social experiences, and he discusses translation in various articles. For him translation between different knowledges "assume a forma de uma hermenêutica diatópica. Consiste no trabalho de interpretação entre duas ou mais culturas com vista a identificar preocupações isomórficas entre elas e as diferentes respostas que fornecem para elas" (Santos, 2006: 115). Another element of the diatopical hermeneutics is translation between different kinds of world views and conceptions of knowledge (*Ibid*.: 116). Novels can participate in cultural translation in a way defined by Santos, and this can also take place within one language. Santos shares the example of Western and African philosophy – two areas that seem to work with very different kinds of concepts and also often in different languages. Intercultural translation in this case would mean searching for questions that both philosophies share and topics that are close to each other (Santos, 2009: 53). Novels can share alternative world views and concepts by

expressing them in a way that makes them understandable to a foreign reader. Todorov (2007: 27) brings up a similar result in other words and directly in the context of literature and reading, referring to Richard Rorty's view on reading as meeting new people:

> It consists […] of the inclusion in our consciousness of new ways of being alongside the ones we already had. Meeting new acquaintances does not change the content of our mind; instead the container itself is transformed, the apparatus of mental perception rather than the things perceived. What novels give us is not new information but a new capacity for compassion with beings different from ourselves; in this sense, novels are more part of the moral sphere than of science.

1.2.2 Postcolonial theories

While the views above are central for the literary analyses that follow, there are also many aspects of Mozambican literature that can be approached through concepts that have been discussed within postcolonial studies. For example, Homi Bhabha's *The Location of Culture* (1994), which concerns culture more directly than the decolonial approaches previously discussed, brings interesting perspectives to the discussion. Since it was written after the first phases of the postcolonial theories, it is also (at times implicitly) a response to the criticism the field has received. His views also permit a consideration of the specific characteristics of culture (or literature more specifically), whereas the above perspectives applied to literature may lead to a certain instrumentalisation of it. Bhabha (1994: 19-20) discusses this issue by giving an example of a professor of film, who says that "'We are not artists, we are political activists'":

> By obscuring the power of his own practice in the rhetoric of militancy, he fails to draw attention to the specific value of a politics of cultural production; because it makes the surfaces of cinematic signification the grounds of political intervention, it gives depth to the language of social criticism and extends the domain of 'politics' in a direction that will not be entirely dominated by the forces of economic or social control. Forms of popular rebellion and mobilization are often most subversive and transgressive when they are created through oppositional cultural practices.

Bhabha, in what is a part of the debate regarding theory and the Eurocentrism of postcolonial theory, argues that while polarities may be essential in the field of politics, they may not be appropriate in theoretical debates.

In order to avoid these issues, Bhabha (1994: 37) points to ambivalence and hybridity, which can be approached through the Third Space, a reference to a space in which

or by which, the idea of culture having fixity becomes questioned, and the 'fixed' elements can be used in different contexts or understood differently, appropriated and translated. This is also a subversive process in the context of colonialism, for example, since the 'signs' that seemed to have a fixed meaning can gain new and changed meanings. It also shows, in the context of colonialism, how the coloniser and the colonised influence and resemble each other, which causes colonial ambivalence. In this ambivalence is a seed for changing the power relations – it questions the assumed totality of the power of the coloniser (Bhabha 1994). While Bhabha's views are related to theoretical questions, the ideas of a Third Space and hybridity can be (and have been) appropriated to discussing literature too. Mozambican literature, as an example, can be seen as a hybrid form on the level of genre, but more importantly, it can be seen as a form of questioning the polarities or dichotomous views in many senses. This view can also be extended to language. Moreover, hybridity in many senses is present in the themes of the novels too, and they do question dichotomous views.

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's views seem relevant when it comes to literature too. Spivak's text *Can the Subaltern Speak?* (1994) discusses the situation of the subaltern (women) living outside the Western world. In this text, she discusses the impossibility of the subalternised people, especially women, to have their voice heard. They could (or can) not speak from any acknowledged or legitimate position in any acknowledged 'language' in its various meanings – even if they spoke, they would not be heard. This barrier is cultural and political and operates on the level of nations, but also globally. Spivak sees that the muted subalternity of non-Western women cannot be tackled by Western feminism (or Western intellectuals) – it can even be seen as part of constructing the impossibility of the non-Western oppressed women to speak (Spivak, 1994: 90-91). The idea of bringing up the voice of those that are normally not heard is present in much literature, although it raises another problem, that of representing the subaltern, which is not the same as someone speaking for themselves in their own language (here to be understood principally figuratively) and from their own position. However, literature can be seen as making readers at least aware of the multiplicity of voices through fictional characters. Moreover, this is a process that can also be seen in terms of the above-discussed sociology of absences.

Both Bhabha and Spivak have received plenty of criticism. They have also been questioned for their complex language and the inaccessibility caused by it. Benita Parry criticises Bhabha and Spivak in her article *Problems in Current Theories of Colonial Discourse* (1987). Parry (1995: 36) considers that their deconstructive methods (that differ from each other) lead to "constrain[ing] the development of an anti-imperialist critique". She accuses Bhabha of underestimating the consequences of colonialism: "A narrative which delivers the colonized from its discursive status as the illegitimate and refractory foil to Europe, into a position of 'hybridity' from which it is able to circumvent, challenge and refuse colonial authority, has no place for totalizing notion of epistemic violence" (*Ibid*.: 42). Although Spivak and Bhabha have many differences, in Parry's view both underestimate the conscious work done against the coloniser by the colonised, and they do not acknowledge the fights between the colonised and the coloniser. Parry sees that "[t]he significant differences in the critical practices of Spivak and Bhabha are submerged in a shared programme marked by the exorbitation of discourse and a related incuriosity about the enabling socioeconomical and political institutions and other forms of social praxis" (*Ibid*.: 43). Parry (*Idem*) suggests looking beyond the existing power relations and reminds the readers of Fanon

> At a time when dialectical thinking is not the rage among the colonial discourse theorists, it is instructive to recall how Fanon's dialogical interrogation of European power and native insurrection reconstructs a process of cultural resistance and cultural disruption, participates in writing a text that can answer the colonialism back, and anticipates another condition beyond imperialism [...].

Contextualising their work is, however, important: both have their background in poststructuralism and literary studies. Postcolonial studies is a multidisciplinary field, and as such some of the approaches may not be valid or may be lacking in some areas – but on the other hand, they do not claim to give a complex and thorough answer to the whole set of questions related to the field of postcolonial studies. Moreover, although Fanon's views are relevant – Bhabha discusses them too and has written a foreword to a recent edition of *The Wretched of the Earth* – and Parry's criticism brings up important questions, it could be said, on the other hand, that considering Bhabha's or Spivak's work is not in contradiction with the inclusion of other approaches, such as the decolonial views discussed above. Rather, it is not necessary to exclude them in order to be able to discuss colonialism and its diverse consequences. Instead, especially Bhabha's approaches can be seen as offering perspectives to

the more subtle consequences of colonialism, which does not necessarily need to serve for silencing the unequal power relationships, human suffering or epistemological violence related to colonialism and its continuities. Instead, these aspects can also be discussed in literary analysis. In this context, it may also be appropriate to quote Bhabha (1994: 20), who asks:

> Are the interests of 'Western' theory necessarily collusive with the hegemonic role of the West as a power bloc? Is the language of theory merely another power ploy of the culturally privileged Western elite to produce a discourse of the Other that reinforces its own power-knowledge equation?

The criticism directed at Spivak and Bhabha, who together with Said can be seen as the writers of the fundamental texts on postcolonial studies, reflects the wider issues of the field in its diversity. As mentioned, Grosfoguel raises the question of Eurocentrism within postcolonial critique. The theory is produced almost exclusively in the North, while the subjects might be in the South, and it still follows the Eurocentric thinking; he calls it Eurocentric critique of Eurocentrism (Grosfoguel, 2009: 381). Anne McClintock (1992: 85) argues that the term as such emphasises the role of colonialism to the former colonies' phases:

> Metaphorically, the term 'post-colonialism' marks history as a series of stages along an epochal road from 'the pre-colonial,' to 'the colonial,' to 'the post-colonial' – an unbidden, if disavowed, commitment to linear time and the idea of 'development.' If a theoretical tendency to envisage 'Third World' literature as progressing from 'protest literature,' to 'resistance literature,' to 'national literature' has been criticized as rehearsing the Enlightenment trope of sequential, linear progress, the term 'post-colonialism' is questionable for the same reason. Metaphorically poised on the border between old and new, end and beginning, the term heralds the end of a world era, but within the same trope of linear progress that animated that era.

McClintock's text shows how postcolonial theory can be seen as another way of constructing binaries, and whereas previously the power questions were brought up through the binary coloniser-colonised, now it is constructed around a "binary axis of time" (*Idem*). Furthermore, the time in this case is European, which in McClintock's view makes colonialism reappear in the idea of postcolonial theory, at a moment when it should have been disappearing. For her, this is also an approach that silences the continuities of colonialism (*Ibid*.: 86, 89).

This approach, that ends up emphasising colonialism, is visible too when discussing postcolonial literature. The title of one of the most influential books in this area is revealing: *The Empire Writes Back*, quoting Salman Rushdie. The writers argue that postcolonial literature includes "all the culture affected by the imperial process from the moment of

colonization to the present day" (Ashcroft *et al*., 1989: 2). McClintock (1992: 87) points to the problem with this approach:

> Moreover, the authors [of *The Empire Writes Back*] decided, idiosyncratically to say the least, that the term 'post-colonialism' should not be understood as everything that has happened since European colonialism, but rather everything that has happened from the very beginning of colonialism, which means turning back the clocks and unrolling the maps of 'post-colonialism' to 1492, and earlier. Whereupon, at a stroke, Henry James and Charles Brockden Brown, to name only two on their list, are awakened from their tete-a-tete with time, and ushered into 'the post-colonial scene' alongside more regular members like Ngugi Wa Thiong'o and Salman Rushdie.

The quote shows how absences and silences are also created through an approach that emphasises the role of imperialism to literatures of areas that were colonised. It also reflects the issues regarding the timeline, which is seen exclusively through colonialism and ignores all of the other 'phases' that could be part of the history, even literary history, of these countries. On the other hand, Elleke Boehmer (1995: 3) describes postcolonial literature in a more comprehensive way, which is not as problematic as the above definition: for her, postcolonial literature is that which takes a stand against colonialism and discusses its consequences. However, as a result, those aspects of this literature that discuss the experience of colonialism or 'write back to the centre', may become emphasised at the cost of ignoring other aspects. Ultimately, the term postcolonial literature can be seen as pointing to continuity within colonial literature, which raises many difficult questions.

Moreover, as Leela Gandhi (1998: xi-x) points out, many of the theories still have Western views as their starting point:

> [W]hat postcolonialism fails to recognise is what counts as "marginal" in relation to the West has often been central and foundational in the non-West. […] Despite its good intentions, then, postcolonialism continues to render non-Western knowledge and culture as "other" in relation to the normative 'self' of Western epistemology and rationality.

This perspective, although not in the context of postcolonial texts, is also raised by Bhabha (1994: 31) who warns that

> the site of cultural difference can become the mere phantom of a dire disciplinary struggle in which it has no space or power. Montesquieu's Turkish Despot, Barthes's Japan, Kristeva's China [...] are part of this strategy of containment where the Other text is forever the exegetical horizon of difference, never the active agent of articulation.

It could be said that the above-discussed 'decolonial' views can be seen as a move against these kinds of approaches. Whether it is appropriate to consider these views a part of postcolonial theory can be questioned (and treating them separately in this work is related to this question). Is it just another Eurocentric move to gather all of theory produced in the 'South' under this concept?

Jean-François Bayart has brought up similar questions concerning the relevance of postcolonial studies, asking whether all discussions regarding colonialism and its continuities should take place in this field. He also argues that postcolonial studies have created misconceptions regarding France and its assumed reluctance to consider its past, and created an essentialised view regarding the country, without paying attention to its heterogeneity (Bayart, 2011: 58, 59, 65). Bayart sees that much of the postcolonial studies rely on French theory and on the writers (Fanon, Césaire, Senghor) who discussed the colonial question in French, and therefore ends up arguing that "postcolonial studies is largely unnecessary. Most of the issues it has explored had been previously or were simultaneously being investigated by other theories, which often managed to avoid the pitfalls into which postcolonial studies fell" (*Ibid.*: 65). Bayart's polemic view has been strongly criticised by Robert J.C. Young, for example. He calls Bayart's view Francocentric, and argues that it ignores how the theories of the intellectuals Bayart mentions have been in margins, while according to Young, they have gained new interest precisely because of postcolonial studies. Moreover, it ignores the tradition of anticolonial thought emerging from other contexts too (Young, 2011: 172-173).

While Bayart's view of postcolonial studies is both problematic and very generalised and disregards the field's diversity, as Young (2011: 170) points out, it also reveals the basis for the reluctance towards the field, not least related to its proximity to Anglophone countries and the way postcolonial studies appropriates all discussions regarding colonialism and its continuities as part of the field. As Bayart's views reveal, it is accurate to point out that in the Francophone context language is, in this sense, also at the centre of the discussion, and for Jean-Marc Moura postcolonial studies have been able to question the Eurocentric views regarding language in France too. Moura argues that it is necessary to discuss postcolonial theory, since the consequences of colonialism are so vast and multidimensional. In France, there is also a strong history of Francophone studies (in Portugal, the equivalent would be

Portuguese studies) under which this discussion has been brought up, so discussing postcolonial theory under postcolonial studies may seem unnecessary. Moura argues that postcolonial studies can bring fresh ideas to the 'traditional' literary studies, even when not discussing postcolonial literatures. From the encounter of Anglophone and Francophone traditions of theory can emerge such aspects as a better understanding of questions of identity and locations of enunciation, the political dimensions of the texts – and lastly, interpretations of the texts in a global context (Moura, 2007: 102, 114-117).

Similar questions have been raised in the Lusophone context. However, while many of the Anglophone critics often refer to France and Francophone countries, the dialogue with Portugal and Lusophone countries is more superficial – or non-existent. Paulo de Medeiros (2007: 1) points to this issue and brings up more general criticism directed at the theory in the introduction to *Postcolonial Theory and Lusophone Literatures:*

> The terms "postcolonial theory" and "Lusophone" are themselves problematic. Without going into any detailed problematization here, let it suffice to state that for all its potential to mobilize and redirect critical attention, postcolonial theory for too long also remained not only clearly Anglophone, based on the sometimes very different historical and social specificities of different colonialisms, but also tended unwittingly to duplicate, even if on reverse, some of the strategies of domination it set out to resist.

However, some of the approaches have been discussed and appropriated to the Portuguese context too, and new aspects and questions have been brought to the field. Due to the differences between the Portuguese and English situations, and furthermore, due to the later appearance of the so-called postcolonial studies in the Portuguese context, Portuguese postcolonial studies are in an interesting situation. This can be seen as an approach that, instead of disregarding postcolonial studies like Bayart's, due to their problematic nature, acknowledges the issues and aims to broaden the discussion and make use of the work already done in the area. On the other hand, the tendency to underline the difference in the Portuguese language context has been criticised by Luís Madureira (2008), whose article's title is revealing: "Is the Difference in Portuguese colonialism the Difference in Portuguese Colonialism?".

There is also a possibility to avoid and critically discuss the most problematic issues that have been brought up in the Anglophone context. The Portuguese situation could even

open up possibilities for new kinds of postcolonial relationships, as Santos (2002: 35) argues in the article "Between Prospero and Caliban":

> Unlike the English and French Prosperos in their respective commonwealths, the Portuguese Prospero has not been able to impose his hegemony. Not only has he contended for hegemony with his former colony – Brazil; he has also been unable to prevent some of the new countries from integrating "rival" language communities, as is the case of Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau. Since the hegemony of the latter communities has amounted to the legitimation of neocolonialism, the weakness of the Portuguese Prospero opens enormous potentialities for democratic and truly postcolonial relationships. Whether the former colonizer will be able to transform such into strength, and whether the former colonized are interested in that at all, is, however, an open question.

These new postcolonial approaches would also be counter-hegemonic in relation to the Anglophone approaches. On the other hand, it is also necessary to take a cautious approach so as not to repeat the Lusotropicalist discourse of sympathetic Portuguese colonialism – when arguing that the 'Portuguese Prospero' was weak, it is possible to interpret it in a way that underestimates the consequences of it, or even silences the experiences of the colonised. Moreover, the discussion regarding Portuguese colonialism is often limited to its later phases, ignoring the earlier phases in which the ambiguity and the shifts in colonial policies become more visible. As Madureira (2008: 139) asks, pointing out that Santos' text has had a significant role in establishing the discussion regarding postcolonial relations in Portugal, it is important to ask who exactly was this Calibanized Prospero; was it the same throughout the whole of Portuguese presence in the lands it conquered and can the relations be discussed within these terms in all the colonies? Interestingly, this earlier presence of the Portuguese has been brought up in Mozambican literature.

As Santos argues (2002: 10), in the case of Portugal the role of the coloniser was not clear since the country itself was at times nearly a colony of Great Britain and colonialism (or rather the Portuguese presence) started earlier and lasted longer than in the other contexts. Santos (*Idem*) suggests that for the nature and length of Portuguese colonialism, there are differences in relating to the past in comparison to the other colonial powers:

> While modern capitalist power has always been colonial, in Portugal and its colonies it was always more colonial than capitalist. This condition, far from coming to an end with the end of colonialism, is still being reproduced. In other words, perhaps more so than as regards any other European colonialism, the end of Portuguese colonialism did not determine the end of the colonialism of power, either in the colonies or in the former colonial power.

The hegemonic position of Anglophone studies and the fact that not all of its aspects are relevant in the discussion of the Lusophone context have led Lusophone studies to look for other contexts too. One form that this appears in is the proximity to Latin American thought, which was mentioned above. Margarida Calafate Ribeiro considers that it was through the Latin American discussion that many problems that are central to the Portuguese context were brought up. As Ribeiro argues, it also reflects the way Portugal sees its position with regard to 'central' Europe. This way, the Portuguese discussion regarding its colonialism has as one starting point its own position at the margins, the frontier or as a semiperipheral state, as Santos defines it (Ribeiro, M., 2009: 63-64).

The search for alternative approaches than those provided by postcolonial theory has tended to underline the specificity of Portuguese colonialism. Here, it is then natural that colonialism is discussed according to the different colonisers and their languages, while this approach can be questioned since it may not be fruitful to underline the colonial history and the shared language in terms of analysis. It may be seen as disregarding the diversity of the countries which share a coloniser (in different eras), and on the other hand, the similarities between all the colonial powers and ex-colonies. While any discussion should take history and context into account, Madureira (2008: 140) considers that the emphasis on the differences seems to silence some important aspects from the discussion. He points out that the postcolonial theory has made an effort to shift the perspective towards those who fought colonialism or suffer its consequences – and that from this perspective, the difference between the colonisers may not be of such relevance. For him, there is a risk in underlining the difference since it may take attention away from what Portuguese colonialism shares with the other colonisers, and which is the "main goal" of postcolonial theory as in reconsidering "the history of slavery, racism and colonisation from the standpoint of those who endured its effects" (*Ibid*.: 140-141). Ana Paula Ferreira, in an article that was published in the above mentioned book edited by Medeiros, also criticises Santos' article. She considers that the whole notion of "postcolonialism in the time-space of official Portuguese language" is questionable, not least due to the position of Portuguese – or lack of it – in, for example, the former colonies in Asia. She further points out that it seems that the reflection of postcolonial relations is mainly focused on Africa. Moreover, she points out that the approach outlined in

Santos' text has similarities with Lusotropicalist theory; it doesn't for example discuss racism (Ferreira: 28-30). Moreover, as Hilary Owen (2007: 29) remarks, these postcolonial approaches (in her text represented besides Sousa Santos, by Miguel Vale de Almeida) have not yet considered gender and nationhood from a feminist perspective in depth.

Santos' or Paulo de Medeiros' critical views regarding postcolonial theory in its assumed Anglophone version should not exclude the possibility of a dialogue between postcolonial studies from different language contexts. However, it could be argued that in Portugal and in the context of literature, the dialogue has principally remained in the discussions of the earlier, founding texts of postcolonial theory – for example, the works of Homi Bhabha, Edward Said and Gayatri Spivak. In the area of Mozambican literature, Ana Mafalda Leite and Maria Benedita Basto have brought up these theories. However, in Basto's as in Leite's work, little attention is paid to the work discussing African literatures especially, and to the work of African theorists too (although again one could ask whether it is appropriate to label all of this work under the category of postcolonial theory). Mendonça (2011) too discusses the question of relevance of postcolonial studies in the Mozambican context. Madureira (2008: 137) trefers that the work of figures such as Cabral, Machel, Mondlane and Neto are often left out. In the Lusophone context the discussion has also gained most attention in Portugal, similarly to the Anglophone context, whereas the critique has not gained too much attention in the former colonies in Africa (however, it is important to point out that much of the theory comes from India), which certainly does not mean that colonialism is not being discussed in the former colonies, but rather can reflect the perspective of postcolonial studies and its lack of relevance in them.

It is significant that in the Mozambican context and in texts produced in it the term is hardly ever found. It is not applied to Mozambican literature either – rather than calling it postcolonial, the term 'post-independent literature' is used, which in fact could cover most written Mozambican literature. One reason is probably that postcolonial theory has not gained much attention or discussion in the Portuguese language context. It can also be seen as reflecting the necessity to discuss Mozambican literature from a national or global perspective, without restricting or marginalising the discussion through using postcolonial theory. When it comes to literature, postcolonial theory may appear as a Western view on African literatures,

all of them seen as representing similar issues and societies. In this way the readings can end up simplifying the content, or the readings can become pre-oriented by the postcolonial perspective, which leads the reader-researcher to ignore other aspects. On the other hand, it should be possible to marginalise the postcolonial theory so that it would not lead the reading, but rather enrich it when relevant.

By considering Couto as a postmodernist, Rothwell introduces new aspects of his work and manages to avoid the sometimes very limited view of Couto simply as an innovator of Portuguese language. Although one could argue that it is not necessary to label Couto as a postmodern writer in order to grasp new aspects of his work – especially because postmodernism is still mainly focused on deconstructing Eurocentrism from within, and can be seen as an essentially Western process – Rothwell also gives Couto a way out of being marginalised as a postcolonial writer. Postcolonial readings often tend to treat writers as merely discussing their own countries' situations or continuities of colonialism from a very narrow perspective. Rothwell's approach takes Mia Couto as writer as any other and reads his work from a more universal perspective, this way giving Couto's work a more global significance. Here it becomes clear that even when discussing their own local situations, the writers' work can have global significance too – especially if the literature they write is available for a wide audience.

Rothwell (2004) gives various examples of how Couto reworks some concepts that appear(ed) fixed in Western thinking, such as gender, age and the concept of truth. To this list, new ways to question the idea of 'round' characters in literature can be added by introducing unstable aspects to them: their age may be changing or they might be dead, too. This, then, can be seen as questioning the epistemologies of the 'North' and introducing new perspectives that to some extent originate from the Mozambican traditions – making it different from the way other postmodern writers may approach these issues. It brings literature close to the questions of epistemologies of the South as a possible source for 'new' approaches and values that can question the 'Western' truths. On the other hand, Couto is still a writer who is concerned with his own society and country, but in a way that links Mozambique's issues to global issues, such as neoliberalism and the problematic role of institutions like the United Nations and NGOs in relation to the countries they 'help'. This, then, brings the questions of literature and

decolonisation closer to social intervention, and raises the question of the influence that literature can have in society. Literature as such can be a place in which future utopias are brought up and discussed, and in this way they also make the readers considering alternative futures. As Rothwell argues, Couto seems to be pointing to the need for dreaming – dreaming is a tool that makes future changes possible (Rothwell, 2004: 19). In this case, what is seen as a positive future needs to be based on a non-Eurocentric reading of the past and the present, which is essential in the process of 'decolonising the mind'.

1.3 Decolonising reading

It was suggested above that literature has anticipated liberation movements in Africa, and that it can have a role in building counter-hegemonic globalisation, as well as rescuing and promoting elements that were, or are being disregarded due to colonialism/modernity and their continuities. Of course, literature alone would not be able to solve issues of this proportion but it can support the search for new perspectives. In this process, the readers have a role too, and much depends on their responsiveness. It would be interesting to gather information on the readers' views and to discuss the horizons of expectations with regard to African literatures too. It can be argued that many readers 'travel' through their reading, as was referred to earlier. Readers can gain experiences that they otherwise would not have – even if they visit the place the novels tell of. Much of the role that books can have depends on how readers relate to them. As Candido (2006: 46) points out, what is considered as a spontaneous reaction of the readers is often closely related to established patterns and, ultimately, related to values of which literary taste and even fashion can be seen as constituents of. The expectations – diverse as such and probably related to the cultural background of the readers – are also related to the marketing of literature.

Some authors have pointed to certain preconceived approaches towards African literature. One example of a problematic reading can be found in the way the African authors are questioned on authenticity. Adichie (2009) mentions a professor who had criticised her novel:

> Now, I was quite willing to contend that there were a number of things wrong with the novel, that it had failed in a number of places. But I had not quite imagined that it had failed at achieving something called African authenticity. In fact I did not know what African authenticity was. The professor told me that my characters were too much like him, an educated and middle-class man. My characters drove cars. They were not starving. Therefore they were not authentically African.

Adichie reads the reaction of the professor as being influenced by the 'single story' on Africa. This single story, familiar from European literature but also from the media, does not give space to an urban, modern Africa that struggles with similar issues to many Western cities and their inhabitants.

Couto too refers to the question of authenticity, which is represented by the rural, 'traditional' Africa. He discusses this issue in his text "Que África escreve o escritor africano?". Both the writers and readers that search for 'original Africanness' tend to look for it in rural Africa.

> Defensores da pureza africana multiplicam esforços para encontrar essa essência. Alguns vão garimpando no passado. Outros tentam localizar o autenticamente africano na tradição rural. Como se a modernidade que os africanos estão inventando nas zonas urbanas não fosse ela própria igualmente africana. [...] A oposição entre tradicional – visto como o lado puro e não contaminado da cultura africana – e o moderno é uma falsa contradição. Porque o imaginário rural é também produto de trocas entre mundos culturais diferentes (Couto, 2005: 60-61).

Couto points out that this authenticity or purity does not exist – African literature as any other literature is a hybrid, a product of different influences (*Idem*). However, African literature is read from a different perspective than for example European literature:

> Pense-se, por exemplo, uma produção cultural dos africanos. Em lugar de valorizar a diversidade dessa produção e olhar o livro como produto cultural substitui-se a apreciação literária por uma visão mais ou menos etnográfica. A pergunta é – «quanto este autor é autenticamente africano»? [...]
> Exige-se a um autor africano aquilo que não se exige a um autor europeu ou americano. Exigem-se provas de autenticidade. Pergunta-se até que ponto ele é etnicamente genuíno. Ninguém questiona quanto José Saramago representa a raiz cultural lusitana (*Ibid*.: 62).

Hence, there is a certain reluctance to admit that African authors have the same kind of global value that authors like Saramago can have – or that they do not need to write to satisfy the readers' hunger for the exotic.

One of the above-mentioned of Santos' five monocultures that seems relevant in this context is that of logic of the dominant scale. This appears in the ideas of universal and global, whereas anything that is not part of this is considered as local or particular. This is the case for

African literatures, which is already reflected in the concept. While the particularity or local tone of Western literature is not discussed, African literatures are often labelled as representing the continent (Santos, 2006: 96-97). It could be said that Western literature, due to different horizons of expectation, is seen in terms of universal themes (those assumed to be shared by all human beings) even when they are discussing specific contexts, whereas the 'other' literatures are seen in terms of their local specificities, and the universal themes are disregarded or paid less attention to. As Santos (*Ibid.*: 97) argues: "As entidades ou realidades definidas como particulares ou locais estão aprisionadas em escalas que as incapacitam de serem alternativas credíveis ao que existe de modo universal ou global". In terms of African novels this is the same, whereas the process of considering them through sociology of absences and a wider decolonisation can bring up new aspects. However, it should be pointed out that in literary criticism these views are currently rare, and both Couto's and Adichie's popularity seems to indicate that the readers appreciate their approach. Both have also won literary prizes, reflecting their established position.

In the specific case of African literatures much of the discussion is to some extent related to the question of how to speak about Africa. This is visible in the work of Chinweizu, Jemie & Madubuike, who go through the Eurocentric criticism. In their discussion the idea of 'development' becomes visible too: Africa is considered as being in a process of development – and the point of comparison is Europe (or Western countries). Ultimately, as Achille Mbembe (2001: 1) argues, there is a long tradition of troublesome discourse regarding the continent:

> First, the African human experience constantly appears in the discourse of our times as an experience that can only be understood through a negative interpretation. Africa is never seen as possessing things and attributes properly part of "human nature." Or, when it is, its things and attributes are generally of lesser value, little importance, and poor quality.

For Mbembe, this is present in the current discourse too. Ultimately, for him too, this is related to the "Western philosophical and political tradition" (*Ibid.*: 2). It is in regards to Africa, which has had a significant role as the point of comparison to what Europe is, that "the notion of 'absolute otherness' has been taken farthest" (*Idem*):

> In the very principle of its constitution, in its language, and in its finalities, narrative about Africa is always pretext for a comment about something else, some other

place, some other people. More precisely, Africa is the mediation that enables the West to accede to its own subconscious and give a public account of its subjectivity (*Ibid*.: 3).

This approach is visible especially in the earlier literary analysis and criticism discussing African literatures – and literature written about Africa. It can be argued, however, that in many cases African literature is read as representing the continent – an Africanness – but in a more subtle way. This can be seen, for example, in the way oral tradition is emphasised in the analysis to the cost of other elements, which are ignored. However, literature also has an important role to play in questioning stereotypes and widening the discussion, and this is probably one of the reasons readers are interested in African literatures. As was mentioned earlier, research of African literatures or texts such as Jameson's above-discussed article, but also Ngugi's, have a significant role in setting the expectations of the readers and creating stereotypical approaches.

It is also possible to consider the act of reading from an alternative perspective. Although Ngugi does not bring it up explicitly, his approach questions the way reading (and writing too) are seen as individualist acts, and it is also implicitly considered that the 'influence' of reading is limited to the individual reader. However, literature can be seen as interaction between people (not only the author and the reader) too. Although the initial form may change throughout the time and locations when and where the book is read and discussed, it can still have power, and it can also travel from people to people in different forms. It is not necessary to limit a book's influence only to those who read it, but also to those who discuss it (in writing too), talk about it with those that haven't read it, and so on. Literature as this kind of storytelling can be seen as having wider influence, not limited to the idea of reading as an individualist act. This way also the social aspects can be considered from a new perspective, through the ideas and new perspectives that literature can offer to its readers. As Candido (2006: 84) argues:

> A literatura é pois um sistema vivo de obras, agindo umas sobre as outras e sobre os leitores; e só vive na medida em que estes a vivem, decifrando-a, aceitando-a, deformando-a. A obra não é produto fixo, unívoco ante qualquer público; nem este é passivo, homogêneo, registrando uniformemente o seu efeito. São dois termos que atuam um sobre o outro, e aos quais se junta o autor, termo inicial desse processo de circulação literária, para configurar a realidade da literatura atuando no tempo.

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Against the background of these discussions, Adichie's (2009) comment gains a broader sense:

> Now, I loved those American and British books I read. They stirred my imagination. They opened up new worlds for me. But the unintended consequence was that I did not know that people like me could exist in literature. So what the discovery of African writers did for me was this: It saved me from having a single story of what books are.

2 CONTEXTUALISING MOZAMBICAN LITERATURE

> Unfortunately I am well aware that there were Mozambicans who internalised
> Portuguese values – values the colonial regime used to demean and oppress us. But
> that kind of behavior wasn't the automatic result of assimilation.
>
> Raúl Honwana in Allen Isaacman, *The Life History of Raúl Honwana – An Inside
> View of Mozambique from Colonialism to Independence, 1905-1975*

Mozambican literature will be discussed here from different political contexts, paying attention to three principal topics: colonialism and assimilation; the fight for independence and the early years of independence, and the current phase. Some literary texts are also discussed as examples. I have chosen not to present a thorough literary history of the country since it has been discussed in depth by various scholars, both Mozambican and non-Mozambican. Rather, a few principal aspects and phases are brought up in order to establish a background for reading Mozambican literature. These aspects and phases do not present a linear history, although organised within time, but can deepen the understanding of some elements that are especially relevant when it comes to the wider themes of the thesis, and permit a discussion of issues not strictly related to literature. As Basto (2008: 105-106) points out, Mozambican literary history itself is not a linear process constituted of uniform shifts in paradigm. Some of these aspects are shared with other (Lusophone) African countries, allowing a consideration of a wider perspective and not limiting the contextualisation to only serving the idea of national literatures. The chapter is divided into four subchapters that follow the above-mentioned phases. Besides the first, they are divided into further subchapters. The second one discusses assimilation and the steps towards questioning colonialism. The third discusses the era of revolution and the phase following it. The last subchapter brings up *lusofonia*, the current literary field in Mozambique and introduces a number of current writers. Before proceeding to the topic of assimilation, some central aspects of earlier research of Mozambican literature will be considered.

2.1 Research on Mozambican literatures: central questions and approaches

The history and different phases of Mozambican literature have been thoroughly analysed and covered by various researchers, and there has been much literary analysis of the work of authors. Mozambican poetry has been discussed in detail by scholars such as Ana Mafalda Leite on José Craveirinha, Fátima Mendonça on Rui de Noronha and Francisco Noa on Rui Knopfli. Many studies and analyses of Mia Couto's novels have been undertaken, such as the earlier discussed work by Phillip Rothwell. Some of these focus especially on language, such as Fernanda Cavacas' and Celina Martins' work. Paulina Chiziane's novels have been discussed in many articles and chapters of books too, and the same applies to João Paulo Borges Coelho. Furthermore, Ana Mafalda Leite has discussed Mozambican oral tradition and literature in *Oralidades & escritas nas literaturas africanas* (1998), although not focusing exclusively on Mozambican literature. Leite has also discussed postcolonial theory in the context of African (Lusophone) literature in *Literaturas africanas e formulações pós-coloniais* (2003). Maria Benedita Basto's *A guerra das escritas – literatura, nação e teoria pós-colonial em Moçambique* (2006), which has already been referred to, discusses postcolonial theory in the Mozambican context and focuses on combat poetry and Noémia de Sousa's and José Craveirinha's work. Basto also discusses the theme of nation and this same theme is brought up by Patrick Chabal in a collection of interviews with Mozambican writers, *Vozes moçambicanas – literatura e nacionalidade* (1994), and by Fátima Mendonça, for example, in her article, "O Conceito de Nação em José Craveirinha, Rui Knopfli e Sérgio Vieira" (2002).

The literary history of Mozambique has been covered extensively by Russell Hamilton and Chabal, and before them by Manuel Ferreira and Alfredo Margarido, among others. Within Mozambique the pioneering researcher has been Fátima Mendonça. One of the first issues regarding Mozambican literature is simple: what can be considered as Mozambican literature? While Mozambique appears earlier in literature and there are writers who have worked in the country, most researchers consider that the literature one can denote as Mozambican appears together with the criticism pointed to colonialism and racial inequality. In other words, it is commonly considered that colonial literature regarding Mozambique, thoroughly covered in Francisco Noa's work *Império, Mito e Miopia − Moçambique como*

invenção literária (2002), is not part of the so-called canon of Mozambican literature. Although this literature is nowadays not very known, especially the colonial novel, such as the works of Eduardo Paixão, circulated widely among the literate 10% of the population in the ex-colony (Noa, 2002: 19-20). For Noa (*Ibid.*: 21-22), colonial literature is

> [...] toda a escrita que, produzida em situação de colonização, traduz a sobreposição de uma cultura e de uma civilização manifesta no relevo dado à representação das vozes, das visões e das personagens identificadas com um imaginário determinado. Isto é, trata-se de um sistema representacional hierarquizador caracterizado, de modo mais ou menos explícito, pelo predomínio, num espaço alienígena, de uma ordem ética, estética, ideológica e civilizacional, neste caso, vincadamente eurocêntrica.

Whereas most of this literature supported colonialism, most visibly in Mozambique by writers such as Rodrigues Júnior, the field was not as uniform as it might appear, as Noa's research reveals. An example of this is Guilherme de Melo's novel *As Raízes do Ódio* (1963), which explores social inequality and racism in colonial Maputo through the voices of two teenage boys, resulting in the censorship of the first edition of the novel (Noa, 2002: 266). It is also relevant in terms of the topic of this thesis, that, as Mendonça (2011: 25) remarks, there wasn't as much colonial literature produced in Portugal as in England or in France.

For these reasons, most researchers argue that the pioneer of Mozambican literature is João Dias, who wrote his *Godido e outros contos* (published posthumously in 1951) while studying in Coimbra, and followed then by Honwana's *Nós Matámos o Cão Tinhoso* (1964). Ferreira (1977: 99), for example, considers that Dias, "[t]raz, assim, para a ficção, e pela primeira vez, o homem moçambicano, o negro moçambicano, enquadrado num sistema colonialista". It is widely accepted that Orlando Mendes's *Portagem* (1966) is the first Mozambican novel. However, Pires Laranjeira considers that actually Guilherme de Melo's *As Raízes do Ódio* is the first Mozambican novel, but agrees that Mendes is the first one to write a novel that introduces a critical perspective regarding social relations in Mozambique (Laranjeira, 1995: 293). Moreover, Leite discusses the work of José Pedro da Silva Campos de Oliveira, "o primeiro poeta e jornalista moçambicano" (Leite 2008: 60) in the nineteenth century, whose work has been discussed by Manuel Ferreira and who wrote a poem which opens with the following words: "Eu nasci em Moçambique, / de pais humildes provim, / a cor negra que eles tinham, / é a cor que tenho em mim [...]" (*Ibid.*: 63). Similar questions relate to the work of Rui de Noronha. At times his work has been seen as simply reproducing European

models, which in Mendonça's view is related to not considering the influence of assimilation policies. Noronha wrote sonnets and rewrote, for example, Antero de Quental's poem "A um poeta – Surge et ambula" (1865). In his "Surge et ambula" (1936) Noronha changes the perspective to Africa in the time when nationalist thought started to take form, at the same time following Quental's idea of poetry as having a social mission (Mendonça, 1988: 88, 93). The work is of interest for the very way it questions and underlines the difficulty of writing a literary history of a country like Mozambique. However, in terms of poetry, José Craveirinha's work marks a significant turn, as does Noémia de Sousa's too. She left Mozambique in 1951 and wrote the poems that were published in *Sangue Negro* (the collection was published in 2001, and until that point her works were published in different anthologies and newspapers) in 1948-1951. Her work is also of interest in terms of Mozambican women's writing: while the majority of writers are men, one of the pioneers was a woman – who also coordinated a women's page in *O Brado Africano* in which texts of other women writers were published too (Owen, 2007: 24).

Gilberto Matusse finds it problematic to argue that only literature that takes a stand against colonialism should be considered in the Mozambican canon in its earlier phases. Matusse argues for the inclusion of literature or poetry that discusses other topics and also points to the contradictions in works of Manuel Ferreira and Alfredo Margarido, for example, who have taken upon themselves the task of defining what literature one can define as Mozambican. He argues that Margarido, for instance, creates a dichotomy between the African imaginary (colonised) and European imaginary (coloniser), in this way ignoring the complexity of the cultural scene (Matusse, 1993: 8-14). Ribeiro & Meneses point to the problems associated with the role of Portuguese language in literary expression in the context of canonisation – taking it as a starting point for canonisation causes silences and exclusions. It ignores the traces from other cultures (and languages), other expressions such as dance and rhythm, oral literature and, of course, literatures written in the national languages (Ribeiro & Meneses, 2008: 14). This issue is also comprehensively discussed by Matusse in his *A Construção da Imagem da Moçambicanidade em José Craveirinha, Mia Couto e Ungulani Ba Ka Khosa* (1993). Matusse discusses the work of the three writers from three perspectives: the influence they have from Portuguese literature, from the oral tradition or literature, and from

Latin American literature. He also brings up other influences besides the Portuguese that was emphasised in earlier, Eurocentric analysis. These include, for example, the influence from the Arabic and Indian presence, and from the North American (black) literature – which also serve to create distance from the European influences (Matusse, 1993: 39-41). Ngomane, whose work will be discussed in detail further, has also discussed the relationship between Mozambican and Latin American literature.

With regard to the different phases of Mozambican literature, it is useful to consider Hamilton's approach which pays attention to the role – or even influence – of literature in society in its different phases. Hamilton (1975: 50) presents three phases:

> Tal como se observa em outras situações coloniais, houve em Moçambique três fases principais na formação de uma literatura aculturada produzida por elementos da burguesia indígena e multiracial, que se consideravam moçambicanos e não súbditos do Império Português. Depois dos primeiros momentos em que reinava a reivindicação cultural e racial, veio o protesto, no início mais reformista do que revolucionário. Mas inevitavelmente, o protesto, impelido pelas realidades históricas locais e globais, conduziu à militância revolucionária, e portanto, à literatura política e combativa.

A similar division is presented by Ribeiro & Meneses (2008: 11): "Os três principais momentos que irão interferir de forma decisiva no campo literário recente são: o colonialismo tardio e as lutas nacionalistas; a independência e o ciclo socialista; e a ambiguidade do tempo presente [...]". Ana Mafalda Leite (2008: 65) presents a different division, in which she sees that in the first phase there was a necessity to be both African and European, which was expressed by the writers of newspapers like *O Africano* (1908-1918) e *O Brado Africano* (1918-1974), and which will be discussed later in the context of assimilation. After this Negritude emerged, represented by Noémia de Sousa and José Craveirinha. The last phase Mendonça brings up is that of being national or universal, which has various expressions in the literature written after independence. The canon of Mozambican literature is, however, constructed afterwards by instances such as literary prizes, translations and the inclusion of certain works in the curricula of schools. The task of periodisation is complex since Mozambican literature is in a constant dialogue or confrontation with the colonial past, and where the question of what is 'ours' and what belongs to 'others' is bubbling close to the surface all of the time – and as Mendonça points out, this is not the case for other arts such as dance, for example (Mendonça, 2011: 12-13, 19-20).

In her latest book Mendonça sketches a view regarding literature from the perspective of ruptures and emerging literature, considering that an important rupture is related to the independence of African countries and, as a result, looking for recovering elements of history that might serve for forging new identities in that situations – which is a process that could be seen as still going on in Mozambican literature. Her approach permits considering the changes in literatures from a non-Eurocentric perspective since she brings up ruptures such as the independences of India and Pakistan, which reflected in literature as discussing questions related to identity, and for example the Russian revolution, by which socialist realism gained space (Mendonça, 2011: 10-13, 19-20). She also provides a thorough discussion regarding Mozambican poetry, bringing up its diversity beyond the established views and considering for example its intertextuality. Mozambican poetry has lost its position, also due to the popularity of Mia Couto and other writers (of novels) published by Portuguese publishing houses: "Mantendo-se interiormente na periferia onde a nova economia de mercado a parece situar, sem grande impacte numa sociadade atraída tardiamente pelo neoliberalismo, a poesia estará a perder o papel que já teve de unificadora de um imaginário diverso [...]" (*Ibid*.: 109-110).

Much of the work regarding Mozambican literature has remained quite strictly in the area of literary analysis and literary history. There is also a tendency to restrict the analysis to sources in the Portuguese language and hence some issues that have been widely discussed in the context of African literatures in French or English have gained little attention. As mentioned earlier, the 'language question' and the implications (also from a wider, social perspective) of using the Portuguese language in Mozambican literature have not been thoroughly discussed. In addition, most of the work has been produced in Portuguese language and it can be argued that Mozambican or other African literatures written in Portuguese have not gained much interest outside the Lusophone context, although there now seems to be a shift in this.

2.2 Assimilation, the first signs of anticolonial criticism and Mozambican literature

Assimilation, in the context of Portuguese colonialism, refers to a policy that officially was aimed at civilising the local population. While the 'civilising project' was constantly present, it took different forms during the different phases of colonialism, and was an essential part of it especially in the later phases – not least for justifying the Portuguese presence in its colonies. The willingness to civilise the Africans was strongly emphasised during the era of the New State (1926-1974) and justified by the help of Lusotropicalist theory created by Gilberto Freyre. Its basic idea was that the Portuguese, because of their history, were very different from other colonisers. They were considered more humane and tolerant than other nationalities and able to adapt to new (tropical) environments. They were deeply Christian, did not have any racial prejudices and treated all kinds of people fraternally (Castelo, 1999: 13-14). The Portuguese considered it their responsibility to remain in the colonies to continue the civilising work. However, at this point no serious investment was made to develop social or educational institutions, which demonstrates that the project existed mainly on paper (Enders, 1997: 80, 89).

This process, however, also sowed the seeds of anticolonial criticism, which had a close relationship with Mozambican journalism and writing in general. This phase is significant in terms of Mozambican literature, since the first writers considered as Mozambican emerged from the group of *assimilados*. Moreover, the issues of colonialism and the position of the colonised were discussed in literature, as the analyses of João Dias' and Orlando Mendes' texts reveal. Discussing these processes also reveals differences between the colonial policies of the different metropolises that in their part explain the differences between the processes of cultural decolonisation and their pronunciation. These also extend to language policies.

2.2.1 From assimilation to anticolonial views

To become an *assimilado*, the Africans needed to demonstrate that they could read and write Portuguese, could sustain themselves, were Catholic and had abandoned their previous culture and religion. This status also meant that they were subject to Portuguese laws. However, the

vast majority of Mozambicans were *indígenas*. From the beginning of the twentieth century a specific policy concerning the *indígenas* was being created. For example, it was decided that not all the Portuguese laws were valid for them (Castelo, 1999: 76). Hence, they were inhabitants of the colonies to whom the traditional law applied and who in their daily lives did not follow Portuguese values, culture and religion. The highly-valued labour force was constituted by this group, who were often subjected to work by force, unlike the *assimilados*. However, as will be seen further on, not all Mozambicans who had an opportunity to become an *assimilado* applied for the status.

Assimilation can be discussed from the perspective of epistemological oppression, which Santos & Meneses refer to as 'epistemicide'. It refers to the process in which local knowledges, world views and cultures are disregarded, while the culture of the coloniser is brought to the country. An essential part of this process, closely related to colonialism and modernity, is the inequality between cultures, languages and knowledges. The imported culture is valued as the only correct culture and the local cultures are seen as backwards and primitive (See, for example, Santos & Meneses, 2009: 10). Due to the established inequality between the world views, often expressed in different languages, vast amounts of knowledge was given the status of primitive beliefs or ideas belonging to the past. Although the numbers of *assimilados* were not large, the process itself can be read as an example of epistemicide. It sets clear standards regarding the superiority of Portuguese culture, values, language and Catholic religion – and inferiority of any local values, languages, religions and cultures. However, it is important to notice that this process started before the formal assimilation policy (the opportunity to apply for the status of an *assimilado*) was introduced, and it can also be considered that this process still continues on a larger scale. This is, as was discussed above, a process that literature can be seen to question by both making the process visible – assimilation is discussed in Chiziane's *O Alegre Canto da Perdiz* and Mia Couto's *O Último Voo do Flamingo*, for example – and bringing into view the epistemologies that were disregarded.

The ideas regarding inferiority were also reflected in views regarding languages. Francisco Noa describes how in the nineteenth century ideas such as the primitivism of Africans and the racial and cultural superiority of the Portuguese were brought up. This was

expressed by Portuguese intellectuals, such as Ramalho Ortigão. The example Noa gives from Ortigão's *As Farpas* (the chronicles he published with Eça de Queiróz) reveals how this extends to language too. Ortigão sees that the 'savages' do not have the capacity for abstraction which is essential for understanding Christianity. Their language exists only for the purposes of daily life and cannot express concepts like consciousness, causality and finality (Ortigão, 1883 *apud* Noa, 2002: 18). In the 1960s the idea of a nation-state with only one language strengthened, and cultural and linguistic homogeneity became a central topic in colonial policies. This idea is also expressed by F.J. Hoppfer Rego, who considered that the 'vernacular language' should only be used in education in the colonies if necessary. Otherwise the only language used should be Portuguese since the aim was to create unity through the generalisation of it. Language, in his view, supported culture and obviously, assimilation (Rego, 1968: 41-42).

It is, however, of interest to consider the fact that many of the *assimilados* used other languages too, and not only Portuguese. For example, Raúl Honwana, who was an *assimilado* himself and the father of writer Luís Bernardo Honwana, mentions in his memoirs that his family was bilingual – they spoke both Xironga and Portuguese (Isaacman, 1988: 142). Firmino also refers to the importance of Xironga (the language spoken in the Maputo area), which was used by *assimilados*, also in such publications as *O Brado Africano* (Firmino, 2002: 225). However, even in this situation the hierarchy is present: the Portuguese language is considered superior in any case and the other languages do not threaten its position but, instead, are used for different purposes than Portuguese. This is where the role of 'epistemicide' becomes clear – even if it does not destroy all 'irrational' knowledge, it establishes a hierarchy. In the case of Mozambique, this was at its strongest during the New State era when the colonial administration was defining a more polarised relationship to its colonies.

The low number of *assimilados* is related to various factors. Newitt mentions that the Portuguese controlled the number of *assimilados*, so that not all applicants were granted the status (Newitt, 1997: 385). A large number of Mozambicans could not apply for this status because of the requirements: knowledge of the Portuguese language (reading and writing) was the first barrier. Most Mozambicans were illiterate – Enders states that in 1950 this was the

case for 98% of Mozambicans. In comparison, at the same time, 44% of Portuguese were illiterate (Enders, 1997: 89). Eduardo Mondlane, the first president of FRELIMO, points out (1969: 44) that the *assimilados* were required to be more 'civilised' than the Portuguese living in the colony. For example, as Castelo shows, in the 1940s many poor Portuguese requested free passage to Mozambique for the simple reason of searching for a better alternative from the poverty and harsh conditions in Portugal. Regardless of their level of education, it was considered that the presence of settlers would serve as a civilising force on the Africans – and would reinforce the sovereignty of the Portuguese. However, the ideas and policies for sending settlers to Mozambique or helping them to settle there varied during colonialism, and at times the 'quality' of the settlers was considered more important than the quantity (Castelo, 2007: 50, 107, 126).

Besides knowing Portuguese and being able to sustain themselves, the *assimilados* were required to demonstrate that they had adopted Portuguese culture and values. Raúl Honwana describes the process:

> Africans who considered themselves "civilized" had to pass an examination by answering certain questions and by allowing a committee to go to their homes to see how they lived and if they knew how to eat at a table as whites did, if they wore shoes, and if they had only one wife. When Africans passed these examinations, they were given a document called the "certificate of assimilation" [...]. This document gave them right to legally register their children's births and enabled them to have access to the courts. Once considered an assimilado, an African's affairs no longer had to be handled by a special court or in the meetings called by the chiefs. The assimilado status also freed Africans from having to pay the hut tax and from being conscripted into the forced labour system (Isaacman, 1988: 91-92).

Honwana explains that in most cases the motivation for applying for this status was to avoid forced labour and that "[t]hey didn't want to be deprived of at least the very minimum rights of citizenship" (Isaacman, 1988: 105). He also underlines the fact that *assimilados* wanted to provide better opportunities for their children (*Idem*).

In his introduction to Raúl Honwana's memoirs Allen Isaacman (1988: 13) argues that to gain the privileges reserved for *assimilados*, the Africans

> had to undergo a very degrading scrutiny of their lifestyle. They also had to exhibit a combination of patience and ability to fill out the mountain of papers demanded by the bureaucracy. [...] Even after they satisfied all these requirements and had been awarded this lofty status, *assimilados* still faced the possibility of having their privileged status taken away at a moment's notice.

As Honwana points out, the assimilation law and the way it was put into practice was criticised by the *assimilados* themselves. These opinions were expressed in the newspaper *O Brado Africano* edited by João Albasini, who "denounced the discriminatory nature of the law and called for the extension to all Africans of the 'privileges' reserved for assimilados; that is, that all Africans should be given full citizenship" (Isaacman, 1988: 92). The nature of this criticism will be discussed in detail later in this chapter, but it is clear that it does not directly question assimilation as an approach, but rather the way it was implemented.

Honwana, speaking of his own experience, convincingly argues that "[w]hen people became *assimilados*, they weren't denying their own culture, race or basic beliefs. They were simply seeking a better life, as was their right. It was also true that for colonialism the control of the few people who were assimilados was a critical factor" (Isaacman, 1988: 105). Honwana also points out that due to the political situation the *assimilados* could not express their interest in the African cultures without putting themselves in danger. As Isaacman argues, Honwana's comments regarding assimilation need to be read against the background of the ideas of *assimilados* as traitors of their own people, working for the Portuguese regime (Isaacman, 1988: 15). They can also be seen in terms of transculturation, which emphasises the selectivity of the process, instead of seeing it as a passive reception of the imposed foreign culture.

Although 'epistemicide' in the case of Mozambique (or other Portuguese colonies), is not limited to the process of assimilation, it was clearly articulated through it. For obvious reasons, it was at no point considered that the languages, knowledges, cultures or religions of the colonised would have been worth taking seriously as equivalents to the Portuguese ones. These elements reflected the backward way of life of the locals, from which they were to be saved by introducing them to modern life. By reading sources from the time of colonialism the twisted nature of the civilising project becomes visible. Many authors underline the absence of racism and any ideas of the superiority of the Portuguese compared to the Africans. Rego underlines the open-mindedness of the Portuguese and of Catholicism, ensuring the absence of ethnocentrism and xenophobia (Rego, 1968: 41). Belchior sees that the administrators have to be seen as friends of the Africans and as educators of the masses of *indígenas*. He also underlines the interactivity of the relationship: the Africans not only learn from the

Portuguese, but the Portuguese respect their cultures and customs. To this, however, the help offered by Catholic missionaries (who were considered more trustworthy than the Muslims or Protestants) is added, and the view of interracial friendship as a Christian dream (Belchior, 1960: 10-15, 30-35, 65-66).

In another publication from 1960 Belchior underlines the necessity to understand and support the Africans in the civilisation process by treating them well. He says that they – referring to the Portuguese – never felt any repulsion towards the blacks, and always considered that they had souls. He continues that the Portuguese always treated the civilised Africans as their equals. The *indígenas*, for him, are without a doubt very backward and, hence, require understanding instead of rough measures. He goes on to explain that the backwardness is not a consequence of mental inferiority, it is caused by the conditions in which the locals have been living in for many ages. The *assimilados* should consider themselves proudly as examples to the vast masses of uncivilised Africans and encourage them to adopt the Portuguese way of life (Belchior, 1960: 22-23, 45, 104). These examples illustrate Eurocentrism and the assumed universality of the particular Western world view too.

In reality, then, only the *assimilados* are seen as worth being treated equally (which in reality did not happen), while the *indígenas* are to be understood and patiently tolerated as inferior beings – or like children. Here the superiority becomes visible (and was during colonialism hidden in the Lusotropicalism): equality is possible only when the Africans completely accept and adopt the Portuguese way of living. In the time of colonialism, equality could not mean equality between the Portuguese lifestyle, culture and values and the Mozambican equivalents – this would question the whole basis of colonialism itself. The masses needed to remain 'uncivilised', since if they were all civilised, they would need to be treated as equals to the Portuguese and, therefore, could not be used in the same way as a labour force.

This view is reinforced in the literary discussion of the time, which further explains some of the later approaches within the literary history of the country. Basto (2006: 254, 256, 258-260) up debates from the 1970s – from the time when Lusotropicalism was seen as a discursive rescue when Portugal was questioned for maintaining the colonies. Portuguese writer and literary critic Amândio César emphasised the unity of the Portuguese literature and

in this way managed to consider the local references and words from other languages than Portuguese as thematic aspects, representing the 'province' of their origin, and hence literature written in this province could safely be appropriated to the canon of Portuguese literature. For César, this approach is finely represented by Orlando Mendes, whose novel will be discussed further. In Mozambique Rodrigues Júnior, a writer himself too, considered that genuine Mozambican literature illustrates the path from the bush to civilisation, where the black 'Portuguese' begin to remind the white Portuguese. Basto (*Ibid.*: 262) points out that in this context,

> [a]s palavras do vernáculo, das línguas banto, são suplementos, condimentos, que referem a proveniência etnográfica do texto, que imitam ou autenticam um quadro vivencial que se pretende reproduzir na sua fixidez. Elas nunca representam, em si, um princípio de comunicabilidade, de civilização. Elas não concorrem para a criação de uma comunidade sensível.

The 'devouring' form of Lusotropicalism is present in Angolan Mário António Fernandes Oliveira's approach too, which similarly reduces the 'local elements' as parts of the Portuguese universe and this way clears them of any subversive tones. Basto quotes Mário António's text published in Lourenço Marques' *Notícias*, originally from the magazine *Permanência*:

> Mas também é verdade que tudo quanto existe no Ultramar Português é verdadeiramente português: rios e montanhas, ritos e superstições, homens e animais, tudo enfim. As línguas – todas as línguas faladas do Ultramar português – muito embora não entronquem directamente no grupo das línguas indo-europeias são politicamente *línguas portuguesas*. É por seu intermédio que milhões de crianças portuguesas – vinda da variedade lusitana – aprendem a conhecer e amar a sua Pátria – Portugal (*Notícias*, 1970 *apud* Basto, 2006: 262-263).

As was discussed earlier, Craveirinha questioned these views by his language use in poetry.

Mondlane points out that the *assimilados* were required to carry their identification as a proof of their status and their right to move freely in the country (Mondlane 1969: 41). This was obviously not required from the other *não-indígenas*, as they could be distinguished by their skin colour. This was one of the issues that caused bitter criticism on the part of the associations of Africans. The situation of an *assimilado* is described by Mondlane (1969: 50):

> In return for the doubtful privileges already described, according to the law he must live in an entirely European style; he must never use his own language, and he must not visit unassimilated relatives in their own homes. One of the absurd contradictions of the system is that while not receiving the same treatment as a white, he is expected to identify completely with whites.

The *assimilados*, while expected to adopt the way of life of the coloniser, were also expected to 'lose' their own past. Since the local cultures have no value, the history of the country before colonisation loses its importance. Frantz Fanon argues that in the eyes of the coloniser the society of the colonised always lacked values and hence the colonised represent a negation of the values of the coloniser. Fanon considers that the civilising work conducted by the missionaries is actually work done in order to alienate the colonised from their own culture. He claims that colonialism not only affects the minds of the colonised, but also destroys and distorts the past of the colonised. It denies the value of the past prior to colonisation (Fanon, 2003: 38-39, 183). By establishing the superiority of the coloniser, not only the future of the local knowledges is at stake – it may also destroy much of the local knowledge regarding the past. These processes can be seen in relation to literature and decolonisation: in much of the current literature the past and assimilation are brought up, which questions the narrative established by colonialism and assimilation. This is also related to literary traditions: while the local narrative traditions were considered as not having value, their value is re-established in literature – the reasons why this takes place only after the first phase of independence will be discussed further. This is visible, for example, in the ways the writers discuss myths and emphasise oral tradition. It is a process that Achebe also points to: one that is aimed at changing the view regarding the past as a "long night of savagery" (Ashcroft *et al*., 1989: 125-126).

The hybridity and ambivalence that Santos sees as an element of Portuguese colonialism throughout its existence could be detected here. Santos (2002: 14, 32) says that to be assimilated is emphatically not to be Portuguese. The original expression, not related to the Portuguese situation, is from Homi Bhahba (1994: 86). The colonised have to cut – at least superficially – their African roots, but they can never be fully European, although they have adopted the European lifestyle. Hence, their identity becomes complex – they are neither Africans nor Europeans, and therefore remain in a situation of double de-identification (Santos 2002: 32). The same point is raised in Sheila Khan's article regarding Afro-Mozambican immigrants in Portugal. Becoming an *assimilado* was a promise of benefits and a better position in society, but these benefits and other promises were constantly taken away from them (Khan, 2004: 12-13). On the other hand, there are also reasons for the fears of the

coloniser: the Africans, considered as inferior, begin to resemble the colonisers and hence, question their superiority (Bhabha, 1994: 90). As Aurélio Rocha (2002: 214) points out, referring to the associations of the *assimilados*: "pode-se questionar, sem receios de exagero, sobre o perigo que representava para a administração colonial e para a comunidade colona, uma organização de negros que dizia representar todas as camadas sociais e com os mesmos direitos dos brancos". As will be seen, these aspects have been discussed in literature too.

Another ironic result of the assimilation policies is the fact that the *assimilados* planted the seed for nationalism, which further reflects how assimilation was never complete. The era of the Republic, in the first decades of the twentieth century, marks the beginning of these, still very timid, movements: the association Grémio Africano de Lourenço Marques was established in 1908. This phase is often designated as the period of protonationalism, which Mário Pinto de Andrade (1998: 77) describes as a "período histórico de emergência de um discurso que se distingue pelo seu triplo carácter *fragmentário* (no pensamento e na acção), descontínuo (na temporalidade) e *ambivalente* (no seu posicionamento face ao sistema colonial)". In literature, these characteristics are visible in Rui de Noronha's poetry. The group, which defined themselves as natives, Afro-Portuguese or black Portuguese was constituted principally of urban, educated black and *mestiço* Mozambicans. In order to do justice to this era it would be necessary to provide a longer description of the different phases, perspectives and positions, but here the focus is only on aspects that relate to literature, acknowledging that the multidimensionality is not thoroughly covered, as is in the works of Rocha (*Associativismo e nativismo em Moçambique*, 2002) and Andrade (*As Origens do Nacionalismo Africano*, 1990).

The associations of the *assimilados* went through several phases, influenced externally by changes in the coloniser's politics (the change from Republic to New State meant fundamental changes in freedom of speech and the press) and internally by controversies related to race and, for example, different standpoints regarding Marcus Garvey's and W.E.B. Du Bois' Pan-Africanist ideas. These phases are similar to the movements in the other Portuguese colonies, and their ideas echo also the movements in Lisbon. Contact was maintained with other countries too, which emphasises how the discussion was not limited to Mozambique or to the Lusophone context (Rocha 2002: 322,

362-363). Moreover, Lourenço Marques was an international town at the time, of which Borges Coelho's novel *O Olho de Hertzog* (2010) provides an interesting illustration.

The issues that were brought up by these intellectuals were the criticism towards assimilation policy and the inhumane treatment of the *indígenas*. Their position towards the Portuguese was ambiguous, and in terms of assimilation their main complaint was the humiliating fact that a document (as described above) was required to prove that one was an *assimilado*, and that in reality, the *assimilados* were not equal to the Portuguese. They defended the *indígenas*, but at the same time they distinguished themselves from them through the idea of class. They had become part of the upper class through education, not through property (Rocha, 2002: 407). One of their main concerns was, then, that education should be provided to more Mozambicans. The ambivalent role of the *assimilados* is related to their position in the colonialist society. As Rocha (*Idem*) argues, "[d]esenvolvendo um combate contra o Estado colonial, que acusavam de inépcia da 'missão civilizadora' e de injustiças para com os 'africanos portugueses' e, em geral, para com a maioria africana, tinham nesse mesmo estado colonial a única alternativa capaz de garantir a sua protecção". To simplify, their interest would have been rather improving their conditions within the context of colonialism instead of questioning the whole system – or the idea of education and progress associated with Portugal and Europe. This process also reveals colonialism's ambiguity.

The main channel for spreading the ideas of this group were newspapers, the first one being *O Africano* (1908-1918), followed by *O Brado Africano*. Articles were published in Portuguese and in languages such as Xironga, Zulu and Changana, which reflects the assumed readers, but also the presence of various languages even within the capital and among the *assimilados*. It is interesting to consider within this context that the texts in Portuguese were written in a very formal and sophisticated language. Rocha (2002: 191) interprets this as a form of questioning, but at the same time, a distancing from the uneducated majority of Mozambicans:

> [P]odendo interpretar-se o recurso à língua portuguesa, na melhor norma culta, por parte do segmento social dos intelectuais nativos, como um instrumento de resistência. Evidenciando as injustiças de que eram alvo os negros, o grupo nativo manifestava-se desse modo, expressando em português não só a sua especificidade como tambem a sua superioridade cultural.

This move can be seen as questioning the assumed intellectual inferiority of the Africans, especially in a situation where many of the Portuguese in Mozambique had no education or a very low degree of education. Of course, it also underlined the seriousness and credibility of the message of the writers. It could also be considered that Portuguese language was a form in which a difference to the neighbouring countries was constructed, and through which Mozambique was reflected.

The language question was essential in the rivalry between the Catholics and the Protestants, from among whom many nationalists emerged. The Portuguese were somewhat correct in their fear of the Protestant movements: the liberation movement can be partially seen as a result of the Protestant churches' work. In Mozambique, the Swiss Mission was very powerful, especially in the Southern part of the country. It was in the schools of this mission that many Mozambicans developed their political views and capacity to analyse the colonial situation from a new point of view. The Protestants, unlike the colonial power, knew local languages and could publish articles in these languages criticising the colonial government and its policies, which could not have been published in Portuguese (Silva, 1998: 397-400). Protestants also had a role in standardising and creating the written form of some of these languages. On the other hand, it can also be said that they, accidentally, created two levels to the languages. For example, the foreign missionaries who translated the Bible into Xironga, made an effort to standardise the language, but on the other hand, added to the written form of it connotations of their own culture (Madeira, 2003: 33). On the other hand, it is also necessary to point out that whereas the Protestant churches may have had an impact on the independence movement, and had a different attitude towards the local cultures and languages, their presence too was problematic, to say the least.

The other forms of writing, besides articles published in the newspapers, were limited. João Albasini, one of the main figures of Lourenço Marques' cultural life then, wrote *O Livro da Dor* (published in 1925 after his death) which is a collection of desperate love letters, but which marks the first steps towards writing prose and an interest in the aesthetic values of the texts too (Mendonça, 1988: 35). It is curious to consider his approach from the perspective of a focus on the individual and feelings, both in terms of Ngugi's discussion and in terms of the later shifts in Mozambican literature. From the 1930s onwards, censorship

gained more prominence and any kind of critical attitude in writing had to be hidden: this meant a move towards poetry since in it more subtle and less direct positions could be expressed (Hedges, 1993: 225). As Rocha (2002: 322) puts it, "[p]ara a prolixa imprensa de Lourenço Marques chegara o tempo em que a ironia cautelosa, a escrita ambígua, entremeada pela bajulação e a crítica cuidadosa, substituiram a irreverência, a contundência e a crítica aberta da era republicana". It took some time for critical and direct writing to appear because at this time it was still not possible, as Andrade (1998: 186) argues:

> Mas o protonacionalismo, na sua essência, foi produtor de um discurso com uma finalidade ilusória: assumindo-se como negros cultos, no molde ocidental, sujeitos da nação portuguesa e legalistas, esses ideólogos, por condições históricas conducentes à imaturidade na sua análise, não tinham atingido o grau crítico de compreensão lógica do sistema colonial portuguesa.
> E aí reside, precisamente, o ponto de ruptura que será expresso pela geração que fará a sua entrada na cena da história, nos anos imediatos à segunda guerra mundial.

Rocha also dates the change in the discourse to the 1940s and to the discussion regarding Pan-Africanism and Negritude. It is only at this point that assimilation as a system became questioned, which for Rocha is the first step towards the independence fight (Rocha, 2002: 342).

Whereas the phases of the *assimilados* and their associations have been documented and discussed since, it is important to point out that they were not the only ones that brought up the ills of the conditions of Africans under colonial rule. There are several episodes in which the workers rose up against the coloniser when the working conditions became unbearable. These examples are mentioned in the *História de Moçambique: Moçambique no auge do colonialismo*, in which several strikes and other forms of resistance are described (Hedges, 1993: 211-221). Also, as Rocha brings up, what happened in the suburbs is not properly documented. José Craveirinha, however, described them in *O Brado Africano* in 1955, on which Rocha's (2002: 134) description is based:

> Menos conhecido era o quotidiano e as formas de vida da gente negra dos subúrbios, situada para lá da "estrada de circunvalação", que era o limite entre a cidade propriamente dita (o centro) e a sua zona suburbana (a periferia), a das palhotas e casas de caniço, em cujos quintais, que formam palco de histórias magistralmente retratadas por escritores e poetas, se desenvolviam as mais diversas actividades que duravam por vezes até de madrugada ao som das batucadas ou das dolentes danças e canções das irmandades muçulmanas.

The resistance was also expressed in songs that the workers sang in their own languages so that the Portuguese would not understand them. Other expressions included dance and sculpture in which the Portuguese were mocked. These features are not very widely studied due to the lack of a written register of them (and it can be added that the language question limits access to them too). However, the experiences of these people were present in literature later on, but were represented by educated writers and, therefore, necessarily interpreted and not based on first-hand experience. Regardless of the filtering of these experiences, literature played a significant role in highlighting the voices of the lower social classes. It is interesting to consider that in Mozambique the emergence of literature is related to the urban and suburban experience, and with some exceptions the initial phases did not discuss the kinds of revolts explored in *História de Moçambique*. In this sense, there is a significant difference from Ngugi's phases, for example, who underlined the culture of the peasants, and also aimed his work to them, and Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* which is set in the countryside. It is also interesting to consider Sembène's *Les bouts de bois de Dieu* (1960), which describes a railroad strike.

2.2.2 Mozambican prose and questioning colonialism

Despite the fact that the previous oral cultural expressions were carried out in Bantu languages, these remained the languages of religion and family relations, for example, and Portuguese, due to its prestige, value and practicality, naturally became the language of literary expression. As Mendonça (1988: 86) argues, this also meant that the process of starting to use local languages in literature came to its end due to assimilation. There are signs of the first phases of this process though. They are related to Protestant missionaries: Andrade (1998: 47) points out that in Mozambique Samu Mukhomba and Yohona B. Abdallah, born at the end of nineteenth century, wrote in their mother tongues about their communities' history in order to bring up their civilisational past. This also shows how literary tradition did not have any local predecessors, and it seems that t hese were searched for in the oral tradition only in later phases. As Mendonça points out, it is important to be aware that the *assimilados* had no real options besides appropriating Portuguese: it was the only suitable instrument for their needs and for expressing their views. Moreover, as Mendonça argues, the appropriation of the

Portuguese language is a long process, which is still ongoing. For these *assimilados* the literary references were Portuguese – especially the so-called third romanticism and its main figure, poet Antero de Quental (Mendonça, 1988: 10-16).

As Mozambican researcher Aurélio Cuna argues in his dissertation *Estatuto e Focalização: Modalidades técnico-narrativos propensos à expressão da ideologia em Godido e Portagem* (published in 2012, although written earlier), in which he compares João Dias' *Godido e outros contos* and Orlando Mendes' *Portagem* (written in the 1950s but published in 1966), the authors who wrote fiction in the 1950s and their works have received little attention, even though they are often identified as fundamental works in Mozambican literary history. There were few writers of fiction in the 1950s and the silence was further constructed due to lack of studies regarding the few works, although *Godido e outros contos* has received quite a lot of attention – but often the discussion is limited to these two works and Luís Bernardo Honwana's short stories *Nós Matámos o Cão Tinhoso* (1964). Also, poetry was more prominent in this era and one could claim that it still remains more influential and more studied, whereas prose has not yet been systematically studied so far (Cuna, 2012). While the importance of poets like José Craveirinha and Noémia de Sousa is without a doubt vast, it is also interesting to consider the works discussed here as predecessors for the novels that will be discussed later.

João Dias's short stories introduce new perspectives to Mozambican literature.[7] Dias was one of the rare African students in Coimbra, which gave him a different view of colonialism and racism compared to those in Mozambique. The stories "Em terras do Norte" and "Indivíduo Preto" draw attention to his situation. In these stories he brings up the question of skin colour, which defines him in the eyes of the society. They echo Fanon's account of his experiences as a black student in France in his *Peau Noire, Masques Blancs* (1952). Fanon (1975: 127) speaks of the look of the white people; how they see the black people and how this ends up influencing his view of himself: "Nenhuma oportunidade me é concedida. Sou super-determinado do exterior. Não sou escravo da ideia que os outros têm de mim, mas do meu parecer. Mas logo os olhares brancos, os únicos verdadeiros, me dissecam. Sou fixado".

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This is also discussed by Dias, who, like Fanon, raises the racist looks of the children. Reading Dias against this background makes it possible to understand why one of the first texts in which the perspective of the Africans and their suffering in the colonialist system is written by someone in Europe. He 'knows' the coloniser better and has the opportunity to see colonialism from a wider perspective than those in Mozambique. Being in Europe also made it possible for him to see problems in the coloniser's society, which in the colonies probably appeared as untouchable and all-powerful. Here, it is interesting to consider that in the story "Indivíduo Preto" he refers to the conditions of Portuguese workers, their long working hours and the attitudes of their superiors. In this way he also points to failures in European societies that were presented as models to follow in Africa.

On the other hand, the colonised are defended from a position of superiority, present through the voice of the narrator. There are references to European 'civilisation' and Africa represents suffering, colonialism and slavery. Europe, then, represents at the same time, the coloniser, the oppressor and civilisation and knowledge. Even though in "Godido" there is a strong attack against colonialism and mistreatment and inequality, as well as the hypocrisy of the Christian coloniser (the Portuguese family called Santos is mocked and ridiculed), Africa is not presented as having its own civilisation and knowledges that are equal to those of the coloniser. However, it is significant that there is reference to traditional music at Christmas. Godido, working as a servant for the Portuguese family, calls his colleague to sing a local song:

> – Eh! Zafania! Buya. Venha brincarri co gente, a cantari côsa do nosso terra. Anda cá quando não minha coração zanga cum você. Mesmo!
> Enquanto o compasso do 'boogie' ou lá o que era, insistia em ficar no ar ao lado da voz de Godido, Zafania foi-se chegando a dançar (Godido e outros contos: 24).

Mendonça (1988: 21) says that it was through music and their lyrics especially that resistance and criticism was expressed outside of the Portuguese language (and urban environments).

The story "Godido" reveals the conditions of the colonised working for the coloniser: the abuse of women, forced work, violence and racism. This approach gives the story its

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[7] This analysis is based on a presentation given in Eduardo Mondlane University in a seminar of literature on April 12th 2012 and reworked following the comments of students and Professor Aurélio Cuna.

specificity since Dias shows the experience and suffering of the colonised from their own perspective. The narrator uses European Portuguese, whereas Godido speaks Portuguese badly – this approach is used by other writers too, such as Honwana. This reflects the regionalist approach towards language, which Ngomane (2010: 11) considers in the Mozambican context:

> Ao procurar vincar a identidade literária por intermédio de traços supostamente distintivos das falas locais, quer os regionalistas latino-americanos quer Dias e Honwana, outra coisa não fazem senão projectar nesse nível linguístico a ambiguidade da estrutura social na sua profunda estratificação e o lugar superior que nela ocupa o escritor.

The narrator also has a patronising attitude towards Godido, who is enthusiastic when he sees the city: "(o) ambiente ter-se-ia rido do seu estado de alma se o soubesse. Como se não fosse humano um negro pensar que a 'vida do negro há-de acabar'" (*Godido e outros contos*: 38). There are also references to people and knowledge that the characters would be unlikely to have: "Não sabia ler nem conhecia de vista a metafísica mas era um partidário de Diderot" (*Ibid*.: 22). Here, it is also interesting to consider the implied reader – while Dias describes the suffering of the colonised, he also presents a request to the so-called civilised, who should treat the colonised better and give them more opportunities.

In the story Godido's mother Carlota can be seen as representing suffering, but also subservience towards the coloniser. The story starts with her dream: a son, almost-God (Godido was the name of a son of the emperor Ngungunhane; usually spelled Godide), is born and the child's father is also present. The dream can be seen as representing the times past – the world without colonialism. Colonialism therefore destroys the previous social structure and leaves the colonised without a means for survival and a traditional family structure. In the text they sing "pelo recém-nascido imaginado rei, apesar de saber que lavar pratos e coleccionar insultos seria seu destino" (*Godido e outros contos*: 16). It is also interesting to consider that in this way Dias introduces the perspective of the colonised women, which is often omitted. In the references to Godido's mother there are some aspects that remind of (or in this case, anticipate) Negritude: the image of the mother breastfeeding the son that "já ele se mostrava todo uma temperatura tropical, um sangue quente [...]" (*Ibid*.: 20).

Godido then abandons his mother and at the same time everything she represents: hard rural labour, sweat, suffering and subservience. Godido is presented as a black colonised in revolt, who is all the time more conscious of his position. However, for Godido the city

represents civilisation: "[ele] iria para cidade, para a civilização, onde não haveria certamente nem brancos a chicotear nem pretos a obedecer. A civilização deveria ser alguma coisa de melhor, com gosto a 'matapa' ou a toucinho do céu" (*Godido e outros contos*: 20). He becomes angry and frustrated because he wants to be civilised and equal, but he is not given any chance: "Mais tarde Godido quis aprender a ler, e deram-lhe panelas para lavar" (*Godido e outros contos*: 21). The city is a disappointment: "Suspirou pela sua vida primitiva e quis fugir. Apanhado, ficou a apodrecer numa cadeia. Quando gritou que era livre e rei nas costas da mãe, o mundo cuspiu gargalhadas de ódio no negro que queria ser mais que escravo" (*Godido e outros contos*: 21). These descriptions also reflect the diversity of the experiences of colonialism by the colonised. Here, it is clearly shown that the revolt is a result of lack of humanity, of a system that gives a very limited space to the colonised and denies them a chance to improve their conditions:

> [Godido] [...] obteve um passe, uma licença onde a sua impressão digital era a assinatura, e só então pôde pisar o alcatrão da calçada e correr os olhos furtivos pelos edifícios em redor. A juntar a tudo isto veio-lhe o imposto de capitação, uma população hostil e o desejo de estar só onde não estava (*Idem*).

There is a strong parallel here with Fanon, who writes that "o mundo branco, o único sério, recusava-me toda a participação. De um homem exigiam uma conduta de preto. Eu chamava o mundo e o mundo amputava-me do meu entusiasmo" (Fanon, 1975: 126). Godido learns that since he is black, he has no means to improve his social situation: "Ali estava toda uma doutrina de ódio de raças. Agora compreendia que ser negro era algo mais mesquinho que a lepra. Era ser cancro, cancro entre os civilizados" (*Godido e outros contos*: 21). Later a Manichean vision, the impossibility of hybridity, is underlined: "Racismo como mofo... Mas todo o dia de hoje concretizado em duas raças, dois ódios, ilógicos talvez, mas humanamente certos" (*Idem*).

"Sonho de Negro" is a continuation of "Godido", but it is separated from it with a subtitle. The dream seems to represent what, for Dias, is perhaps the only way out of the injustice: a violent revolt. Godido tried other ways, such as assimilation and studying, but he is not given any opportunities. That is the way that finally leads the colonised to become men, as Dias writes. This is what Fanon (1975: 126) also emphasises: he only wants to be a man among others and not be defined by his skin colour. In *Les damnés de la terre* (1961) Fanon

defends violence as a way out of colonialism. He sees that it is the only possibility to bring colonialism to an end. Godido, in killing the white man who is raping a black woman, can be seen as an allegory of colonialism. The dream can also be seen as a threat and an end to the subservience of the colonised: "Agora, aquele grupo negro de cabeças, até ali esborrachadas no chão, falou, a plenos pulmões, cabeça erguida, do seu primeiro canto, o canto do despertar" (*Godido e outros contos*: 34).

Orlando Mendes, born in Ilha de Moçambique, studied in Portugal like Dias, but was white. Besides *Portagem*, which is considered the first Mozambican novel, he has written poetry. The works of Dias and Mendes have much in common, but there are many differences too. Whereas Godido in the end takes a stand against colonialism, in *Portagem* the main character João Xilim and his phases illustrate the various ways colonialism made the life of the colonised miserable. What is constantly emphasised is skin colour and its origin: Xilim is *mestiço* and finds out that his father is *patrão* Campos, the boss of a mine. The novel follows Xilim's phases, most of them marked by desperation or the fear of future disasters, often connected in his view with his skin colour: "Por toda a parte ele encontrou gente que anda à toa, rejeitada pelos brancos e pelos negros. Deserdara pelas duas raças puras. Mas ele esconderá dos filhos a memória dos pecados das negras Katis e dos patrões Campos. E eles crescerão como se a raça mestiça não tivesse nascido de um abraço fortuito" (*Portagem*: 160). However, he considers the possibility of a future in which skin colour and race issues would not define the people the same way as they did then.

This theme, as well as the question of skin colour and the origin of *mestiços* as a result of white (Portuguese) men getting involved with or taking advantage of black Mozambican women, are themes that are present in much of the future Mozambican literature, for example, in Aldino Muianga's work, as well as in Chiziane's *O Alegre Canto da Perdiz*, and they will be discussed in further detail. On the other hand, they are also related to the significant role of the suburbs in Mozambican literature. It is interesting to consider that in both stories the main character leaves to the city with expectations of better opportunities, but like Godido, Xilim becomes disappointed:

> Viu os seus irmãos mulatos e negros que trabalhavam no cais e nas fábricas e eram tão subtraídos à civilização como os negros do Marandal. Viu os seus irmãos mulatos e negros que imitavam os brancos no vestuário, na linguagem e nos costumes. Viu os

> seus irmãos negros contratados para irem trabalhar nas minas no outro lado da fronteira. Viu os homens brancos que moravam nos arredores da cidade em companhia de mulheres negras e andavam fazendo filhos mulatos para crescerem proscritos entre brancos e negros. Viu os homens brancos que viviam em casas bonitas e se deslocavam de automóvel e tinham todas as comodidades. Viu brancos que eram compreensivos e não se pareciam com patrão Campos (*Portagem*, 26).

As Aurélio Cuna (2012) argues, *Godido* is built on strong oppositions, such as black/white and exploiter/exploited. In the world of *Portagem,* there is also space for 'sympathetic whites', one of them being Xilim's stepsister. Regardless of the differences, the urban (and in *Portagem*, the suburban) space appears as the space where the seed of resistance is sown: if the countryside is the space for abusing the work force, in the city both Godido and Xilim get a clearer picture of colonialism and its many sides.

Xilim's problems are partially related to women, who often appear as culprits of the many problems and immoralities, whereas Xilim often causes problems for himself without planning his actions. There is a woman who ends up making money from young girls:

> Sofia Mais Velha anda a ganhar dinheiro com as raparigas. Os brancos pagam, levam as raparigas e depois cansam depressa e querem outras novas. Depois elas não voltam mais ao bairro onde nasceram. ...Às vezes, nasce um filho. Filho de ninguém, esta porcaria com pele nem preta nem branca que toda a gente cospe em cima (*Portagem:* 67).

This reflects how Xilim sees that women were responsible for creating the mixed race and, hence, their problems. He also points to the lack of control, pride and morals of the *mulatas* in front of white men: "– Mulata é assim mesmo: olhar de branco, levanta as saias; palavra bonita de branco com uma prenda na mão, abre as pernas" (*Ibid.*: 134). His own wife, with whom he later starts a family, first cheats on him with a Portuguese man and then becomes a prostitute while Xilim is away working. He himself gets involved with his white stepsister, but when he suspects his wife of having cheated on him with a white man, he judges her harshly. The stepsister, then, represents another type of woman, often associated with the Portuguese: a sad, lonely figure who is constantly waiting for her husband, who in turn is cheating on her with black women. However, for a moment, Xilim realises that the position of the women is not as simple as that: "Ele nunca tinha pensado que as mulheres também podem sofrer, que podem ter queixas da vida, como ele. Toda a gente sofre" (*Portagem*: 107).

Xilim's rage does not manifest itself in the same way as Godido's, but there is a moment in which he attacks the white man who is after his wife. He thinks that he kills the

man, runs away and then hands himself in to the police. Unlike in *Godido e outros contos* (similar to Fanon's view of ending colonialism), where in the moment of fighting the men finally take on their role and fulfil their 'humanity' in the colony, in *Portagem* Xilim does not kill the 'coloniser', but instead escapes from trouble – his rage is understood. If this can be seen as an allegory for colonialism – which it doesn't necessarily need to be – in *Portagem* the problems are pointed to, but there is some level of forgiveness from the side of the coloniser, and the solution lies in the future. It could be seen as an idea (that the coloniser had in real life too) that the people of Mozambique are not ready for independence and for expelling the coloniser. This argument is supported by the moment in which Xilim comes across a black man, Abel Matias, who is interested in chatting with the men in Xilim's neighbourhood who would be tired of the problems caused by colonialism. Xilim, who considers him strange, does not trust him and sets him up and humiliates him in front of his friends.

As well as in *Godido e outros contos*, in *Portagem* the role of the narrator is interesting. As Aúrelio Cuna (2012) observes,

> [...] o discurso em Portagem é doado por um narrador adulto, experiente, com elevado nível de conhecimentos, face a ampla visão do mundo ampla, que detém. Em contrapartida, o protagonista alarga a sua visão do mundo à medida que vai tendo o contacto directo com o mesmo: João Xilim mete-se às suas aventuras, desde criança, o que significa que a mentalidade amadurece condicionada pela idade e pela instrução, que era praticamente nula.

In this way, the narrator has more information on the surrounding world and a better understanding of the specific situation in Mozambique too. This brings up the question of representation from the perspective that Spivak (1994) discusses it: when the voice of the subaltern can be heard, it is transmitted, in this case by a narrator who is more aware than the characters that are being described. Hence, the writer is able to create a narrative of the subaltern that can be understood; it is expressed within the familiar concept of the novel and perhaps the fictionality also has a role in the acceptance of it. Similarly to *Godido*'s narrator, he moulds the Portuguese language according to the speaker when it comes to direct quotes. However, there is an interesting difference too. In a passage where Xilim's mother Kati speaks to her own mother the 'native language' is translated into Portuguese. However, at first the mother seems to be speaking Portuguese: "– Tu só gostas de falar língua de branco, não é?... E

aprendeste a mim a falar também, não é?" (*Portagem*: 13), but later on it appears that she was actually speaking another language:

> E, retomando a língua nativa, fala para Kati:
>   – Já ninguém tem a mim e eu não tenho ninguém. Não quero mais. Acabou. E agora, por favor, deixa a mim só. Deixa a mim só, até eu ter morrido e os pássaros da terra do Ridjalembe terem comido os meus olhos (*Portagem*: 14).

Here, it is interesting to see that the narrator 'translates' the so-called native language into Portuguese, in a passage that also includes an expression that reflects the tradition, world view and its end, with Kati's mother and Xilim's grandmother Alima. Although translated, the passage is written in Portuguese that is distinguished from the rest of the language used in the novel. Hence it seems that for the narrator, the 'native language' is not of the same level of sophistication as Portuguese – or else it would have been translated into fluent, normal Portuguese.

It is also interesting to consider these two stories from the perspective of genre. As Cuna (2012) points out, there was much discussion concerning "Godido", of whether it is a novel or a short story (the collection was published and organised by Dias' friends after his death, which also leaves space for speculation on how complete the work was), whereas *Portagem* is clearly a novel. On the other hand, regardless of its shortness, "Godido" could have been worked into a novel and *Portagem* has many similarities with short stories. Both works have one principal character and the story and plot is constructed around them, which builds an interesting dialogue with Ngugi's earlier discussed views. Both reflect the changes in the characters in what could be called a *bildungsroman*: they become conscious of aspects that change their character and personality. However, although the narrative technique is close to the traditional novels which Ngugi wanted to create distance from, the values they express are very different from the earlier Christian novels written in Africa to which he referred (Ngugi, 2011: 69-77). Regardless of the problems related to the approach, there are also ruptures in the language.

In *Portagem* the chapters sometimes seem loose, and some passages seem quite irrelevant in terms of the cohesion of the novel. It is quite close to the way a person's life story might be told orally by at times not pointing to the time of what is happening and leaving the main character and stopping to describe someone else's experiences. This was the kind of a

structure Ngugi ended up constructing in his later novels, borrowing oral tradition and aimed at the local readers. *Portagem* also has passages in which the main character recapitulates his phases and analyses them. This serves as a way for the reader to refresh her/his memory, to keep the story together and to focus on the main character. All of these aspects can be seen as creating distance from the traditional Western novel – whether it was conscious on the part of Mendes, or just a result of his way of working or even a lack of editing, is difficult (and not too important) to judge.

It is also interesting to consider these two works with Fanon's views regarding literature in *Les damnés de la terre*. In the first phase of Fanon's idea of the development of revolutionary art the artist has completely adopted the culture of the coloniser. It is challenging to see this phase in the Mozambican context, unless colonial literature is considered as Mozambican literature. Even in the case of Rui de Noronha and Oliveira de Campos the definition becomes questionable. This reveals how, in the case of Mozambique, there has been a certain ambiguity – which also reflects the unsuccessfulness of assimilation. According to Fanon, in the second phase the author tries to get in touch with his people, but as he is alienated from them, he ends up describing the past. Fanon sees that in this phase the artist describes the past using the European models. While the above authors to a certain extent rely on what could be called 'European models', they do not describe the past as in tribal cultures or myths, but the present moment or the near past, at most. This could be related to the social position of the writers too; they may not be familiar with the past and traditions. The third phase described by Fanon is one in which the artist starts to write revolutionary literature and wants to open the eyes of her/his people (Fanon, 2003, 193-194). This reflects the phase described in the following subchapter.

2.3 Defining Mozambicanness: revolution and after

The fight for liberation, which started in the early 1960s and went on until the independence of Mozambique in 1975, was a multidimensional process, as Newitt observes. The political ideas of FRELIMO (written with capitals referring to the liberation front) were based on Marxism

and on Amílcar Cabral's thoughts and emphasised the need for schools and better health care. The new leaders wanted to play down the ethnic differences, as they saw that the Portuguese had used them to divide and control the country – but it still was a movement with its roots in the South of the country, where the capital also is (Newitt, 1997: 466). It marked a significant shift in culture too, which served the purposes of the revolution. It also marked a shift in the concept and availability of culture, and its production as well. The dichotomy built between colonialism and socialism disregarded cultural, epistemological and linguistic diversity, but at the same time brought the two surprisingly close to each other. The price of modernity was, hence, still abandoning the tradition that was considered stagnated, unproductive and old fashioned.

Although literature in this phase was initially written in the name of revolution, it can be said that these values and approaches were questioned again in literature, timidly bringing up new subjects and widening the field of topics. It can even be said that the precedents for the writers who did not follow the pattern of revolutionary literature were exactly those that anticipated the change in values: José Craveirinha and Noémia de Sousa, first and foremost. In the 1980s, especially, there was a significant shift in the literary fields, not only in terms of writing, but also in terms of activities and debates regarding literature. In both phases the role of Portuguese language and its relationship with the national languages was discussed too.

2.3.1 The birth of a 'new man'

FRELIMO emphasised the birth of a *Homem Novo*, a revolutionary Mozambican. These new citizens would be born out of revolutionary education. Samora Machel, the first president of Mozambique, underlined the need to abandon colonial values, but also the so-called traditional values, which reflects the view of passive tradition as stuck in time and incapable of transformation. He considered that they had negative consequences since they promoted discrimination between sexes and caused resistance to any positive changes. The old society was to be destroyed in order for the new society to appear (Mondlane & Machel, 1975: 95-97). While this approach is clearly anticolonial, and in this way questions the narrative of the country created by colonialism, it also ignores the other narratives that emerge within concepts like ethnic group, gender and religion, as Ribeiro & Meneses argue. Therefore, the

anticolonial narrative is excluding many other narratives in the name of national unity. Hence, in this phase, decolonisation is a project that is led and defined by the leaders of the revolution and is hegemonic as such. The judgement of poets José Craveirinha and Rui Nogar in 1977 for questioning the established views of nationalism can be mentioned as an example of the process and the uniformity expected in literary works (Ribeiro & Meneses, 2008: 11-12).

Portuguese language was seen as an important element of the unity of the country, although in the beginning the main languages of FRELIMO were Swahili and English. The fact that FRELIMO chose Portuguese as its language also had significance in legitimising it as the language of independent Mozambique and the unity of its citizens (Firmino, 2008: 11). The language of the coloniser was now used against colonialism, as a weapon against it. It was believed that through the Portuguese language access to science was easier, as opposed to the use of local languages. It was thought that costly efforts lay ahead if the local languages were to be developed to be used for scientific purposes. Dias (2002: 135) points out that the Portuguese language was chosen also because it already had the Marxist-Leninist vocabulary, which was lacking from the other languages available in this context. Firmino points out that the establishment of Portuguese as the only official language and language of national unity was a contradictory process, since it ignored the linguistic diversity of the country and therefore signified exclusion. The sections of the population that did not know Portuguese continued excluded and marginalised. Moreover, the symbolic value of Portuguese as a language of prestige in society did not disappear after colonialism – on the contrary, it became stronger due to Frelimo's work (Firmino, 2008: 4-5).

The new values were also expressed in poetry. Eduardo Mondlane praised the new cultural resistance expressed, for example, in José Craveirinha's and Noémia de Sousa's poetry. Both poets wrote on themes such as the rise of the black man and drew attention to the suffering of the Mozambicans, that way supporting the early phases of the revolution. (Mondlane, 1969: 108-109.) However, later these poets were considered as maintaining a relationship with the past, whereas the new poetry meant a "ruptura total com o passado" (Basto 2006, 84-85). Craveirinha's earlier work was considered as denouncing colonialism, but it was not a protest – and hence it was imperfect, marking only the first steps towards combat literature which was seen as the ultimate target of literary development, which Basto

calls the 'Fanonian scheme' (*Ibid*.: 37, 84-85). Craveirinha was also criticised for the Negritude tone of his poems. This reflects Fanon's above-mentioned third phase, that of revolutionary culture calling the people to action by opening their eyes to the reality. This kind of art could not rely on European models or just describe the past of the Africans (Fanon, 2003: 193-194, 203). However, it could be argued that Fanon did not call for a complete rupture with the past, but rather underlined a process of 'updating' the tradition, so that it would serve the purpose of the revolution, which can also be seen as a difference between his view and that of Machel's – in Fanon's view the tradition is not as passive as in Machel's.

As Basto (2006: 37) argues, a strong dichotomy was built between the so-called elitist art and art that served the ideology of the fight for liberation. It is worth noticing that these discussions took place in the press, which emphasises the political and social role of the literary discussion. Moreover, writing was not limited to the cities and their press, there were local press outlets too: "os jornais 'descentralizados', produzidos 'localmente', em campos de preparação político-militar, bases, escolas, onde pequenos quadros, militantes de base, militares, alunos, publicam os seus textos" (*Ibid*.: 152). Hence, not only writing, but also printing and publishing were part of the revolution. This is also a significant change from earlier when there were no such possibilities for Mozambican writers, although newspapers such as *O Africano* should not be forgotten. In this sense, this phase is related to a new approach towards culture and writing, which was no longer restricted to the educated (*mestiço*) elite. This can also be seen from the perspective of reading, which in this sense became a revolutionary act.

Combat poetry served to support the values of the revolution, and it wasn't a separate element of the revolution, but a part of it, aimed at political and cultural liberation (Basto, 2006: 18, 72). The writers concretely make use of Portuguese to express the 'new' values of the independent country, using the language against the coloniser. On the other hand, they were not the first ones to do it: Portuguese was the language that the *assimilados* or *nativistas* used in their criticism towards the coloniser. What is new in this situation is the use of the language to express the opposite of what it was used for earlier, and the tone of the attack was a lot less subtle than before. However, it is also interesting to widen the perspective towards

the Portuguese language, which in Mozambique appears as the language of the coloniser, but was also the language of Portuguese opposition too.

This poetry was written in Portuguese, but words from African languages were used in it, as well as Mozambican expressions, reflecting the new attitudes towards the language, in a manner that can be seen as a continuity of Craveirinha's earlier discussed approach – it was now the property of Mozambicans. This approach is also explicit in the foreword of a combat poetry collection: "Por isso também os poemas tinham uma função – uma única função – e dentro dessa função surge a utilização da língua portuguesa. Utilização como instrumento e não como adorno, exactamente como a espingarda utiliza a bala ou o morteiro usa a granada" (FRELIMO, 1973). As Firmino (2008: 5) points out, the situation is reminiscent of the myth of Prospero and Caliban. However, this revolutionary poetry was still accessible only for the minority that knew Portuguese and could read. Due to the language situation the nation was 'narrated' in this situation among the elites, and the poetry served to create a collective imaginary within this small group (Basto, 2006: 295).

One can only wonder if and how the nation and the new Mozambicanness was felt or expressed by the rural population, who did not speak Portuguese. Some hints can be found in the later Mozambican literature, as will be discussed further. As Ribeiro & Meneses (2008: 11) argue, the great anticolonial narrative was still rather Eurocentric and focused on bringing up the problems of colonialism and constructing a future for the country. Although it certainly contributed to forming an idea of Mozambicanness, it at the same time silenced the diversity to such extent that great contradictions were created: "Por exemplo, como situar a ideia da nação, veiculada pela luta anticolonial, em relação às outras grandes narrativas, como a etnicidade, a raça, as religiões, o género?" (*Idem*). On the other hand, while sketching the country's future, the process was also directed towards the past and aimed to create a uniform past as a background to the country's future unity. Colonialism was constructed as the unifying enemy of the Mozambican people. This story, bringing colonialism to its core, was another great narrative that aimed at a uniformity that did not correspond with many artists' view of their country, and these artists, through different forms, began suggesting alternative views (*Ibid*.: 12).

The centrality of colonialism is visible in much of the combat poetry, most of which makes use of rather uniform imagery and vocabulary. Mozambique appears strongly as a people, united by suffering and looking towards a new future, as in this poem by Jorge Rebelo, the future information minister, from 1971:

> Escuta o voz do povo, camarada
> Escuta, camarada, a voz do nosso povo.
> É uma voz antiga como o tempo [...]
>
> Ouve-la? É Wyriamu, é Mueda que choram
> os seus filhos massacrados...
> são camponeses que amaldiçoam os colonos
> que lhes roubaram a terra... [...]
> (*Poesia de Combate 2*, 91)

This can be considered as a new way of imagining Mozambique, very different from the imagery of the earlier work of the *assimilados* and the earlier writers such as Dias or Mendes – who hardly mention Mozambique – or poets like Craveirinha and Sousa, for whom Mozambique is described often in terms of Africanness (although especially in Craveirinha's work, of which some is included in the same *Poesia de Combate* collection with Rebelo's poem, there are significant changes according to different phases). Rebelo's poem also constructs a space of utopia through which the future can be imagined:

> Escuta a voz do povo, camarada.
> Faz com que ela seja a tua luz,
> deixa que ela te envolva como um manto
> invisível mas pesado
> imensamente pesado
> porque tem o peso de todos os sofrimentos
> que devem acabar,
> de todos os sonhos que devem tomar forma.
> (*Idem*)

The poetry was clearly in line with the new political approaches, not least because most of the writers were politicians who were deeply involved in creating these approaches in other areas besides culture.

Moreover, as Basto reveals, FRELIMO also excluded a certain type of poetry from its combat poetry collections: those that re-wrote Portuguese literature, especially Camões' *Os Lusíadas*. Basto argues that these experiments were ignored, or perhaps not understood by FRELIMO. She considers that while combat poetry is located outside the colonisers' ground, these poems were located within that ground. They can be seen as a form of subversion that is

located beyond the dualistic setting in which combat poetry is based. These poems, written mainly under pseudonyms by FRELIMO militants such as Tchaíle, Chinyakata and Maguni, should also be seen in the context of New State policies which emphasised the role of literature. It is not surprising, then, that *Os Lusíadas*, closely related to the discoveries and the Portuguese Empire, was attractive for these kinds of re-readings and for the alteration of its meanings in a manner that can be considered through Bhabha's concept of Third Space. For the same reason, it could be argued that it is not surprising that Maguni picks up the figure of Adamastor, which Fernando Pessoa had earlier picked up from Camões in his *Mensagem*. Moreover, as Jared Banks (2000) has brought up, this figure can be seen as being referred to in *Ualalapi*, which will be considered in the analysis of it. This kind of strategy, familiar from other previous colonies and discussed in much post-colonial theory, has not been discussed widely, and also gains a different tone for most of the writers having been unknown, unlike the more discussed examples of this practice, such as Aimé Césaire's famous play *Une Tempête*, a version of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (Basto, 2006: 193-213). In this context, the epic poem *As Quybyrycas*, written by Portuguese António Quadros (presented as written by a fifteenth century poet Frey Ioannes Garabatus) who lived in Mozambique, can be mentioned too. It was published in 1972 and is a reworking of *Os Lusíadas* to represent the negative sides of the discoveries. Earlier he had written a famous piece of combat poetry called *Eu, o Povo,* under the name Mutimati Barnabé João, presented as a combatant of the fight for liberation and also for a while, taken as such. His works reveal the ambiguity that was present even in this phase too, not least for bringing up the potentiality of fiction.

An interesting comparison can be built between some of the approaches from Africa and a Brazilian idea of antropophagy in literature. Whereas in the African context the so-called European elements are discussed in terms of either eliminating them or peacefully including them in a hybrid expression, anthropophagy brings up another attitude. It refers to modernist movement that was inspired by Oswald de Andrade's *Manifesto Antropofágico* (1928). It is an approach that takes the tools of the coloniser and uses them against its tradition, by devouring and carnivalising the European tradition. This approach changes the power relations and could enrich the reading of African literatures by problematising the hybridity. It can be used as an approach towards the language use of writers like Mia Couto as

well. It is also interesting to consider Antonio Candido's suggestion regarding Brazilian literature and its relationship with Portuguese literature. For him, the dialogue is a way through which the Brazilian literature becomes conscious of itself (Candido, 2006: 117).

Under the leadership of Samora Machel the aim in the first few years of independence was to create social integration, for which the main tool was to spread literacy so that the whole population would be literate in Portuguese. The alphabetisation of adults was also an important task, but the results were scarce as the adults had little time for studying, and the exclusive use of Portuguese in the alphabetisation excluded many, especially peasant women. Literacy was seen as an element of the liberation of the power of the Mozambican nation and an important step towards independence (Lopes, 1998: 466). The role given to the Portuguese language could be seen as a legacy of Portuguese assimilation politics, but it can also be seen as the only possible solution in the moment of independence, when many urgent reforms were needed. It cannot be denied that Frelimo's politics were a success to some extent, as can be seen from the fast growth of basic education. Besides that, the use of Portuguese in informal situations, especially in the urban areas, increased (Gonçalves, 2000: 1). Furthermore, the relationship between Mozambicans and the Portuguese language changed: now there was a greater willingness to learn the language than during colonialism, and the local languages were nevertheless more valued than during colonialism (Dias, 2002: 139). However, the new role did not make the difficulties related to education or the lack of knowledge of this language disappear.

Although Mozambican independence and discourses related to the new way of being Mozambican changed the role of the Portuguese language, it still remained the language of the elite. While the leaders of the revolution emphasised equality and an end to discrimination, in reality the birth of a *homem novo* had some conditions attached. While the formulation of assimilation during colonialism was different, the conditions for becoming a citizen were strikingly similar to those set by Samora Machel. In both times, the inequality between the 'modern' Portuguese speaking elite, mainly living in the cities, and the rural, 'tradition' following population existed. Although the leaders did not emphasise the abandoning of the African languages spoken in Mozambique, the role given to Portuguese did not leave much space for other languages. It is also fair to point out that in the first years of independence the

language question was not the most urgent issue to be resolved. On the other hand, it can be considered that the problems in education and the unsuccessful nature of the colonialist's civilising mission worked in saving the national languages. Even though they are not official languages in Mozambique, they are still used in many contexts and there have also been attempts to revive them.

While the situation changed radically after the country became independent from Portugal, it is interesting to consider the similarities between the two opposing sides regarding the role of 'traditional' epistemologies in Mozambique. Jason Sumich reads the situation as a willingness to finally have access to the 'modernity' that the Mozambicans were denied during colonialism. As seen above, for the *assimilados*, who were officially equal to the Portuguese, the colour barrier existed, and they had, for example, only limited access to education and work opportunities.

> A FRELIMO estava também empenhada em esmagar as estruturas tradicionais que, na sua opinião, já não serviam o povo. Todavia, esta perspectiva sobre a tradição era profundamente influenciada pelos antecedentes sociais dos líderes revolucionários, que aspiravam à modernidade e se ressentiam profundamente do facto de o colonialismo lhes ter negado o acesso total à mesma. Para esta elite, um regresso à «cultura tradicional» não era uma opção realista. A cultura tradicional estava associada à derrota e à humilhação; era a causa da fraqueza que possibilitara a subjugação de Moçambique pelos portugueses (Sumich, 2008: 329).

It is interesting to compare Sumich's comments with Cabral's views, which were discussed in chapter one. For Cabral, similarly to Sumich, the middle class turns against the coloniser due to disappointment. However, Cabral argues that they turn to the tradition of the majority in this context and speaks of the necessity of re-Africanisation (García, 1999: 109, 128-129). This, though, seems to refer to an assumed anticolonial or even socialist tradition. In Mozambique, as mentioned, 'tradition' represented by the majority was seen as something passive and stuck in time, and it was not seen as a source of values that could serve as an alternative to colonialism. Still, the views of the leaders are similar.

Cabral emphasises the need to overcome the idea of what 'African' stands for. He argues that many of the aspects, such as animism or other beliefs or religious aspects, are phases that all peoples have gone through and then developed to become what they are nowadays. In Cabral's view the weakness of the local culture is that it is based on an idea of people being at the mercy of nature and uncontrollable forces: "Mas como já ultrapassámos

isso, sabemos que na floresta, no mato, nós é que mandamos, nós, os homens, não é nenhum bicho, nem nenhum espírito que está lá metido" (García, 1999: 47). Cabral's idea of development is in this sense in line with that of Eduardo Mondlane's and Samora Machel's (1975), and should be seen in the context of the colonialist ideas of the underdevelopment and incapacities of the colonised, but on the other hand, as can be seen in the Mozambican example, this also lead to underestimation and despising some local cultural and religious aspects (and the languages used in expressing them too, in the Mozambican case) in the name of 'progress'.

As Ania Loomba (1998: 21) argues, both capitalists and socialists shared the same idea of progress, since "for both, it included a high level of industrialisation, the mastery of 'man' over 'nature', the modern European view of science and technology" which interestingly supports the idea of associating "European colonisation with the triumph of science and reason over the forces of superstition, and indeed many colonised peoples took the same view". This approach is somewhat visible in Cabral's writing, as it is in the texts of Mozambican revolutionaries, and has also participated in the 'epistemicide', which further on raises the need not to limit the discussion to colonialism and its influence in the societies, but to also critically view its continuities even in the process of decolonisation.

Eventually, the reality challenged FRELIMO's project for creating a united Mozambique. As Jocelyn Alexander (1997: 5) writes: "Far from building a united and modern nation-state, Frelimo was driven out of large swathes of territory, and failed to deliver social or economic goods within them". Sumich reveals that it had plans for an education system that would reach all Mozambicans, but a lack of resources prevented the implementation of the plan. It was through this education that the new national identity would have been reinforced and the old society destroyed (Sumich, 2008: 335).

2.3.2 Towards diversity

A major obstacle for the projects of FRELIMO/Frelimo had for Mozambique was the civil war that started two years after independence and lasted until 1992. Frelimo had ruled out the traditional leaders and implemented their own centralised hierarchy. They also did not, at least formally, appoint the religious leaders or polygamists to administrative tasks on a local level

(Alexander, 1997: 4). Harry West and Scott Kloeck-Jenson consider that the view of Frelimo was that the traditional authority was a tool used by colonialism, and that these chiefs had not only facilitated colonialism, but also gained personal profit from it. They argue that the reality was somewhere between the ideas of the traditional authority as an authentic African way of organising communities, and the view of Frelimo. The authorities had not always gained their position as a result of the community's legitimation, but it cannot be said that all chiefs were in favour of colonialism. These chiefs, marginalised and humiliated by Frelimo politics, often co-worked with Renamo (*Resistência Nacional Moçambicana*), which fought against Frelimo (West & Kloeck-Jenson, 1999: 456-460, 470). The civil war showed that the 'traditional' leaders were not ready to step aside in the name of the national unity – although their motives for supporting Renamo cannot be read as a simple will to keep their traditional role. Although the reasons for civil war cannot be reduced to a simple confrontation between the values of the rural population and the new model imposed by Frelimo, among other factors, such as the role of international powers, it was related to Frelimo's politics towards the 'traditional' ways of life in the rural communities. Alexander argues that it was Frelimo's negative attitude towards the traditional authorities that turned the people against the party (Alexander, 1997: 10).

The country also faced significant financial issues, which were deepened by the civil war. As José Manuel Pureza, Sílvia Roque, Mónica Rafaeli and Teresa Cravo argue, this was in the background of the economical and political change. The socialist model changed to accept help from the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, symbolising a new approach towards the West. A discourse of strong economic success is a result of, and a condition to, the development of cooperation, while the dependence of the country on their 'external voters' is not brought up. Moreover, the results of this progress have not reached all: Mozambique is still ill-positioned in the United Nation's Development Programme's human development statistics (Pureza *et al*., 2007: 11-14). The narrative of success and the change in the values of freedom fighters has been discussed in Mozambican literature, especially in Mia Couto's *O Último Voo do Flamingo*, in which the division of the social groups also becomes visible.

Although the attitudes towards 'tradition' in a wider sense have become more tolerant (especially in comparison to colonialism, but also socialism), it still has a stigma of

superstition and backwardness. It may not be considered an exaggeration to claim that the 'tradition' can be valued – as during colonialism – as storage of the country's history and object of study. It also may not be an exaggeration to consider that it is used to express 'local colour' too. The model of development and modernity has changed though, from the Portuguese civilisation to the socialist model to that of neoliberal globalisation. North American culture has a strong position, and there are, for example, Brazilian churches gaining space. The situation can also be analysed through the concept of subalternisation – there is a vast group of silenced subaltern in Mozambique. This was the situation of the *indígenas* during colonialism, but affects also part of the population today, with low levels of education and little or no knowledge of Portuguese language. On the other hand, there are also lots of urban youths in Maputo that are to some extent part of both groups, and are even working towards a co-presence, for example, by combining modern music (such as hip hop) with traditional music, and singing or rapping in national languages.

The marginalised population seems to have become excluded on many levels – if being excluded is considered as not having their voice heard in decision-making and not being equal to the 'non-marginalised'. It can be said that their values, languages and religious views are not accepted as elements of contemporary, modern Mozambican society; they are considered as signs of living in the past and resisting progress – this view was established strongly during Machel's government (see, for example, Machel & Mondlane, 1975: 95). Here, though, it is necessary to point out that it does not imply that the 'disregarded' knowledges would appear as such to the latter, or that they would to some extent expect or require the recognition of the former. The issues emerge rather from the power relations and problems this causes in terms of democracy, and it is also necessary to point out that regarding cultural and religious aspects it isn't possible to consider that there would be such a simple division – and there are other kinds of divisions as well. However, this setting is further accentuated by the language situation, which is directly related to the social hierarchy in Mozambican society. Although during the socialist phase there were some attempts to create a Mozambican Portuguese, which would reflect the revolutionary Mozambican culture, the European norm of Portuguese did not lose its position (Firmino, 2008: 9-10, Dias, 2002: 21,

135-142). However, depending on the context, local expressions are employed too, among those who otherwise use a version of Portuguese that is close to the European norm.

The failure in the teaching and generalising of the European norm demonstrates the problems of education and the indifference the curriculum shows towards the local cultures and their particularities. Dias continues that the use of the Mozambican variety is mostly a sign of cultural and linguistic resistance, not of ignorance. This variety, however, is not standardised or exists officially. Dias also points out that Mozambican Portuguese should be established, as it would mark a linguistic identity and better represent the cultural identity of the Mozambicans, and would end the comparisons of it to the European norm (Dias, 2002: 130, 264). The language question is, as seen above, also related to the literary field. Much of the literature circulates only among certain groups of Mozambicans and these groups are also the consumers of other cultural activities that are related to language, such as theatre. However, not knowing Portuguese obviously does not mean that people live with no information or without culture either, and on the other hand, it is necessary to point out that it is not an issue that would affect all Mozambicans in all areas of their lives.

What is clear is that after the years of independence fighting and the early years of independence the cultural field became more open. A significant event was the establishment of Associação dos Escritores Moçambicanos (AEMO) in 1982 and the literary magazine *Charrua* in 1984 (Mendonça, 1988: 58-66). At this time the scene was very active, with literary dinners with international writers from Saramago to Gordimer as guests, and reading sessions in the neighbourhoods of Maputo – and in the radio too (Mendonça 2011: 117). The background to the emergence of novels in Mozambique can be traced to the 1980s as well. This phase can be understood against the background of combat poetry and its uniformity, and the role given to culture. As Ngomane (2004: 57) argues, it served to unify the people of Mozambique, bringing up the shared experience of colonisation, forced labour and massacres. However, this soon changed:

> Só que a Independência não trouxera, necessariamente, uma estabilidade à nova nação: junto com ameaças externas e internas, houve desmandos, abusos de poder, prisões arbitrárias e uma guerra "civil" que entretanto se iniciara (1976-1992). Estes factos actuavam como agentes de distorção e mistificação da realidade que essa literatura pretendia representar, reclamando de novos autores a urgência da invenção de uma nova expressão literária. Uma expressão, na verdade, condicente com o

universo do real que grassava, habitado pelo incerto, pelo absurdo, pelo trágico, pelo inverosímil, pelo insólito, pela fome, pela miséria.

This led to new aesthetic approaches such as Ba Ka Khosa's and Couto's innovative language use and narrative forms. Another way of creating distance from the earlier protest literature was a "mergulho nas raízes tradicionais" (*Idem*). As Ngomane (*Ibid*.: 57-58) points out, writers like Dias and Honwana should be seen as predecessors to these writers, especially when it comes to language. Also, significantly, it was in the early 1980s that the work of poets Rui Nogar and José Craveirinha gained a wider audience, and the same applies to Mendes' *Portagem* (Mendonça, 1988: 58-66).

The earlier phase was and is still being criticised, not always directly though, by various current writers, such as those that will be discussed in the literary analyses, among poets and other writers: "[F]oram e vão desafiando em diferentes perspectivas esta macronarrativa de sentido unívoco, conferindo-lhe uma plurivocalidade que coloca sob suspeita as rígidas fronteiras dos territórios geográficos e culturais com que muitos insistem em espartilhar Moçambique" (Ribeiro & Meneses, 2008: 13). This can be seen as one essential part of the literary decolonisation in Mozambique, whereas the time of combat poetry was a direct response to colonialism. In this sense, Basto's (2008: 83) view offers a comprehensive perspective: "O que está em questão não é apenas a afirmação de uma recusa em relação ao cânone oficial, para quem esta forma de poesia entrava em contradição com o fim de uma literatura burguesa e individualista, mas a possibilidade de traduzir outras realidades".

Although the Portuguese language retained its position as the language of Mozambican literature, the literary expression became more diverse. Moreover, Bento Sitoe published two novels in Tsonga: *Zabela* (1983) and *Musongi* (1985). As Basto argues, in many contexts the attention is now aimed at the words in a literary sense and to the literary means: language becomes a valid space of experimentation. Changes take place in poetry, where writers take up topics the revolution has disregarded as unimportant. Topics such as love and intimacy in this context have a subversive potential in questioning the official model of writing (Basto 2008: 78). Basto quotes Nelson Saúte who discusses the phases of poetry written in the post-independent era: "Eis o início de um percurso onde a nova linguagem elege o amor para o papel de comandante" (Saúte, 1987: 45 *apud* Basto, 2006: 189). Earlier,

emotions were seen as an irrational power that could diminish the hopes of a glorious future. The new approach was visible in the *Charrua* generation, and its most known representative is probably the poet Eduardo White. However, as Basto points out, the literary field was not uniform and there was continuous debate, which shows how the phase should not be seen as a simple change of paradigm. For example, the issue of who can be considered a Mozambican writer and on what grounds, emerged again, and extended also to questions related to authenticity (Basto, 2008: 99, 105).

A significant new voice was that of Mia Couto, who published his first book of poems, *Raiz de Orvalho*, in 1983. It is interesting that its preface was written by Orlando Mendes, who considered the work as courageous due to Couto's singular voice and expression, as Basto refers. This creates an interesting continuity from Mendes' work (who wrote poems too) to the later phases of Mozambican writing. It could, to some extent, be considered that these writers continued the work Craveirinha had started – opening dialogues and abandoning the dichotomies that marked the combat poetry. Basto, as was discussed above, sees Craveirinha as representing a more complex approach towards decolonisation (or, rather, ex-colonisation, how Basto puts it by quoting Craveirinha's description of his father as an ex-Portuguese) and bringing up the encounter between the language of the coloniser and the African languages and using Portuguese in poetry that was not in the favour of this coloniser. This approach, as will be seen, can be found in the works of Couto, which caused a debate at the time, but also, for example, in the work of Ba Ka Khosa. This interpretation is further supported by Craveirinha's position in AEMO, reflecting the liberty the association aimed for, instead of continuing the tradition of combat poetry (Basto 2008: 90, 92, 269).

Besides the changes in literary values, this shift marked the establishment of literary criticism and a new conception of the literary field too. The younger generation had close contact with the Eduardo Mondlane University. There was new strength and interest in literary activities. There was also an organisation of young writers named after João Dias. Hamilton describes that from 1982 onwards there were many literary events, including open-air cultural events with theatre and poetry reading. As Basto discusses, much was published in newspapers and magazines, which can be seen as a part of the tradition of Mozambican writing. Literature was also discussed widely in the press. Hamilton, similarly to Ngomane,

argues that it is in this phase that the history of the country was discussed from new perspectives, and re-mystified too. Social protest was also present, and the work of this generation could be seen as signifying the appropriation of their own culture in a new way. (Hamilton, 1995: 275-276).

This, then, was the atmosphere in which the first novels were written, with the exception of Mendes' *Portagem* and the colonial literature that was discussed earlier. Up to this time, Mozambique had been traditionally a country of poets, as well as storytellers – short story was a common form, as Matusse argues. He considers that the experiments in the area of novel were related to its prestige, but he also points out that most literatures take their first steps in the area of poetry, and other forms emerge later (Matusse, 2012). Hence, it can be deduced that this phase, perhaps representing the latest significant turn in Mozambican literature, was marked by experimentation in the area of content, but also in the area of form. The earlier works of João Dias and Orlando Mendes were in the background, but it could be said that this is the first time that Mozambican writers, after colonialism and socialism, were freer to experiment, discuss the country's past and cultural diversity, this way questioning and completing the earlier national narratives. This reflects the political situation in the country as well; abandoning socialism had opened doors, not only to the West.

This phase also meant that writers, no longer simply serving Mozambican independence, started to discuss topics unrelated to the country's state. It could be said that the writers were now allowed to imagine, to experiment and discuss different perspectives. This aspect can be seen in terms of sociology of absences and emergences, and epistemologies of the South. The writers, by taking a look of the diversity on many levels, start to pick up knowledge and social experiences that were not earlier discussed, or offer a new perspective towards them – as Paulina Chiziane (2012) said, there are many different cultures to write about. Moreover, this is a process that points to the past and to the future as well. It is a process that still continues, and this process will be discussed in chapter three. In a certain way, this freedom brought responsibilities, and the lack of earlier models to follow regarding the topics, content, and also form, represented and continues to represent a challenge.

2.4 Current literary field in Mozambique

Lusofonia is a relatively new term that brings Portugal together with its ex-colonies by the force of a common language. It is not a term that has an established meaning; besides the common language, it can be a cultural connotation or just mean the countries that have Portuguese as their official language (Madeira, 2003: 12-13). As was mentioned earlier, *lusofonia* has become an important platform for discussing language questions, and not only, as will be discussed furter. Moreover, it is also an important context for discussing Lusophone literatures. However, similarly to *francophonie*, it has also a problematic side to it. Since it can be considered an important factor in the conversation regarding Mozambican literature, especially from Portugal and Brazil, it will be discussed and questioned in the first subchapter. *Lusofonia* and CPLP have been critically considered by Alfredo Margarido and Eduardo Lourenço, for example, but not often from the perspective of Mozambique.

Lusofonia is not a significant factor in the literary field in Mozambique, which is currently in an interesting phase: there are new innovations, but also significant challenges both in terms of the conditions for writing and reading. There is also a new generation of writers alongside Ba Ka Khosa, Borges Coelho, Chiziane and Couto, who have brought new topics and approaches to the field, while there are also continuities from the earlier phases in terms of some themes. Moreover, there are also writers who have not entered the Lusophone canon of literature, but have been writing in Mozambique for a longer time, and who should also be discussed in order to provide a more accurate view of Mozambican literature.

2.4.1 *Lusofonia* and other dialogues

Although it is not possible to know what kind of expectations the readers may have, one of the possible contexts against which Mozambican literature may be read outside the country, and through which it is labelled and marketed, is that of Lusophone literature. Here, by discussing *lusofonia*, there is an attempt to pay attention to its Eurocentrism and to suggest other possible backgrounds and perspectives. This is also relevant when considering the literary field, influences and marketing of the books and the work of the writers. At the same time it can be seen as continuity: now African literatures are often labelled through the language they are

written in, which, according to Mendonça (2011: 133), could be interpreted as one more move that slows the acknowledgement of the autonomy of the national literatures. However, bringing up these challenges, which could all be interpreted as different forms of globalisation, does not mean that the local readers are not considered, or that Mozambican literature is not aimed at them. Furthermore, only the most famous writers are known outside the country and it is through them that the image and expectations regarding Mozambican literature are built, often ending up in generalisations, whereas there are writers who are not (yet) read outside the country who still belong to the canon of Mozambican literature, or can be considered as actors in the literary field.

In discussing *lusofonia* there is no attempt to create another Eurocentric approach by seeing Mozambican literature as a part of a wider, Eurocentric Lusophone tradition, but rather to see the concept from a Mozambican perspective. This process is in parallel to the wider process of decolonisation. *Lusofonia* also leads to a consideration of the role of Mozambique and its literature in globalisation and the new challenges it brings for writers. Furthermore, this theme is also related to 'decolonising the mind' of the readers, at many times located outside Mozambique and influenced by certain Lusophone approaches. Whereas, as will be argued, *lusofonia* does not necessarily have much influence in Mozambique, it is an aspect that writers have to confront. In various contexts *lusofonia* and its concretisation in the creation of CPLP have been seen as a way for the Portuguese to continue their presence in the former colonies. Margarido (2000: 6-7, 28) sees that *lusofonia* is based on an idea of the Portuguese language being the property of the Portuguese, and that by controlling the language in this way, Portugal is trying to recuperate some of its former greatness. Lopes (1998: 472) asserts that the establishment of CPLP is partly a response to Mozambique joining the Commonwealth countries in 1997, and to the preoccupation about the growing influence of French in Guinea-Bissau. The power held by language can also be seen as a way of compensating the marginality of the Portuguese in the European Union and in the globalising world (Madeira, 2003: 43).

If *lusofonia* was merely based on a common language, there would not be so many controversial characteristics to it. However, clearly there is much more to *lusofonia* than that – but what is it then? Eduardo Lourenço argues that if *lusofonia* was a matter of language, it

could only be discussed on the level of language – he refers to philology, phonetics and grammar. However, there is something emotional and affective about *lusofonia*, as the idea of a Lusophone world reveals. Lourenço considers hence that *lusofonia* is not only a fact, but a project which can also be seen as a utopia. Lourenço, discussing *lusofonia* from the Portuguese point of view, also argues that for the Portuguese there is an idea of a Lusophone culture, harmoniously shared by all of the Lusophone countries. This idea, in Lourenço's view, is a Portuguese creation – as much of *lusofonia* in general is (Lourenço, 1999: 174-175).

This idea is expressed, for example, on the website of CPLP in a document regarding the foundation of the organisation which refers to the countries that share the Portuguese languages as "[...] nações irmanadas por uma herança histórica, pelo idioma comum e por uma visão compartilhada do desenvolvimento e da democracia [...]" (CPLPa). The sentence reveals the way the unity is constructed: it refers to a common history and brotherhood, but also turns its back to the colonial past by underlining shared views on development and democracy. In the same document, reference is made to decentralisation in the form of organising the CPLP meetings in different countries. While CPLP was not imposed on the Lusophone countries by the Portuguese, much of the discourse seems to have a Portuguese point of view. The other countries are voluntarily a part of CPLP, but it can be argued that this participation is due to other reasons than that of a common history and brotherhood sensed in these countries towards each other. These kinds of expressions echo Lusotropicalist theory, also emphasising the brotherhood the Portuguese felt towards the colonised peoples. Moreover, this aspect seems not to have significantly changed, although the economical relationships between Portugal and Angola or Brazil have.

From Lourenço's views it can be deduced that for him *lusofonia* is problematic, since there is a strong emotional and cultural charge to it. However, the common language element already draws attention to the reason the language spread – colonialism. Questions of even greater interest emerge when common culture is brought into the picture. Is it possible to overcome the power relations and inequality in colonialism and claim that these countries share a culture? This also leads to another question: is there Lusophone culture and even more importantly, what is it? What unites these countries culturally, besides the colonial history and its heritage? Are the hybrid cultures with multiple influences and dialogues part of the

Lusophone culture? Are the discussions from the 1970s regarding local colour within the universe of *lusofonia* being repeated in the approaches towards, for example, Mozambican literature? This sort of imbalance is, in Lourenço's view, a result of the fact that *lusofonia* and CPLP are simply based on Portuguese ideas, needs and ideals. It is not acknowledged generally that the other countries do not share the views on the links that bring these countries together (Lourenço, 1999: 176).

As Mozambican sociologist Carlos Serra discusses, in Mozambique *lusofonia* is mentioned mainly in official contexts and when relating to Portugal. It is often also seen in a negative light (Niero, 2009). As was discussed above, in the Mozambican situation the Portuguese language has had a significant role in colonisation in a wider sense, and *lusofonia* can be considered as a continuation of this role. Moreover, this approach draws attention to the continuities of power relationships between the ex-colonies and the ex-metropolis. To discuss the language aspect of current Mozambican literature it is necessary to see, as Rothwell argues, the writers not as enriching Portuguese language when using it creatively, or when borrowing from oral literature. He argues that Mia Couto is often seen from this perspective: "Indeed, a problematic aspect of the reception of Mia Couto's work is the manner in which most critics privilege his 'innovative' or 'regenerating' use of Portuguese and often neglect other aspects of his texts. First and foremost, Couto is deemed to do service to the *língua portuguesa*" (Rothwell, 2004: 50).

It could be considered that one reason for the absence of critical analysis regarding *lusofonia* in Mozambique is the naturalisation of the term. It is rare to consider what *lusofonia* would mean to Mozambicans in general – let alone to Mozambicans with different backgrounds, from different social groups. *Lusofonia* as such is not an issue that would touch the people on a daily basis, but it could be argued that it is one of the discourses through which the Portuguese see their position in the world. The term is being used in political speeches as a concept that is not problematic. This naturalisation of the (Portuguese) content of the concept has led to a situation where it becomes a form of silencing the rest of the 'Lusophone voices' as a hegemonic discourse. Moreover, *lusofonia* could be seen as a positive way to deal with the colonial past – and when creating a positive image of the current relationships between the countries it possibly silences a more critical discussion regarding the colonial past. For

example, Alfredo Margarido (2000: 76) argues that *lusofonia* has served to distort and cover up the brutal colonial past.

The country's language situation also poses some challenges in considering Mozambique in the context of *lusofonia*. Simply put, Mozambique is a Lusophone country since its official language is Portuguese due to having been a Portuguese colony. However, as discussed previously, in the context of *lusofonia* it is common to refer to cultural affinities and shared ideas regarding development and democracy. The latter are not values that would be shared only among the Lusophone countries, and hence it is necessary to take a look at the cultural affinity, or brotherhood. The cultural diversity of Mozambique already raises some challenges. Could and should all these other cultures be included in *lusofonia* – even if they are expressed in languages other than Portuguese and if they have little influence from the Portuguese presence in Mozambique? Many of the Mozambican authors mould the Portuguese language in order for it to reflect the Mozambican reality. This action – questioning the 'official' Portuguese – can also be seen as a process that reflects the questions related to *lusofonia*. The process can be read as a symbol of the decentralisation of *lusofonia*, maybe in so far that the term could be used in the plural form. Moreover, writers such as Suleiman Cassamo, who has published short stories (*O Regresso do Morto* in 1987 and *Amor de Baobá* in 1997) and a novel (*Palestra para um Morto*, 1999), also question the limits of the concept of Lusophone writing, by bringing up the presence of the other languages through the use of their words, and in this way bringing up the question of principal readers – one who is not familiar with these languages does not have immediate access to his texts.

Eduardo Lourenço (1999: 179) points out sharply that "[s]ó para nós, os portugueses, a lusofonia e a mitologia da Comunidade dos Povos da Língua Portuguesa é imaginada como uma totalidade ideal compatível com as diferenças culturais que caracterizam cada uma das suas componentes".[8] This seems like a complicated question, even though CPLP's documents refer to equality and respect towards the national identities of each member (CPLPb). This question is also raised by the common usage of the short form PALOP (Países Africanos de Língua Oficial Portuguesa) or *África Lusófona*. Although using these terms can be justified in

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[8] As Mata (2004: 347) points out, the correct expression is *Comunidade dos Países da Língua Portuguesa*.

terms of practicality, it also points to views regarding a unity among these countries that share a common official language and a common former coloniser and its multiple heritages that have taken different directions, but which also are very different from each other on many levels. After all, even in the Lusophone countries there are significant numbers of 'Lusophone citizens' that do not speak Portuguese at all, or not as their mother tongues. Enders considers that the term Lusophone Africa makes no sense, as all of the five ex-colonies are nowadays in different situations. She argues that seen only from Lisbon the unity has a cultural basis and therefore the Portuguese language is seen as having an important role (Enders, 1997: 129). However, it can also be pointed out that many of the 'PALOP' themselves underline the common language and often the term Lusophone Africa is heard. Also, not all the links between the Portuguese language countries go through Portugal: Brazil, seen from Mozambique, is attractive in terms of education and culture, for example, while Portugal appears less modern and interesting. Whether this relationship should be considered in terms of *lusofonia*, is another question.

As mentioned above, there are other relevant perspectives to Mozambican literature, one of them being the above-discussed perspective of Phillip Rothwell regarding Mia Couto as a 'postmodern nationalist'. Whereas there are several readings that consider Mozambican literature alone as a national literature (which is a problematic term as such), there are also many that have colonisation and its consequences as a background – and lately, the implicit background seems to be rather often *lusofonia*. Pointing to the other dialogues, especially those with Latin American or Brazilian literature, is a form of avoiding Eurocentric approaches. It is no wonder that this approach has been brought up by Mozambican researchers, such as Gilberto Matusse (1993) and Nataniel Ngomane (2004). Matusse pointed out that in Mozambique Latin American, Brazilian and Portuguese literatures have always circulated more than, for example, other African literatures (Matusse, 2012). Also, many times names such as Jorge Amado or Guimarães Rosa are brought up when discussing the influences the writers may have from other writers. As Rama's (2008: 123-125) text reveals, in Latin America in turn the writers read European writers – not only the classics, but from the margins too, such as Nordic literatures, and in this sense it is interesting to consider the network of literary interaction.

Ngomane's thesis discusses the magical realism in the works of Mia Couto, Ungulani Ba Ka Khosa, Cuban Alejo Carpentier and Brazilian Guimarães Rosa. He brings up the similarities, arguing that the discussion regarding influences is based on ideas of hierarchy and originality, and looks for other approaches such as transculturation. This kind of approach avoids the problem of originality and copying since it relies on the thought that in a country like Mozambique, in which besides the pre-colonial cultures, there was a strong, imposed influence from Portuguese culture, another, independent culture emerged (Ngomane, 2004: 183). As Ngomane's reading shows, this approach frees the researchers from the weight of Portuguese culture and its influences as necessarily negative and pointing to continuities of colonialism – instead, the presence is not denied, but is seen as part of the background to current Mozambican literature.

On the other hand, colonialism does have a place in Ngomane's analysis. However, it is seen as a background to the similarities between the writers he discusses – for him, it is necessary to pay attention to social and historical factors that influence the phases of literature and cause some of the similarities. In other words, the possibility of finding similar aspects, such as magical realism, in Mozambique and in Latin America, is not a result of simple influences from the latter to the first, but instead it is related to the similar phases that the countries have gone through. In terms of literature, in both locations there was a phase in which literature was directly in the service of politics and revolution, but after that there was a search for new aesthetics and especially, a new language. This is also related to new kinds of readers, who are more interested in their own surroundings and not turning to Europe (Ngomane, 2004: 3, 30-31). It is interesting to consider the approach towards language from this perspective:

> É preciso lembrar, neste passo, que a língua de que dispõem os autores realista maravilhosos, seja o espanhol ou o português, é totalmente alheia à realidade profunda do povo e do seu quotidiano. É alheia às suas tradições, às suas práticas e à expressão dos seus sentimentos. Não havendo, porém, outra escolha que não fosse o seu uso, era preciso, além de revesti-la de novos significados, também modelá-la de acordo com a nova realidade que procurava expressar, uma realidade não escrita, mas falada. Desconhecida, mas viva (*Ibid*.: 41).

It is through these aspects – common denominators in history – that the link to other African literatures can be built too. This approach could also widen perspectives regarding the

use of oral tradition, which is another aspect that brings (not only) African countries and their literary traditions together: oral tradition and traditions that are 'outside' of the Western canon of knowledge have a stronger presence than in Europe, for example. As Matusse (2012) points out, reading of African literature in Mozambique has not been very widespread – due to a lack of availability of these literatures (in Portuguese translations), rather than a lack of interest. Similarities are present regardless of lack of direct influence, which supports Ngomane's approach too. From these another background, one that would not underline too much the influence of colonialism and Portuguese literature, could be constructed. Interesting approaches could emerge, for example, from comparative studies between current African authors from different countries, and not only from within the same language contexts. On the other hand, it is interesting to consider that currently, where colonialism and its continuities are getting mixed up with other global issues, there are new forms of connections emerging that can show similarities between African and European literatures, for example, such of the topic of immigration or other social issues. However, again, and as Ngomane points out, it is important not to end up reading literature as reproducing the reality in writing – as in this way literature appears simply as a result of social changes (Wellek & Warren, 1971 *apud* Ngomane, 2004: 117). Lastly, it could be argued that the presence of the Portuguese and Portuguese culture, regardless of *lusofonia*, is rather marginalised in the current literary field, especially if younger writers are considered. Their references from the media point to other directions too, such as North America, South Africa and Brazil, and while the Portuguese language has a strong role, for the rest the legacies seem to have lost their connection to the 'origin', which is an interesting aspect in terms of decolonisation and transculturation, too.

2.4.2 The literary field in formation

The literary field in Mozambique appears to be in an interesting phase. On the one hand, there are many young writers willing to publish their work, many literary events (poetry nights, publishing events, writing contests), literary associations (Kuphaluxa of Brazilian-Mozambican cultural centre, for example) and book fairs. On the other hand, the public spaces for literature seem to have diminished. Earlier, for example, many writers had their texts published in literature pages of newspapers or magazines, AEMO had a more significant role

in bringing writers together and generally the quality of the published texts is not as good as one would expect. Moreover, as Fátima Mendonça (2011: 14) points out, in Mozambique literature has not been included properly in the curricula or the education system and neither is there any national reading plan existing at the present time. Noa also brings up these questions and argues that lately the literary scene in Mozambique has become less lively. This is due to a lack of a culture of reading, the social problems affecting Mozambicans and also the issues that the editorial field faces (Noa, 2008b: 42).

Furthermore, books are relatively expensive and they are not being distributed properly throughout the country. As Ungulani Ba Ka Khosa, now the director of Instituto Nacional do Livro e do Disco, pointed out, the spaces that during socialism were bookshops, are now clothing stores or such, since, in his view, due to the economic and political shift, there is a need for quick profit and selling books does not produce such a return. Public libraries are also few and some schools keep their libraries closed – in fear of books being stolen by pupils, Ba Ka Khosa (2012) says. Therefore, books are simply not available to many Mozambicans since the price of a book can easily correspond to at least half of the minimum salary, and a network of public libraries does not cover all of the country – or even all of the capital.

It is also visible that books are being published quickly, without proper editing. Books are being printed with many spelling mistakes, and the printing of books that could have been improved significantly by simple editing and proofreading, raises several questions without simple answers. It reflects the social order in Mozambican society: the faster the book is in the market, the more profit can be made. Publishing in a fast pace keeps the writer in the spotlight too. It can also be seen as reflecting a concept of literature and writing that has probably changed radically in recent decades. Generally speaking, the romantic idea of a writer and the aura of literature have been deconstructed, but at the same time, the idea of literature has changed to something that needs to return quick results, and to a profession providing income. As a result, it seems that the writers in general do not necessarily take enough time for writing and editing their own work. It is also generally agreed that although there are a lot of writers, reading is not very common, which then reflects on the quality of the published texts. This has not really changed the position of writers in Mozambican society.

Writers are still considered intellectuals and, as such, also belonging to the higher social classes. It is perhaps due to this that there are so many young aspiring writers: writing is seen as a possible path, among other arts, to success in a society where the opportunities are few and competition is hard.

As Mendonça (2011: 17) describes, the situation has changed significantly from the 1970s and the 1980s, when literature had a significant role: "[...] assistiu-se à construção de algumas ideias que intervieram eficazmente na definição política de literatura nacional, como resultado da influência ideológica da Frelimo na então intensa vida cultural do país. Salientava-se o papel da literatura – com o relevo para a poesia – na construção da ideia de nação". She lists many reasons for the change, also quoting Francisco Noa's (Noa, 2007 *apud* Mendonça 2011: 15-17) article, which are related to political views, financial issues and values and to the problems related to education on all levels. Hence, there has been a significant change in a short time, and while the field may be more diverse, it is not as lively as it used to be. However, as Mendonça (*Ibid*.: 20) points out, the new information channels, such as internet or new television channels and even text messages "produzem novos campos na esfera pública, onde o debate de ideias se materializa em outras formas de percepção da questão identitária em geral, que inevitavelmente irão influenciar a forma como no futuro serão percebidas as formas artísticas incluindo a literatura nacional".

However, there are also new literary movements, and as an example one can mention the cardboard book movement. The first publishing house for cardboard books in Mozambique is called Kutsemba Cartão, and the idea has been adopted by other groups too. The idea, coming originally from Latin America, is to produce cheap books, and at the same time recycle. The covers of the books are painted in workshops on pieces of cardboard and the text is photocopied and then stapled to the cover. In this way the process of producing a book is already a result of group work and, at the same time, the covers end up being unique. In Maputo books have been provided this way to children whose parents would not necessarily be able to buy books for them. While the publishing process is very different from major publishing houses, the content can also be very different. Since the risks are minimal, young writers can publish their work, and more experimental texts can be published. Another aspect is the language question: since the costs of producing books this way are very low, it gives

freedoms, such as opting for some of the Mozambican national languages instead of Portuguese. Only the length of the texts is limited: they cannot be much longer than 100 pages.

At a book-publishing event I was able to attend, related to the *Primeiro encontro de livro de cartão*, certain issues were brought up by José dos Remédios, editor of the collection *O Campo, a Luta e o Saber* (2012*)*, and by the audience. He said that it is through the medium of cardboard books that he was able to bring together the texts and bring them to other readers. Remédios' comment reasserts what seems to be a general view among some young writers: they feel that their ideas and views are being excluded due to an elitist view of literature. The criticised approach is supported by university lecturers too, and not many believe in literary expressions that emerge outside of the academy, from writers that have not studied at third level. It is of interest to remark that in Remédios' collection there are texts by Ungulani Ba Ka Khosa (who was, significantly, also present at the book launch event), who can be described as belonging to the canon of Mozambican literature, by Lucílio Manjate, who is a university professor and a writer, but also song lyrics by rapper Azagaia, known for his sharp social criticism, and by female rapper Iveth. By bringing these texts together, Remédios' collection creates an interesting dialogue and brings the writers of different groups (or, in the context of the described elitism, representatives of 'low' and 'high' culture) together in a fascinating way.

However, it is necessary to bring up the question of quality too. One aspect is lack of editing (as discussed above), but there are other aspects too. It is relatively easy to agree that in order to become a good writer, it is necessary to read too. What has also become clear is that the reason is not only lack of willingness to read, but sometimes access to literature can be a challenge, especially for those who are not university students and/or do not live in the capital. Another question is what writers should read and what is available to them – reading world literature extensively in Portuguese translations is quite a challenge in today's Mozambique. As Matusse (2012) pointed out, African literatures in languages other than Portuguese are hardly available, as well as the classics of languages other than the canon of the Portuguese language. On the other hand, being a university student does not necessarily correspond to being an enthusiastic reader – and vice versa: for example some of the rappers producing interesting lyrics have read widely, but not in the context of university studies.

Although Instituto Camões and AEMO provide support to emerging writers, it seems that there is a need for more support or better information regarding the resources for young writers.

Another aspect is the discussion regarding language skills, or rather a lack of them. Although it is also the responsibility of the publisher to proofread the works, the wider background of the language question is present here too. The question of the norm of Portuguese is related to literature, and it is even contradictory to notice that much of Mozambican literature, studied in schools too, does not support the European norm taught at school and used in the media – Mia Couto's language, especially in the earlier works, and Suleiman Cassamo, whose short stories and novels extensively use words from the national languages are examples of this. Therefore, the 'official' norm is mainly present in Portuguese literature. Moreover, Hildizina Norberto Dias (2009: 406) brings up an important topic:

> Perante as "acusações preconceituosas" que se fazem à nova geração de escritores, costumo amiúde perguntar-me se tais críticas fazem mesmo sentido. Os escritores moçambicanos só podem escrever como o fazem porque essa é a variante da língua comum moçambicana que usam no seu quotidiano, na época histórica em que estão a viver. Essa é a variante que está a ficar registada e por mais que a critiquemos e que digamos que ela é apenas uma "criação literária individual", com a intenção estética de criação do belo por meio da linguagem, ela continua a ser usada, porque é essa a linguagem que os escritores conhecem.

Another aspect that is visible in the literary field in Mozambique is that the majority of the emerging (and current, known) writers are men. Besides Chiziane, Lília Momplé and Lina Magaia are the only woman writer that are more known. The women, even those who start writing, often leave writing aside after marrying and having children – there is no time and sometimes no support for female writers. This ends up influencing the topics and perspectives, although of course men can also write about women and from their perspective, as happens in Couto's latest novels, for example. The gender division further extends to the whole literary field: not many women are present either in the area of criticism or teaching of literature in Mozambique. However, changes can be expected in this area.

The new generation are introducing new topics, which is natural due to their life experience and social and cultural contexts being so different from the earlier generations. As Chiziane points out, there is no war and the writers have the opportunity to write in a calmer society, reflecting on the past and on the myths. Moreover, as Chiziane discusses, the opening

of universities in other parts of the country will affect the literary field too (Chiziane, 2012). The questions related to decolonisation, colonialism and postcolonial literature seem rather distant when seen from the perspective of current Mozambican literature. Even if the themes are present, they are rather in the background, and not the main topic of discussion. They point to hybridity and the presence of various cultural heritages, and globalisation is more present than, for example, colonialism. On the other hand, there are plenty of universal themes too, such as love and relationships. These aspects, altogether, point to the direction of a necessity for more global readings, without of course disregarding or avoiding discussing colonialism or its continuities when they are brought up. The change of the themes can also be perceived as a 'new' stage in the process of decolonisation.

Of course, there are also other important aspects, such as the limited access to education or the limited numbers of local readers, which influence the current literary field in the country, and the role of writers in society. The role of the publishers (including the Portuguese ones) is relevant when discussing novels – Noa (2008b: 43) argues that one of the reasons for novels to become a more popular form of literary expression in Mozambique is due to 'pressure' from publishers and readers. On the other hand, he argues too that the novel is also an expression that suits Mozambican society well, for "[...] as realidades africanas, em geral, e a moçambicana em particular, conterem em si uma fulgurante energia épica que pode ser vislumbrada nos cíclicos cataclismos naturais [...] e humanos [...]" (*Idem*). Rothwell's comment on Mia Couto's and Paulina Chiziane's publisher Caminho's work complements Noa's comment: "[it] is simultaneously problematic for its neocolonial overtones, since an agency in the former metropolis still mediates a product from the former colony and, in large part, determines its success or failure" (Rothwell, 2004: 27). Moreover, the establishment of the multinational LeYa in 2008 has caused discussion and criticism. Currently both Caminho and Mozambican Ndjira are its subsidiaries. The literary field, understood as an interaction between these different actors, influences also the choice of topics and forms of expression. As Leite argues, for a literary field or literature as a system to exist, besides writers, the reception of literature, conscious receptors, are necessary, as well as a mechanism that brings these two together (Candido, 1981 *apud* Leite, 2008: 47). For Leite (*Ibid*.: 73), this emerges within the

advent of independence, but the vision of Mozambican literature as a system becomes stronger after it.

It could be argued that if there was a literary field being constructed earlier, with activities related to it and new groups of readers besides the earlier ones, and also publishing houses and even more writers, the literary field currently faces new challenges. Of course, there are still readers and writers and publishing houses, but it is interesting to consider the role of literature for the younger, compared to the role it had for the older generations, for example, for those participating in the fight for liberation. Candido (2006: 144), discussing the Brazilian context and a different generation from what is being discussed here, argues that the younger are losing their interest in reading since they have other means through which information or entertainment is available, with less effort:

> A possibilidade de leitura aumentou, pois, consideravelmente. Muito mais, todavia, aumentou o número relativo de leitores, possibilitando a existência, sobretudo a partir de 1930, de numerosas casas editoras, que antes quase não existiam. Formaram-se então novos laços entre escritor e público, com uma tendência crescente para a redução dos laços que antes o prendiam aos grupos restritos de diletantes e "conhecedores". Mas este novo público, à medida que crescia, ia sendo rapidamente conquistado pelo grande desenvolvimento dos novos meios de comunicação. Viu-se então que no momento em que a literatura brasileira conseguia forjar uma certa tradição literária, criar um certo sistema expressivo que a ligava ao passado e abria caminhos para o futuro, — neste momento as tradições literárias começavam a não mais funcionar como estimulante.

Here, he is referring to radio, but the same can be applied to television, music and the internet (the two last often accessed by mobile phones) in Mozambique today. This is clearly not a situation that applies only to Mozambique, but it may have even more influence in countries where the literary field and literary tradition are still relatively new. It certainly also influences the reading skills if reading does not become a habit, although here of course it is necessary to bear in mind that those who don't read books may read newspapers, for example. In addition to this is the fact that literature is not easily or widely available, probably even less than would be expected. It could be argued that the reciprocity Candido (2006: 100) mentions, "literatura enquanto sistema orgânico, articulado, de escritores, obras e leitores ou auditores, reciprocamente atuantes, dando lugar ao fenômeno capital de formação de uma tradição literária", is not taking place exclusively within the national literature, but is extended to Portugal and Brazil, for example, where there are more readers and which are countries that

are significant players in the literary field, and also in terms of literary criticism and publishing of works.

It is also interesting to consider the Mozambican readers. Clearly, there are more readers than previously, and there is more academic discussion regarding Mozambican literature than previously too, but literature remains available mainly to the upper social classes of Maputo. Whereas reading may be possible now that it is available in a different way than earlier, the number of readers of literature is probably not growing accordingly, due to the 'competition' from other media. This reflects on the formation of a literary field and literary criticism. It is interesting to consider here Candido's (2006: 95) comment, although, again discussing a very different context:

> Com efeito, o escritor se habituou a produzir para públicos simpáticos, mas restritos, e a contar com a aprovação dos grupos dirigentes, igualmente reduzidos. Ora, esta circunstância, ligada à esmagadora maioria de iletrados que ainda hoje caracteriza o país, nunca lhe permitiu diálogo efetivo com a massa, ou com um público de leitores suficientemente vasto para substituir o apoio e o estímulo de pequenas elites. Ao mesmo tempo, a pobreza cultural destas nunca permitiu a formação de uma literatura complexa, de qualidade rara, salvo as devidas exceções. Elite literária, no Brasil, significou até bem pouco tempo, não refinamento de gosto, mas apenas capacidade de interessar-se pelas letras.

However, it is interesting to consider that most of the current Mozambican literature does not take a visible political stand in a similar manner as Ngugi, for example, it still strongly criticises the Mozambican society, which will be discussed in detail in the following chapter, but here it is interesting to explore the relationship between the political elite and the writers. Whereas during the fight for independence many of the future politicians wrote, nowadays politics and culture/literature are separate fields, and the politicians seem not to consider writers or literature as a significant part of society. Mozambican writers, at least the majority, are not criticising the country's situation or the politicians as directly as Ngugi, for example, in whose stories there is no doubt about the target of his critique. They are not, in the 'traditional' way, writer-activists, and it can be argued that their critique is also related to issues that extend beyond the country's borders and have much to do with globalisation.

2.4.3 Themes and writers

In order to provide a more vivid picture of some aspects of the current literature and the literary field, some contemporary writers and their work can be introduced to widen the picture of Mozambican literature beyond the most well-known writers. Here, again, the focus will be on novels, but poetry continues to be very popular among Mozambican writers. Many of the current writers have also written short stories, and often their novels have proximity to them. Most of the younger writers are published by AEMO, which still continues its series of new writers called *Colecção Início*. It is curious to point out that many of the books that are being published, except for the most famous writers, have a company sponsor. This feature has raised some questions, and also reveals much about the state of the affairs of the literary field.

Of the same generation of writers as Couto Marcelo Panguana and Aldino Muianga can be mentioned. They have been publishing short stories, are members of AEMO and have published in literary magazines. Panguana is also known as a journalist. His *Como um Louco ao Fim da Tarde* (2009) brings together in an interesting way the questions related to Western and 'traditional' medicine, and the way these sometimes are searched for in an eclectic way that does not respect the frontiers, especially in moments of turbulence. Religions are explored in a similar way and it also discusses the relationship between men and women. All of these topics are present in much of contemporary Mozambican literature, and of course, in other areas of discussion too. It can also be seen as a continuation of the processes that started in the 1980s and has links to the work of the novelists that will be discussed in chapter three.

One of the continuous themes in Mozambican literature is the suburb, which is present in Mozambican literature in many forms. Many of the writers are from these areas and naturally they are often described in writing. It would be easy, for example, to write an article regarding the depictions of the neighbourhoods such as Mafalala from the texts of Craveirinha to Borges Coelho's or even Guilherme de Melo's (discussed earlier in the context of colonial literature), so often do they appear in Mozambican literature – and interestingly too, in different eras of the history of the country. Noa (2008a: 38-39) points out that the meaning of space in African literature is significant (in different terms, such as physical, psychological, social, cultural, mythical, private and collective, he argues), and that in the Mozambican case

the suburbs are often present as this kind of space. The suburban space brings together different ethnic and linguistic groups, who are between the tradition and the conditions of their new space in or near the city. The difference between the city and the suburb is often not related to distance, but marked by other aspects: the suburbs represent (to an outsider) a labyrinth of poor houses and sand streets, and the language spoken in them is not (at least always) Portuguese. These kinds of depictions are present in the texts of Muianga, Borges Coelho and Melo, and often they gain more power for being described as a contrast to the rules and linear architecture of the city. It can be pointed out that, later on, in literature describing today's Mozambique, the young people have 'taken over' the city and appropriated it as their own space, even if it is accessible only by suffocating travel by public transport. Moreover, as Noa (*Idem*) points out, the relationship between the suburbs and the urban space is filled with tensions, but also with fascination.

For Noa, it is in Muianga's work that the suburb is brought up in a new way: as memories and as a symbolical space. In Noa's view, discussing the city-suburb duality is important in terms of understanding colonialism, territories and identities. Remembering, for Noa, is also an essential element of Muianga's novel *Meledina (ou a história de uma prostituta)* (2004), which takes place during colonialism and brings up exactly the dialogue between the suburbs, city – and countryside too (Noa, 2008a: 42-45, 48, 49). Another aspect that emerges from Muianga's novel – the same theme is present in an earlier story from 2002, *Rosa Xintimana* – is that of the relationship between white men and black women during colonialism. Whereas in the morning there is a movement from the suburbs to the town for making a living, at night there is another movement of white men towards the suburbs, which is, as Noa (*Ibid.*: 42) argues, one more version of the relations: "inscreve-se, neste sentido, numa longa tradição dominada pelas relações espúrias entre europeus e escravas, ou se quisermos particularizar, entre a 'casa grande' e a 'senzala'". To this, it can be argued, applies the same thought that Noa applies to remembering regarding the suburbs – both are areas or topics that are not part of the official history of colonialism, but are present as memories – collective, fictional or private. Bringing up these voices in fiction could be seen as one aspect of decolonial processes in the country.

When taking a closer look at the relationships, there are interesting aspects that seem reminiscent of earlier depictions of African women. They are described through their looks and physical features, whereas men are described through their merits. Muianga seems to bring up also the common stereotype of the sensuality and fertility of African women. He also includes a stereotype regarding Portuguese women, wives in the colony, as cold, ill and sad. On the other hand, he questions some stereotypes by letting the 'colonised woman' describe the 'coloniser', and also adds some ambivalence to the character of the coloniser. The novel is, indeed, the story of Meledina the prostitute, and not that of the white man. It seems that the social order and relationships between men and women in general is one of those areas that was, and continues to be a topic that causes discussion, and seems to be a difficult one to settle. The role of men and women is an area in which colonialism, globalisation and tradition seem all to have weight, together with sexism and gender hierarchies. Ultimately, it also reflects current questions, such as prostitution in popular tourist destinations, for example.

Similar themes are present especially in Paulina Chiziane's novels, including intriguing descriptions of older women 'selling' their daughters (often in a wider sense) to the white man in order to make a living. What is different, however, is that Chiziane brings up the question of skin colour and that of miscegenation, and the values attached to skin tone, in a sense continuing to discuss questions that Mendes brought up in *Portagem* – where there also is an older woman selling young girls for prostitution. This is a theme that Muianga does not touch at all, although Meledina has a child with a white man. In the texts of the younger writers, such as Sergio Simital, Élio Martins Mudender and Lucílio Manjate, born in the late 1970s and early 1980s, these themes are not often present either.

However, Simital's novel *Zé, O Talentoso Vagabundo* (2009) twists many of these aspects and brings up new urban experiences that are not often depicted. In his novel a young sculptor of traditional wooden statues, selling them on the street, falls in love with a Muslim girl, which for the girl's family is a taboo and causes much of the drama in the story. Here, then, the woman is from a rich family and the man is poor, the man is black and the woman is lighter, turning the previous narrative on its head, and updating it too. Tellingly, the story ends with the artist – Zé, the talented vagabond – winning the first prize in a sculpture competition, becoming successful, traveling the world and eventually marrying the girl he fell in love with,

having children with her and moving to a fancy neighbourhood and having several cars and envious neighbours. It could be seen as inverting many of the previous themes, but on the other hand, also repeating the 'from rags to riches' -theme. Ironically, it seems to represent much of what Ngugi would like to see eliminated from decolonised literature. It also says much about the values – visible to anyone visiting Maputo – where success is measured in wealth, and prestige is gained through possessions (even when access to these is gained through traditional arts). This process, in no way particular to Mozambique, could also be read as a reflection of the values and world views that are a result of colonialism and coloniality as a form of capitalism and materialism.

Whereas Simital's novel presents tradition in the form of sculpture as a means to take the main character out of poverty and giving him access to 'modernity', it is not present as a world view or values. However, it could be argued that the opposite takes place in Lucílio Manjate's novel *Os Silêncios do Narrador* (2010), which, not surprisingly, won the prize Prémio Literário 10 de Novembro. Here, it can be argued, the presence of the so-called tradition is taken to a new level, together with questions related to the narrator and writing in general. It is also clearly written for local readers, but on the other hand, bearing Candido's arguments above in mind, expects a lot from them, since it is not a very easy book to read and is, on the other hand, in dialogue with much of the novel's traditions and conventions, especially concerning narrating. It is composed of fragments that on some level are connected with each other, while the narrator refuses its traditional role, as the novel's title also points out. The imagery is different from what the readers of Mozambican literature are used to, but it is also remiscent at times of that of Ungulani Ba Ka Khosa's novels. The language is rather sophisticated, but not in a way that it would allow the other ways of speaking, part of the urban ambient, to be brought up as a curiosity – they seem to appear as natural variance and not inferior to formal Portuguese. At times, the language is reminiscent of Couto, to whom most Mozambican writers end up being compared, sometimes unfairly, and limiting the field of free experimentation – but Manjate's adaptation of language is less striking (although Couto's latest novel *A Confissão da Leoa*, published in 2012, is also more subtle in terms of language).

Manjate's novel brings up the 'other' rationalities even explicitly by the narrator who refuses to organise the text according to traditional conventions (which have been questioned in Western literature too, but on different grounds):

> Impressiona-me o repente na literatura, particularmente na nossa; provavelmente tenha a ver com uma concepção fatalista do mundo, próprias de sociedades, para uns, irracionais, dito sem nenhuns subterfúgios retóricos, para mim, cuja racionalidade é outra, a qual não nomeio exactamente porque permanecemos ágrafos, mas que ousam designar obscurantista e sei lá que mais, quando digo que no Norte produzimos relâmpagos caseiros (*Os Silêncios do Narrador*: 44).

In line with the narrator's declaration, the experience of the 'other rationality' is expressed through language and in the first person, which is a fresh approach, since in most cases it is described with distance and not reaching the language as such – or even in ways that are similar to anthropological depictions. It reaches the physical experience and is able to mould the language so that it can be depicted in a way that is understandable through (Portuguese) language: "Coisa incrível é que quando quis apalpar meu corpo para saber das minhas roupas a injustificarem tanto frio, não consegui, procurava-me e tudo eram só areias e mais areias, fosse estivesse transparente ou que só meus olhos caminhavam" (*Ibid*.: 75). At the same time, it shows the limits of language in explaining something that is out of the reach of language and the understanding of those going through these experiences: "Entenda, é que o Justino agora pode estar aqui, até me escutando ou mesmo falando em mim. Por isso me espelho com esta constância" (*Ibid*.: 16).

The reader, in turn, can end up in a process of intercultural translation and may notice aspects that draw attention to similarities instead of differences. The experiences that question views regarding the limits of the self and the narration – themes familiar from the works of Pessoa and Saramago too – are here based on the 'tradition', while at the same time they visibly join the wider tradition of questioning of these aspects in literature and by literary means. The experiences are described in a way that seems to bring together other experiences from different geographical areas, and to which a common denominator could be applied: being on the limits or the outside of the so-called Western rationality. One also notices how these aspects have become a symbol for disorder, and often represent negativity and the opposite of the rational, safe and understandable world. It is also curious to notice how much of the imagery – darkness, spider webs, snakes – is common and recognised most probably

among many different cultures. This way, it could be argued, Manjate's book can make the reader consider how thin the presence of rationality is, how often it is disturbed in various ways and how common these experiences are. He also manages to create a world in which all this is present in the same moment, instead of creating a polarised view.

When it comes to decolonisation, it is not something that would be instantly present in current literature. In terms of language, however, there is a clear tendency among the younger writers to not only use words from other languages, but especially to underline the Mozambicanity of the language they use. This is visible, for example, in Simital's text, in which Mozambican slang or local expressions appear in italics which, intended or not, puts even more emphasis on the words, but on the other hand, also underlines the idea of them not belonging to the written Portuguese language. This approach goes hand in hand with the tendency of the writers – Simital and Élio Martins Mudender – to bring up the experiences of the urban youth, which as such is not a new theme as seen above, but in the more well-known literature this section of the population is often left out. The urban youth and discussion regarding their lives is now provided by those who clearly have personal experience of what it is to be a young person (or man, as there are very few women writers in this generation) growing up in Maputo and its suburbs. For example, Clemente Bata's *Retratos do Instante* (2010) and Simital's novel fall clearly into this category. The description of this world is very far from the 'traditional' idea of decolonisation in literature since language seems to be appropriated, although not always in an unproblematic way, and most of the writers do not seem to worry about the values and ideals of Western literature – some might say this is also because they are not familiar with the classics.

Another interesting aspect is intertextuality, which is visible in Mudender's *A Cidade Subterrânea* (2011), where there are references to Dan Brown and in Manjate's *Os Silêncios do Narrador*, where there are references to articles in local newspapers, for example. Here, it is also of interest to point out that in Borges Coelho's *O Olho de Hertzog* this is taken to another level for one of the characters in his novel is João Albasini and his writings are constantly referred to. This reflects, on the one hand, the establishment of the Mozambican literary field within which intertextual references also occur, but on the other hand, references to literature like Dan Brown's novels place the Mozambican voice in a current global literary

dialogue. On the level of the language use the influence of Mia Couto is visible, although it is of course difficult to say when he is being imitated or referred to, and when the result is just a simple result of working with words and language in general. Couto's style has, however, most definitely left a mark on the literary language of Mozambique.

It could be argued though, that decolonisation as a wider process is clearly still ongoing. This is taking place especially with regard to values and world views. As will be discussed in the following chapter, this seems to be a challenge that when received and successfully tackled, can bring new approaches and question 'epistemological coloniality' in a way that seems not to be possible in Western literature, although it can also be said that there is a tendency to have more voices with different backgrounds in, for example, European literature, including immigrants and their descendants, for example. It is also important to consider other expressions in Portuguese, such as the rap music and lyrics emerging mainly from the suburbs – areas that earlier too had served as a space for social changes. These lyrics reflect, often better than literature, the experiences, problems and attitudes of the 'excluded' Mozambicans. The lyrics also echo situations such as the demonstrations against the rise of the price of bread (in 2010) and public transport (in 2008), and are also available to a wider audience than literature (Pöysä & Rantala, 2011). On the other hand, there are also writers among these people, but their works, as well as rap music, are marginalised by the elite, not least since they seem to represent a threat to their lifestyle, values and position. This, on the other hand, was not an obstacle for alternative movements being born earlier in Mozambique's history.

3 LITERARY ANALYSIS: MOZAMBICAN NOVELS AND DECOLONISATION

Esta diversidade de pensamento sugere que talvez seja necessário assaltar um último reduto de racismo que é a arrogância de um único saber e a incapacidade de estar disponível para filosofias que chegam das nações empobrecidas.

Falei das cosmogonias diversas e peculiares de zonas rurais de Moçambique. Mas não gostaria que olhassem para elas como essências, resistindo ao tempo e às dinâmicas de troca.

Mia Couto, *E se Obama fosse africano? e outras interinvenções*

The last chapter is an analysis of four Mozambican novels from the perspectives discussed above and under the general concept of decolonisation. Hence, it aims to respond to the question of what kind of processes of decolonisation can be detected in Mozambican novels and how they participate in the kind of decolonisation discussed above; both the earlier phases as brought up by Ngugi, but particularly in the wider sense of decolonisation related to questioning coloniality and globalisation. There will also be an examination of how they relate to past, present and possibly anticipate and discuss the future. The novels will be discussed in the order they were published: Ba Ka Khosa's *Ualalapi* (1987), Couto's *O Último Voo do Flamingo* (2000), Borges Coelho's *Duas Sombras do Rio* (2003) and finally Chiziane's *O Alegre Canto da Perdiz* (2008). The analyses are preceded by an overview and contextualisation of their works, whereby the choice of the corpus will be justified too. They are followed by a summary, in which the results of the analysis will be reflected on in light of the earlier discussion on decolonisation.

3.1 Overview and context

Paulina Chiziane, João Paulo Borges Coelho, Mia Couto and Ungulani Ba Ka Khosa are all authors who are actively writing at this point in time. It is through their work that a certain literary 'Mozambicanness' has been established, together with earlier writers such as José

Craveirinha, Noémia de Sousa and Luís Bernardo Honwana. The works of the aforementioned authors also set the horizons of expectation of those interested in Mozambican literature. The choice of their works for the literary analysis is related to their position in Mozambican literature, but even more to the content of their works. Their texts challenge preconceived ideas regarding both novels and African literatures. It could be argued that their singular approaches lead them to be the most representative authors of the country, with all this implies. Their work discusses, besides particular locations and histories, global and universal issues shared by people regardless of their nationality or knowledge of Mozambique or its history. These aspects allow those who are not familiar with the particular aspects to appreciate their writing, and it is also why they are not mere literary ambassadors of their country.

Moreover, the fact that these authors' work is being read abroad makes them interesting within the framework of my approach, considering the questioning of the 'single story', but also the social impact of literature – of course without forgetting the local Mozambican readers and Mozambican society. Their work is circulated in Portuguese speaking countries, and Couto's work especially has been widely translated, as well as Chiziane's books. All four authors have won literary prizes. Besides this, all of them appear at international literary events and in this sense too, participate in the Lusophone literary scene. In Mozambique they are public figures who give interviews, often not only related to their work as writers. Their comments, especially Couto's and Chiziane's, are brought up in the Brazilian and Portuguese media too, and in these contexts they are often representing their country. Their position in the literary field is also related to their popularity. All of them, with the exception of Borges Coelho, have held positions in AEMO, of which currently Ba Ka Khosa is the secretary-general.

Ba Ka Khosa and Couto have been present in the literary field since the 1980s, when they appeared as representatives of the new generation. Couto's phases as a writer can be seen as reflecting the literary field in Mozambique in general. When he published *Vozes Anoitecidas* (1986), a collection of short stories, he became a target of criticism. The debate concerned, documented in detail by Fátima Mendonça (2011) and Basto, his legitimacy to write about the peasants and African traditions since he is a son of white Portuguese parents

and from an urban area and hence would not know what he is writing about. Moreover, at this stage, his language was seen to make his characters speak bad Portuguese (Basto, 2008: 93). Mendonça brings up the same critique and considers that the reception of Couto in Mozambique continues critical, but that he is also appreciated by, for example, students, which Mendonça sees as a shift in the theory regarding the reception of Mia Couto's work (2011: 162-164). Not least due to his talent as a writer, he is currently popular in Mozambique too – even among those who don't read his novels, but know him as a public figure. It is interesting to compare his initial reception to that of Ba Ka Khosa's, whose *Ualalapi* for Luís Carlos Patraquim represents the new phase in Mozambican prose, searching to establish a new relationship with the past in the form of stories and considering questions of power (Patraquim, 1987: 45 *apud* Basto, 2008: 104). Ba Ka Khosa (2012) himself also argues that he did not receive criticism and that *Ualalapi* was well received.

Chiziane and Borges Coelho, the last two to start publishing novels, did not cause as much discussion because the literary field was already more diversified, and when it comes to Borges Coelho, the questions of authenticity and legitimacy had already been discussed and put aside. Among these four writers, he has also experimented most widely with different forms, and one could say that his works create the most distance from the assumed traditions of African writing. Chiziane, however, did gain attention for being one of the rare woman writers of Mozambique, along with Noémia de Sousa and Lília Momplé, and the first one to have written a novel. Moreover, as was discussed above, when Chiziane and Borges Coelho emerged as writers, the literary field was not as lively as earlier, in terms of literary debates too. All four have written short stories and Couto has written poems, whereas Borges Coelho has published cartoons.

Although all of them write in different manners and have different approaches as writers too, similar themes appear in their works. They all share a discussion regarding myths, and while they are different, they can be seen as bringing up what could be called an alternative history or a world view, contrasting those offered by colonialism or the revolution. While some of the other themes that are present in more than one of the four novels are rather obvious, such as assimilation or other aspects related to the colonial past, the presence of other themes can be surprising. For example, in both Couto's story "Lenda de Namarói" from

Estórias Abensonhadas (1994), and in Chiziane's *O Alegre Canto da Perdiz* the myth of women being the first humans and initially living without men, whose arrival destroys their harmony, is present. In many novels, such as Couto's *O Outro Pé da Sereia* (2006) and *Jesusálem*, Borges Coelho's *Duas Sombras do Rio* and to some extent, in *O Alegre Canto da Perdiz* too, the role of water and the river Zambezi is significant. In the mythology discussed the women are associated with the water, and water is also what divides the matrilineal North from the patrilineal South. The emphasis on the river is an interesting theme and symbol since the Portuguese and their presence is often represented by the sea. Another aspect closely related to nature, myths and respecting the traditional approaches towards nature is that of hunting, which is present in Couto's *A Confissão da Leoa* (2012) and *Jesúsalem*, but also in Borges Coelho's *As Duas Sombras do Rio*. Hunting is often also seen as a skill that was learned in a traditional form, but later used in different contexts, such as war or poaching. A figure that is repeated is that of the Portuguese who in the earlier phases of the Portuguese presence became part of the local communities, as is the case in Ba Ka Khosa's *Choriro* (2009) and Borges Coelho's *As Duas Sombras do Rio*. Another figure that re-appears is that of a witch or a healer, present in all of the novels discussed with the exception of *Ualalapi*, in which traditional knowledge is contrasted with the 'imported' one by other means. Moreover, these themes are not often brought up by other Mozambican writers. Although it would be interesting to compare the different treatment of the same topics by the different authors, here novels are chosen from the perspective of diversity too. The novels here discussed vary significantly in terms of language and the presence of oral tradition and narration, for example. In the following paragraphs the writers and their works will be discussed in more detail. They are discussed in the order they had their first novels published, and in this sense, in a chronological order.

Ba Ka Khosa's first novel, *Ualalapi* (1987) is his most known novel. He has published other novels and story collections too: *Orgia dos Loucos* (1990), *Histórias de Amor e Espanto* (1999), *No Reino dos Abutres* (2002), *Os Sobreviventes da Noite* (2005), *Choriro* (2009) and *Entre as Memórias Silenciadas* (2013). Ba Ka Khosa's work is known mostly in Mozambique, and is not widely available in Portugal, for example. On the other hand, his old works have been republished in Mozambique – and on the back cover of the new edition it is

stated that his works are being translated to English. Ba Ka Khosa was born in 1957 and both his parents were *assimilados*. His first language was Portuguese and he learned Changana when he moved to the South of Mozambique as a young boy (Chabal, 1994: 309). He worked for a short time for the Ministry of Education in Mozambique. His career as a historian is present in his writing, as *Ualalapi* and *Choriro*, both taking place in the past, show. Therefore, it is interesting to start the literary analyses with *Ualalapi* since it brings up questions related to the past and narrating the past. Moreover, it could be argued that it illustrates the shift of the 1980s, which could be described as questioning the established narratives and bringing up new perspectives to the past, which is an approach that unites all four writers here discussed. It also reflects the literary history in Mozambique at a time when the literary field diversified in terms of topics, and colonialism was not the main topic of discussion. Instead, attention was paid to the failure of independence, which Ba Ka Khosa (2012) considers in terms of rejecting cultural diversity. *Ualalapi* is also interesting in terms of genre, since it is a novel with proximity to short stories. Moreover, through *Ualalapi* interesting questions related to the language question emerge. Ba Ka Khosa's novels can also be considered as a form of sociology of absences for the way they introduce new aspects and narratives concerning Mozambique's past in a way that focusing on colonialism – or the narrative of the heroic independence – would not permit. His work offers many perspectives to the past while not choosing sides, but rather permitting the reader to see the ambiguity of past events and figures.

Ba Ka Khosa's position as a writer is far from that of a teacher telling the readers what they should think, regardless of his education and earlier profession. However, his novels do, in a more subtle way, educate the reader regarding their own (in the case of Mozambican readers) culture, by, for example, carefully explaining cultural practices. He mentions that the younger generations, even when they have some knowledge of cultural traditions, do not have profound knowledge of them since they were never taught at school. For Ba Ka Khosa, his principal contribution has been through fiction to trigger in the readers the necessity to look at their own culture in a critical way. For him, the writer is intervening in society this way, indirectly, by making the reader think about topics such as conscience and memory. Literature as an element of social changes is not as powerful as it used to be and for him it is exaggerated to consider that literature could lead to social changes. He argues that society sees the writer

differently though: he or she is expected to have important messages and Ba Ka Khosa mentions that it often happens that he is asked to write about social problems and expected to register and denounce problems as a citizen, through his writing. For this, the writers are respected and they are listened to as well (Ba Ka Khosa, 2012). Considering this against the views of Ngugi, Achebe and Jameson, it is clear that their view has been questioned and the African writers, as much as their Western counterparts, can choose their approach – it is not society that makes them become writer-teachers automatically. This, again, reflects the differences in decolonisation processes both in terms of culture and literature – and moreover, reveals that these processes are not uniform or linear.

After *Ualalapi* Ba Ka Khosa published *Orgia dos Loucos* which is very different from *Ualalapi* and more challenging to read since it is fragmentary and much more is left for the reader to interpret, starting with the context of the texts. In the stories there are powerful images that mark Ba Ka Khosa's writing, and death is one of its principal themes. In it the distance from the theories of decolonisation is even wider than in *Ualalapi*, and it could be argued that Manjate's *Os Silêncios do Narrador* is quite close to it at times. *Choriro* (2009) shows that he is still interested in the country's past. It is a complex novel that takes place in nineteenth century Zambezia and tells the story of a Portuguese man who ends up becoming a local chief, treated as one and seeing himself as one too. A similar character is already present in *Orgia dos Loucos*, in the story "A Solidão do Senhor Matias". This, already mentioned, 'character' is known from history, and their presence was sometimes brought up as a proof in the context of Lusotropicalist discourses of respect of locals, their culture and habits, and the adaptability of the Portuguese. Cafrealisation was the term used to "stigmatize the Portuguese men that yielded their culture and civilized status to adopt the ways of living and thinking of the 'cafres', the blacks depicted as primitive savages" (Santos, 2002: 24). However, as discussed by Ba Ka Khosa, it is given a new dimension and widens the established history of colonialism told in Mozambique. The reader also ends up considering the proximity of fiction and 'official' history – sometimes Ba Ka Khosa's novel is reminiscent of a history book and leaves the reader wondering how much of the novel is based on imagination and how much on facts. The interest shown towards the country's history and the fearlessness in terms of writing about difficult subjects is also confirmed by his latest novel, *Entre as Memórias Silenciadas*

(2013), which discusses the re-education camps of the socialist period. They are shortly referred to in *O Último Voo do Flamingo* and in Borges Coelho's *Crónica da Rua 513.2* (2006) too.

Mia Couto is the most translated and widely known Mozambican writer, whose books have also turned into movies. His parents were Portuguese emigrants and Couto was born in Beira in 1955. He has worked as a journalist, also for the Mozambican government in the early years of independence, and is a biologist. His first published work was *Raiz do Orvalho* (1983), a book of poetry, and after that he published short stories, with *Terra Sonâmbula* (1992) being his first novel. Since that he has continued to write novels, such as *A Varanda do Frangipani* (1996), *Um Rio Chamado Tempo, Uma Casa Chamada Terra* (2002) and short stories, such as the collections *Estórias Abensonhadas* (1994) and *O Fio das Missangas* (2003). For him, writing novels was a natural route and he does not see it as a very different form of expression from poetry (Couto, 2012). Brugioni (2012: 72), on the other hand, considers that novel might seem an inappropriate label for Couto's texts, since, as in *O Último Voo do Flamingo*, the chapters are rather independent, which for her also points to a fragmentariness which she sees an essential element of Couto's work. Couto has also published chronicles and is a very productive writer. *O Último Voo do Flamingo* was published in 2000, and a film of the same name and based on the novel was released in 2010. His latest novel, *A Confissão da Leoa,* was published in 2012. Although it marks a change in his language use, which according to Brugioni (*Ibid*.: 124) can be seen already in *O Outro Pé da Sereia*, it continues to discuss similar themes as the earlier ones, such as the mysteries of life, different views regarding truth and facts, and death and love, with the exception of this one focusing more on the position of the women.

Mia Couto's works have been studied widely as well, in Mozambique and abroad. It could be argued that he has been able to write about his country in a way that has global appeal, or that even though his texts are full of local details, they also deal with global issues. This is the case with *O Último Voo do Flamingo*, in which UN soldiers, globalisation, local politics and myths come across. Rothwell sees that it was this novel that marked a change in Couto's position, and it is the first one of his works that can be seen to criticise globalisation and Mozambique's position in it, whereas earlier the questions were more related to

colonialism and Marxism (Rothwell, 2004: 20-21). *O Outro Pé da Sereia* deals with these aspects as well, discussing the presence of NGOs and the views by foreigners of Mozambique and Africa, while in *O Último Voo do Flamingo* the epistemological questions are more emphasised. It is also of interest since it is perhaps Couto's most well known and translated novel alongside with *Terra Sonâmbula* on which a film of the same name has also been based.

Throughout Couto's work there are themes that re-emerge. In this sense, *Jesusálem* is illustrative: it brings up the relationships of fathers and sons, myths such as those related to women and water, and the memories of the war. On the other hand, it also emphasises themes such as the ambiguity of gender and the problem of relationships, which is taken further in *O Outro Pé da Sereia*, in which there are direct references to relationships between women and allusions to those between men too. *O Outro Pé da Sereia* also pays more attention to the position of women, which is a theme that is taken up in *A Confissão da Leoa* too. It also continues the discussion regarding the relationship between corruption and the presence of international donors and builds an interesting dialogue between locals and foreigners and their often contradictory views. On the other hand, there are also new topics that are being introduced and discussed in a new light, such as the slave trade in *O Outro Pé da Sereia* or violence against women in it and in *Jesúsalem*. The variety of topics and characters can be seen also in relation to Couto's (2012) response to his reasons for writing: through writing he can be many people and have different identities.

Given the way Couto is known outside Mozambique and the way his novels have influenced the ideas the readers – who may not know the country – have about the country, he can be seen as one of the principal voices of Mozambique. However, Rothwell (2004: 17) argues that this may also be seen as problematic, since his parents only came to Mozambique in the 1950s, he is white and his work is influenced by Portuguese literature. While labelling writers according to their origin is problematic, and on the other hand, defining Mozambican literature has always been challenging, here it is curious to see how he is accepted and widely popular in Mozambique. Instead of seeing Couto's position as a writer through this perspective, it may be more fruitful to see it through what being Mozambican is in the first place and from what kind of a background it emerges. Moreover, Couto's role as the 'voice' of

the country is not only related to him as a writer, but he participates actively in public discussion, publishes articles and gives lectures.

Couto's position as a writer is quite different from the other writers discussed here. He openly discusses the role of the writer and his position in society, and furthermore comments on society in his other texts, such as chronicles, more directly. As was mentioned earlier, he has discussed the position of the (African) writer questioning the expectations towards their choice of topics, but also bringing up his commitment to society. For him, the role of a writer is to write well, and a writer is not an activist since he does not use a normal, daily language. The writer is not obliged to take part in public discussions, yet he ends up having a role in society. However, the capacity a writer can have in changing his surroundings – or the world – depends on his writing skills (Couto, 2012). In this sense, it could be argued that he discusses a topic that could be considered as decolonising the role of African writers by emphasising the literariness of their position. For all his productivity, it is tempting to allow the non-fictional texts to guide the reading of his fictional works – and to a certain extent this happens in the following analysis as well.

With regard to the question of literary decolonisation, Couto does not believe the novel as a form of expression to be problematic – for him it is not necessarily a Western form and he does not consider the frontiers between the genres when writing (Couto, 2012). If considering decolonisation as Ngugi wrote about it and how he implemented it in his work, Couto seems to be very far from it. Rothwell (2004: 28) sees that throughout his work, Couto shows an awareness of the Portuguese and Western influences in his writing, but instead of 'eliminating' these influences as Ngugi would, they are distorted and in this way questioned: "He disrupts the paradigms of Western orthodoxy as he fashions a Mozambican identity by turning European epistemology into a raw, repackageable material". Furthermore, although the oral tradition is not present as songs or as an oral narrative by the introduction of a narrator, the inspiration from local proverbs and myths is. Hence, his decolonisation could be seen in context with the idea of questioning Western thinking and its assumed universality, which does not permit philosophies from the poorer nations to be considered as relevant (Couto, 2009a: 23).

Paulina Chiziane has introduced new themes in a new way, which has become the principal approach towards her work as a writer, often considered from a feminist perspective. She writes about issues that have not been widely discussed in Mozambican society, such as polygamy and women's position and role in Mozambican society. Although she writes about the often-difficult situation of women, she also criticises women for facilitating colonialism or polygamy, for example. Chiziane was born in 1955, and published her first novel *Balada de Amor ao Vento* in 1990. For a long time she was working full-time and writing in her spare time. Before publishing her first novel she had published some texts in Mozambican journals and has published the following novels besides the first: *Ventos do Apocalipse* (1996), *O Sétimo Juramento* (2000), *Niketche: Uma História de Poligamia* (2002) and the topic of this analysis, *O Alegre Canto da Perdiz*. After these novels she published *Andorinhas* (2009), three short stories on Mozambican heroes: Eduardo Mondlane, Ngungunhane and Lurdes Mutola. In November 2013 she published her latest work, a biography of a traditional healer: *Por Quem Vibram os Tambores do Além?* It remains to be seen whether Chiziane will return to writing novels – she has not discussed the change of genre, it seems.

Chiziane's cultural background is, according to her, strongly Mozambican – in an interview she explains that her father let the children use only their mother tongue Chope at home and tried to protect them from the coloniser's culture. Chiziane emphasises this background, although she sees that the marks left by the cultural domination by the Portuguese is a part of her too. She mentions that the oral tradition, in the form of stories told by her grandmother, for example, is an important influence on her works. Chiziane also explains that it is challenging for her to express herself in Portuguese since it is not her mother tongue: she needs to translate and recreate the language, and in this process much is lost (Chabal, 1994: 292-300). Moreover, she says that for her it is a challenge to write formal Portuguese and even when she does, the other languages and 'Portugueses' enter her text (Chiziane, 2012). However, she sees that Portuguese is the only possible language for those writers who want to reach Mozambican readers. For Chiziane, Portuguese is a Mozambican language and the property of Mozambicans (Martins & Caldeira, 2011). Furthermore, she points out that there is no single Mozambican Portuguese, but rather various ones, depending on the mother tongues

of the speakers. Hence, in the North of the country a different Mozambican Portuguese is spoken than in the South of the country (Chiziane, 2012).

Chiziane says that she exposes the stories of the women, and that her writing can be called a protest. She sees that the traditional role of women is very hard, but on the other hand, the situation has not improved much. Nowadays, women work even harder, but equality has not been achieved (Chabal, 1994: 298-299). The women in her work reflect, however, the fact that the women are not simply silently suffering victims, and Mozambique has also been praised for having more women politicians – even a prime minister – than many countries. Chiziane, not perfectly at ease when called a feminist writer, points out to the reader that writing from a woman's perspective is as natural as writing from a male point of view. Her criticism towards the position of women in society emerges in her description of their daily lives and in that way brings the difficulties and inequalities to light. She has clarified her position in an interview: "Ao contrário do feminismo radical que considera que a mulher deve encontrar um espaço de independência em relação à sociedade, nos meus livros a mulher luta por um espaço de liberdade dentro de uma relação de interdependência e complementaridade com o mundo masculino" (Leite, 2003: 77). Leite argues that in her novels Chiziane shows the results of colonialism on culture, but also analyses the situation of women in the phallocratic society in which women are subject to exploration. Due to the nature of society, women are not aware of their rights (*Ibid.*: 76). While one could ask what kind of rights they should be aware of and if there is a general agreement regarding them, Chiziane's most discussed novel, *Niketche*, reflects Leite's argument. It is a story of a polygamist whose wife finds out that he has children with other women too and decides to take action. The official wife brings all of her husband's women together and they question his role and actions by unifying forces. Hence, the lack of awareness of their 'rights' does not leave the women without a space of manoeuvre.

Whereas Ba Ka Khosa discussed some silenced aspects of Mozambican history, Chiziane brings another, new perspective to it too, also discussing questions related to (collective) memory. Although she has written on various topics, her novels all deal with the perspective of women – which she says is natural, since the feminine world is her world – which the male writers have not discussed in the same way for not being able to (Martins &

Caldeira, 2011). Women, their role in colonialism and their position in current Mozambican society belong to the silenced stories, and women's voices have rarely been heard, especially that of the 'ordinary' woman. As Anne McClintock (1995: 5-6) points out, both colonised and coloniser women's experience of imperialism is different from that of the men, and since men have mainly written this history, the issue of gender and imperialism has not been widely discussed. This is what Chiziane (2012) also mentions: women and men experienced colonialism differently. Chiziane discusses the voice of women in most of her novels, interestingly often together with other silenced aspects such as witchcraft (*O Sétimo Juramento*), polygamy (*Niketche*), and race issues (*O Alegre Canto da Perdiz*). *O Sétimo Juramento* brings up challenging questions related to the encounter of different world views, such as the fear towards traditional healers, but also similarities between mythologies of different origins. It also explores the relationship between witchcraft and accumulation of riches, which can be seen as a criticism towards capitalism. The question of prostitution is also brought up here. *Niketche*, which is probably Chiziane's most well known novel, by discussing polygamy in an urban context brings up a topic that while not rare, has not been written of in Mozambique. It has, however, been discussed by writers such as Senegalese Mariama Bâ and Ghanaian Ama Ata Aidoo. Another aspect that is often present in Chiziane's novel is a dialogue between Christian values and the so-called traditional values. The work on a biography of a male healer could be seen as a sign of the liberty as a writer she treasures, and not as abandoning women.

  O Alegre Canto da Perdiz brings up the question of skin colour, which, as the author points out, is a topic that has not been discussed – often or widely, it could be added (Chiziane, 2012). Moreover, it places the discussion in a specific context: that of Zambezia. While her other novels also raise new aspects and perspectives, *O Alegre Canto da Perdiz* discusses a long time span, from colonialism to the current day. It also brings up multiple voices and three generations, which makes it a rich subject for analysis. Hence, besides specifically bringing up the perspective of women's experience in various historical phases, it discusses a topic that has not been discussed earlier in such depth. Choosing it for the analysis provides one more perspective to the past, while the novel also directly refers to the future. It also has topics that build a dialogue with earlier Mozambican literature, such as Mendes'

Portagem, but also with the other novels here discussed, especially *O Último Voo do Flamingo*, when it comes to assimilation, and myths, when it comes to *As Duas Sombras do Rio* and *Ualalapi*.

With regard to the idea of 'traditional' decolonisation, as defined by Ngugi and the Nigerian critics, Chiziane has not brought it up as a uniform process. However, she denies being a novelist: she writes long stories and feels more at ease with oral tradition than the 'traditional' European novel. She considers that she does not belong to the world of European novels and represents a different way of telling stories (Martins & Caldeira, 2011). As an example she gives *O Alegre Canto da Perdiz*, which she considers a long and emotionally difficult story, for which she introduced shorter, individual stories within the story to give it more oxygen (*Idem*). It is appropriate then to conclude that for her, this is not a technique that belongs to the traditional novels. She does not discuss these aspects as a part of African novels, and would rather not participate in the discussion regarding genres – again she wants to be free from all of these categories and labels (Chiziane, 2012). This approach could be seen as a form of liberation from the discussion regarding African novels and their relationship with European novels, and as such brings up the question of decolonisation.

Borges Coelho is the last one of the writers discussed here to have published a novel, and *As Duas Sombras do Rio* (2003) is his first novel. After that he has published both short stories and novels, of which *O Olho de Hertzog* (2010) is probably the one that has gained most attention. Borges Coelho was born in Portugal in 1955 but shortly afterwards his family moved to Mozambique. He is also – or perhaps principally – a historian, and Mozambique's wars and Borges Coelho's research on them are visible in his novels too. He has also published scientific articles, some of them related to events and locations that are present in his fiction, as is the case in *As Duas Sombras do Rio*. His versatility as a writer is revealed through *As Visitas do Dr Valdez* (2004) and *A Crónica da Rua 513.2* (2006), for example. In the first, a rare view of the life of young man who works as a servant to two elderly women is offered. It also questions the power relationship between the three in a very curious way. In the latter, there is a vast collection of different characters, from Portuguese families that flee at the time of independence to an Indian shopkeeper and to local families. It also introduces Samora Machel as a character of the novel. His latest novel, *Rainhas da Noite* (2013),

confirms the versatility: it discusses the lives of Portuguese women who lived in Mozambique due to their husbands' positions. It reproduces a diary, which appears in a dialogue with the notes of the writer, who writes the book decades after the diary was written. Hence, it discusses one more new perspective: that of the Portuguese women in the colonies and their role in the society. It also experiments with the narrative technique.

While most of Borges Coelho's novels still focus on Mozambique, *O Olho de Hertzog*, as mentioned, brings up new perspectives. The main character is German, and the events related to the First World War are seen through this character – even his moderately racist views are present, justified by the time the novel represents. Moreover, Borges Coelho reproduces the thinking of a culturally, temporally and linguistically distant character – although one that has had his voice heard in much European war literature. Another novel that further reinforces the idea of moving away from expectations towards an African writer is *A Cidade dos Espelhos* (2011). The location is not clear, but the novel's distant characters are involved in events taking place in an urban and cruel environment. It could be said that both writing a futuristic novel and its novelty reflects how much of the published African literatures still mirror the expectations towards 'African literature'. In this panorama *As Duas Sombras do Rio* seems rather conventional, but even as such it brings up aspects that relate to the topic of decolonisation: ultimately, it reframes or questions the expectations towards African literatures from within the paradigm of 'African literatures'. It also questions the borders set by colonialism and brings up an international scene without the presence of the former coloniser or other Western countries. In terms of maps and cartography it is closely related to the author's short story collections *Índicos Indícios I – Setentrião* and *Índicos Indícios II – Meridião* (2005), in which the stories have as their starting points different locations in Mozambique. It is also a novel that discusses myths and in a way updates them to correspond to the present day in a manner that has a connection to *O Último Voo do Flamingo*.

It could be said that Borges Coelho as a writer is the one who is least concerned with questions related to literary decolonisation. He seems to keep a distance from the discussions regarding African literature and refuses to take the role of a teacher-writer. This, clearly, could be seen as a form of liberation of an African writer: she or he is free to write on topics and from perspectives that are not traditional within the field. Borges Coelho, perhaps due to his

presence in both academic and literary fields, points out that in his view literature should be considered as such, without seeing it through society or as a form of sociology. Moreover, he points to the freedom of a writer, which is not present in academic research work. He also questions the idea of national literature and points out that he is not interested in the reader or the research of his fiction (Coelho, 2012). This approach, it could be said, permits the writer more freedom of choice regarding topics and not taking part in a social discussion as a writer too. Hence, it could be said that both Borges Coelho's position as a writer, as well as his novels or fiction, question and widen the discussion regarding African literatures and can also be seen in terms of literary decolonisation – against the will of the writer, without a doubt. Whether the question dissolves completely, then, is also an interesting issue. Moreover, Borges Coelho's position can also permit a different view on the other writers here discussed – and also questions further the marginalisation and limitations of the approaches that have the 'Africanness' of the discussed literature as a starting point.

Borges Coelho's approach towards writing fiction permeates other aspects of his writing too. In terms of language the approach is not problematised as is the case in the other novels here discussed. Moreover, the genre is also clear and he has not discussed topics such as the oral tradition or storytelling, neither do they have a heavy, underlined presence in his novels. Whereas it may seem that this might be problematic in narratives such as *As Duas Sombras do Rio*, which has a strong presence of local myths and traditions, it permits, rather, the reader to focus on the events – and perhaps even allows more space for the reader's imagination and interpretation. This is further permitted by a narrative technique that establishes a distance between the narrator and his subjects. However, in Borges Coelho's work the local knowledge is visible, as well as the respect towards facts and details. Moreover, as the analysis reveals, his novels do take part in important discussions regarding the state of Mozambique (and not only) and its multiple cultural heritages – regardless of the author's position.

It could be said that all four writers seem to participate in a wider process of bringing up the cultural diversity of the country and bringing up many perspectives to the past events. The eras that are being discussed vary between the sixteenth century (*O Outro Pé da Sereia*), the nineteenth century (*Ualalapi*), the twentieth century (including colonialism, the period of

transition and civil war) and ultimately, the present moment. It is as if there would be a process of questioning the single stories, which leads the writers to choose different topics and show how multi-faceted they are. This way they correct previous views on the country, its peoples, its past and its cultures. While this discussion takes place in other fields too, not least in academic research, bringing them up in fiction permits various perspectives and also more personal approaches, since the writers can provide (fictive) individual accounts of the events. Besides the richness in topics, the different approaches in terms of narration and language bring up additional perspective. This is a form of decolonisation as such since it questions the 'single stories' constructed both during colonialism and after it. This reflects the wider social processes, in which the nation is looking at its past and present moment, and from these discussions views and questions related to the future also emerge.

The choice of the novels for analysis can also be discussed from the perspective of expectations regarding African novels, since the emphasis has been on those that bring up the past, myths and continuities of colonialism. A different kind of approach would probably have emerged if different novels had been chosen, and although the choice was limited to novels, all the novels published by the four writers would have permitted many different combinations, and hence a certain randomness is present in the choice too, perhaps also related to the order in which the novels were read and what kind of thoughts they provoked. For example, in this choice novels that discuss urban realities were excluded and in terms of time span it would have been possible to discuss the past further too. However, the novels that will be discussed in the following subchapters, besides bringing up a diverse array of topics, themes and time periods too, build a dialogue between each other.

3.2 Ungulani Ba Ka Khosa: *Ualalapi*

Ualalapi focuses on the empire of Gaza, ruled by Ngungunhane who was born in 1850. Initially cooperating with the Portuguese, after many events and as a result of colonial policies, Ngungunhane ended up fighting against them, which finally led to him being captured and brought to Portugal. The empire consisted of various ethnic groups, united by

force by the Nguni army. Ngungunhane's grandfather fled to current Mozambique with his army after losing a fight to Zulu leader Shaka's army. Therefore, they were originally from southernmost Africa, from where they fled in early nineteenth century. The family has been present in Mozambican literature earlier too – Godido, besides being the name of João Dias' above discussed story and its principal character, was the name of Ngungunhane's son, taken with him to Lisbon. There, upon arrival, Ngungunhane, his wives and the other prisoners were taken around the town and shown to the curious crowds. The former emperor died in the Azores in 1906. Hence, Ngungunhane is a significant figure, or a war trophy, in the narrative of Portuguese colonialism. Ngungunhane was later considered as a hero in Mozambique, and his remains were repatriated later from the Azores to Mozambique. The urn was handed over to the state of Mozambique in 1985 when the country celebrated its first 10 years of independence. Ba Ka Khosa's text can be read as a deconstruction of these myths by showing both the fearless, but also cruel sides of Ngungunhane. It is also considered that the character of Ngungunhane has references to Samora Machel, the first president of independent Mozambique and another Mozambican hero (Laban, 1998: 1069-1070). The novel, therefore, is also a commentary on the phase after independence and reflects the wider discussion regarding it in the 1980s. Moreover, it can also be considered as referring to *Os Lusíadas*. Jared Banks (2000) considers that it, in many senses, builds a dialogue with it, and that there is a connection between the figure of Adamastor and the character of Ngungunhane.

The analysis of *Ualalapi* begins with a discussion regarding the novel and its principal characteristics and its novelty in the time of its writing, while also paying attention to the techniques used in order to discuss the past in a way that it becomes relevant both for the present moment and the future too. The second subchapter is a closer analysis of the novel's events through the background established in the first one, and the third subchapter has as its perspective the language of the novel.

3.2.1 History, memory and narrative techniques in *Ualalapi*

Ualalapi's significance is related to the literary history in Mozambique, because when it was published it was in many ways a pioneering work. Ana Mafalda Leite (2005: 155) lists the reasons for its novelty:

> [É o] primeiro romance moçambicano que visa tematicamente a questionação do passado histórico, fazendo uma releitura das fontes históricas da época anterior ao início da colonização portuguesa. A obra concretiza uma reflexão sobre a noção de cultura e identidade cultural, que é retrabalhada pela reabsorção de modelos de oralidade e de uma certa mundividência mágico-mítica.

In this sense, it is radical both in form and in content: for being a novel and in discussing the distant past, it abandons the models of combat poetry and its values both in literary and political terms. However, it is not a simple reaction to the earlier phase, but discusses much wider, even global, issues through the story of the Empire of Gaza. Besides that, it reflects the phase of Mozambican literature that was discussed in the previous chapters, that of the 1980s, together with the political shift in society. This can be also seen in its reception – according to Ba Ka Khosa it was received as a novelty and with excitement. It also marked a new way of writing that had not been experienced in Mozambique. Moreover, its significance has been confirmed by its reception later as well: Ba Ka Khosa says that even though it is obligatory reading for young people at school, they find it fascinating (Ba Ka Khosa, 2012).

The publication of this novel shortly after Samora Machel's death took place at a time when FRELIMO's negative attitudes towards 'tradition' were still fresh in peoples' memory. The context of the time when the novel was written escapes simple models in terms of society. It is not simply a society recovering from past atrocities, and it isn't clearly a society in transition either (if not from socialism to neoliberalism) – it was written in a moment when colonialism had come to an end slightly more than a decade before, but also at a time when the socialist model had failed. Moreover, it was written during a civil war. Hence, while there had been forced labour earlier, related to colonialism, there had also been re-education camps during the socialist phase, and the violence of civil war was still present. It could be suggested that the time of the writing in its ambiguity is reflected in the novel too, which can be interpreted in multiple ways. Moreover, just by choosing the period of time to write of, Ba Ka Khosa points to another history of the country, not created by colonialism, and which has very little to do with it culturally – and doesn't respect the geographic borders it created either. Colonialism is present in a way that is reminiscent of Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958), where only at the end the two sides come into contact, while the clash is in the air constantly throughout the story. Ba Ka Khosa's description of the Gaza empire, however, is more critical than that of Achebe's of the Igbo communities.

Although *Ualalapi* raises the past, it is not brought up as a cultural or political model. Instead it could be seen as a warning to the people. It questions the views regarding a glorious pre-colonial past which was disturbed for good by the arrival of the foreigners and from which alternative values to those of the coloniser could be searched for. At the same time it brings to the surface the problem of the 'progress' offered by the government following colonialism. It discusses the diversity both in the sense of culture and history, denied by Machel's government in its narrative of *homem novo*. It could also be seen as a reminder that Mozambique's cultural heritage is not a uniform one, but based on different cultures and values, which are often not limited within the country's borders either. Furthermore, there had been hybridity and cultural exchange prior to the Portuguese colonialism, which in the novel is represented by the parts where there are references to different habits, for example, between the Nguni invaders and the other peoples that were part of the empire. Whether this could have been brought up with similar emphasis by discussing contemporary Mozambique is an interesting question, since it reveals how a view constructed from a temporal distance can provide a background or a mirror against which the current events can be reflected. Ultimately, as Ann Rigney (2008: 352), discussing cultural remembrance, points out, "[f]amiliar figures from earlier texts function as coat stands on which to hang new, often radically opposing versions of the past or as a wedge to break open up a hitherto neglected theme." In this sense, *Ualalapi* comes close to the novels that re-write earlier ones, such as Coetzee's *Foe* – just that in Ba Ka Khosa's case the references are to a real historical character and narratives related to it.

Ba Ka Khosa explains that the idea for *Ualalapi* emerged when he was teaching the history of the Gaza empire. He discusses that it was written in an era when the government was searching for its own references, and the Gaza empire was one of its great references in the fight against colonialism. Ba Ka Khosa says that at this time the oral tradition was still lively, and the depictions of Ngungunhane and his empire were very different from those that were brought up by FRELIMO/Frelimo's narrative of the country's history. As a result, Ba Ka Khosa decided to discuss this in literature and create his own fictive reading of it (Ba Ka, Khosa 2012). The fictiveness and the idea of truth are also underlined in the author's note,

playing with the concept of truth and its different degrees and giving the text multiple meanings and possibilities of interpretation:

> É verdade irrefutável que Ngungunhane foi imperador das terras de Gaza na fase última do império. É também verdade que um dos prazeres que cultivou em vida foi a incerteza dos limites reais das terras ao seu mando. O que se duvida é o facto de Ngungunhane, um dia antes da morte, ter chegado à triste conclusão de que as línguas do seu império não criaram, ao longo da existência do império, a palavra imperador (*Ualalapi*, Nota do autor).

The reader is also guided by Agustina Bessa-Luís's quote preceding the text: "A História é uma ficção controlada" (*U*: 8). Prior to the first chapter – or story – the reader is challenged to consider the different depictions of the emperor in the beginning of the novel. On the first pages there are alternating depictions by Portuguese Ayres d'Ornellas, who took part of the military action against Ngungunhane's empire, and by Dr. Liengme, a Swiss missionary who stayed four years in Ngungunhane's court. The latter describes Ngungunhane as an immoral and erratic monster, while d'Ornellas describes him with respect and admiration. However, these are written testimonies by outsiders, although they lead the reader to the problematic of the character. The story itself, then, is another vision – that of the 'insiders' living in the court, hearing and transmitting the oral histories related to the Gaza empire. Hence, it questions the narrative of both the coloniser (ambiguous as such) and the liberation fight, and can be seen as an attempt to recover the alternative narratives and take a look at the processes in which the former were constructed, in order to show their nature as 'controlled fiction'. Moreover, since Banks (2000) sees *Ualalapi* as a reconsideration of *Os Lusíadas*, with multiple references to it, it could be seen as the third narrative, which too becomes questioned. Moreover, the multiplicity of layers becomes visible when considered that the national epic had a significant role during the twentieth century discourse in Portugal – it was another narrative taken from the initial context and employed for new purposes, similarly to how Ngugunhane's story became one of national resistance.

These aspects can also be considered through the concept of memory. With memory being flexible, and collective memory dynamic, they become useful tools in establishing new views with regard to the past and hence act as agents of change which, furthermore, have significance in terms of the future too. As Aleida Assmann & Linda Shortt (2012: 13) write regarding memory and political change, "past is an essential resource for future". The flexible

character of memory becomes emphasised in Ba Ka Khosa's novel, together with the aspect that memories are not equal to past, but rather representations of it – in this case, by literary means. Moreover, memories are heterogeneous, and hence it is possible that different memories co-exist, sometimes causing friction. The phases of political shifts, such as the transition period in Mozambique, in terms of memory, mark a shift from counter-memories to normative memories, which is what took place with Ngungunhane (*Ibid.*: 3, 4, 8). However, in this case, the other memories falling outside the opposing views (although not as polarised as one would expect, but rather diverse as such) represented by colonialism and the liberation fight, have silenced the memories of the people, transmitted and stored in oral tradition. What is necessary to distinguish though, is that Ba Ka Khosa takes part in the discussion using different means to his predecessors – not formal writing of history or public events, but a novel. It does not rely only on official sources, nor claim to be telling the truth, but instead it creates memory through a process, to which Birgit Neumann (2008: 334) in her discussion regarding the literary representation of memory says:

> However, on the textual level, novels create new models of memory. They configure memory representations because they select and edit elements of culturally given discourse: They combine the real and the imaginary, the remembered and the forgotten, and, by means of narrative devices, imaginatively explore the workings of memory, thus offering new perspectives to the past.

In this sense, *Ualalapi* can have an impact on how the reader sees the past, and is hence a process of "negotiation of cultural memory" (*Ibid.*: 335). Many of the narrative techniques in *Ualalapi* are related to this aspect: the process of producing memory is made explicit.

The novel consists of six different stories describing significant events in the empire and underlining the disastrous future through omens. The first story discusses a soldier called Ualalapi, the second the death of Mputa, accused of insulting Ngungunhane's first wife, the third Damboia and her mysterious death, the fourth a siege, the fifth Ngungunhane's son Manua and the last one is Ngungunhane's last speech. Each story has a dedication, sometimes accompanied by a quote from the Bible. The chapters are separated from each other with short, numbered texts called "Fragmentos do Fim". Some of these fragments are quotes from reports, in this way breaking away from fiction and creating intertextual links to documents of the time, all of them referring to the end of the empire. The presence of the fragments can be considered as elements of metafiction, which can be seen as taking the questions of truth and

fiction to the level of the text. This could also be seen as extending to the relationship between written novels and oral tradition, and the genre of historical novel too. The presence of the fragments and oral tradition together, as a totality, points to how oral tradition cannot be written down as such, but that rather it becomes present – and changes – through a process of writing fiction. Moreover, bringing up oral tradition as a source gives it a different role than it had earlier, during both colonialism and the socialist period. Metafiction is mostly associated with modern and postmodern literature, similarly with questions of the 'truth' or the truths, which creates other possibilities for the background for reading Ba Ka Khosa's work, besides those of historical novel and oral tradition.

Similarly, the narrator, who in *Ualalapi* seems at times omniscient but also introduces supernatural events, can also be considered in terms of metafiction. The reader is not sure who the narrator is and how trustworthy he is. Also, little by little the reader understands that there may be a 'real' narrator, and the stories were actually being transmitted orally, which further questions traditional forms of narration. Whether the narrator is the same in all of the stories remains as a question though – and further points to the question of genre. Initially, the tone is as if there is a third-person omniscient narrator, who appears to be contemporary with the characters, but later on there is a change, and the narrating changes from objective to personal, bringing up the many faces of the so-called truth and facts to which the author's note seems to refer to as well. This happens when Damboia's death is discussed:

> Quanto ao dia em que Damboia, postada ao umbral da sua casa, sentiu o sangue viscoso a escorrer pelas coxas, prenunciando o luar interminável da sua morte, as opiniões divergem. Malule, que guardara a casa sinistrada de olhares intrusos, dissera-me que nesse dia as copas das árvores foram arrasadas pelo vento maldito que vinha carregado de conchas das profundezas abissais do mar distante (*U*: 44).

Here the first person appears and seems to be discussing the events with temporal distance. The narration brings attention also to the aspect of transmitting oral history and myths through generations. This idea becomes more prevalent towards the end, where there is a dialogue between a writer with his papers and an old man at a fireplace, telling the story of Ngungunhane he had heard from his grandfather, a setting that relates to the ideas of traditional storytelling. The reader, then, ends up considering the earlier voice, which is also significant in terms of the genre: is this a different short story written from a new perspective or is the author slowly introducing the 'real' narrator to the reader?

The novel was published when many novels had not yet been written, and poetry continued to be the most popular form of literary expression, together with short stories. Matusse points out that *Ualalapi* was initially considered a collection of short stories and was labelled as such on the cover of the book until the 1990s. This approach is supported by the structure of the novel – the stories are clearly separated from each other, each has a dedication and a quote preceding it, and they are named too. Moreover, in the author's note on the first page, Ba Ka Khosa speaks of "estória(s)", this way pointing to the possibility of seeing the book as a collection of short stories. However, even in singular it is referred to as *estória* instead of novel. Hence, the genre is not of significance to the author, who rather this way presents himself as a storyteller and questions the narrow definitions of the text(s). For Matusse, *Ualalapi* and Mia Couto's *Terra Sonâmbula* (1992) represent the first, cautious attempts to write novels. For him, they can even be considered as a form between the novel and collections of stories (Matusse, 2012). Ba Ka Khosa, who has also written short stories after the publication of *Ualalapi*, says that for him writing a novel came naturally. Novel was the genre that best served his writing necessities. He realised that he could not handle *Ualalapi* as stories – it would have limited it too much – whereas the novel permitted him to tell longer stories with more information and characters (Ba Ka Khosa, 2012). This approach is in contrast with the discussion caused by the genre in the colonial criticism that Chinweizu, Jemie & Madubuike (1983: 111-112) refer to – novels written by African writers were criticised for being short stories that are combined in a novel.

If one considers the 'traditional' literary decolonisation discussed in chapter one, it can be argued that Ba Ka Khosa's work is creating a distance from the Western tradition on many levels. Hence, in the Mozambican context it introduces new approaches, while it can also, at the same time, be seen as looking for an expression that suits its purposes – which is probably the reason it has similarities with Ngugi's later novels too. Ba Ka Khosa's choice of content easily falls into a form that has close links to oral narration – he borrows from existing narratives, transforming them by writing and translating, not having to consider how to forge the oral tradition for discussion of aspects that are normally not discussed in oral narration in the form of stories (which was Ngugi's problem, as he wanted to discuss contemporary life). Moreover, while Ngungunhane is the main character and is constantly present, most of the

stories have other principal characters, and the main focus is not on the phases of the characters, but rather on the events and their impact on the community. In this sense, it is reminiscent of Ngugi's choice, who had already struggled in his earlier novels to find a form that would permit him to focus on a community, rather than on one principal character (Ngugi, 2011: 77). It could also be seen in the light of the commentary made about much of the African works that they are epics instead of novels, or that the novels are national allegories. The former approach is supported by the way in which the phases when Ngungunhane is insignificant to the community are left out, and neither does the reader get an insight into his thoughts or feelings. However, an alternative and a more productive approach can be brought up from the perspective of memory.

Since what is at stake are narratives regarding the past and its appropriating and forging afterwards as a memory or a narrative, Ba Ka Khosa is able to bring up the selectivity and the differences in what is remembered and what is forgotten in different phases and by different people in different social positions by not focusing on only one character. It also makes sense that a community is described from various perspectives and even from different temporal distances. As Neumann (2008: 338) points out, "Texts with a multi-perspectival narration or focalization provide insight into the memories of several narrative instances or figures and this way they can reveal the functioning and problems of collective memory-creation". Hence, in *Ualalapi*, there is a discussion regarding whose version of the memory is approved, whose is actively disregarded and whose is considered irrelevant. Ultimately, the focus on a community (or an empire) instead of one character can be seen as providing the opportunity – by means of fiction – to discuss the different versions, especially those marginalised versions that question the hegemonic memory and can become a counter-memory too, as Neumann (*Ibid*.: 338-339) argues.

Moreover, the multiplicity of perspectives, including that of "Fragmentos do Fim", reveals the 'fictiveness', in the sense of Bessa-Luís's quote, of the hegemonic memory. This aspect in *Ualalapi* becomes underlined in its intertextuality, constituted by the quotes, the references to oral tradition and to the narratives established prior to the writing of the novel: "Allusions to legends, fairy tales, myths, and other stories of dubious historical authenticity suggest that fact and fiction intermingle in cultural memory and that these fictions should thus

be treated as cultural documents in their own right as they shed light on what is actually remembered as a culture's past" (Neumann 2008: 340). Neumann (*Ibid*.: 341) also points out that the discussion regarding memories – such as Ba Ka Khosa's novel – has extra-literary dimensions too:

> Fictions of memory may symbolically empower the culturally marginalized or forgotten and thus figure as an imaginative counter-discourse. By bringing together multiple, even incompatible versions of the past, they can keep alive conflict about what exactly the collective past stands for and how it should be remembered. Moreover, to the extent that many fictions of memory link the hegemonic discourse to the unrealized and inexpressible possibilities of the past, they can become a force of continual innovation and cultural self-renewal. Thus, far from merely perpetuating culturally pre-existing memories, fictions of memory have a considerable share in reinforcing new concepts of memory.

Another central aspect that can be and has been brought up in the context of Ba Ka Khosa's work is that of magical realism, which can be seen as a new approach in terms of narration, but also as providing an alternative perspective towards the discussion normally bringing up Western influence in African literatures. For example, Gilberto Matusse (1993), and Nataniel Ngomane in his thesis (2004) and articles, have both discussed this aspect. Matusse (1993: 141) asserts that magical realism is, both in Africa and in Latin America, related to the desire to create distance from the hegemonic approaches:

> Parece fundar-se aqui, por um lado, rejeição do racionalismo, da abstração intelectualista, da tentação científica, e a consequente tendência para a criação de universos fantásticos [...], e, por outro, o discurso que rompe com a sobriedade, a harmonia e o comedimento, optando pela abundância de imagens, desregramento sintático e lexical.

This can be seen as an element of decolonisation and it is not only a simple protest or a literary invention, but rather points to the culture, society and history of the countries where this literature emerges. Matusse (*Ibid*.: 150) argues that in Ba Ka Khosa's work the fantastic is often expressed through extreme hyperboles, which is familiar from Gabriel García Márquez's works. He argues that his work has influenced that of Ba Ka Khosa significantly. In this technique, events or incidents begin 'normally', but end up having supernatural aspects – there are uncontrollable rivers and pools of blood, sweat and vomit, for example. The supernatural is further emphasised by a strong presence of death, omens and violence, and the powerlessness of the characters encountering them. These aspects are visible in *Ualalapi*, but also in Ba Ka Khosa's other works, such as *Orgia dos Loucos* (1990). All of these aspects

reveal the significance of Ba Ka Khosa's novel: it introduces various new approaches to the literary field, both in terms of the topics and questions it brings up, but also in terms of technique.

3.2.2 Histories of Mozambique in *Ualalapi*

A key to the novel can be found in its first chapter: it is narrated from Ualalapi's perspective and also named after him. Ualalapi was the soldier who killed Mafemane out of loyalty towards Mudungazi, who later takes the name Ngungunhane. Mafemane was Ngungunhane's brother and Ngungunhane was behind his murder. In this way, Ngungunhane achieved his position as the emperor after their father's death. While Ualalapi has only a short presence in the novel, he gives his name to the novel, which can be seen as a suggestion to the reader. It could be argued that it is significant also because Ualalapi is a soldier, and although apparently highly considered by Ngungunhane, he is one of those whose perspective is not normally present in the writing of history. The word *ualalapi* means the one who is sleeping. He, representing the people who take orders from Ngungunhane, ends up being an intermediary for Ngungunhane's power – he makes it possible by killing Ngungunhane's only adversary. In this way he is, metaphorically, the one who puts Ngungunhane in power and permits the suffering of the people under his violent rule based on fear.

The name could also be viewed in terms of people, the likes of Ualalapi, who allow the circle of abuse to continue. This setting is further accentuated since Ualalapi does not listen to his wife, who can be seen as representing popular wisdom. She asks him to refuse the task of killing Mafemane.

> – Sonhei com a tua morte.
> – Minha morte?
> – Sim.
> – Como é que morri no sonho?
> – Morreste andando. A tua voz sustinha o teu corpo, sem vida. Eu e o teu filho morremos afogados pelas lágrimas que não pararam de sair dos nossos olhos (*U*: 21).

Ualalapi kills Mafemane and after that disappears to the forest – his wife and his son die according to the prediction she saw in her dream. Furthermore, the chapter regarding Ualalapi ends in the following words, referring to Ualalapi's cry after he has killed Mafemane and vanishes in the forest: "E o mesmo ruído cobriu o céu e a terra durante onze dias e onze noites,

tempo igual à governação, em anos, de Ngungunhane, nome que Mudungazi adoptara ao ascender a imperador das terras de Gaza" (*Ibid*.: 26). This was also the number of years Machel ruled the country until his death (Leite, 2005: 160). The reference to sleeping could be seen as a call to the people to see their position and power differently, perhaps in order to break the cycle of continuous abuse. Here, it is already visible that Ba Ka Khosa's text can be read as referring simultaneously to colonialism and the socialism which followed it.

Most of the novel offers a perspective of those who lived in Ngungunhane's empire and who transmitted their views in oral tradition. They offer a new vision of the empire in a situation where neither one of the 'official' narratives fits into people's earlier views regarding it. Through these views, Ba Ka Khosa reveals an empire maintained by fear. This is emphasised by Ngungunhane in the novel too:

> E serei temido por todos, porque não me chamarei Mudungazi, mas Ngungunhane, tal como essas profundas furnas onde lançamos os condenados à morte! O medo e o terror ao meu império correrão séculos e séculos e ouvir-se-ão em terras por vocês nunca sonhadas! (*U*: 20).

However, the alternative view offers a view to the ruptures in the power too. For example, Domia confronts Ngungunhane in order to take revenge for her father's killing, and in this story Ngungunhane's greedy and cruel nature is revealed too: "Ultrajada e ferida no íntimo, e com os planos frustrados, Domia outra coisa não fez que cuspir na cara do rei e chamá-lo cão, coisa que ninguém, desde que o rei nascera, tivera coragem de dizê-lo de frente, porque de trás sabia que tudo falavam, mas de frente, nunca!" (*Ibid*.: 37). While Domia is killed afterwards, her act still reveals a fracture in Ngungunhane's power and the vulnerability of the empire too.

The perspective of the Portuguese, representing another vision of the empire, is expressed in writing, whereas the other vision is 'originally' presented as oral tradition. Both narratives tell of the end of the empire. However, there are differences in the way the presence of the end is expressed: in the stories it is present through omens and unnatural events that do not directly relate to the end of the empire, but show signs of it – and can also be considered as warnings against those questioning the stability of the order of the community. In this way, the whole period of Ngungunhane's rule can be seen as bringing the empire to the end. But when seen from the other perspective, that of the Portuguese, the end of the empire is related simply to war tactics and power questions, and from a wider angle, to colonialism and conquering the

world. This can be seen as revealing the different world views – the Portuguese perspective is brought up through the rational and presented in the form of legitimate documentation.

Most of the "Fragmentos do Fim" are quotes from documents. There are references to the heroes of the fight against Ngungunhane, especially to Colonel Eduardo Galhardo and his report on what happened. Here, it is interesting to consider that the narrator reveals how these reports are also biased, by taking the liberty to comment, invent and add more details to Galhardo's reports. Whereas the process of making a hero of Ngungunhane is implicit – and for the time of the publication of the novel it probably wasn't necessary to underline it to the readers – the process of making colonial heroes in Portugal, by omitting some parts and emphasising others, is explicit, as becomes clear in "Fragmentos do Fim (3)":

> «Estão cumpridas as ordens de V. Exa. A coluna do meu comando efectuou a marcha sobre Manjacase. Chegado a langua, provoquei o inimigo em combate, bombardeando a povoação. Gente do Ngungunhane apareceu no bosque que circunda e oculta o Kraal, em pequenos grupos, respondendo apenas com alguns tiros de espingarda ao fogo de artilharia da coluna, que os dispersou rapidamente.» [...]
> Assim começa o relatório à posterioridade do coronel Galhardo. Um relatório pormenorizado, prolixo, mas falho em aspectos importantes que o coronel omitiu, ao não registar:
> [...]
> – O roubo de cinco peles de leão que ostentou na metrópole, como resultado duma caçada perigosa em terras africanas.
> – O facto de ter, pessoalmente, esventrado cinco negros com o intuito de se certificar da dimensão do coração dos pretos.
> [...]
> A propósito deste homem, o então comissário régio de Moçambique (1985), António Enes, escreveu, anos mais tarde, nas suas memórias, o seguinte: «se na galeria dos homens ilustres estiver inscrita a bravura, a tenacidade, o respeito pelo homem, a bondade, o amor à pátria, o coronel Galhardo tem assento por mérito próprio» (*U*: 39-40).

Whereas the empire of Ngungunhane is presented as a violent one, the same applies to the Portuguese – hence it seems that attention is drawn to the similarities of both parties.

Ngungunhane's empire is based on significant inequality, as can be seen through the descriptions of different peoples – Domia's father Mputa is cursed as "animal semelhante aos machope" (*U*: 35) and the Tsonga are referred to as "vermes" (*Ibid.*: 33). The Nguni introduce themselves as the saviours of the backwards savages:

> Ganhámos batalhas. Abrimos caminhos. Semeámos milho em terras sáfaras. Trouxemos a chuva para estas terras adustas e educámos gente brutalizada pelos costumes mais primários. E hoje essa gente está com vocês, Nguni!

> Este império sem medida ergueu-o meu avô depois de batalhas incontáveis em que sempre triunfou. Nele espalhou a ordem e os costumes novos que trouxemos (*Ibid*.: 18).

This approach is not very different from the colonialist discourse and also applies to the leaders of independent Mozambique, who, as discussed earlier, were eager to eliminate the 'tradition' in order for the *homem novo* to flourish. The depictions of Ngungunhane's empire show how the power and social inequality were maintained. This can be seen in Ualalapi's thinking when he tries to decipher the bad omen signified by the appearance of pangolins:

> Não, é impossível, à sua família os ventos do infortúnio não chegarão tão já. Talvez a estes guerreiros, pensou, e viu-os cabisbaixos, como se temessem que a terra se lhes abrisse aos pés, tropeçando por tudo e por nada. A estes também não, pertencem ao vulgo, e ao vulgo a infelicidade sempre lhe surgiu, desde o princípio dos tempos, sem enigmas, às claras, como as suas vidas vulgares e sem história e destino senão o de nascerem para servirem aos superiores até à morte (*Ibid*.: 14).

This excerpt shows how, regardless of the idea of progress and saving the people from their backward ways, they are still seen as not having the same value as those belonging to the higher classes. This, again, draws lines both to colonialism and FRELIMO's power and to today's neoliberal politicians too.

Again, however, there are alternative interpretations too. For example, the atrocities added to Galhardo's reports could also refer to the construction of a narrative that sets Ngungunhane out as a defendant against the powerful and cruel Portuguese army. As Ngomane (2004: 56) argues, after independence the suffering under colonial power was brought up as a unifying force and for this it was necessary to describe the cruelty of the colonisers. While judging the veracity of the atrocities is not necessary, it can be argued that the Portuguese reports have left them out, and hence there is not much written evidence of them. They are produced as non-existent, although they might still be present in the oral tradition (also among those who participated in doing them). On the other hand, there are also depictions of Ngungunhane in the stories based on the oral narratives that could be borrowed from the written accounts of the empire, in which he is represented as an insatiable, greedy and drunken emperor. Hence, the narratives intersect and feed each other, leaving obvious only the fact that the written history is untrustworthy.

Moreover, there is also a point where the two world views meet. This happens in the story of Manua's diary. He becomes ill while traveling on a ship and his illness grows to surreal dimensions:

> Um fio que ia-se alargando até ocupar a extensão do corredor saía do camarote. Era vómito. O vómito com tonalidades vermelhas e amarelas. Eram cabeças de peixes. Era o cheiro. Eram as moscas a zumbir. Inacreditável, pensou Manua. [...] Em todo o lado o vómito cobria o soalho, vermelho, amarelo. Dos peixes só se viam as cabeças enormes. [...] Os passageiros, encostados à amurada do navio, vomitavam, incapazes de suportar aquele chão pegajoso, lamacento, sujo e malcheiroso. O mar, em redor do barco, tomava cor do vómito (*U*: 72-73).

The event leads the Portuguese to discuss witchcraft:

> – Isso é bruxaria – disse o primeiro interlocutor do capitão. Andei eu este tempo todo pelo sertão e vi coisas incríveis, capitão. Se vos disser que vi aldeias a envelhecer do dia para a noite, vocês acreditariam?
> – Conte lá bem essa história – pediu o capitão.
> – Conto-vos, lá isso vos conto, e não pensem que quem conta uma história, acrescenta um ponto. O que vos vou contar é tão verdadeiro como verdadeiro é o nome de Maria das Dores que a minha mulher leva e que tanto sofreu com os vómitos deste preto malvado (*Ibid*.: 74).

On two occasions, it is underlined that the story of a lively village that changes overnight to one with monkeys instead of people and huts falling apart is true, and that the storyteller himself was present. After the knowledgeable presentation regarding the supernatural forces of the Africans it is decided that Manua will not be killed, but that two guards will stay at his door until they reach the port:

> – É a melhor coisa que faz, capitão. Há pessoas por aqui que estão na disposição de esfaqueá-lo. Já vi um preto a ser esfaqueado. Em vez de sangue saía água, capitão.
> – Que raça! (*Ibid*.: 76).

Hence, the more experienced warn those who want to punish Manua for his disgusting act and who don't understand the need to be careful with the power of witchcraft. Therefore, they acknowledge it, although at the same time place it exclusively in the separate world of the colonised Africans. Manua himself understands the reason for what happened to him, at the same time believing in it and questioning it, in this way revealing his ambiguous position:

> O comandante do navio nada entende de feitiço. Se compreendesse alguma coisa talvez entendesse o facto de eu ter sido dos poucos na minha tribo que teve acesso ao mundo dos brancos, à sua língua, aos seus costumes e à sua ciência. Mas ele não pode entender o mundo negro, os nossos costumes bárbaros, a inveja que norteia a nossa vida e as intrigas que nos matam diariamente (*Ibid*.: 73).

The story regarding Manua can be seen as revealing how thin and superficial the 'Western rationality' is as a supposed characteristic of the coloniser and how easily it can become questionable when confronted. This episode also brings the two worlds together in terms of oral tradition or storytelling, revealing how it is present in both contexts and with similar aspects. The Portuguese, watching Manua leaving the ship, discuss the strange sea voyage:

> Alguns estavam atemorizados pelas histórias que os passageiros contaram, pois não foram poucos que afirmaram que o moço, além de vomitar, meteu o vento pelos camarotes adentro, fazendo esvoaçar a roupa e incomodando as pessoas. [...] E o pior, compadre, foi a vez que acordámos sobressaltados com os peixes que entravam pelos lençóis adentro. [...] Que bruxaria... E não os comeram? Não diga isso, compadre, tinham patas. [...] Olha para aquele homem adiante, andou pelo sertão e disse-nos que não valia a pena matar o moço, pois vira uma vez um preto a ser esfaqueado e em vez de sangue saía aguardente, e da boa, compadre (*U*: 77).

This aspect – the way the stories travel and how they change in the process – could be seen as a way of commenting on the untruthfulness of all storytelling, but also pointing to the exaggerations that are a part of it. Although generally it is considered that the oral sources are less reliable than the written sources, the fragments between the stories reveal that although presented as formal reports, they are also subject to omissions and exaggerations. Nevertheless, in the stories of Ngungunhane's empire from within, the exaggerations are not underlined by narrative techniques, as above.

Ultimately, Manua's story can be seen as pointing to assimilation too, which is also an important aspect of Mozambican history. Manua is not accepted by the Portuguese, as the episode in the ship reveals, regardless of knowing their language, habits and science. Hence, the only thing he is remembered for among the Portuguese is the vomiting and his connection to witchcraft. This theme – being judged by skin colour regardless of the level of the 'assimilation' – is similar to those brought up by Fanon in *Peau noire, masques blancs* and in Dias' *Godido*, that were discussed earlier. Moreover, Manua is represented as being willing to abandon his past and his culture, but he is unable to: he cannot rid himself of the world of his father. For example, he is described as drinking wine and eating fish, which is against the habits of his ethnic group, the Nguni, of which results the episode in the ship described earlier. The clash between Manua and Ngungunhane can be seen as a clash between two world views, sets of values and epistemologies that Ngungunhane apparently wins through Manua's death:

in his empire the different views cannot coexist. On the other hand, Manua has a vision that refers to Ngungunhane's end: "Viu as águas a cobrirem o império e Ngungunhane a boiar nas águas, incapaz de nadar. Os olhos do rei aumentavam de tamanho. O corpo medrava rapidamente. Rebentou. Tripas e bocados de carne andavam à deriva sobre as águas vermelhas, azuis, pretas" (*U*: 80). The end of the empire is not just Ngungunhane's political or territorial loss, but it is also a loss similar to what Manua represented to Ngungunhane: epistemological and cultural.

Whereas the narration and oral tradition are rather obvious topics in Ba Ka Khosa's novel, there are other aspects too that can be seen as part of a decolonisation process, as questioning the Western world views' hegemony. One of these is the underlining of the similarity in the cycles of power and abuse, although in popular thought the idea of history repeating itself is familiar elsewhere too: even if Ngungunhane's empire is finished, there will be other invaders who will control the people. This is expressed in Ngungunhane's (fictive) last speech. First, there is the Portuguese coloniser:

> – Fora das grades os vossos netos esquecer-se-ão da língua dos seus antepassados, insultarão os pais e envergonhar-se-ão das mães descalças e ocultarão as casas aos amigos. A nossa história e os nossos hábitos serão vituperados nas escolas sob o olhar atento dos homens com vestes de mulher que obrigarão as crianças a falar da minha morte e a chamarem-me criminoso e canibal (*U*: 92).

Curiously, there is a part that seems to point to a peaceful coexistence with the Portuguese: "Muitos filhos destes homens ficarão nestas terras e aprenderão as nossas línguas e dançarão as nossas danças e casarão com as nossas mulheres à vista de toda a gente e serão nossos irmãos de verdade, porque esconjurarão com os curandeiros do amanhã os seus males de séculos" (*Ibid*.: 94). Taking into consideration the approach towards the future and Machel's appropriation of Ngungunhane's character, this could be seen as an attempt to question and diversify the picture build by FRELIMO of the Portuguese, although it seems rather controversial that this phrase is in Ngungunhane's last speech, right before he is taken away by the Portuguese.

Colonialism is followed by war, and then a celebrated victory and a black leader, but this is not the beginning of happier times: "Mas não tereis chegado ainda ao tempo da vossa felicidade, seus cães, porque a maldição que abraçou estas terras perdurará por séculos e séculos" (*U*: 94). This can be seen as a circle of power – Ngungunhane's end means that

another, more powerful ruler (the Portuguese) takes his place and continues the exploration and abuse. This can also be seen as a reference to the civil war, starting soon after independence is gained. Here, the possible criticism towards Machel emerges and it can be argued that it represents – perhaps even more than colonialism – the inversion of the values of the past and distrust among people, secretly still holding on to their own epistemology:

> Mas começarão a aprender novas doutrinas que rejeitarão os espíritos, os feiticeiros e curandeiros. Todos ou quase todos aceitarão o novo pastor, mas pela noite adentro muitos irão ao curandeiro e pedirão a raiz contra as balas do inimigo, porque não quererão morrer antes de saborearem a vitória (*Ibid*.: 93).

The fight for independence is not seen simply in a positive light, as was (and still is) in the official narrative, and of which Ngungunhane's character is a part of too, as if he would have fought for the independence of the country instead of defending his own violent and unequal empire as depicted in Ba Ka Khosa's novel. Furthermore, Ngungunhane's last speech can be seen as one more vision – or a curse – pointing to the future suffering for abandoning the traditional values, which brings up another contradiction in the narrative of independence fight and Ngungunhane's part in it. While considered a hero, he also represented the values that FRELIMO wanted to eliminate from the new society – and hence the narrative is incomplete too.

> E na ilusão da vossa vitória invadirão casas que erguesteis e mudarão a ordem das coisas, passando a cagar onde deviam comer e a comer onde deviam cagar. A desordem será de tal ordem que as casas mudarão de cor, passando a ter a cor da morte que se instalará nas vossas terras que terão a extensão de meses e meses de percurso (*Ibid*.: 94).

Moreover, Ngungunhane himself is unable to assess his own behaviour and blames the people – this can, again, be seen as a reference to the following rulers and their behaviour: "Mas ficai sabendo que a noite voltará a cair nesta terra amaldiçoada que só teve momentos felizes com a chegada dos nguni que vos tiraram dos abismos infindáveis da cegueira e devassidão. Fomos nós, homens, que vos tirámos da noite que vos tolhia à entrada ao mundo da luz e felicidade" (*Ibid*.: 87).

Another idea that is present is again related to history: how history is constantly rewritten, and how the new rulers will criticise the earlier ones in order to reinforce the legitimacy of their power. The role of collective memory and the way this is manipulated according to the necessities of those in power becomes underlined. Furthermore, this can be

seen as also reflecting Machel's time and the construction of power through such 'tools' as combat poetry, uniting the people under the shared experience of abuse and exploration. Similarly, the depictions of Ngungunhane by the coloniser represent the same process – and furthermore, Ngungunhane's depiction of the other ethnic groups follows the same logic too: every time has its victims, its scapegoats and ideas of development. Ngungunhane's prediction seems to refer to cyclical time: "E terão de voltar ao princípio dos princípios. Eis o que é a vossa desgraça de séculos, homens" (*U*: 95). This idea is present throughout the novel, since it can be argued that by depicting Ngungunhane's empire, the other, later power structures are being commented on as well – or previous ones too, if Ngungunhane and his visions are seen in dialogue with *Os Lusíadas*, considered by Banks (2000: 9) from the perspective of an empire in decline. As Ba Ka Khosa (2012) argues, there was another 'colonisation' between the locals before the presence of the Portuguese, which was marked by excessive violence and the exclusion of those who did not want to integrate.

The cyclical approach can be seen as questioning the concept of linear time. The monoculture of linear time discussed by Santos (2006: 96) is more concerned with the idea of progress and development defined by only certain countries – the same ones that see themselves as leading the progress, while other countries are labelled as backwards. However, it can offer useful tools to discuss Ba Ka Khosa's concept of time. Furthermore, the temporal aspect is related to questions of power: "As relações de dominação mais resistentes são as que assentam nas hierarquias entre temporalidades e essas continuam hoje a ser constitutivas do sistema mundial" (*Ibid*.: 102). Questioning and deconstructing it would then liberate the 'other' ways of being from the label of being backwards, and this way the social experience present in them would not be disregarded (*Idem*). However, the same setting is present on a smaller scale in the discussion Ba Ka Khosa presents, and where the leaders (Ngungunhane, the Portuguese, Machel's government) always see themselves in terms of progress and development in comparison to their predecessors – and the majority they rule. This applies even to Ngungunhane's empire, which for the Western modernity represents the local and underdeveloped, but nevertheless established itself as representing progress and improvement.

The approach that is present in Ba Ka Khosa's novel would, then, by bringing up the circles of power and abuse and showing their similarities, open up new perspectives that serve

for seeing beyond the current paradigm. Here, again, this is suggested by literary means. Whereas according to the linear time concept the different rulers introduce new ideas and progress, the cyclical presentation of time can reveal the silences and absences created by the monoculture of linear time. However, a question remains in Khosa's approach: while different temporalities can reveal the absences caused by the linear time concept, is there a possibility of a genuinely new paradigm? The novel's end and Ngungunhane's grim monologue seem to suggest that at least it is not yet in sight. On the other hand, there are references, such as the character of Ualalapi, that can be seen as pointing to the people starting to see that they have the power to resist the circle of power.

It could be concluded that *Ualalapi* demonstrates methods of history writing and how the narratives that appear uniform are not actually – and that even the narratives that seem very distant eventually intersect. Furthermore, the relationship with the narratives and power become explicit. The cycles of power are fed by these legitimatising narratives and by building dichotomies and ignoring similarities. The methods for creating the narratives by manipulating memories are shown as well. Furthermore, these questions are familiar from more recent Western literature too. However, it is clear that Ba Ka Khosa is not copying these models, but rather the political and social situation in the country, at the time of writing facing a rupture after the zeal of independence, leads to the questioning in which the above are useful tools. Hence, while bringing up an empire of the nineteenth century, Ba Ka Khosa takes part in a discussion that is shared globally.

3.2.3 Portuguese language, writing and oral tradition in *Ualalapi*

Although Ba Ka Khosa's language use is not as striking as that of Couto's, it has been one of the aspects that has most caught the attention of researchers. These aspects have been discussed by Leite (1998, 2005), Matusse (1993), Ngomane (2004, 2010, 2012) and Gonçalves (1996). The question of language in *Ualalapi* has often been considered from the perspective of oral tradition and the presence of Bantu languages. It is indeed curious to consider how the Bantu languages and the world they represent seep through to Portuguese language. The novel is written throughout in standard Portuguese, and Ba Ka Khosa's

appropriation of the language seems rather pacific, but it permits the presence of the world of those it describes and avoids an anthropological approach.

Ngomane has discussed Ba Ka Khosa's language from this perspective, coining it as 'bantuisation' (*bantucização*) of Portuguese language. He argues that although Ba Ka Khosa uses Portuguese language, it is heavily influenced by Bantu languages:

> É por via desse processo que Khosa logra uma série de efeitos estéticos fundamentais nas suas obras, tais como a linguagem misturada que caracteriza as suas narrativas e a consequente impregnação do Português dos seus textos de uma densa atmosfera sociocultural e linguística bantu, num elevado grau de transculturação (Ngomane, 2012: 248).

Ualalapi's language does not militantly question the language's Eurocentrism, but rather lures the reader to 'forget' its European origin and its role in Portuguese colonialism. It is also a practical choice respecting reality since Portuguese is the language of Mozambican literature, and the narrator, as can be argued, is writing the story afterwards in a time when it would have, without question, been written in Portuguese. This is interesting, and draws attention to the hybridity or heritages of colonialism, since Ba Ka Khosa is depicting something that 'didn't exist' in Portuguese. This also points to the role of the writer as a translator.

However, the proximity to oral tradition is 'broken' by the presence of written texts from the past, namely the "Fragmentos do Fim". The intertextuality and the presence of the written tradition are also present through the quotes from the Bible – another narrative full of omens and magical events. These elements draw attention to the narrator (and author, who is present through a few dedications) as the final organiser of the story, as well as to the language question. They, moreover, bring up again the question of metafictive aspects in Ba Ka Khosa's work, discussed above. Interestingly, the excerpts from the reports are in old Portuguese, with spelling that is no longer in use. This draws attention to the author's use of language, in which the myths and oral tradition is brought to the reader in Portuguese – they can also be considered as translated by the first narrator who is transmitting them to the writer.

As Ngomane points out, Ba Ka Khosa's approach is different from the approach of the earlier writers, regionalists, like Honwana and Dias, who, as mentioned earlier, modify the Portuguese language in order to represent characters that don't speak it very well, and also to create a realistic ambience. Ba Ka Khosa's approach is seen as a transculturalist one:

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> Assim, ao mesmo tempo que se distanciam das fonografias populares, saindo do confinamento lexical regional, também encurtam a distância entre a língua culta do narrador e a das personagens de origem rural, o que lhes permite operar uma renovação de extrema importância a nível estético: narradores e personagens passam a adoptar a mesma linguagem na totalidade textual, quebrando desse modo a dualidade linguística do texto literário, que rompe com a unidade artística da obra (Ngomane, 2010: 11-12).

Ba Ka Khosa does not narrate the characters from the position of the Portuguese, but from the perspective of the world he describes, which can be seen from some descriptions, as Ngomane points out. Although there are existing words in Portuguese for "homens com vestes de mulher", referring to priests, and "espetar ferro", referring to vaccination, Ba Ka Khosa uses these expressions which reveal the perspective of the narrator (*Ibid.*: 15). In the case of *Ualalapi* this is also related to the illusion regarding time – these expressions emphasise that the narrative is located in the past. On the other hand, there are similar situations which reflect even more significantly the local world view and manners, as, for example, Ualalapi treating a women as *mãe*, mother, which in the cultural universe in question is a way (still current) to treat a woman, whereas in the 'original' cultural universe of the language of writing it only refers to the family relation (*Idem*). Hence, Ba Ka Khosa's approach permits him to use standard Portuguese and through translation he is able to bring the cultural universe to the Portuguese language text, in this way expanding the language. This is achieved by various different techniques, which also end up influencing the style of his writing.

Proverbs are common especially in dialogues, and according to Gonçalves, they are literal translations and create a literary discourse in Portuguese with a Bantu base (Gonçalves, 1997 *apud* Ngomane, 2012: 248). For example, when Ualalapi is speaking with a woman, in part of the exchange only proverbs are used:

> – [...] De que é que morreu o seu marido?
> – De susto. Mas que importância tem a formiga perante o elefante?
> – Quantas vezes a formiga não matou o elefante, mãe?
> – E quantas vezes o crocodilo saiu da água, homem? (*U*: 15).

The same approach is repeated, giving the dialogue a deeper significance: it calls attention to the different cultural universe, and its ancient knowledge expressed through the proverbs. Ngomane (2010: 16) also adds that this reveals the high linguistic skills of the characters, as well as their profound knowledge of their sociocultural universe. This was not the case in the work of the regionalists, since in their works those that do not have proper knowledge of the

Portuguese language are not given a chance to express themselves in another language, and appear unlearned in terms of language and Portuguese culture. Hence, by these means the reader can read the story without interruptions, and without the credibility of the empire and its members being compromised, or the position of the narrator becoming problematic as it was in the case of Dias or Honwana, for example. However, the narrator's presence creates a rupture – but this is more related to metafictive aspects than to unintentional ruptures. This approach is also different, for example, from that of Chiziane, who in her earlier novels at times quotes whole sentences in other languages than Portuguese, or from that of Couto, who, also in his earlier novels, creates a whole 'new' Portuguese that signifies the different sociocultural universe being described.

However, the sophistication and registers vary according to the characters. When depicting the emperor speaking, the language is pretentious and old-fashioned, as can be seen from the quotes above. Moreover, he makes use of a verb form that is not commonly used anymore and helps to place him in the past and also in adding importance and grandeur to his character. Hence, this tone suits the idea of a temporally distant era and also serves well to underline the portentousness of Ngungunhane's last speech, replete with horrifying images of the future of the miserable people. However, at other times, colloquial expressions are used. This happens when Molungo, Ngungunhane's uncle, tries to convince him not to murder an innocent man, "[...] ciente de que Mputa não cometera tal crime, pois bastas foram as vezes que vira a inkonsikazi acercar-se do homem como um animal em cio, mas bolas, pensava, palavra do rei não volta atrás [...]" (*U*: 32). It can be deduced that in order to represent situations, registers and different social positions through language, Ba Ka Khosa has had to return to varying the registers in Portuguese language, which sometimes is not unproblematic, as it may also remind the readers that the historical characters would not have spoken this language. Of course, this is the case in most literature that depicts characters from different locations and makes them 'use' another language. Moreover, it is an aesthetic issue as well, and perhaps even more sensitive because of the relationship between the languages as was discussed above: Portuguese is the language of power whereas the national languages have more informal roles. Furthermore, the question of language is brought up in Ngungunhane's

last speech as well, where he declares that the grandchildren will not understand the languages of their ancestors anymore.

The other languages are present too, although not very often. The use of the national languages emerges mainly in the context of local traditions or concepts that have no translation:

> […] [O] nkuaia (ritual anual e sagrado em que os súbditos, provenientes de todos os cantos do império, à corte se dirigiam […]) (*U*: 43).

> E tudo por causa dessas tinlhoco – nomeação em tsonga dos servos […] (*Ibid*.: 45).

The narrator carefully explains to the reader the meaning of the words, thereby including the readers who are not familiar with these expressions. Hence, the narrator has a secondary role as a translator, and the approach and method permit providing a contextualised translation instead of just providing another word, and, it could be said, it also serves to emphasise the presence of the other world and in the case of *Ualalapi*, the temporal distance too. Ngomane points out that these words should not be considered as simple words, but rather they have a metonymic role in the text, representing the vast and diverse Bantu world. Hence, they do not only serve the purpose of authenticity. As Ngomane points out, the words and the following explanations end up also influencing Ba Ka Khosa's narrative style. Moreover, they permit more uniformity and do not require the inclusion of a glossary or footnotes (Ngomane, 2012: 249-250).

On the other hand, this approach breaks the illusion created by not using the Portuguese words available, for example, for a priest or vaccination, and here the narrator is closer to a translator or an anthropologist, a guide between the universe being narrated and the universe of the (implied) reader. Moreover, this underlines the pacifism in the appropriation of the Portuguese language, which is perhaps facilitated by describing a distant era. There is not so much pressure to try to create a Mozambican literary Portuguese in order to represent the contemporary language situation, neither is there a necessity to describe the Portuguese spoken by those who do not speak it as their first language, something which has been present in lot of Mozambican literature. As seen above, the more recent writers mix local expressions

and slang with otherwise standard Portuguese. These approaches differ from Ba Ka Khosa, who offers the translation immediately in the text. Furthermore, his explanations are more detailed and less subtle than those of Chinua Achebe, for example, who allows the reader unfamiliar with the expressions used to understand the meaning through the context of the story. Whereas Achebe's approach can be also seen as excluding some of the details from a reader unfamiliar with the context, Ba Ka Khosa is more generous towards them.

Ba Ka Khosa's approach towards language is also related to the narrator of the text. Leite points out that his narrator is similar to the narrator in oral tradition: he takes distance from the story and then regains proximity again. Leite sees this as reminiscent of the act of narrating as an act of creation, as it is in oral tradition (Leite 2005: 161). This reading would mean that the narrator of the stories is the same one – and it is tempting to argue, then, that the narrator would be the same fictitious character that writes the stories down and organises them too. In this way attention is drawn to the narrator as an organiser of the story, and to the act of (written) narration. Furthermore, here the genre is a key question too: it is possible to argue that since they are separate, independent stories, they are just simply narrated in different ways. This, moreover, breaks the chronological aspect and the idea of linear time, since the narrator is presented at the end of the novel, which again opens up new perspectives to it and brings a new temporal distance to the story by introducing the present moment and breaking the illusion of a traditional (historical) novel by introducing the narrator and drawing attention to the act of writing as such.

However, both of the stories regarding the end of the empire (represented by the fragments and by the main stories relying on oral tradition) seem to proceed linearly. The fragments – according to their name – represent a shorter time span whereas the actual stories take place from the beginning of Ngungunhane's rule all the way to his last speech before being taken to Portugal. Leite (2005: 156) considers that the temporality of the main stories is less defined and mythical, which for her is related to the presence of oral tradition and its didactic characteristics: in this way the lessons to be learned are not tied to a specific time. It can be argued, however, that by representing oral tradition, there may not be direct reference to the order or to the date, but that the events are timed (in more detail with regard to Manua), and it could be said that the differences might emerge from the differences between the genres

instead. In other words, time is more accurate in written documents than (oral) stories. However, this does not mean that the possible didactic message would not be valid in other times. This aspect is also related to the role of the narrator and its interpretation.

The act of narration is introduced properly only in the last pages of the novel. The writer/narrator tells in the first person how he has heard the whole story of Ngungunhane from an old man, who he leaves next to the fireplace where he wants to sleep. This episode can also be interpreted as reflecting on the position of oral tradition in today's Mozambique. The last sentence of the novel can be seen as actually referring to the moment when the narration of this version of Ngungunhane's empire begins: "Algo me intrigava no velho e no discurso de Ngungunhane" (*U*: 96). It is possible to imagine that the narrator has actually only heard the old man's oral depiction of Ngungunhane's last speech, which leads him to search for more information and leads him to the other stories, which he then organises and writes down as a novel. Another possibility is to see the narrator as having discussed the stories with various sources, with the old man being the last one he hears. The narrator and the moment of narration is revealed a few pages earlier, which points to the narrator having read something to the old man, and not necessarily writing the old man's stories down, as it first seems. The old man comments that the narrator has left some important aspects aside:

> – Há pormenores que o tempo vai esboroando – disse o velho, tossindo. Colocou duas achas no fogo e soprou. Novelos de fumo passaram pelo rosto. Pequenas lágrimas saíram dos olhos cansados e tocaram na pele coberta de escarnas. Afastei os papéis. Olhei-o. Era noite.
> – Era miúdo ainda – prosseguiu – quando o meu avô me contava histórias de Ngungunhane. [...]
> – Como é que se chamava?
> – O meu avô?
> – Somapunga. E ele, ao contar-me as histórias de Ngungunhane, repisava alguns aspectos que o meu pai se esquecia e que tu omitiste. E são pormenores importantes (*Ibid.*: 88-89).

Hence, the novel as such could be seen as a rewritten version of the story the narrator already knew – and the oral narration of Ngungunhane's last speech, where the old man has added details related to contemporary Mozambique, leads him to compose the novel that the reader is reading. Finally, it is also possible, as mentioned earlier, to see *Ualalapi* as a collection of independent short stories. There are no hints that point to this narrator or the old man earlier in the novel. There are, for example, references to Manhune, who talks about Manua to his son

and grandson, but already the name reveals that this is not the same person as above (*Ibid*.: 79). A first person narrator also mentions another character, Malule, when describing Damboia's disease (*Ibid.*: 44). All of these possible readings point also to how these stories are heard and passed on by various storytellers, which demonstrates the instability and creativity of the process, which is missing from written stories. The presence of the written fragments draws attention to the narrator – or author – as the compiler of the text as well.

Another aspect that is clearly visible is that of 'papers' or written text as a threat to the oral tradition and previous values and languages. This is expressed in Ngungunhane's last speech:

> Estes homens da cor de cabrito esfolado que hoje aplaudis entrarão nas vossas aldeias com o barulho das suas armas e o chicote do comprimento da jibóia. Chamarão pessoa por pessoa, registando-vos em papéis que enlouqueceram Manua e vos aprisionarão. Os nomes que vêm dos vossos antepassados esquecidos morrerão por todo o sempre, porque dar-vos-ão os nomes que bem lhes aprouver, chamando-vos merda e vocês agradecendo. Exigir-vos-ão papéis até na retrete, como se não bastasse a palavra, a palavra que vem dos nossos antepassados, a palavra que impôs a ordem nestas terras sem ordem, a palavra que tirou crianças dos ventres das vossas mães e mulheres. O papel com rabiscos norteará a vossa vida e a vossa morte, filhos das trevas (*U*: 89-90).

Hence, the written text symbolises control and an abandoning of respect towards the earlier social organisation. Here, as Leite (2005: 160) argues, Ngungunhane is blaming his people for their cooperation with foreigners. However, it is quite easy to see that his people are also blamed for accepting the denial of the earlier values by following the future black leader.

The corruption that writing represents becomes most visible in the chapter where Manua's diary is discussed. Leite argues that Manua's writing, and the reference in his text to an Arab called Kamal Samade, represent the first steps away from oral tradition and socio-cultural transformation, which is connected to assimilation too, as was discussed above (Leite, 2005: 157). Curiously, the Arab is mentioned earlier too. He is referred to together with Vuiazi, one of Ngungunhane's wives:

> O rei pensa na sua concubina, Vuiazi, mãe de Godide, que desapareceu misteriosamente com as ancas, o corpo, o sorriso, o rosto macio, negro, brilhante. Vuiazi pensa em Kamal Samade, comerciante árabe que se internara nos pântanos de inhafura por o acusarem de dormir com Vuiazi. [...] Vuiazi pensa na pederastia de Kamal Samade, doença e mania desconhecida nestas terras de Gaza (*U*: 59).

In the story that focuses on Manua, Samade is mentioned as having written regarding Manua's phases: "Kamal Samade, que pela capital passo, deixou as suas impressões em árabe, escritas em folhas desordenadas. Pela sua pena sabe-se que Manua, desde a chegada, tornou-se taciturno e mais bêbado do que nunca. [...] Era um sonâmbulo, rematava Kamal Samade." (*Ibid.*: 78.) Samade's character is interesting since he, in the passage concerning Vuiazi, is seen as an outsider, cast out as a result of false accusations, and as representing an external threat to the empire. Furthermore, it could be argued that the reference to 'pederasty' in the character closely related to writing could be interpreted as a reference to the moral suspiciousness of writing. On the other hand, he also represents another history of Mozambique and the other encounters, prior to the presence of the Portuguese, that have left marks on Mozambican society and culture, to which Ribeiro & Meneses (2008: 14) call attention to. Another reference to history writing regarding Mozambique's history can be seen here, one that questions the exclusivity of the sources in Portuguese that are most commonly referred to, and reveals their Eurocentricity and the invisibility of the sources in other languages or in oral tradition.

Manua's writing can also be seen in terms of transgression, as Noa (2010) defines it in the context of community: when individualism surpasses the good of the community it often represents a transgression concerning values, memories, affection, costumes, norms and feelings. In Manua's case, this is closely related to language and writing associated with the Portuguese. First, he writes about his father calling him ignorant and a witch, and then brings up his admiration towards the Portuguese – and his own hunger for power: "Quando eu for imperador eliminarei estas práticas adversas ao Senhor, pai dos céus e da Terra. Serei dos primeiros, nestas terras africanas, a aceitar e assumir os costumes nobres dos brancos, homens que estimo desde o primeiro dia que tive acesso ao seu civismo são" (*U*: 73). Manua is punished by his exclusion by both the Portuguese and his father's empire. Ngungunhane denies him:

> Manhune transmitira ao filho e ao neto que Manua fora envenenado pelo pai, pois era uma vergonha para os nguni ver um filho seu assimilar costumes de outros povos estrangeiros. E o pior, dizia Manhune, Manua parecia um chope, pois era subserviente aos portugueses. Matem-no na próxima oportunidade, disse Ngungunhane num dos encontros que teve com os maiores do reino (*Ibid.*: 79).

Eventually Manua dies: "[...] Manua bebia com muita sofreguidão devido ao feitiço dos bisavôs que se irritaram por aqueles modos estrangeiros no andar, no vestir e no falar. O pénis minguava de dia para dia. No dia da sua morte acordou sem nada entre as coxas e apanhou a maior bebedeira de sempre" (*Ibid*.: 79).

Manua's phases are described in a manner close to historical research, and various views of him are offered – there are those of Manua's brother, Buisanto, of Manhune who is quoted above, and of Sonie, Ngungunhane's first wife. Furthermore, his phases are described with more accuracy, presenting, for example, important dates (the date of his death and the time he left for Lourenço Marques). The same kind of objectivity is present from the beginning of Manua's story:

> Por entre os escombros daquilo que fora a última capital do império de Gaza encontraram um diário com uma letra tremida, imprecisa, tímida. As folhas, amontoadas ao acaso, estavam metidas numa caveira que repousava entre ossadas humanas e animais. Não há referência do seu autor, mas sabe-se que pertenceu a Manua [...] (*U*: 71).

There are also references to the registers regarding the ship Manua takes to Lourenço Marques. This, then, could be seen again as approximation towards the more 'Western' approach towards history. There is also a reference to Luís de Camões in this story, another writer of the history of the country, and Banks (2000: 11) interprets Manua's travel as a "inverse of Vasco da Gama's voyage", and this story or chapter has plenty of references to Camões. It could be further suggested that the whole decline of Ngungunhane's empire could be read as commenting also the Portuguese empire and its end too. On the other hand, there is another reference, to the Albasini family, who were discussed earlier. All of these references seem to point to writing and its significance in the country. However, the writings of Camões, here described as a "viajante zarolho, [...] branco esquálido, [...] homem magro e famélico" (*Ibid*.: 71), later become a national epic, read also in Mozambique, whereas Samade's and Manua's texts are not even preserved, let alone considered as having historical value. This can be seen in the way they are described as unorganised, loose papers, in Manua's case partially eaten by rats. However, it remains for the reader to consider if it is the same, above-mentioned narrator who is reading what is left of Manua's writings.

Manua, regardless of adopting Portuguese habits, is at the mercy of the 'traditional' world, as the vomiting in the ship reveals. For Leite (2005: 159), these aspects are related to

oral tradition since they represent the intervention of supernatural powers, as a "desproporção de fenómenos físicos e da natureza". These are foremost related to negative events and to moments of transgression. The language in these contexts is expanded to represent mystical events. One of the most powerful scenes in the novel is Damboia's death. Significantly, the knowledge of the reason for her illness – which Ngungunhane desperately tries to hide – is disregarded because the explanation comes from part of the lower social classes, revealing the impossibility of a complete control of words: "Pécoras, bestas sem nome, eram eles que levavam no saco histórias inventadas, dizendo que Damboia sofria da doença do peito que faz vomitar sangue pela boca, mas que ela vomitava entre as coxas, em paga da vida crapulosa que levava" (*U*: 46). More details of the cause of her fate are revealed in a dialogue between Damboia and her servant, Ciliane, who claims that Damboia has had innocent men killed:

> – Eles recusaram as minhas ordens.
> – Mas que ordens, Damboia?... Não achas humano um homem recusar ir para cama com uma mulher?
> – Quem eram eles para recusar as minhas ordens?... Gente da rua sem nome, gente que nunca sonhou transpor a porta da minha casa. Se fossem homens de palavra ter-me-iam recusado na altura que apontei o dedo.
> – Temiam-te.
> – E por que deixaram de me temer?
> – Só tu é que deves saber... Antes de morrer, Mosheshe teria dito, segundo me contaram, que aqueles que o impontaram do mundo dos vivos teriam uma morte terrível (*Ibid*.: 48).

It is significant too that Ciliane has the courage to bring these details to her and treats her as an equal. It is also through Ciliane that the narrator 'has gained' the information concerning Damboia – and not through the official histories.

Damboia's 'disease' develops to such a scale that eventually the whole village is covered by sticky, disgusting blood. Damboia's bleeding is a parallel to disgusting rain: "Ao amanhecer começou a cair uma chuva amarela, forte, de gotas grossas e pegajosas como a baba do caracol" (*U:* 44). Mysterious corpses start to appear at the same time as the slimy rain – and these corpses disappear with the rain too. The healers explain the reason for the appearance of the corpses that disappear with the rain: "[...] eram cadáveres de outros tempos esquecidos que vieram chamar atenção àquele povo que nada respeitava, e que murmurava tudo o que ouvia e o que não ouvia" (*Ibid*.: 45). As Leite (1998: 92) argues, "a fenomenologia escatológica prende-se obsessivamente aos líquidos: vómitos, sangues, chuvas diluvianas,

entrando em sintonia a natureza com o mal estar dos homens". This is present in the depiction of Manua too. Matusse (1993: 150), as was seen above, also points to the presence of similar aspects – extreme hyperboles – in Latin American magical realism. It is here that the limits of the Portuguese language are tested, even though the whole text is written in plain Portuguese.

The limits of the language and the presence of the oral tradition are also related to the question of written and spoken words and their different roles. The power of the words is visible in Ngungunhane's last speech – which also reminds of religious myths: "Estava no auge do discurso. E o mais impressionante eram as nuvens a desaparecerem do céu e os brancos, sem nada entenderem, tinham os cabelos eriçados" (*U*: 92). The presence of oral tradition is emphasised by the expressivity and gestures too, as Ngomane (2004: 25) argues, drawing attention to the act of narrating or telling and to the power of words. The writing down of the words, in this sense, strips the words of their power, and they also become controlled. The written text imprisons the words and also gives them a sense of stability. This is not the case with the oral tradition or spoken word, which cannot be controlled, although it needs to be pointed out that these two worlds are also in contact with each other and not presented in a dichotomous way. Furthermore, while not revealed directly in the text due to Ba Ka Khosa's language use, this is a question of two different languages too.

After Damboia's death the words become uncontrollable:

> A pior coisa que aconteceu durante aqueles meses foram as palavras, homem! Elas cresciam de minuto a minuto e entravam em todas as casas, escancarando portas e paredes, e mudavam de tom consoante a pessoa que encontravam. A violência que Ngungunhane utilizou para assustá-las não surtiu efeito. Elas percorriam as distâncias à velocidade do vento. E tudo por causa dessas tinhloco – nomeação em tsonga dos servos – que saíam da casa de Damboia com os sacos cheios de palavras que as lançavam ao vento (*U*: 45).

As Ngomane (2010: 26) points out, the words in the hands of the ruled become a tool of subversion. As described above, regardless of the violence, Ngungunhane is unable to control the words. Ngungunhane, who has been compared to Machel, can be seen here as a metaphor for the attempts to silence the oral tradition – or words in general. However, even death cannot silence them, as the old man tells the (possible) narrator, underlining the tone of voice and gestures and their impact on the listener:

> Nunca contei ao meu avô os meus sonhos. Receava que ele parasse de contar as histórias de Ngungunhane. E quando contava a voz tremia e os gestos seguiam o

> ritmo da voz. Morreu a dormir, sonhando alto. De manhã, ao entrar na sua cubata, vi-o deitado ao comprido, olhando o tecto. Falava. A voz tocava-me profundamente. Durante horas seguidas ouvi-o falar. Quis acordá-lo, pois já era tarde. Ao tocá-lo notei que o corpo estava frio. Há muito que tinha morrido. Tiveram que o enterrar imediatamente para que os vizinhos não nos chamassem feiticeiros. E o nosso espanto foi ouvir a voz saindo da cova, uma voz como que vinda de escarpas abissais. O meu pai teve que sentar-se sobre a sepultura e acompanhar, movimentando a boca, a voz do defunto (*U*: 88).

The words, in this particular case, tell the story of Ngungunhane, questioning the written documents and his character's appropriation by both the Portuguese and FRELIMO. Lastly, it could be pointed out that here, as well as elsewhere in the novel, most of the time it is the men who have the word, which could be seen as one more form of silencing – that of silencing the 'words' of the women. The same clearly applies to "Fragmentos do Fim" – here the Portuguese perspective is also only a male one.

What Ba Ka Khosa's use of the Portuguese language reveals, is that language as such can be used to describe cultures and visions that might originally be foreign to it. Considering decolonisation on this level, it also shows how the language question is complex: besides the question of which language to use, it is also a question of spoken and written words, the way the words are used – and for what purpose they are used. It also calls attention to what happens to the oral word when it is written down, which is a question that Ngugi, for example, has not considered in his view of a change of language as a solution for the language question. Moreover, the pacific use of the Portuguese language, which seems to be a general approach among Mozambican writers, settles the issue instead of deepening further the abyss between the world being described and the language used to describe it. Hence, it can be seen as a process of decolonising the role of the use of the Portuguese language in literary expression in Mozambique.

3.2.4 *Ualalapi*: conclusions

It can be concluded that *Ualalapi* can be seen from the perspective of both 'traditional' decolonisation and decolonisation from a wider angle. It could be argued that the principal way Ba Ka Khosa's work creates distance from the European tradition (of the novel) is not only through language, but by showing different epistemologies and world views. Furthermore, his work can also be seen as bringing new views to the concept of the (historical)

novel too. All of these elements create distance from the tradition of European novel and historical novel. However, Ba Ka Khosa's approach is quite pacific, which could be seen as resulting partially from his position as a writer. On the other hand, his approach towards Mozambique's history is very radical and questions the pillars it is still built on. These aspects become visible only through careful reading since they are not underlined, but rather the reader is left to draw her/his own conclusions. It can, in this way, be seen as having a significant role in questioning and offering alternatives to the narratives – or collective memories – regarding the country's past.

It also becomes clear that some approaches, especially those focusing on the oral tradition, end up leaving other aspects aside. This is visible in Leite's analysis, although she does not claim to provide a complex analysis of Ba Ka Khosa's work, but rather focuses on the presence of the oral tradition in it. She argues, for example, that the complexity of the structure is a characteristic of written narratives, whereas didacticism and moralising aspects are characteristic of the oral tradition (Leite, 2005: 156-157). In this way, most of the novel's characteristics are seen through the lens of the oral tradition – which in the analysis of African literatures is often employed vaguely, without defining or contextualising it. Hence, the oral tradition becomes a vague explanation for many aspects that may be seen differently too. Furthermore, it can also be a result of a misconception of oral tradition as simple short stories, ignoring the sophistication of epics and longer narratives, to which the Nigerian critics point (Chinweizu *et al.*, 1983: 86). Ba Ka Khosa's work, which can also be seen from the perspective of metafiction questioning the grand narratives and the concept of truth, takes part in a discussion that surpasses geographical and cultural boundaries. This discussion would not become visible if the analysis was restricted to more general approaches towards African literatures, such as discussing the community and oral tradition, proverbs and customs. Hence, it becomes clear that it is necessary to 'decolonise' the critical approaches too.

The novel not only deconstructs some of the silences of the past of Mozambicans, but also reveals that there are many other 'silences' left to be brought up. The future is clearly anticipated in Ngungunhane's last, dystopian speech which can be seen as a warning against the 'sleeping people', like Ualalapi. This can also be seen as suggesting new views towards the current state of the country by discussing history. This reflects on the present situation,

where the leaders often quote from the grand narrative of Mozambican independence in order to legitimise their position. Finally, Ba Ka Khosa's work becomes fully contextualised when discussed together with the other Mozambican novelists: it can be seen as initiating the discussion regading foundational myths, tradition and history, that in the years following its publication has grown to many directions. For example, *O Último Voo do Flamingo* can be seen as taking part in a similar discussion regarding the past, and the novels also share a sense of dystopia and the presence of an end, stemming from continuous disappointments and failing hopes.

3.3 Mia Couto: *O Último Voo do Flamingo*

O Último Voo do Flamingo takes place in a fictive village called Tizangara and evolves around mysterious disappearances of the UN peacekeepers placed there. The story is related to real events: peacekeepers were stationed in Mozambique after the civil war. The soldiers, as they are referred to, are only present as dead characters and have no place in the community, although they are referred to in some of the reports or testimonies of the villagers. An Italian UN representative, Massimo Risi, is trying to understand the events in order to produce a report on them, but realises that the task is more difficult than he had expected. He also becomes more involved in local life than he had planned. It is clear that there are two world views being pitted against each other that do not translate very easily, making the Italian's investigation all the more difficult. Risi has a translator (who is not named in the novel) who explains – instead of just literally translating – the world view of the people, and who ends up questioning his own relationship with the village, his own father and his past, and other characters and their world views and relationship to the events. The presence of the foreign soldiers brings an international dimension to the novel, while the depiction of the local administration reveals another kind of international relations. Moreover, the globalisation depicted here is closely related to Mozambique as an African postcolony, although most of its aspects can be discussed under the wider concept of globalisation.

Couto's novel will be discussed here by focusing on three main themes. The first subchapter discusses language from various perspectives and also serves to describe the central aspects of the novel. The second subchapter brings up the encounters of world views, while in the third, globalisation and its many dimensions are discussed.

3.3.1 The languages of *O Último Voo do Flamingo*

As was mentioned earlier, Couto's language has gained attention among many researchers. However, his language use can also be discussed from the perspective of the content of the novel, and in this way the most general approaches can be avoided. The narrator of *O Último Voo do Flamingo* is the translator, who has written the text that precedes the actual first chapter: "Fui eu que transcrevi, em português visível, as falas que daqui se seguem" (*UVF*: 11). This refers to the various sources of which the text consists, and also to the translator becoming a novelist who ultimately succeeds in the task in which Risi fails: to explain what has happened. The text is signed by "O tradutor de Tizangara", which further emphasises the role of the translator. He is not a linguistic translator but a cultural translator who, for having studied, is also able to understand Risi's perspectives: "Passou-se o tempo, e eu saí da terra nossa, encorajado pelo padre Muhando. Na cidade, eu tinha acesso à carteirinha das aulas. A escola foi para mim como um barco: me dava acesso a outros mundos" (*Ibid*.: 50). The translator without a name is also a character who, initially, seems to be an insignificant intermediary but later on reveals his central role, which can also be seen as a metonymy. Risi realises that he is not able to understand the other world, represented by Tizangara, and since it is not necessary for him in order to conclude his research, he does not initially feel it is a necessity to understand it either. The knowledge of Tizangara's world does not have value in the same way as the knowledge the translator has of Risi's world:

> – *Sabe, Massimo, tenho pena de si, tão só. Eu nunca poderia ficar tão absolutamente sozinho.*
> – *Porquê?*
> – *Mesmo se me arrancassem daqui, se me levassem para Itália, eu não passava assim tão mal. Porque eu sei viver no seu mundo.*
> – *E eu não sei viver no seu mundo?*
> – *Não, não sabe* (*Ibid*.: 109).

The presence of the translator as the writer of the story shows that perhaps more value should be given to his knowledge of his own world, and not only to the knowledge he has of the world of the others. This approach is in line with Couto's (2009a: 23) view regarding the reluctance to consider philosophies from locations such as Mozambique, as quoted above.

While Brugioni considers, quoting Leite, that here each character represents a certain narrative which is relatively independent from the 'global' narrative, this could be questioned since the characters' phases are interdependent – and in this way the narrative seems rather coherent, unlike what Leite argues (Leite, 2003 *apud* Brugioni, 2012: 73-74). The relationship between Risi and the translator is rather revealing considering the novel: it shows that Risi, at the end, is able to understand the events – but is not able to explain them according to the rational standards expected from him in his report to the UN. The formal language is not suitable – which can be also seen as reflecting Couto's own literary language: as was the case in *Ualalapi,* here too it needs to be expanded and seen in a new way in order to 'speak' of the events that to some extent are foreign to it. Moreover, this could be extended to written language, which also as such does not serve to describe Risi's experience. On the other hand, it is significant that there are no references to Risi learning the local language, and hence the translator operates as a linguistic translator too, proving that it is possible to translate and understand very distant worlds. Hence Risi's case and Couto's language show that the task is not impossible, but rather the conditions for discussing them should be reconsidered in order for the explanations to become understandable.

Couto's language, hence, reflects the different worlds and also points to the role of the Portuguese language in the dialogue between them. The language in *O Último Voo do Flamingo* is as creative as it is in Couto's other texts, and according to Ngomane's (2010: 11-12) earlier discussed view, it has a transculturalist approach. Couto occasionally introduces some local ways of speaking, but they reflect globalisation instead of a lack of knowledge of Portuguese, or the speakers' status as peasants, as the regionalists used it:

> Massimo Risi recusou que eu lhe levasse as bagagens e lá foi tropeçando pelos buracos, com maltas de crianças lhe perseguindo e mendigando doces:
> – *Masuíti, patrão. Masuíti* (*UVF*: 37).

Furthermore, the creativity in the dialogue is presented as something valuable – reflecting often the sense of humour of the speakers – and not looked down on as wrongly spoken

Portuguese. It can also be argued that the flexibility of the language is abused in order to fill in gaps related to the differences between the two apparently distant worlds. Rothwell sees that this is related also to the lack of truths – which suits his view of Couto as a postmodernist – and therefore the language is influenced by the absence of stability: there are no generally accepted, universal truths. These are replaced by more space for different interpretations and unstable significances (Rothwell, 2004: 30).

As Rothwell (2004: 24) points out in his provocative commentary, the approaches regarding Couto's language can also distort his work:

> This rather romantic view of Couto's agenda turns him into a very safe example of "Mozambicanness" that lusophone intellectuals outside Africa can admire. Critiques based entirely on the reinvigoration of the Portuguese language interrogate very little and comfortably situate Couto in Fernando Pessoa's language-as-homeland. In such a space, Mozambique becomes mediated through a European filter: a language that even today, over two decades after the aggressive promotion of Portuguese by the Frelimo government, is not spoken by the majority of the Mozambican people.

This is also confirmed by Brugioni (2012), who discusses various approaches and argues that many of these readings are essentialist and focus on Couto's language from a literary or aesthetic perspective, or discussing the relationship between different variants of the Portuguese language. It could also be argued that due to Couto's language use, special attention is directed at the language use of other Mozambican writers too – and it could be argued that he must have significantly influenced other writers. Couto's own views regarding language shine a light on his writing process and the origin of his language use. Brugioni points, quoting Couto, that according to his language use he does not invent words, but rather 'finds' them (Brugioni, 2012: 23, 56-59). Moreover, he is searching for the limits of the Portuguese language, of which a quote Brugioni (*Ibid*.: 36) too uses, is illustrative:

> A escrita é uma casa que eu visito, mas onde não quero morar. O que me instiga são as outras línguas e linguagens, sabedorias que ganhamos apenas se de nós mesmos nos soubermos apagar. Da minha língua materna eu aspiro esse momento em que ela se desidioma, convertendo-se num corpo sem mando de estrutura ou de regra. O que quero é esse desmaio gramatical, em que o português perde todos os sentidos (Couto, 2009: 169).

Couto's language use can be considered from the perspective of decolonisation too. Celina Martins, comparing Édouard Glissant's and Couto's works, considers that Couto's way of writing can be seen as paying homage to the storytellers and their linguistic creativity. As

Martins argues, Couto reinvents the grammar as well. (Martins, C., 2006: 195-196, 205.) This creativity can also be seen as reflecting in a positive way the 'Mozambicanisms' of Portuguese. Couto himself also points to this direction:

> Porque, de facto, alguns dos mecanismos que eu uso para subverter a norma são inspirados na forma como os moçambicanos se apropriam da língua portuguesa, como casam e descasam – como é que eles, usando uma língua europeia, moldam nessa língua os traços da sua cultura africana. Portanto, eu procuro encontrar muitas vezes essa lógica, não tanto reproduzir o que é feito, mas compreender a lógica de como é que isso é feito (Laban 1998: 1017-1018).

Even if the words are not the same ones that Couto hears, the creativity has similar forms. As Couto admits: "Sou um escritor africano, branco e de língua portuguesa. Porque o idioma estabelece o meu território preferencial de mestiçagem, o lugar de reinvenção de mim. Necessito inscrever na língua do meu lado português a marca da minha individualidade africana" (Couto, 1997 *apud* Martins, C., 2006: 15). In this sense it is intersting to bring up Mendonça's (2011: 112) view as Couto's approach serving to question Ngugi's position: "Mais do que enriquecer o património da Literatura Portuguesa (como insinuaria Ngugi), a língua literária criada por Mia Couto veio mostrar que a língua pode fundar uma nova tradição literária, produzindo deste modo a autonomia das literaturas particulares [...]". Couto's language use could also be seen as not only creating a distance from European Portuguese and world views, but also appropriating the language in a wider sense as the property of Mozambicans. As Brugioni (2012: 43) argues: "Alias, tal como os processos da libertação política, esta dinâmica inédita de redefinição da língua poderá caber, em rigor, numa lógica de libertação linguística e cultural que, em última análise, visa restabelecer sujeitos, contextos e, sobretudo, relações que pressupõem o mesmo Moçambique como actor desta performatividade".

The ambiguity and sophisticated linguistic games could also tell something about Couto's primary audience. Couto's texts may not be very easily accessible or fully understandable for those who don't master the Portuguese language to a high level. On the other hand, Leite ignores the language question and sees that the implied reader of Couto's novels is Mozambican, reflecting a generalised view of the Mozambican or African readers to whom oral tradition is the most familiar form of expression. She argues that "[n]o caso do romance moçambicano, podemos constatar que o autor tende a diminuir, e mesmo estreitar, a

distância de registo genérico entre um potencial receptor moçambicano, ou africano, ao recorrer à representação de géneros característicos da oratura" (Leite, 2003: 61). She argues that Couto's novels are constructed in episodes, which approximates his narratives to the Mozambican (oral) tradition, and with what the implied Mozambican reader would be most familiar with (*Ibid.*: 62-63). On the other hand, Bruglioni's (2012: 77) suggestion of oral tradition being present as one element among others that belong to the field of culture and tradition that the literary text refer to, seems rather accurate. This is also supported by Couto's own view of the references to oral tradition being a naturally emerging presence (Couto, 2012).

Whereas Couto does not underline the presence of the oral tradition in *O Último Voo do Flamingo*, the difference between spoken and written – or recorded – language is often brought up, which is similar to Ba Ka Khosa's approach to this through Ngungunhane's character, as was discussed earlier. The spoken word is less controllable and also livelier, emphasised by gestures, for example. This also points to the role the capturing of the words can have, and the difference between the 'captured' and spoken word. The translator's father, Sulplício, views the recorder with suspicion: "Para ele era claro: como podia eu estar a capturar as palavras dos meus compatriotas numa caixa daquelas? Dentro daquela caixa que destino teriam as nossas vozes? Quem assegurava que aquilo não seria para fazer feitiços, lá na Europa?" (*UVF*: 189). However, capturing the voices is also tempting, because it saves them for the future:

> – *Liga lá essa porcaria dessa máquina.*
> – *Para quê, pai?*
> – *Quero ver minha voz escrita aí* (*Ibid.*: 189-190).

Hence, there are letters, interviews and reports, in which the spoken word is present and constantly brought up. It seems that the spoken word is more suitable for narrating the events, as becomes visible in the village administrator's letter to his superior: "*Escrevo, Excelência, quase por via oral. As coisas que vou narrar, passadas aqui na localidade, são de mais admirosas que cabem num relatório. Faz conta estes relatório é uma carta muito familiar. Desculpe o abuso da confidência*" (*Ibid.*: 75). This could be seen in context of Bakhtin's considerations regarding the novel as the genre that can include other genres in it, and also reflects how it is possible to bring the presence of other forms of linguistic expressions to the

written text, and moreover, to a novel (Holquist, 1987: 6-7). Ultimately, these questions can be seen as reflecting the process of writing and creating literary language in general.

It is also interesting to consider the role and power of words, and how their power changes according to their form of expression. Whereas in *Ualalapi* the words would be uncontrollable, in *O Último Voo do Flamingo* they can be used as tools for witchcraft or as the translator's father argues, they can be reinvented to suit a specific situation, they can be stored in writing or in recordings and they can be translated too. Hence, it becomes visible that it is not only a question of the languages used, but rather the way words and expressions are seen differently – and this is often ignored when discussing the language of African literatures. Furthermore, in Couto's novel the other Mozambican languages are present too:

> – *Não é você que fala afluentemente as outras línguas?*
> – *Falo umas línguas, sim.*
> – *Línguas locais ou mundiais?*
> – *Umas e outras. Umas, de estrada. Outras, de corta-mato* (*UVF*: 19).

They are not only seen as foreign (to Portuguese) expressions, but the text reveals how their role is seen by their speakers in comparison to Portuguese, and how their use can also be interpreted in different ways in different situations. The administrator tries to speak with the translator's father, who refuses to speak Portuguese as a form of questioning the administrator's power and position: "Da primeira vez que tentara falar-lhe, o administrador sofrera o peso do ridículo. Ele ali, todo modos e maneiras, licenças para cima, desculpas para baixo. E o outro nada, trancado na testa, lambendo a própria língua. Isto é: não falando português, mas a língua local" (*Ibid*.: 108). Hence, the local languages – or national languages as they are called – are not only languages spoken by the subaltern, or only in specific contexts, but they can also be used in a subversive way.

Furthermore, there are also different registers in use. Besides the different formats, such as letters and reports, the characters use the language they speak in different ways, according to their social position, needs, or the occasion in question. The Italian speaks Portuguese differently from the administrator, and even the spirits use languages in order to communicate. The language of the earlier freedom fighters, now shown in their greed and hunger for power, is especially rich:

> *Eu me irrito com as bazófias dela. Se é tão esperta por que razão não é ela a administradora? Ou administratriz? Sempre eu lhe faço lembrar meu heroísmo na luta armada. Em pleno mato, sem nada para comer, tudo em sacrifício pela libertação do povo. Certa vez, até comi Colgate* (UVF: 78).

The administrators, legitimising their position by the fight for liberation, have also adopted a sophisticated Portuguese, which emphasises titles and social position, and which by Couto's language use appears as a ridiculous approach. The administrator is called "Sua Excelência", and his wife "Primeira Dama", while the villagers are still using a completely different register, introduced in the context of the arrival of the United Nations' representatives:

> De entre a multidão figurava um bem visível cartaz com enormíssimas letras: *«Boas vindas aos camaradas soviéticos! Viva o internacionalismo proletário*!» O administrador deu ordem instantânea de se mandar retirar o dístico. E que ninguém entoasse vivas a ninguém. O povo andava bastante confuso com o tempo e a actualidade (*Ibid*.: 26).

Couto, then, is able to bring these aspects up through language and by using different registers and does not need to explain the speakers' position. These aspects are also related to questions of globalisation, which will be discussed in detail later.

O Último Voo do Flamingo and Couto's language can also be seen in terms of ambiguity on the level of narration. For Rothwell (2004: 38), who emphasises the questioning of binary oppositions and lack of 'truths' in Couto's texts, it is typical of Couto to present his characters as unstable. This is not a psychological aspect, but the characters can change when it comes to age and gender, for example. Rothwell has discussed this especially in regards to gender, which in Western thinking is seen as something stable and exclusive, and closely related to identity. Couto is able to question this setting through his characters because, in Rothwell's (2004: 134-136) words, he "individualizes genders of many of his characters". Hence, they can question the stable and limited view of gender – which Rothwell (*Ibid*.: 134) argues, is in the context of Mozambique a result of colonialism and also related to questions of race and class:

> Post-independence Mozambique inherited many of the gender prejudices of the colonial order it replaced. In particular, a limited view of masculinity – characterized by sexual prowess, strength and conquest, prevailed in popular culture and restricted the officially sanctioned image of what it meant to be a Mozambican man. Samora Machel repeatedly condemned homosexuality in the same tone of moral probity that informed Salazar's protection of family values. Campaigns were launched to encourage heterosexual monogamy, and to obliterate vice from public view.

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It could be argued that this 'limited' view is strongly present in much Mozambican literature, for example, in Chiziane's novels – but also in Ba Ka Khosa's, where there is even a reference to the homosexuality of a character who is not part of Ngungunhane's court (*U*: 59). For example, in Ba Ka Khosa's case, it is curious to consider how much the view and position is affected by the current approach and how much it reflects the attitudes of the time it describes – at least alternatives to heteronormativity are not present in *Ualalapi*. Furthermore, it could be argued that the absence of discussing these aspects is interesting, which perhaps reflects a reluctance to question and see these kinds of 'heritages' of colonialism. Of course, it is hard to say whether it is exclusively a heritage of colonialism – or Western thinking, but Rothwell (2004: 136) provides examples of models that emerge from outside the Western hegemony and question heteronormativity.

While the gender aspect is not visible in *O Último Voo do Flamingo*, there are other topics that can be seen from a similar perspective and are related to the instability of the characters, but also question the assumed universality of concepts like age, time and the limits of 'reality'. This approach, then, can be seen as a form of decolonisation, which literature permits a discussion of, and which also ends up influencing the language use of the author. In *O Último Voo do Flamingo* the truth is as transient as in Couto's other novels, which is underlined at the beginning of the novel: "Em Tizangara só os factos são sobrenaturais" (*UVF*: 17). It could be said that the most visible example of the contradicting world views is expressed in the affair between Temporina and Risi. Temporina, who is at the same time old and young due to a spell, seduces Risi, who is incapable of understanding what is happening between them, and how Temporina can change. The same applies to the encounter between Risi and Hortênsia, Temporina's dead aunt, who is looking after Temporina's brother. These encounters also make Risi understand how his task – explaining the inexplicable deaths of the soldiers – is beyond his powers because the deaths are not the only events that do not respect the rational logic of Western thinking.

While these encounters will be discussed in more detail in the following subchapter, it is interesting to consider how they are presented. Although the translator is the narrator, Risi's views are brought up in dialogue and directly quoted. The narrator declares at the beginning that he will speak of what he knows: "*Que eu tenha mentido, isso não aceito. Mas o*

que se passou só pode ser contado por palavras que ainda não nasceram" (*UVF*: 11). In this way, the narrator declares that he does not need to explain the events thoroughly, since the language he uses is not capable of grasping them (and it seems, that neither would be the national languages, although it is tempting to consider this as a reference to written language in general). As Rothwell (2004: 38) points out, there is no omniscient narrator and he argues that this is related to Couto turning away from truths. His interpretation is not in contradiction with the possibility of the language not permitting the presence of an omniscient narrator that could explain the events.

3.3.2 Epistemological encounters in *O Último Voo do Flamingo*

By bringing the translation into the text as a visible process through the characters, Couto manages to avoid a narrator that 'naturally' has to explain the specificities and cultural differences to the reader. Hence, he can avoid approaches such as Ba Ka Khosa's, whereby the narrator at times interrupts the storytelling in order to give a detailed description of terms or customs the reader may be unfamiliar with. However, a glossary is provided, since not all non-Portuguese words are explained within the text. Other languages are present, but unlike in Ba Ka Khosa's novel, not all of the characters know the languages and this is also explicit in the text. Besides the foreign character, the local administration does not know them. Moreover, translation in the novel becomes a process of cultural translation regardless of the initial, traditional translator role given to the narrator. An example of this is the different views regarding dead people – or perhaps more accurately, levels of death, and how the translator guides Risi:

> – *Dá licença, Tia Hortênsia?*
> Silêncio. O italiano me pegou pelo ombro: Hortênsia não estava falecida?
> Pedia-se autorização a um morto? Pedi que respeitasse o silêncio (*UVF*: 65).

With the presence of Risi and the perspective of the translator, the co-existence of the two different approaches becomes pacific, and there is a dialogue between the two. This approach also permits an approximation of the two worlds, which are not, after all, so distant or unintelligible to each other as it may appear, which can be considered in terms of hybridity. Furthermore, since the narrator is in a position in which he understands both, he appears as a mediator instead of someone who is looking at the events from the outside. The questions the

Italian presents, and the depictions of his appearance and physical reactions, permit a negotiation of the distance. As Brugioni (2012: 91) comments, the characters are initially represented in a manner that is close to stereotypes of both African and European, which is then overcome in a process that points to hybridity and questions these same stereotypes, based on ideas regarding race and culture.

It is worth pointing out too, that the Portuguese language here becomes a place of cultural translation. It could even be considered as a Third Space, which according to Bhabha (1994: 37) is the location where translation takes place, revealing the hybridity and lack of unity of all cultures: "It is that Third Space, though unrepresentable in itself, which constitutes the discursive conditions of enunciation that ensure that the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity; that even the same signs can be appropriated, translated, rehistoricized and read anew". The language is a tool in this process, showing how languages and cultures are not necessarily inseparable. It is also significant that the main characters, Risi and the translator, do not have Portuguese as their mother tongue, and in this sense it is a neutral area. The Portuguese language is not seen in terms of its colonial 'roots' in Mozambique, but it has a relationship with power – or coloniality of power: the local administration uses it exclusively.

Curiously, all of the other characters seem to know Portuguese too, which in most cases is explicable through their experiences (the prostitute is not local, the translator's father has worked for the colonial administration). This shows how Portuguese is a Mozambican language, but may not reflect the reality – or shows how those who don't speak it tend to remain silently in the margins. However, the local languages are also shown as tools of subversion. As was mentioned earlier, there are no references to Risi learning another language, although in every other sense he seems to be turning his back to his European knowledge. While this could be seen as pointing to not valuing the local languages, it also points to the capacity of a European language to serve as a space for translation in this sense too. Moreover, Portuguese is shown in its globalised form: there are no Portuguese characters and no European Portuguese is 'spoken' in the novel – even Risi's Portuguese seems to be closely related to his Italian.

Couto, by 'using' Risi's confusion and the translator's knowledge, manages to bring the problems of misunderstandings, cultural differences, different world views and epistemological differences to the centre of the novel. The reader here is not in the position of a simple receiver of the results of the translation, but becomes a part of it too, and is challenged to question and analyse the positions of the different characters. Here, the role of literature can be brought up. As was discussed earlier, literature can be a powerful tool in various ways, and Couto's work can be seen as bringing up the limits of Western thinking and the problems it causes in globalisation and cultural encounters. In Risi's phases the reluctance to take seriously and learn alternative (to Western thought) world views is also shown. Translation and the use of the Portuguese language in the above discussed way can also be seen as a way to bring this kind of decolonisation to the level of the text and genre too, making the processes that take place within languages visible, instead of assuming language as a neutral and shared space.

Although most of the cultural encounters and dialogue takes place between Risi and the villagers and their 'traditional' world views, the diversity of the world views often becomes emphasised between Risi and the receptionist of the guesthouse where Risi stays, who introduces some traditional beliefs, but is also fluent in the political language of the administrators. Both speak Portuguese, but don't understand each other. Risi's Western references become a source of humour, but also misunderstanding. These encounters also reveal how distant world views expressed in the same language can be. Moreover, Risi is also given advice and lessons especially by Temporina, which eventually save his life. Hence, in order for him to avoid the destiny of other foreigners, he has had to listen and take the advice seriously.

As mentioned, the encounters between different world views are present in the mysterious relationship between Risi and Temporina. She is first described as an off-putting old woman with a young woman's body, which astonishes Risi: "É que o pano deixava entrever um corpo surpreendentemente liso, de moça polpuda e convidativa. Era como se aquele rosto encarquilhado não pertencesse àquela substância dela" (*UVF*: 41). Risi is told that Temporina has not left the guesthouse for centuries, and the receptionist tells the translator that Risi should be careful with Temporina: "– *Ela é uma dessas que anda, mas não leva a*

sombra com ela" (*Idem*). The first encounter with Temporina is the one that shows Risi how he cannot understand, regardless of understanding Portuguese, the world he is supposed to understand in order to produce his report. Later on, Risi dreams of Temporina: "Nessa noite, um estranho sonho tomou conta dele: a velha do corredor entrava no quarto, se despia revelando as mais apetitosas carnes que ele jamais presenciara. No sonho, o italiano fez amor com ela" (*Ibid*.: 59). Considering his experience as a dream – which suits his world view, since dreaming is a legitimate space of irrationality – he later on is 'woken up' by Temporina who claims to have become pregnant as a result of the night (*Ibid*.: 60)

Risi's confusion is described in detail which underlines his lack of understanding. There seems to be no rational explanation, and Risi surrenders to the situation. The narrator invites Temporina to explain herself to Risi and she starts by offering Risi a mysterious drink, which could be seen as a path towards understanding Temporina's discourse:

> – *Tenho duas idades. Mas sou miúda. Nem vinte não tenho.*
> – *Madonna zingara!* – suspirou Massimo, abanando a cabeça.
> – *Tenho cara de velha porque recebi castigo dos espíritos.*
> – *Madonna zingara!* – repetia o italiano.
> – *Castigaram-me porque se passaram os tempos sem que nenhum homem provasse da minha carne* (*UVF*: 63-64).

The translator then takes his professional role, which extends far beyond linguistic translation, as was seen earlier. He explains and confirms Temporina's story which he is familiar with since they are nearly same age. Hence, the translator has both local knowledge, but also knowledge of the language he should use in order to explain the events to a foreigner. On the other hand, Temporina also seems to be able to put her condition in words that Risi understands, but the translator confirms the story since he, because of his position, has the legitimacy to do it. Risi is not only confused, but afraid of the world he doesn't know and hence the translator also becomes the protector he wants to have near him at all times.

Whereas Risi and Temporina can be seen initially as representing two distant worlds, they are brought together with the help of the translator. When Risi asks Zeca Andorinho, the region's most powerful witch, to return Temporina to her own age, Andorinho tells him that Risi has already undone the spell. Risi, who ends up staying in Tizangara, is finally saved by Temporina from the destiny of exploding like the other foreigners. Risi is running towards

Temporina who appears until he stops since someone is warning him that the path he is taking is mined. He is already on top of the mines when he stops:

> Ele já havia penetrado fundo no terreno. Para trás seria tão perigoso quanto para a frente. Salvá-lo – como podia alguém? De repente, Temporina soltou a estranha ordem:
> > – *Venha, Massimo. Venha ter comigo!*
> > Loucura do amor? Como podia ela convidar que ele arriscasse caminho?
> [...]
> > Deste lado, outras vozes fizeram coro. Que o italiano se deixasse quieto. Mas Temporina teimou, chamando-o com doçura:
> > > – *Não lembra que lhe ensinei como pisar o chão? Pois venha, caminhe como lhe ensinei* (*UVF*: 204).

Risi walks as Temporina taught him – and gets to safety. The walking is referred to by the translator too, and can be seen as a form of distinguishing the foreigners and the locals: "Os europeus, quando caminham, parecem pedir licença ao mundo. Pisam o chão com delicadeza mas, estranhamente, produzem muito barulho" (*Ibid*.: 37). The prostitute Ana also refers to Risi's walk: "*Sabe por que gostei de si? Foi quando lhe vi atravessar a estrada, o modo como andava. Um homem se pode medir pelo jeito como anda. Você caminhava, timiudinho, faz conta um menino que sempre se dirige para a lição*" (*Ibid*.: 183). Whereas the explanation regarding the events and the explosions is more closely related to corruption and globalisation, Risi's phases and the way he becomes saved is related more to the cultural translation, or acculturation even: learning a new way to walk. This happens through his relationship with Temporina, leading to a change in Risi's world view and values.

These processes can be considered through Bhabha's (1994) concept of hybridity in many senses: *O Último Voo do Flamingo* essentially negotiates binary oppositions and denies cultural homogeneity, even in a process in which two supposedly distant cultures are in contact. Although the process takes place in a novel, it is not limited only to it, and it could even be said that the reader becomes part of the process, for it is for her/him that the description of the process is offered, and moreover, extending to the reader's own experiences and resonating with them too. This process is similar to Todorov's (2007: 27) concept of literature as having the capacity to make the reader more understanding and be compassionate with beings that differ from her/him. What is here in discussion are the two apparently distant world views and making understood the rationalities the inhabitants of Tizangara, with their diverse backgrounds. On a larger scale, it could be argued that what is being discussed are

different forms of globalisation, its influences and ultimately, the ways to confront it. This, then, takes place on the level of the novel, but also on the level of literature and its capacity to take part in these processes.

The encounter between Risi and Temporina is not without the influences of globalisation, as becomes visible in the conversation between the receptionist and Risi. The receptionist, unlike the translator, is unable to explain the events to Risi in a way that would not just make him more confused – or he deliberately laughs at the cost of the different world views and Risi's confusion and worry:

> – *Mas eu não fiz nada.*
> – *Se ela reclama que você lhe engravidou! Só se ela é segunda Virgem Maria...*
> – *Eu juro, não toquei nessa mulher – rumorejou o italiano.*
> – *Agora essa moça vai querer lhe acompanhar lá para a sua terra. Ela mais o vosso filho mulato* (*UVF*: 61).

Although Temporina's fate is conditioned by the so-called traditional world view, it is also influenced by conditions related to globalisation. In the minds of the locals, this is not contradictory. Morever, the combination emerges in a way that demonstrates the continuities of these aspects of colonialism, which could be considered under the term coloniality. It is closely tied to globalisation and inequality in a broader sense, pointing not only to race issues but also to gender issues, which Quijano (2009) discusses and will be brought up in the analysis of *O Alegre Canto da Perdiz*. The locals, as much as any other people and regardless of their way of life, are affected by global issues in multiple ways. This is, once more, a way that in the novel, and in Couto's texts in general, dichotomies are questioned.

Here, then, the questioning is aimed at the dichotomy between traditional and modern, extending also to the dichotomy between rural and urban imageries. This has been brought up by Couto, who has on various occasions called attention to the false dichotomy between the inhabitants of rural areas of Mozambique, considered generally as representing tradition, and the urban or international representing modernity. He points out that the cultural exchange also reaches the "traditional" (Couto, 2005: 60-61; Couto, 2009a: 23). Moreover, this aspect can be considered through the sociology of absences, and especially the monoculture of linear time, which produces the assumed traditional as non-existent and non-contemporary (Santos, 2006: 96). Here, Couto's words and work can be seen as questioning this monoculture by means of fiction, by discussing possible experiences and knowledges of

the people, usually seen through terms of tradition and in this way labelled as having fallen behind progress and development. Likewise, *O Último Voo do Flamingo* brings up the results of the cultural exchange Couto has referred to.

Some of the assumed 'truths' of so-called Western thought are questioned. This, again, happens most visibly in Temporina's character. Risi's confusion is deepened by his discussion with the receptionist of the guesthouse:

> Massimo parecia ausente. Antecipava em sua cabeça o desfile daqueles imprevistos em sua vida?
> – *Eu não posso entender!*
> – *É difícil, sim senhor. Até porque essa mulher não existe.*
> – *Não existe?*
> – *Não existe do modo como o senhor pensa* (*UVF*: 61).

As Rothwell (2004: 38-39) argues, in Couto's work the characters are in constant change: "Additionally, the same name refers to changed essences at different points in the narrative. In fact, the essence of each character is rarely constant since each rereading is informed and distorted by previous readings of the tale" and continues that "Couto sets his characters adrift, and forces them to assume new identities that respect and reinterpret traditions but never fossilize them. Once a tradition is set in stone, it becomes a truth, and is thus dead" (*Ibid.*: 41). Whereas Rothwell sees the instability of the characters as a part of Couto's postmodernism, it can also be seen through epistemologies of the South, or Chabal's request to profoundly consider our understanding of such concepts as individual, which is not in contradiction with Rothwell's reading, but complements it. The instability – labelled as such from a Western point of view – appears as a challenge to the reader, since it is difficult to judge and relate to it and its significance.

Rather than asking the readers to agree that people can be bewitched to change their age, these elements can lead to questioning established views regarding age, truth (and ultimately, the idea of conceiving a stable, lasting truth) and even existence. In other words, Temporina and Hortênsia exist, but differently from the way it is generally understood – death is not the end of the existence, and external appearance does not necessarily correspond to someone's age, abilities or even knowledge. The latter two change throughout a person's lifetime, and her/his quantity of knowledge does not necessarily accumulate progressively, but is in constant change instead. This is visible in Risi's character: initially the different approach

causes astonishment and anxiousness in him, but at the end he starts to understand the different epistemology. Moreover, he starts to see similarities between the different epistemologies. Risi, for example, starts to see his task differently through his own family myth in which his family asks a prostitute to spend time with his aging 'grandfather' in order to cheer him up, and also to then pass on reports of the old man's virility. Eventually, the prostitute dedicates herself to the old man and becomes pregnant against all expectations. Massimo tells the translator that he is the son of the prostitute and explains his interpretation of his destiny to him:

> Esse destino o tinha conduzido até ali, o tinha atirado para aqueles confins e lhe entregara, inclusive, uma prostituta que guardava segredos.
> – *A mão de um bom santo me protegeu* (*UVF*: 180).

The translator does not agree with Risi's view regarding the protection and Risi, somewhat confusingly, also attributes his different destiny from the other UN soldiers to Temporina's protection. The translator 'knows' that Temporina could not have provided the protection: "Nenhuma mulher pode chamar serviço sem chegar a ser mãe" (*Ibid.*: 181). Nevertheless, the two epistemologies come close to each other and there are similar principles in both cases. The translator understands it:

> – *E acredita nisso, Massimo? Acredita nessas nossas coisas?*
> O importante não era a verdade do assunto. Contava era ter havido alguém que intercedera por ele. Essa era a única verdade que lhe interessava *(Idem)*.

Similar processes of translation are present in Couto's other novels too. As an example, Couto's latest novel, *A Confissão da Leoa*, can be mentioned as exploring different views regarding nature and people's relationship with it in a situation where it apparently poses a danger – lions start attacking people. The story, based on real events, shows various different approaches and explanations of the reasons behind the attacks. A hint of this theme can be seen in the case of the mantis that Risi kills in the guesthouse, which then causes horror in the dramatic receptionist enjoying Risi's reactions:

> – *Você matou-lhe!*
> O italiano se ergueu, aflito. Outra morte? E o recepcionista, juntado as mãos no rosto, gritava olhando o chão:
> – *Hortênsia!* (*UVF*: 62).

The Italian loses his patience when he realises that the commotion was caused by a dead insect and asks the translator for an explanation: "Uma louva-a-deus não era um simples insecto. Era

um antepassado visitando os viventes. Expliquei a crença a Massimo: aquele bicho andava ali em serviço do defunto. Matá-lo podia ser um mau prenúncio" (*Idem*). However, it is hard to see if Risi's action leads to the suspected problems or causes bad events – on the one hand, Hortênsia has died long ago and on the other, she is visited by them right after finding the insect dead. Therefore, directly there is no consequence which the receptionist suggests, and the translator himself also labels the approach a belief. Hence, the belief is presented as one that makes people be careful in their actions in order to maintain order.

However, the translator's explanation is necessary for Risi to understand the logic and rationality of the receptionist's reaction and to bring up the similarity of this and other beliefs. Furthermore, the translator wants to teach Risi to understand Tizangara, which is the reason he takes him to visit Hortênsia:

> – *Entende agora por que viemos aqui? Para você ver que em Tizangara não há dois mundos.*
> Ele que visse, por si, os vivos e os mortos partilharem a mesma casa. Como Hortênsia e seu sobrinho. E pensasse nisso quando procurasse os seus mortos (*UVF*: 69).

This direction of translation is partially related to the idea that the locals know Risi's world while Risi doesn't know theirs, but showing Tizangara's world and translating it to Risi also has another dimension, related to local politics and community. The politicians, whose corruptness is brought up on many occasions, are the ones that normally transmit the events to the foreigners, and as the text goes on, it becomes visible that the agenda of the politicians is very different from that of the other locals.

Although in the novel it is most visibly Risi who changes, his change also reveals something to the villagers – they too see that there is not necessarily an abyss between their world and the Western world. Risi, little by little, is forced to give in and see the events through the epistemology of the locals, through concepts of ancestors and spirits: "O italiano não voltou a responder. Levantou-se, derrotado. Estava ali o final de sua carreira, o desmoronar da sua própria razão" (*UVF*: 221). Hence, there are two ways of the translation: "Massimo sorria, em rito de infância. Me sentei, a seu lado. Pela primeira vez, senti o italiano como um irmão nascido na mesma terra. Ele me olhou, parecendo me ler por dentro, adivinhando os meus receios" (*Ibid.*: 224). Significantly, Risi and the translator are sitting in front of an abyss waiting for other times, and Risi comforts the translator:

> *– Que vamos fazer? –* perguntei.
> *– Vamos esperar.*
> A voz dele era calma, como se vinda de antiga sabedoria.
> *– Esperar por quem?*
> *– Esperar por outro barco –* e, após uma pausa, se corrigiu*: – Esperar por um outro voo do flamingo. Há-de vir um outro* (*Idem*).

Hence, Risi finally speaks in terms of a local myth and images, replacing the ship with a flamingo, whose role as a myth will be discussed in the following subchapter. After this, Risi destroys the report he had written for the UN, which can be seen as symbolising his abandoning of his previous values, representing the hegemonic Western thinking, especially in terms of basing on rationality, logic and visible proof of what happened to the soldiers in the village.

Through his approach in *O Último Voo do Flamingo* Couto also avoids the problem of representing the oral tradition in writing, which is present in Chiziane's and Ba Ka Khosa's works. The work is in the very beginning presented as a written text, using different sources such as written and spoken reports, interviews and letters. This way, the process in which oral testimonies or narratives are transmitted into writing becomes explicit. The problem of the presence of oral narrative in written text is brought up in a way which differs from Chiziane's approach and perhaps approximates Manuel Rui's (2008: 28) idea of the battle between oral and written text, which through the work of the writer becomes another text, in which both are present. In this context, it is interesting to consider the proverbs and quotes that precede each chapter, which should be seen as a result of the translator's work in writing down the story. Hence, the references to oral tradition come from him and could be seen as keys to the world view of Tizangara rather than marks of authenticity.

Differently from many African novels, Couto does not here quote existing proverbs, but invents new ones from Tizangara in the name of the translator. Hence, these appear as part of the fictional world and their literariness becomes visible. Moreover, the myth that also gives the novel its name does not appear as an old myth, and Couto explains its birth and the necessities which lead to its invention. This could be seen as a form of emphasising the process in which even the originally oral becomes literary, and is transmitted to writing in a form which could also be seen as translation – it cannot be replicated in writing as such, neither can it be directly translated to other languages. On the other hand, Couto's approach in

this case could be seen as intertextual – or even ironic – since so many African writers emphasise the presence of the oral tradition, often particularly in the form of proverbs, sayings and beliefs. Couto's approach also questions the readings that underline the presence of the oral tradition as an 'obligatory' feature of African literature, which adds up to his questioning of the role of the African writer.

In *O Último Voo do Flamingo* Couto not only brings to the centre the encounter of different world views and epistemologies, but also describes the results of translation, or dialogue, through the characters of Risi and the translator. Moreover, it can also be seen through giving Portuguese language the role as a space in which the approximation takes place. Ultimately, it also gives a new perspective towards the presence of an oral tradition in Mozambican, or African literatures. Besides that, he also adds a 'rare' perspective of those that are normally the translated beings towards the hegemonic position represented by Risi, but also the UN soldiers. This is also related to the narrator being a local character instead of an omniscient narrator. Moreover, the direction of translation and its results can be seen as inverted since it is Risi who abandons his world and turns his back to values it is based on.

3.3.3 *O Último Voo do Flamingo* and globalisation

Although there are some references to colonialism and the socialist phase, the main reasons for Tizangara's state seem to be coloniality, neoliberal globalisation and the international powers, together with the corruption of the local administration. The state of the village, in which the local people are not respected and their world views disregarded, besides the poverty and abuses by those in power, extends to much of Mozambique, but also Africa more generally, and ultimately is a global issue. These aspects will be discussed in order to reveal how the criticism is constructed and how it is reflected in the dynamics of the village.

Significantly, the problems that the village is experiencing become visible only after the UN soldiers start to explode, which brings Risi to investigate the events. The imbalance is brought up by the prostitute Ana Deusqueira: "– *Morreram milhares de moçambicanos, nunca vos vimos cá. Agora, desaparecem cinco estrangeiros e já é o fim do mundo?*" (*UVF*: 34). There is also further resistance to Risi's presence, expressed by the local priest: "Muhando primeiro ainda somou reclamações: imaginasse o italiano que era o contrário. Isto era: que um

grupo de negros africanos surgia no meio da Itália, fazendo inquéritos, remexendo intimidades. Como reagiriam os italianos?" (*Ibid*.: 126-127). The presence of the United Nations and its Italian representatives (the chief of the mission was Italian, although many other nationalities were part of the mission) took place in reality between 1992 and 1994 for peacekeeping purposes after the civil war. For this reason, Brugioni (2012: 91) considers the possibility of seeing Risi's nationality as a synecdoche. The mission caused controversy and criticism for reported cases of child prostitution (Machel 1996: 24). Moreover, which is interesting for the discussion of *O Último Voo do Flamingo*, problems related to the demining programme were revealed. Alden (1997) reports that although millions of dollars were used for demining, the majority of the mines were not removed. Most of the mines are located in the rural areas, on footpaths and fields. The tasks of the soldiers are not commented in detail, but the story is placed in the same time and situation as in real life:

> *Estávamos nos primeiros anos do pós-guerra e tudo parecia correr bem, contrariando as gerais expectativas de que as violências não iriam nunca parar. Já tinham chegado os soldados das Nações Unidas que vinham vigiar o processo de paz. Chegaram com a insolência de qualquer militar. Eles, coitados, acreditavam ser donos de fronteiras, capazes de fabricar concórdias* (*UVF*: 11-12).

Risi initially sees his task as an opportunity to grow professionally, and wants to leave as soon as possible: "– *Tenho que cumprir essa missão. Eu queria só receber a promoção que há tanto espero*" (*Ibid*.: 42). However, the more he tries to understand, the deeper his anxiety becomes. The translator, on whom he relies in many aspects, is determined to make him understand the wider picture of the village's challenges and dynamics. Hence, the events that bring Risi to the village fade into the background and Risi's change becomes the principal topic of the story. The perspective changes from that of preoccupation regarding the foreigners towards preoccupation regarding Tizangara and its destiny in the hands of its corrupted leaders, who are keen to cooperate with the Westerners in order to make money. Hence, the translator too becomes a principal character in a story that eventually leads to the opening of the eyes of the Western visitor, here embodied in the character of Risi.

The relationship between corruption and the Western presence is brought up in the beginning, which eventually ends up explaining the whole series of events that lead Risi to come to Tizangara. The administrator explains it in his letter:

> *Se fosse era antigamente, tinham sido mandados para longe. Era o que acontecia se havia as visitas de categoria, estruturas e estrangeiros. Tínhamos orientações superiores: não podíamos mostrar a Nação a mendigar, o País com as costelas toda de fora. Na véspera de cada visita, nós todos, administradores, recebíamos a urgência: era preciso esconder os habitantes, varrer toda aquela pobreza.*
>
> > *Porém, com os donativos da comunidade internacional, as coisas tinham mudado. Agora, a situação era muito contrária. Era preciso mostrar a população com a sua fome, com suas doenças contaminosas. Lembro bem as suas palavras, Excelência: a nossa miséria está render bem* (UVF: 77).

Hence, regardless of the different political approaches, the problems have not changed but are just brought up differently in order to present the required picture to the visitors. The relationship is clear too: the administrator considers that besides the 'internal government', the 'external government' is coming to investigate the events as well. The external power and the role that the foreign countries and institutions play in the country is underlined in this way, which also explains the suspicion the locals have towards the foreigners:

> *– Mas pai, esse italiano nos está ajudar.*
> *– A ajudar?*
> *– Ele e os outros. Nos ajudam a construir a paz.*
> *– Nisso se engana. Não é a paz que lhe interessa. Eles se preocupam é com a ordem, o regime desse mundo.*
> *– Ora, pai...*
> *– O problema deles é manter a ordem que lhes faz serem patrões. Essa ordem é uma doença em nossa história* (Ibid.: 192).

The position of the administrator Jonas and his fellows is justified by their participation in the war for liberation, and not measured by their progress in eliminating the problems that the people are suffering from. The administrator is comfortable with his position:

> Dona Ermelinda, a sua esposa, tinha vazado os equipamentos públicos das enfermarias: geleiras, fogão, camas. Até saíra num jornal da capital que aquilo era abuso do poder. Jonas ria-se: ele não abusava; os outros é que não detinham poderes nenhuns. E repetia o ditado: cabrito come onde está amarrado (Ibid.: 20).

However, the dynamics and power relations are also related to colonialism and the liberation war too. The translator's father, Sulplício, had a position in the colonial administration as a game keeper:

> Era o tempo colonial, não se brincava. Ele era quase o único preto que detinha um igual lugar. Não fora fácil.
> > *– Sofri racismos, engoli saliva de sapo* (UVF: 140).

Similarly, as in Ba Ka Khosa's and Chiziane's novels, the different forms of administration do not offer a relief to the suffering, as Sulplício explains. Instead, the hope that independence and the end of the civil war raised dissolves, and is replaced by disappointment:

> *– Só mudámos de patrão.*
> [...]
> Ele era um fiscal já no tempo colonial. Será que entendíamos? Um preto, como ele, servindo as forças dos brancos? Sabíamos o que ele tivera que passar? E, no entanto, não tinha queixa. Já tinha sofrido, voltara a sofrer. (*Ibid*.: 141-142)

In a small village such as Tizangara, these relationships and the changes of the positions of the people cause problems and can also make it difficult to proceed with new approaches or at least create stability due to bitterness emerging from past events. These issues, explaining some of the current tensions in the village, are related to Sulplício not respecting the special rights of the elite: "Certa vez, meu velho apanhou em flagrante o enteado de Jonas caçando elefante. Fora da época, fora da licença. Prendeu-o. Foi seu erro. Dona Ermelinda, a esposa do chefe, apareceu na prisão clamando que aquilo era perseguição política" (*Ibid*.: 142). Sulplício was tied to a tree, and besides the humiliation, he injured his hand permanently. As well as revealing the continuous circles of abuse, the description also points to the rapid changes in the power relations. As Ba Ka Khosa (2012) pointed out, the values that were denied in the liberation fight were later adopted – by the same people.

Moreover, there are some familiar echoes, reminiscent of colonialism and reflecting coloniality. The locals are judged by language, the way they speak Portuguese and their culture. The administrator is irritated by local ceremonies:

> *Gritei pelo milícia.* [...] [*E*]*stava tão cheio com sono que, no princípio, falou em chimuanzi. Bem eu tinha recebido a recomendação de Sua Excelência: aprender a língua local facilita o entendimento com as populações. Mas eu desconsigo, nem tempo tenho para as prioridades.* [...] *Despachei sentença: os barulhos que terminassem, logo-logo.*
> – Mas qual barulhos, Excelência?
> – Esses dos tambores, nem ouves?
> – Mas, Senhor Diminstrador, não conhece as cerimónias? São nossas missas, aqui no Norte.
> – Não quero saber – *respondi.*
> *Eu era autoridade, não podia ficar ali destrocando conversa. Nem valia a pena prosseguir diálogo: ele era um local, igual aos outros, mautrapilhoso. Por isso aquele barulho era música para ele*. (*UVF*: 77-78).

The idea of locals is further accentuated since the administrators are often not locals, but posted to different geographical locations by the government. Moreover, this attitude can be considered through the monoculture of linear time, producing the villagers as prisoners of the tradition, rendering them as not worth a dialogue and hence, non-existent.

The arrogant attitude towards the local people is complemented by the subservient attitude towards those coming from elsewhere. The administration and their attitude towards the visitors is ridiculed which, instead of softening the sharpness of the critique, actually increases it. The local administration wants to look good in the eyes of the previously unseen, important visitors, and for that reason hires a translator:

> – *Tradutor? Mas para que língua?*
> – *Isso não interessa nada. Qualquer governo prezável tem seus tradutores. Você é meu tradutor particular. Está compreender?* (*UVF*: 20).

The translator, due to his position in the village, is not respected, as his comment regarding Dona Ermelinda shows: "Olhou-me como se eu não chegasse sequer a ser gente" (*Ibid*.: 21). Neither are his skills questioned, but rather he needs to be present in order for the village and its administration to seem more appropriate to receive the visitors. Moreover, curiously, the hiring of the translator is the event that ultimately sparks the unveiling of the corruptness of the local administration.

It is fruitful to consider Couto's depiction of the local administration together with Achille Mbembe's views regarding politics in a postcolony. Warning of approaches that use binary categories since they may obfuscate some significant aspects of postcolonial power relations, he discusses the banality of power in postcolonies by drawing lines to Bakhtin's discussion regarding Rabelais, especially regarding the grotesque and obscene (Mbembe, 2001: 102-103). For Bakhtin, the carnivalesque aspects and folk culture with its laughter have not been properly discussed and neither has their relevance in European cultures been understood – and as a result Rabelais has been misunderstood regardless of how highly he has been estimated afterwards. During carnival all hierarchy and rank were eliminated and neither were the normal etiquette and decency norms valid (Bakhtin, 1984: 10). However, Mbembe (2001: 102) rejects Bakhtin's view of these aspects being placed exclusively within the non-official cultures, and argues that they are present in all systems of domination, both in confirming or destructing them. Although Couto doesn't bring up so much the vulgar aspects Bakhtin and Mbembe discuss, or what Ngugi plays with in his *The Devil on the Cross*, where the bourgeoisie is depicted through repulsive images of big bellies and greediness, there is still something similar in his way of depicting those in power and eager to maintain and expand it. Moreover, some similarities can be seen in the explosions where the UN soldier is described

as inflating until he explodes, and that only their genitals are left. But the local administration is not depicted with these kinds of images, but with less severity and more ridiculed than the foreigners.

The way the author (Couto, and especially the fictional character of the translator) discuss the pomposity of the administration echoes Mbembe's (2001: 109) discussion: "[...] in the postcolony the search for majesty and prestige contains within it elements of crudeness and the bizarre that the official order tries hard to hide, but that ordinary people bring to its attention, often unwittingly". While it may seem that the power is respected, it is rendered ridiculous while at the same time, through doing what is expected, the people also avoid problems such as violent repression. This is seen in the translator's character, who accepts his role as the translator without much questioning and in this way participates in maintaining the image of power pursued by the administration. It is also visible during the reception, when the people show posters with a socialist vocabulary. This, then, shows how relations are not based on binary oppositions such as hegemony versus counter-hegemony, but reveals multiple identities instead. Moreover, it could be argued that the mockery permitted by carnivalesque aspects is shown to be not restricted to the non-official. It's based on reality, which as such is ridiculous if seen from a certain perspective.

Moreover, the reception of the guests points to both the performance of the people and to the closeness of the administration with the local people, and their distance to the modernity, which they are trying to perform by, for example, hiring the translator. Besides the poster of the people with the wrong vocabulary, the administrator is further ridiculed by the goat that is hit by a car and bleats in pain while the administrator is trying to welcome the guests. It is suggested, however, that the goat belongs to the administrator himself:

> – *Quem é esse cabrito?*
> – *De quem é...* – o secretário corrigiu, discreto.
> – *Sim, de quem é essa merda?*
> – *Esse cabrito não será dos seus, Excelência?* (*UVF*: 26).

Later, the administrator labels the event as ideological sabotage by the enemy, falling himself into language that is a reminder of the previous political phase. Both of these aspects can be seen as referring to the closeness of the 'people' and the administration, representing power.

As Mbembe (2001: 25) argues, the power relations in postcolonies are a mixture of various, entangled heritages such as colonialism and pre-colonial forms of government, "to the point where something has emerged that has the look of 'custom' without really being reducible to it, and partakes of 'modernity' without being wholly included in it". Moreover, the continuities of colonialism are mixed with new conditions imposed by the wider setting of neoliberal globalisation. Hence, Rothwell (2004: 165) argues that the novel "[...] is not an attack on Portuguese colonialism. It is far more daring, suggesting that Mozambique has, as yet, been unable to overcome the mentality of the colonized". However, taking a closer look, the assumed mentality of the colonised is more complex. In *O Último Voo do Flamingo* the local administration repeat some of the attitudes that are familiar from colonial times, but on the other hand, they are the ones that Rothwell seems to be blaming for maintaining the mentality of the colonised towards international donors and others. Moreover, the willingness to please the foreigners can also be seen as a form of securing future advantages instead of blindly pleasing the exterior institutions. Hence, Rothwell's argument could be further clarified by pointing out that whereas the ordinary Mozambicans – the majority – may be seen as 'victims' of the neoliberal globalisation, together with many other people around the world, the higher classes are not pleasing the donors or other international organisations/companies in vain since they also gain much from the negotiations.

While some of the attitudes reflect coloniality, there are also new attitudes that reveal a change in the discourse – and not so much in practice. The role of culture is brought up in the context of the reception ceremonies: the first lady, as she requests the translator to call herself, is described as wearing clothes she claims to be African. The translator does not recognise the style: "Mas nós éramos africanos, de carne e alma, e jamais havíamos visto tais indumentárias" (*UVF*: 21). The local culture does not have other than decorative value in pleasing the foreign visitors, as Dona Ermelinda's comments show:

> Virando-se para o marido, quis saber se tinham mandado chamar a cultura.
> – *A cultura?*
> – *Sim, os grupos de dança?*
> – *Eles não hão-de aceitar vir. Sem pagamento não aceitam.*
> – *Mas será que nesta terra já ninguém faz nada só por vontade do amor?*
> (*Idem*).

Hence, although principally commenting on social, political and international relations, there are also passages that could be seen as referring to culture and the role it has become to have in present day Mozambique – and other countries in a similar situation. The culture is presented as an event that is isolated from its wider context, in order to respond to the hunger for the exotic of the visitors and, at the same time, without value, as the above quote reveals.

This approach towards the local culture can be discussed in terms of alienation, more marked by globalisation than direct admiration of Western values or the coloniser's culture. Sulplício's conversation with the translator, his son, expresses the alienation:

> – *Antigamente, queríamos ser civilizados. Agora queremos ser modernos.*
> Continuávamos, ao fim ao cabo, prisioneiros da vontade de não sermos nós (*UVF*: 193).

This could be seen as a view of the monoculture of linear time from the perspective of those produced as non-existent, for whom the only way to become visible is by seeking modernity, defined by Western terms. As Chabal (2012: 316) points out: "Westernisation and modernisation are directly correlated". It can also be considered in terms of subalternity and their unheard speech, as Spivak (1994) discusses it. It could also be seen from the perspective of hybridity, revealing what kind of conditions it comes to exist in. Although hybridity as such may not always be related to asymmetric power relations, in the specific setting above it is related to the hegemony of Western culture. The will to be something else is not only related to the will of those who want to be modern, but it is also imposed from the outside in Eurocentric processes.

Couto's humorous description also points to other similarities between the assumedly distant groups. In the same letter quoted above, the administrator describes to his superior his suspicious problem which reveals how the elite, presenting itself as all-powerful, are at the mercy of the same powers as the people they rule:

> *Todavia, eu sofro de uma estranheza. É que quando toco em mulher minhas mãos aquecem até ficarem como carvão aceso. Houve vezes até que pegaram fogo e eu fui obrigado a parar o acto. Viu uma coisa destas? Deve ser um feitiço que Ermelinda me encomendou. Quem sabe um dia, de tão quente, também eu expludo no meio da noite?* (*UVF*: 79-80).

There is no contradiction in the view of the administrator who judges the locals but at the same time shares similar perspectives with them.

Moreover, there are also moments in which the accepted Western-like order and preoccupation regarding the credibility and acceptability of the administration precede, which surprises the official visitors. This happens especially in relation to the prostitute of the village, Ana Deusqueira. Calling her to the location causes confusion for the minister and shows how Couto expresses two contradictory views regarding the woman and prostitution in the dialogue. The minister is surprised because of considering prostitution as more related to the moral corruption of the modern world and hence this kind of phenomenon should be absent from such rural locations as Tizangara. The administrator interprets the existence of the prostitute as representing positive progress:

> – *Mas, essa Ana, quem é?* – inquiriu o ministro.
> Vozes se cruzaram: como se podia não conhecer a Deusqueira? Ora, ela era a prostituta da vila, a mais competente conhecedora dos machos locais.
> – *Prostitutas? Vocês já têm cá disso?*
> E o administrador, empoleirado na vaidade, murmurou:
> – *É a descentralização, senhor ministro, é a promoção da iniciativa local!*
> (*UVF*: 28-29).

Deusqueira, who according to Catholic values would be disregarded for her profession, is described in a way that instead of marginalising her, puts her at the centre of the story. Neither is she described as a victim, but rather a powerful figure in the village. Rothwell (2004: 167) argues that Deusqueira challenges the Judeo-Christian tradition when it comes to the ideas of morality, but also the position of women in the Marxist tradition. Hence it can be argued that calling her to the scene is in contradiction with the rest of the reception, but also tells of the familiarity between the inhabitants of Tizangara. It is also interesting to compare Deusqueira the prostitute to Temporina, whose destiny was to live in the shadows due to a curse related to her not having sex. Ultimately, it is her relationship with Risi that liberates her – and while it may seem that the women are powerful, at the end their power is curiously related to their relationships with men. On the other hand, this can also be seen as a different approach to sex and relationships which does not necessarily victimise the woman – and could be also discussed in terms of questioning the Judeo-Christian tradition.

Rothwell (2004: 167) argues that "Couto castrates the totem of foreign power and masculine violence, and uses the marginalized prostitute to make it clear that the phallus, or symbolic order, under which the nation lives is from the outside". However, although the role

of the prostitute is central, there are also violent attempts to prevent Deusqueira from taking her position in dismantling the events leading to the explosions:

> Estêvão Jonas segurava a Ana Deusqueira por um braço. A puxava contra si para depois a empurrar contra a parede. E gritava: puta, puta, puta! Que a mandava prender, acusada de culpa pelas mortes estrangeiras. Chupanga pedia calma. Já a prostituta no chão e o pé do administrador voou na direcção dela. Ana Deusqueira, inclinada sobre um braço, ergueu o rosto e gritou:
> – *Você é uma merda! Vou-te denunciar!*
> Outro pontapé. Ana ia sangrando, o rosto dela perdia contorno (*UVF*: 197).

It is also worth pointing out that Deusqueira is insulted for being a prostitute, and on the other hand called crazy – both of these aspects brought up in order to justify the beating, but also to question her legitimacy as the central figure. Here, then, being a prostitute is again treated from the moralist perspective, on the contrary to what happens in the initial chapters. The beating ends only when Dona Ermelinda steps in and saves Deusqueira, turning her back to her husband and their corrupted son. This moment, then, can also be seen to symbolise a new unity between the women – and again, to question the position of the women with regard to the men, both in Mozambican society and in the Western tradition.

The violent reaction towards Deusqueira is related to the knowledge she has regarding the demining programme and corruption. The most complete description of the events is offered by the priest Father Muhando:

> Passava-se, afinal, o seguinte: parte das minas que se retiravam regressava, depois, ao mesmo chão. Em Tizangara tudo se misturava: a guerra dos negócios e os negócios da guerra. No final da guerra restavam minas, sim. Umas tantas. Todavia, não era coisa que fizesse prolongar tanto os projectos de desminagem. O dinheiro desviado desses projectos era uma fonte de receita que os senhores locais não podiam dispensar. Foi o enteado do administrador quem urdiu a ideia: e se aldrabassem os números, inventassem infindáveis ameaças? Valia a pena. Plantavam-se e desplantavam-se minas. Umas mortes à mistura até calhavam, para dar mais crédito ao plano. Mas era gente anónima, no interior de uma nação africana que mal sustenta seu nome no mundo (*UVF*: 200).

The death of Temporina's nephew should be seen against this backdrop. The description of "gente anónima" fits very well with him: "O moço era lento e tonto, com tanto atraso na mente quanto no gesto. [...] O moço não era um fulano, nem nome nenhum lhe foi posto" (*Ibid.*: 66). He dies after walking into a mine (*Ibid.*: 147). It is mentioned earlier that he admired the UN soldiers and wanted a helmet like theirs (*Ibid.*: 68).

However, the re-planted mines are not offered as an explanation for the explosion of the soldiers as this would not explain the lack of the rest of their bodies, nor the testimony of Ana Deusqueira in which the Zambian explodes like a balloon while with her (*UVF*: 184-185). The explosions are explained on various occasions – or rather interpreted. The first explanation is offered by Ana Deusqueira:

> *Quer saber toda a verdade do acontecido? Somos nós, mulheres, os engenhos explosivos.* [...] *O soldado zambiano chegou, exibindo a farda. Entrou no bar, arrotando presença. Batia os calcanhares mandando vir bebidas. Não gostamos, sabe, esses ares de dono. Só fingimos simpatias, mais nada. Nessa bebida, eu vi, alguém juntou uns pós tratados, feitiços desses, nossos* (*Ibid.*: 85-87).

Zeca Andorinho, the witch, takes responsibility for the explosions, pointing out the jealousy of the local men, similarly to Ana Deusqueira:

> Fazia esse feitiço por encomenda dos homens de Tizangara. Ciúme dos locais contra os visitantes. Inveja de suas riquezas, ostentadas só para fazer suas esposas tontearem. Carecia-se castigo contra os olhares compridos dos machos estrangeiros. Sobretudo, se fardados de soldados das Nações Unidas (*Ibid.*: 150).

Moreover, Father Muhando is captured as guilty for the explosions – and admits his guilt too, without giving logical details though, for Risi's growing anxiety (*Ibid.*: 127). Hence, the deaths are inexplicable in terms of Western knowledge and rationality, which causes Risi's problems in his task. Here, then, the reason for the explosions is that of arrogance and a lack of respect towards the locals – not by Europeans, since those mentioned are from Zambia and Pakistan.

Hence, Couto does not offer a gapless explanation to the readers, who may expect Risi to explain the events by the mines. This, then, could be seen from the perspective of Couto's above discussed plea to take the philosophies that come from outside the hegemonic centres seriously: the events are described from the perspective of the locals, to whom explaining them through witchcraft is valid and rational, and all of the evidence supports this explanation too. Risi, initially representing Western thought, ends up abandoning his professional goals – without denouncing the corruption either, which can be considered as reflecting his helplessness in a hopeless situation. This could be seen as result of the process of 'unlearning', whereby Risi stops looking for a rational (from his Western position) explanation. The material for his report had already 'disappeared':

> Apanhei umas folhas ao acaso. Eram papéis em branco.

This refers not only to questioning the validity of Risi's attempts to explain the events, but also to the impossibility of explaining it through photos and written text. This could be seen together with Zeca Andorinho's spell, with which he claims to protect Risi from the destiny of the UN soldiers (*Ibid*.: 151). Although Risi, as with the others who exploded, had relations with local women, Risi survives unlike the others, for whom having sex with the local women is what ignites the spell and hence, their explosion. This explanation can be seen as calling for a reconsideration of the metaphor of Africa as a woman and the outsiders as male abusers taking advantage of the women. Furthermore, it can also be seen in terms of the castration of the power of these abusers by the locals – to which Rothwell (2004: 167) refers when discussing Deusqueira, as was discussed above. However, although Deusqueira is at the centre of the events, she could also be seen as representing not only women, but all of those who suffer from abuse, including marginalised men.

The novel's title refers to a story of flamingos, introduced as a myth, and later revealed as an invention, which suits Rothwell's approach to Couto as a postmodern writer. It is a consoling story, initially made up by the translator's mother in order to sooth the trauma of the translator's father, who had had to kill and eat a flamingo as proof of his manhood (*UVF*: 191-192). The flamingos are creatures that keep the order of nature: "Para ela, os flamingos eram eles que empurravam o sol para que o dia chegasse ao outro lado do mundo" (*Ibid*.: 49). Therefore the last flight of the flamingo refers to an endless night. According to the origin of the myth, it could be argued that manhood, by killing (or in this case, chasing away) the flamingo, is at the root of the endless night that is described at the end of the novel. Indirectly, then, the destructiveness of the corrupted men is at the source of the disappearing of the country. In this sense, the novel reflects the disappointment after the hope provided by the ending of the civil war, and ultimately, independence too. The country, due to its relationship with foreign countries and donors, looses its independence again.

The land, in a dystopian ending, disappears into an abyss: "Olhei para o lado e quase desfaleci: ali mesmo, onde estava a terra, não havia nada senão um imenso abismo. Já não

havia paisagem, nem sequer chão. Estávamos na margem de um infinito buraco" (*UVF*: 219). Before that, the administrator flees and Chupanga, the administrator's assistant, is caught walking towards a dam – opening it would destroy all of the evidence regarding the events. Scared and apologetic when caught by the villagers, Chupanga is finally forgiven. The disappearance of the village is not necessarily a negative thing, but also a possibility for a new beginning after bringing to an end the current order of things. As Rothwell (2004: 168) writes, the country stops existing to those that have taken advantage of it, which also means protection. Sulplício confirms that this is due to the dissatisfaction of the ancestors, as Zeca Andorinho had also told him:

> Já acontecera com outras terras em África. Entregara-se o destino dessas nações a ambiciosos que governaram como hienas, pensando apenas em engordar rápido. [...] Vendo que solução não havia, os deuses decidiram transportar aqueles países para esses céus que ficam no fundo da terra. E levaram-nos para um lugar de névoas subterrâneas, lá onde as nuvens nascem. Nesse lugar onde nunca nada fizera sombra, cada país ficaria em suspenso, à espera de um tempo favorável para regressar ao seu próprio chão (*UVF*: 220-221).

After the explanation delivered by the translator's father, Risi writes a report in which he explains that he cannot explain what he has witnessed: "*Tenho consciência que o presente relatório conduzirá à minha demissão dos quadros de consultores da ONU, mas não tenho alternativa senão relatar a realidade com que confronto: que todo este imenso país se eclipsou, como que por golpe de magia*" (*Ibid*.: 223). Finally, he sits down on the edge of the abyss, folds his paper into a bird and sends it into the depths. The translator sits next to him and they start waiting: "[...] me deixei quieto, sentado. Na espera de um outro tempo. Até que escutei a canção da minha mãe, essa que ela entoava para que os flamingos empurrassem os sol do outro lado do mundo" (*Ibid*.: 225). Then, it is the translator and the Italian who abandoned his world view that expect a new beginning.

O Último Voo do Flamingo can be seen as a novel that discusses globalisation from various perspectives and not only criticises it, but also offers glimpses of an alternative globalisation, embodied in the encounter between Risi and the translator. This could be seen as cracks in the hegemony, the same way as it appears in the case of Ana Deusqueira's character or how the dichotomies between the apparently opposite groups dissolve when a closer look is taken. This could be seen as a form of how literature, by showing these kinds of cracks, can

take part in a social discussion in which the past, presence and future are present. This is visible, for example, in the way that past relationships still affect the present. These kinds of wounds, which are not part of the official narrative of Mozambique's history, bring up how many political changes, with all that they imply, have taken place in a short time. They can, however, be discussed in literature, and could even be seen as forming a cathartic experience: while these kinds of tensions are continuously present, discussing them personally or on a more formal level is more difficult than bringing them up in literature, through invented characters and without pointing fingers.

3.3.4 *O Último Voo do Flamingo*: conclusions

It could be concluded that through the encounter of epistemologies as described above, the order established through globalisation (together with coloniality) becomes questioned. This process could also be seen in terms of decolonisation, since it by literary means participates in discussing and deconstructing continuities of colonialism, but also takes the discussion even further towards globalisation. Moreover, whereas Risi's phases can be seen as reflecting his understanding of the values he represents, and which he finally abandons, it is significant that his story is told by a Mozambican, and not by himself. This, again, questions traditional settings – an African writing about a European in Africa, learning their world views. Risi doesn't teach much to the locals, and is a receiver rather than a producer or transmitter of values or knowledge. As the translator's father says, he would prefer that their stories are not told by a foreigner (*UVF*: 223). It could be said that the novel suggests, however, that a foreigner can also legitimately tell the stories – but that it requires a process similar to which Risi is exposed to. In this sense, Couto too can be seen as a foreigner – but as the analysis reveals, a condition that can be overcome. Ultimately, it also points to a decolonisation that has again become necessary, since the country is still controlled by external powers.

What is described is neoliberal globalisation, but on the other hand, it could be argued that there is another form of globalisation described too, symbolised by Risi and his phases with the translator. It is possible to see hints of epistemologies of the South – especially in the case of Temporina, as was discussed earlier, but also new views regarding gender roles, for example. Ultimately, the criticism towards neoliberal (and colonial) globalisation is presented

as a dissatisfying turn to the ancestors, and in this way the discussion is linked to the past and local culture – and hence the solutions would also be based on these. There are no models to be followed, but rather the interaction between the various world views gives tools to new kinds of perspectives and to abandoning dichotomies and fixed views. Bringing up these aspects could be seen as the principal way in which Couto's work could be considered as participating in a literary decolonisation – and the aesthetic aspects reflect this position.

Lastly, the novel is also a mirror of the current situation of Mozambique (and many others). In being a novel, it can discuss the effects of the neoliberal globalisation that otherwise might not be visible: it shows the effects of it on a small scale, at the same time pointing to local events but presenting events that are also international. It is anchored in Mozambique's history, but also points to the similarities it has with other countries. However, in being a fictional text, it can also imagine an end to the events and provides a vast space for imagining alternatives.

3.4 João Paulo Borges Coelho: *As Duas Sombras do Rio*

As Duas Sombras do Rio is, principally, a story of a village which in the course of history is attacked by different invaders and enemies according to the political situation of the country. The events of the novel are related to real events, and the geographical locations exist in reality too. The map preceding the text provides the background: the events take place on the margins of Zambezi river where it is joined by Aruângua river. This area is also that of frontiers and hence the events take place in Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Zambia. The characters too are divided between different countries and nationalities – there is Mama Mère from Congo, the Zimbabwean lieutenant Zvobo and the Zambian superintendent Million. Moreover, there are characters from different areas of Mozambique, such as Dona Flora and Amoda Xavier from Tete. The national borders appear artificial – which they are, as a legacy of colonialism and not respecting the areas of the different peoples – and are crossed in problematic times, for trade purposes, and finally, in order to tackle poaching. Many social questions surface, and the novel can build an interesting dialogue between, for example, *O*

Último Voo do Flamingo in terms of globalisation and in terms of myths, with Ba Ka Khosa's and Chiziane's novels – in which the role of Zambezi river is significant too.

After a discussion of the narrative choices and techniques together with some of the principal elements of the novel, attention will be paid to some specific themes that can be seen as questioning Eurocentric and/or generalised approaches towards both the African continent and its literature. In the third subchapter the various myths and their present readings and relationship with events of the near past will be discussed.

3.4.1 Narration in *As Duas Sombras do Rio*

As Rita Chaves points out, Borges Coelho's first novel is already a mature one, and brings some new tendencies to the Mozambican literary field. One of these aspects is setting his novel in a specific location far from the capital, when according to Chaves most of the literature has discussed the South of the country. However, rural settings are present in other Mozambican novels such as Couto's *O Último Voo do Flamingo*. Moreover, Chiziane describes Zambezia in *O Alegre Canto da Perdiz*, and Ba Ka Khosa the empire of Gaza in *Ualalapi*. Hence, Chaves' argument could be developed: Borges Coelho takes a historical, existing location and events as a starting point for his novel, while Couto, for example, in *A Confissão da Leoa,* which is also related to real events, changes the name of the location and in this way emphasises the fictiveness of his work. This could be seen also from the perspective of changes in the literary discussions: the field of possible topics is widened to discuss the whole country instead of Maputo, and the rural areas are brought up from a perspective that differs from the earlier (colonial) depictions and gives these locations other meanings than what they may have had. In Chaves' view, and regardless of the fascination towards careful depictions of the surroundings, Borges Coelho avoids turning his characters into exotic beings. (Chaves 2008: 187-190.) Moreover, by comparing Borges Coelho with Brazilian novels, Chaves concludes that the fascination towards geography and landscape present in Borges Coelho's work could be seen in the context of appropriating the land through fiction. Candido sees this approach as regaining the territory that was occupied earlier (Candido 1997: 101 *apud* Chaves, 2008: 189-190). The approach can also be discussed in

terms of 'literary' cartography, which opposes much of the significations the colonial maps came with.

While Chaves' arguments are without doubt accurate, they could also be extended to much of the other current Mozambican literature – and curiously it seems that her point of comparison, besides Brazilian literature, is colonial literature. Perhaps it could also be pointed out that Borges Coelho, who is not as visible as a writer as Couto, and due to having Portuguese roots, is also approached differently. It is also tempting to consider his profession as a historian as having an influence on his approach towards his fiction. Moreover, this kind of view of the writer may also be related to the narrator in *As Duas Sombras do Rio*, which will be discussed after focusing on the background and the setting of the novel.

The background of the novel is the civil war in Mozambique and an attack on the village of Zumbo. The event is dated and takes place on the 16th of October 1985. As a result of the attack the villagers cross – or try to cross – the river that separates Mozambique from Zambia, and become refugees. Without naming the attackers or the defenders (referred to as "Batalhão 450"), the event is described from the perspectives of the victims who abandon their home village in a rush, and seem to have been attacked randomly. The reader has to find out that the attackers, or invaders as they are called, are Renamo soldiers and the unprepared and mostly murdered defenders are Frelimo soldiers. The attack is not the first Zumbo experiences:

> Quem será este sanguinário bando? Serão os homens de Dombo Dombo que em 1750 veio de Goa à procura de ouro e que os calores do clima tresloucaram, transformando-o numa ave de rapina cruel e sanguinária? Serão os homens de Choutama, neto do anterior [...]? Serão os homens de Chissaka, filho do anterior [...]?
> O povo vasculha nos compartimentos do tempo em busca de uma resposta para a ignomínia, mas a memória paralisa com o pavor e as explicações confundem-se umas com as outras, amalgamadas por toda aquela violência e pela urgência de respostas (*DSR*: 57-58).

In the course of the novel the villagers are attacked on two more occasions, first in Bawa where many of them went after the first attack. This second attack takes place on the 27th of May 1987 and this time the invaders, after attacking the village of Panhame, persuade the remaining villagers to join the attack:

> – Povo de Panhame, vocês são miseráveis, não têm nada que seja vosso. Vocês têm sal? Têm roupa? Rádios?

> E perante o silêncio tímido de quem nunca ouviu música a não ser a saída
> do lamento dos seus próprios tambores, continuou:
>> – Venham connosco e nós vos daremos tudo isso e muito mais. Venham
>> connosco e vão saber o que é a prosperidade (*Ibid*.: 139).

Hence, the neighbouring villagers attack Bawa, which this time is prepared and victims are avoided. The third attack takes place in Zumbo on the 1st and 4th of July 1989, with few victims but far reaching consequences.

These passages show how the experience of war can be discussed differently by literary means than in history, and the experiences (of trauma) brought up. It shows how arbitrarily the individuals can become victims, invaders and then, refugees, while the formal history writing sees the wars in different terms. This is visible in a passage which describes the events following the first attack to Zumbo, when Suzé Mantia is returning to the village: "Por vezes cruzam-se mesmo com alguns assaltantes, confundidos com eles, pois agora toda a gente corre em todas as direcções e só o brilho dos olhos assinala a distinção: uns brancos e distantes de pavor, outros raiados e ébrios de sangue" (*DSR*: 68). Moreover, the consequences of war at the individual level are also approached. This is brought up in Meia-Chuva's character: "Meia-Chuva é destas guerras e também de outras. Meia-Chuva é de todas as guerras" (*Ibid*.: 153). He joins the liberation front in 1969, which was a decisive turn in his life:

> Meia-Chuva foi um dos que deu um passo em frente e pouco depois, antes de partir,
> prometeu à mulher que mais tarde a viria buscar mais aos filhos, quando soubesse
> onde os pôr a salvo enquanto aquele desacato não terminasse (ele durou muito mais
> do que qualquer um deles previu e hoje Meia-Chuva desistiu já de procurar a família,
> perdida nas desencontradas movimentações de povo que depois aconteceram) (*Ibid.*:
> 154).

While the events are of huge significance to those involved, they don't interest the world: "A notícia fará alguns caminhos, para os cantos dos jornais da capital zambiana, para a embaixada moçambicana e dali para Maputo. E pouco mais, que são insondáveis os desígnios que globalizam as notícias (quantas pequenas notícias se agigantam todos os dias, quantas grandes notícias como esta envelhecem discretas)" (*DSR*: 73). However, the war as such is not described in detail, and the attacks serve as pointing to national events. The characters are not described as having a view – or even knowledge – of the full scale of the events and are depicted as rather passively accepting their fate, with the exception of the soldiers or

administrators. Hence, the attacks appear as singular and disconnected events, or as a continuity of the above-mentioned earlier attacks. Moreover, they are also described through the world view of the locals and also in connection with a wider state of the village, which will be discussed in detail later in the analysis. Similarly to Couto's and Ba Ka Khosa's novels discussed, here too the people are at the mercy of differently motivated, but similar power structures that cause the attacks and the uncertainty with regard to the future.

The novel's first chapter discusses Leónidas Ntsato, whose fate can be seen as key to understanding the novel and its myths, and whose phases are also closely connected to the first attack on the village. He is found on an island in the river, and after that he never becomes himself again. Significantly, the local nurse Inês is not able to cure him, and he is taken to the local healer, *nganga* Gomanhudo. Gomanhudo interprets the nature of the disease to Leónidas' wife, silent and patient Amina, whose phases are also followed in the novel:

> – O problema é muito grave. O teu marido está entre o norte e o sul – começou ele. – Diz coisa com algum nexo mas que todas juntas não fazem sentido. Entre o norte e o sul. Por vezes revela a força do leão e fala como se fosse um verdadeiro m'phondoro, com os olhos vermelhos a faiscar de cólera e toda a força da terra. Mas logo em seguida esse discurso macho irreflectido do sul se acalma e ele torna-se sereno e azul como as águas profundas. Revela então uma grande sabedoria que é apanágio das mulheres e da grande cobra do norte (*DSR*: 32).

The problem seems to have been destined for Leónidas, whose first name refers to lion and last name to snake. The North and the South are separated by the river in this location, which has a strong, symbolical meaning in the novel – as its title points out too. The novel plays with contradictions and problems related to them as above, where two different forces represent different elements, knowledges and genders. In this sense, it could be said, it questions the connotations and meanings generally attached to the cardinal directions.

There is space both for hybridity, as will be seen further, and mutual understanding between the assumed oppositions. Tradition is not described as immune to time and external influences, which is visible in the healer Gomanhudo's view regarding nurse Inês:

> É sempre a mesma coisa: as pessoas andam de roda da enfermeira Inês à procura de coisas novas, desprezando a tradição. Não é que o nganga seja avesso ao progresso. Afinal, ele próprio foi há dias pedir à enfermeira que lhe curasse uma ferida feia que um prego lhe fez no pé (*DSR*: 24).

However, the healer's consideration could also be seen as pointing to the necessity of co-existence and acknowledgement of his skills based on tradition:

> Mas se nós passarmos por este mundo como cegos, sem o mínimo respeito pelos nossos valores e pela nossa organização, acabamos por ficar sem lugar quando chegar a nossa vez de irmos embora. Além disso, ele, Gomanhudo, não está sempre no desespero de falta de meios e de importações [...]. Ao contrário, os meios do nganga estão por ali, abundantes, e é assim que deve ser. Devemos trabalhar com o que é nosso porque só as coisas da nossa terra é que estão dentro da nossa compreensão. O resto tanto pode vir como não vir e não há nunca a certeza de o compreendermos inteiramente (*Idem*).

Similar questions are present in another principal theme of the novel: poaching. Suzé Mantia, the talented local hunter uses his skills in order to provide illegal ivory and rhino horns to the corrupted locals.

Hence, in this sense, there is a strong correlation between Couto's *O Último Voo do Flamingo*, and similar approaches could be applied to Borges Coelho's novel too. However, Borges Coelho's novel focuses on the local people's phases without bringing the Western institutions into the picture, even though the continuous demand for ivory refers to wider, international (illegal) networks. Moreover, both novels focus on communities and introduce an impressive number of characters and their life stories. Even while Ntsato is a principal figure in the novel, his perspective and phases are not discussed in more detail, and it is rather his 'disease' that gains prominence because of its significance to the community and to the *nganga* trying to resolve the mystery of it. The locations are different though, and as Borges Coelho (2012) explains, his novel is based on fieldwork in the locality, while Couto's Tizangara is clearly a fictive village with fictive characters as their innovative names reveal, for example. The closeness to reality and facts is further emphasised by the (real) map on the first page, which helps the reader to locate the events that cross the river and take place on its different margins. It is as if the novel could be read as a 'literary illustration' of a place that seems peripheric in many senses, but is not – the international events influence these kinds of locations too. The differences between the two writers is further related to questions of realism and metafiction, and it could be argued that in Borges Coelho's novel the narrator occasionally breaks the otherwise coherent illusion of reality and invisibility of the writing process, while Couto makes it visible by making one of his characters the narrator and writer of the story – and this way creates a coherent fictive world. However, regardless of the narrator's presence, the reader is not given simple answers, and the novel seems to challenge all coherent interpretations.

Hence, a significant difference between the two novels is related to the narration and the narrator. The narrator in *As Duas Sombras do Rio* is omniscient and preserves a certain distance to the characters whose dialogue is rather sparse, and therefore the reader has no option but to rely on the narrator. Local expressions are present, and there is a short glossary at the end of the novel. Similarly to Ba Ka Khosa, some expressions are used where a Portuguese equivalent is available and well-known – even in the same sentence: "[...] o remador pensou que aquilo que via na margem se tratava de um dos inúmeros crocodilos que deixam a água e se fingem de troncos velhos – um maldito nhacoco" (*DSR*: 10). This approach, although not often used in the novel, draws attention to the language of the novel, which is written throughout in Portuguese in a manner that doesn't reveal any contradictions, while the kind of expressions referred to above could be seen as adding local colour and tying the novel to the specific context of the location, although Borges Coelho (2012) himself argues that he is keen not to decorate his text with 'linguistic tricks'. These aspects can be seen as a technique that reinforces the reader's trust towards the narrator who seems to be very aware of local customs and habits. This is further repeated in a description of rushing Amina: "Nem sequer se dera cuidado de colocar uma mão-cheia de folhas a boiar na água da lata para impedir que ela vertesse com o movimento do andar, de modo que metade da já pouca água se ficou pelo caminho" (*DSR*: 16).

The omniscience and trustworthiness of the narration is also reinforced by the way the 'real' events are shown. The fisherman who finds Leónidas in the river is first described above, worried about crocodiles before realising that the figure is a human being. Later, Leónidas' finder's own description is given to the reader, who already knows how the events 'really' occurred:

> Ele contou o que se passara, detalhadamente, demoradamente, referiu as dificuldades que enfrentara durante todo o dia, sem comida e lutando com bravura contra a correnteza. Mas remara sempre, sem desfalecer, para cima e para baixo no rio, pois uma voz lhe dissera que haveria de encontrar o corpo. Contava aquilo que queria, real e imaginado por igual, pois ninguém assistira àquele evento (*DSR*: 12).

This approach, pointing to the untrustworthiness of the characters, is also one that can be interpreted as distancing from them.

At times the descriptions are close to repeating some stereotypes. This takes place especially when Suzé Mantia, the hunter who has learned his trade from his father, and his extraordinary skills are described, as the following passages show:

> Mas um só – Suzé Mantia – pode descobrir a água quando ela ainda está debaixo da terra, a ser fabricada. Antes mesmo de ser água.
> [...] A novidade da água chega-lhe portanto pela vista, pelo cheiro, pela pele. Ele sabe-a.
> Agora abre as suas grossas narinas e aspira repetidas vezes sem emitir um som. Os amigos observam, expectantes. Sabem que Suzé Mantia cheira melhor que ninguém. E cheirar é aqui fundamental. As bestas não têm cheiro para os incautos e, de repente, quando se impõe o cheiro acre do seu suor é já o cheiro do ódio e da morte que não temos sequer tempo de cheirar completamente porque já a sua sombra selvagem nos cobriu e nos preparamos para partir desta vida (*DSR*: 114-115).

While the narration's intention is not to repeat approaches that, ultimately, are familiar from colonial imagery, the narrator and the distance he has from the story and the characters gives this tone to the narration. The narrator is observing the characters and transmits the image of a different being to the readers.

Chaves (2008: 189) argues that the detailed depiction of the surroundings in *As Duas Sombras do Rio* is distant from colonial literature since it is free from nostalgia and goes beyond a simple description. Instead, she sees it as a mark of the position of the narrator (who in her text seems to be nearly equivalent to the actual writer Borges Coelho) not being completely familiar with the location that is being described. For this reason, the text gains a peculiar tone: "Há entre o narrador e os elementos que compõem a sua narrativa uma espécie de confronto que vai ser serenamente vivido e convertido em matéria" (*Idem*). However, it is difficult to see whether the position of the narrator is a result of the distance – or if the distance permits the narrator to describe the details which can be seen as a form of narrative technique offering the reader many details – and serving to 'illustrate' the piece of map reproduced in the first page. This would also permit what Chaves (*Idem*) sees as the narrator sharing with the reader the sensation of the novelty of the location, leading the narration to be so careful in its detail.

Moreover, there is a curious detail in the narration: the narrator adds comments to the text that are placed in parentheses. Sometimes they are simple additions to the descriptions, but at times they also add up to the idea of a narrator observing the narrated from a slightly superior position. This is the case when Mama Mère dies and her worker finds her: "Pigarreou

primeiro, falou depois, tentando convencê-la a reagir, sem saber que Mama Mère estava já muito longe dali. Deu-se por fim conta de que o mundo desabava (quem depende daquela maneira, como o lojista e os criados, deposita sempre no protector o segredo da ordem das coisas)" (*DSR*: 219). This approach can also be seen in one comment, entirely in Latin, in a passage discussing the church and the fathers and their relationship with the locals (*Ibid*.: 79). Sometimes the voice is ironic, as when a decorated sewing machine is described: "Num dos lados, bem visível, tinha embutida uma placa com a silhueta de uma mulher branca com fartos cabelos apanhados atrás e o olhar perdido algures (neste caso a porta da loja da congolesa). Era uma bela máquina!" (*Ibid*.: 109). Here, however, the last sentence could be seen as reflecting the position of Amoda Xavier, the future buyer of the machine.

Hence, by taking a very close look of the writing there are some marks of the construction of the text, but even more, references to the existence of a narrator, which differs from a traditional realist novel where all the signs of the writing and narrating process are dissolved. Chaves (2008: 189), on the other hand, sees this approach as pointing to also making the literary space a space of knowledge and interpretation of the unfamiliar reality, aimed at a reader "que com certeza partilharia a sensação de novo". However, while many African writers have adopted the role of teacher, here the learner seems not to be an African to whom the writer reveals the reverse side of (neo)colonialism like Ngugi, or tells of the history prior to colonialism, as Achebe. Rather, if there is a learner, it is someone who is not familiar with the country. As mentioned earlier, Borges Coelho (2012) himself denies the role of a teacher and sees it in the context of African literature as an approach that is paternalistic.

The presence of the narrator is also expressed in a few sentences where it seems that the reader is directly addressed, and the narrator refers to her/his task in a way that is reminiscent of José Saramago's chattering narrator: "Mas deixemo-nos de divagações que o tempo urge" (*DSR*: 81). On the other hand, the context the sentence above is taken from could also point to the narrator as referring to the characters – Suzé Mantia and his men, – who are in the middle of a stressful situation and in a rush to deliver the ivory to Mama Mère. Similar ambiguity is present in another passage: "Leónidas Ntsato, escondido na sombra espessa de mangueira do outro lado da praça, estuda esse imponente edifício. Pensamos nós, porque o seu olhar se move errático, ora fixo na fachada ora deambulante em redor" (*Ibid*.: 38). Here, again,

the reference could be to a narrator and the assumed reader, or to the other people, who later are referred to as commenting on Leónidas' disease. It is, ultimately, possible to consider that the narrator refers to itself in plural, which is more familiar from academic texts. However, if considered together with the earlier remarks, it could be argued that the observing narrator can this way take a position next to the reader, both observing the characters, their phases and fates from some distance: the narrator is not one of the characters or close to them, and represents a different kind of position, similar perhaps to the educated narrators that are present in earlier Mozambican literature, such as those in Luís Bernardo Honwana's and João Dias's works.

However, there are significant differences between Borges Coelho's and these writers' techniques. While the latter, considered as regionalist for their attempts to repeat the way the characters would speak Portuguese, and as result creating two languages and two levels of narration in the text, this is not the case with Borges Coelho. His technique is based on the use of similar language throughout the text and in dialogue. Hence, his approach can be seen in this sense as overcoming the distance present in Honwana's and Dias' texts and being closer to Ba Ka Khosa's approach, which Ngomane (2010: 11-12) sees as eliminating the duality that is present in the work of the regionalists and permitting further textual unity. However, as was seen in the case of Ba Ka Khosa, Borges Coelho too brings the presence of other languages to the text, providing the reader with a glossary and besides that, permitting the meaning of the words used to be understood in the context in which they are used.

Hence, the dialogue between the speakers is represented in terms of equality. Leónidas, a fisherman, speaks the same language and in the same register as the village's administrator, and dialogues in different languages are written in the same kind of language. Besides the speakers of the Bantu languages, there are dialogues between Zambian, Mozambican and Zimbabwean people who would probably communicate in English, but there is no reference to the language question here either. Borges Coelho's approach, then, leads to a coherent narration, and can be considered as permitting a less patronising approach towards the locals, similar to Ba Ka Khosa. This, then, could be seen as representing Borges Coelho's (2012) reluctance to 'decorate' the language. Moreover, it also allows the language to become more transparent, avoiding the attention towards it – and further, to the language question of African literatures. In this sense, it has similarities with Chiziane's approach.

The only exceptions from this practice seem to be opened in the case of Mama Mère, described by the Zambian superintendent Million: "Million gostou logo da forma como ela falava, com um sotaque carregado que lhe vinha do francês" (*DSR*: 45), and how Amina calls her family's eldest woman *mai* instead of *mãe*. The habit of calling older women mothers was already discussed in the context of *Ualalapi*, but here it could be seen as referring to a different pronunciation of the word, and possibly to adopting it to the local language and most importantly, to mark the difference in its use in this specific context. The word has even been added to the glossary, where the cultural difference is explained: "Mai: Mãe, mais-velha. Tratamento respeitoso" (*Ibid*.: 237). Hence, this short word gains a metonymical role, referring to the different cultural universes, languages and even to the concept of family.

The construction of the novel around different characters, not having a single principal character and naming the chapters after them permits different perspectives and shows different sides of the communities. Moreover, through flashbacks the life stories become richer and the characters more lively; they are often described in a manner that also permits some psychological roundness. However, the depth of the depiction is limited due to the large number of principal characters. Besides the different perspectives through different characters, a major organising theme is the river. There are several descriptive passages that point to the importance of the river in the novel. The river, while it provides income for many of the locals, is also connected to Leónidas' disease, and related to the slave trade and the danger of crocodiles. Hence, the river and water are present in many detailed descriptions:

> Por vezes está o Zambeze tão sereno e transparente que é como se entre as duas margens jazesse a continuação inferior do céu. E neste vazio quase branco voam almadias e pescadores em largas coreografias silenciosas, cumprimentando-se com gestos quase imperceptíveis como se seguissem um plano só por eles conhecido.
> [...]
> Encostam-se os peixes uns aos outros em grupos já menores que cardumes, procuram desesperados as reentrâncias da margem, pequenas grutas onde se porem a salvo. É nessa altura que sobre eles descem as delicadas redes, riscando o céu antes de mergulhar na água e se dissolverem nela (*DSR*: 22).

The river's flow and the impact the building of the Cahora Bassa dam had on it points to how the novel, according to its name, pays attention to nature and the many faces of the river too. These episodes and the changes of perspective towards the river also point to the presence of invisible worlds and continuities and consequences of human actions. Furthermore, besides

pointing to the narrator's liberties, they also point to the distance from the oral tradition and to the more traditionalist approaches towards writing 'African literature'.

3.4.2 *As Duas Sombras do Rio* as questioning Eurocentric approaches

The implied reader or the audience of Borges Coelho's novel seems to be one that is quite familiar with Mozambican history, since not many details or the background of the various wars are given to them. On the other hand, the narration in other terms is very generous in details, which could be interpreted as emphasising the randomness of the attacks from the perspective of the attacked. In this sense, the reception of the novel might vary even more than normal, according to the background and knowledge of the reader. These details could perhaps point to a lack of interest towards the reception of his novel, but also to Borges Coelho's insistence on not considering the reader while writing. It also emphasises the perspective of the writer, who both questions the idea of national literature, representing a specific country (even less a continent) as a writer – and foremost, his approach avoids patronising tones towards the reader. He considers that the position of writers as teachers, such as Achebe's, reflects a position of superiority towards the Africans, an attitude which is also present in the research of African literatures (Coelho, 2012). However, whereas Couto exteriorises these issues and discusses them outside his novels, Borges Coelho seems to bring them to his text and construct a discourse that protects his works from the approaches he questions.

In comparison to the other novels discussed here, Borges Coelho's work seems rather pacific in discussing or revealing silenced issues, although he does discuss people that often remain in silence, not least for their location in such areas as Zumbo. Neither is there a visible discussion regarding epistemological differences or questioning of Western thought as such. Even the presence of the myths is rather pacific, perhaps also because there isn't a counterforce such as colonialism as in *O Alegre Canto da Perdiz*, or Western institutions such as the UN in *O Último Voo do Flamingo*. This aspect could be seen as a result of avoiding generalisations and stark contradictions through literary means. Instead of building a general view of the nation, it is shown through a detailed description of an 'insignificant' village, thereby avoiding a direct discussion of the wider context. Colonialism is mentioned only briefly, although there are several references to hybridity resulting from it. Hence, Borges

Coelho's novel seems to permit a similar approach to that which Rothwell discussed regarding Couto's novels: one of distancing from the traditional postcolonial readings of (postcolonial) African literature. Rather, the approach could be compared to that of Coetzee, for example, who is close to Western tradition but also avoids the pitfalls of Eurocentric approaches. However, although Borges Coelho (2012) calls for a division between literature, society and politics and argues that he doesn't have a mission as a writer, his writing can be still be seen as taking part in various discussions that have significant social and political weight too.

There are many forms in which Eurocentric views on African literatures become questioned, and moreover, the novel can also be seen questioning the literary decolonisation projects such as Ngugi's – or widening their scope. These aspects are a result of Borges Coelho's work on the material he uses as the basis for his novel, and reveal how the histories of locations that from a Eurocentric perspective seem insignificant and remote are also stages for significant events and not located in a vacuum of tradition. The novel discusses the presence of the Europeans, and its continuities and discontinuities, too. In this way, ultimately, it denies colonialism and European influence as the single story regarding Africa by using a tool which was earlier used to build the single story, as Adichie's above discussed speech points out. In order to present some of these aspects, the main focus in this chapter is on questions related to the past and current international relations, continuities and questioning of the legacy of the Europeans and the hybridity of the local traditions.

The question of maps and borders is a question that has a long history in the colonial history. In the case of the location Borges Coelho describes, and which is also reproduced in a map preceding the text, the colonial borders overlap with cultural and even mythical borders. Moreover, they are also related to natural borders, represented by two rivers, Zambezi and Aruângua. First of all, the question of borders can be seen in terms of colonialism, which led to this small area being divided between three different nations, and two different official languages, too. Those that leave Zumbo in Mozambique for Feira in Zambia are considered refugees, while when some of them settle in Bawa in Mozambique, but on the other side of the river, they are considered as the same people: "São todos o mesmo povo, de um lado e do outro do grande rio. Partilham todos o mesmo destino" (*DSR*: 99). The dislocation also divides the people of Zumbo:

> Não há também povo, que partiu em fuga desabrida, dividindo-se para atravessar o Aruângua e chegar desordenadamente à Feira, já no estrangeiro, optando a segunda metade por atravessar o Zambeze para sul, buscando na ainda moçambicana Bawa um espaço de vida provisória onde pudesse fazer um balanço (de quem cometeu a insensatez de ficar não se fala aqui, reduzidos que estão a brancas e puras ossadas). Os primeiros irão ter por única alegria, no meio de mil tragédias, a chegada periódica de um cobertor, uma lata de milho, uma barra de sabão, trazidos por homens de braçadeiras vermelhas e gestos maquinais cuja profissão é fazer o bem. Os segundos não têm nada disto mas podem, em contrapartida, contemplar a partir de Bawa a cidade que já foi sua, na outra margem – para eles é esta contemplação o bem mais precioso (*Ibid*.: 94).

This theme in the novel can also be seen as reflecting on an experience that is shared by many peoples and in different phases of history, from an alternative perspective than that seen in the media, for example.

The movements across the national and natural borders are complemented by the young people who leave their villages: "Em pequenos grupos em que cada um procurava explicar aos outros o que sabia por ouvir dizer, passavam a fronteira e escoavam-se por entre os dedos do atento tenente Zvobo, do exército zimbabweano, que tentava tudo para não os deixar entrar mas não tinha como deter aquela imaginação" (*DSR*: 102). These young men come back as different people because of their different experience, which is not only limited to hard work:

> Independentemente de qual fosse o melhor, ambos – canaviais e minas – abriam as portas a um mundo novo de roupas coloridas, de música maravilhosa, de muitos e desconhecidos sonhos que só se podiam sonhar a partir daí e nunca antes, nunca quando a pobreza é tal que até os sonhos resultam magros e sem cor (*Ibid*.: 103).

One of these men is Ntsato's son Jonas, who returns to the village as a new, experienced and wealthy man. He marries Benedita, who was earlier adopted by Amoda Xavier, who married the girls' widowed mother. Xavier is from Tete and, perhaps for having travelled, full of new ideas and plans: he buys a radio, a sewing machine and is planning to start screening films in the village too. He is in Bawa with those that left Zumbo: "Enganam-se, porém, os que pensam que Bawa vivia apenas nesta defensiva de olhares retrógrados dos do outro lado, da magra hospitalidade dos deste, e o desejo de partir dos jovens de ambos lados. Bawa tinha também energia e sonho" (*Ibid*.: 106), which are represented by Xavier. He is working hard in order to achieve his dreams, but his work is interrupted by the war: he dies in the third attack after becoming an unmotivated soldier whose thoughts were in his other plans (*Ibid*.: 146, 221). Here, then, it could be seen how the dislocations have influence not only at the level of

families and change in their positions through having to leave their homes: it also interrupts the dreams and future plans by taking lives – or by permitting only a focus on survival. On the other hand, the story of Xavier's character shows how through the relocations villages gain new members that come from elsewhere.

All of these crossings of the borders in different contexts point to exchanges and encounters between different people – sometimes forced by the attacks related to the civil war. Moreover, a significant character in many aspects is Congolese Mama Mère, who permits Xavier to proceed with his plans by negotiating with him and having the products he is interest in. She is described as a single-minded trader, and following the logics of racial and gender divisions and stereotypes by those whose businesses she threatens, as "mulata danada" and "mulata cínica" (*DSR*: 47). She is also described as being, regardless of her age, a seducer. Mama Mère is keen to develop her negotiations by extending the trade to 'abroad', which leads her to clash with another merchant, Dona Flora from Tete. In the figure of these two women the encounters that have marked the country become visible, and it is shown how these have often been related to trade. It is also curious to consider how these two women are very different from the local women, such as Leónidas' wife Amina, who suffers – and survives – in silence as an image of the subaltern women. The products and new approaches are also catalysts for changes in the locations, which is visible in the case of Xavier. Moreover, these too suffer from the wars, as the destruction of Dona Flora's shop shows. On the other hand, as is shown in the case of Mama Mère, the consequences of the trade are not always positive: she becomes involved in the illegal trade of ivory which is facilitated by the unstable circumstances caused by the war.

Another outsider is Zumbo's administrator Sigaúke who can be seen together with Couto's Tizangara's administration: he is arrogant, but ends up respecting the people. It could be argued that he has a limited view of the village and their people, which could be seen in terms of monoculture of linear time: for him, initially, the people are trapped in the past and hence he doesn't need to consider them. However, he is taught a lesson, which is described in a chapter named "Uma lição de humildade". Due to this lesson he is not as authoritarian as one may expect a village administrator to be: "Pelo contrário, há até uma história que todos conhecem mas ninguém refere, um episódio que ensinou Sigaúke os limites do seu poder"

(*DSR*: 69). He is described as driving a short distance in his Land Rover to his house, which is Zumbo's finest. When he goes to bed he feels insecure and finally finds out that he is not alone in his bed: "Deixou deslizar a mão pela linha dos contornos, para cima e para baixo, e aos poucos começou a definir mentalmente uma pele macia e quente, dois pequenos seios empinados, finalmente uma mulher que segundo lhe parecia devia ser bastante jovem, quase uma menina" (*Ibid*.: 70). While he is confused, the door suddenly opens and he is being stared at by three old men: "A pequenina chama do candeeiro era a única coisa que se movia. Depois, a um gesto seco de um dos velhos a rapariga saltou da cama, agarrou nos seus trapos e sumiu-se como uma flecha. Os três velhos prolongaram ainda por um momento o olhar de reprovação [...]" (*Ibid*.: 71). The following day the administrator realises that everyone knows about the episode: "E foi assim, a partir de um insólito encontro nocturno em que nem uma só palavra foi trocada, que o administrador Sigaúke compreendeu os limites do seu poder face a uma comunidade que ainda não conhecia mas que já aprendera a respeitar" (*Idem*).

Hence, the role of the administrator is diminished, at least in the eyes of the villagers. On the other hand, as his encounter with Leónidas reveals, he relates to them and their world views with suspicion. While the event will be discussed further, since it is significant in terms of the attack on the village and the local myths, here the approach of the administrator is of interest. Leónidas rushes to the administrator's office and explains that the administrator needs to listen to him – or better, to the spirits that want to speak through him. The administrator doesn't know how to relate to the situation:

> Sigaúke fez uma pausa para reflectir. Na escola de administradores ensinaram-lhe que era preciso acabar com os obscurantistas fazendo valer o materialismo e a lei. Todavia, as circunstâncias tinham-no forçado a ser prudente nesse caminho, para evitar males piores, e por isso optara por um equilíbrio. As coisas existiam mas era como se não existissem pois ele não dava conhecimento oficial daquilo que não lhe interessava. E do que não precisava agora era de ter espíritos e médiuns em conflito aberto uns com outros (*DSR*: 41).

The administrator ridicules Leónidas, ignores his condition and finally considers him crazy and sends him out. Leónidas becomes angry and launches a *m'fiti*, a kind of a curse:

> – Amanhã é o último dia desta terra e vão chover pedras na Administração! O fogo há-de queimar esses teus papéis!
> Teve por resposta um coro de risadas e insultos, salvo um ou outro, mais supersticioso, para quem um vaticínio mau é sempre perigoso, sobretudo se proferido por um louco (*Ibid*.: 43).

The following day the village is attacked.

These aspects reflect the presence of various different kinds of characters in the novel and their relationship with the locals. Although sometimes the presence of the newcomers is problematic, as is shown in the case of Sigaúke and Mama Mère regarding the trade of ivory, these presences also represent exchanges of ideas and cultures too – far beyond colonialism. This is most visible in the character of Amoda Xavier, who with his plans is able to change the village. These encounters and exchanges are seen as a condition for the village's survival, or at least they represent hope and new ideas: "Sem Mama Mère, não tem interlocutor para os negócios que fizeram com que Bawa ou Zumbo olhasse em frente. Sem Amoda Xavier, não tem quem lhe mostre o que são os sonhos" (*DSR*: 227). It can also be seen as pointing to questioning the significance of the nation and failing the hopes the revolution had triggered. The Mozambican government is hardly present and is represented by the administrator who appears as a foreigner to the village, and the national events such as the civil war are not discussed as a matter of a nation. Moreover, the presence of these 'other' encounters serves to question and relativise the influence of colonialism in the country. It also, in this way, questions postcolonial approaches that may emphasise colonialism in Mozambican literature, but also those that discuss the questions related to the nation as an essential element of African literature, such as Jameson's article regarding 'third-world' literature.

However, the Portuguese presence is visible, but rather in references to the relatively distant past. Moreover, colonialism is not represented as a total system of control, but as one of the encounters that has left its mark on the local culture. Hence, most of this presence is expressed in the context of these hybrid cultural references. In most of the cases they are also presented from the perspective of the locals, further preventing the building of a unified and complete picture of colonialism. Moreover, the references cover different eras. They are also often mentioned in context of geography, which suits Borges Coelho's technique of tying geography and maps, history and fiction together. The principal references are the discussions inspired by the ruins of a church, the history of the village of Kanyemba, and the narratve that explains the story of the village's healer Gomanhudo.

The ruins of an old mission are described as Mantia and his men have hidden their ivory there: "Há três séculos, padres barbudos e católicos ousaram desafiar aqui os velhos

espíritos M'bona, regateando-lhes o rebanho humano" (*DSR*: 78). Their journey was difficult, but finally they arrive: "[C]hegavam enfim a este desconhecido lado do mundo com a sua parafernália de objectos e novos elementos de fé que surpreenderam até Dedza, o grande deus" (*Idem*). The knowledge of the land here, referred to as unknown, reflects the Eurocentric views regarding discoveries. The locations are only known when they are known by the Western men – and when they draw a map, in which the references are the constructions they've made, such as churches and fortresses. Hence, the local significant or mythical locations are not appropriately described – the maps are Eurocentric from this perspective too. The difference in the approach of the missionaries in comparison to the locals is explained through the concept of time, from the perspective of the locals:

> Moviam-se depressa e falavam muito àquele povo seco e pequenino, ordens severas, como se o tempo escasseasse para cumprir uma ordem encomendada (o povo intrigado com aquele esforço vão para apressar o tempo, quando é sabido até pelas crianças que são os homens que cabem dentro do tempo e não o contrário (*Ibid*.: 78-79).

The questions regarding different concepts of time were discussed in the previous analysis, but here they are most clearly related to questions of epistemology. There is a reference to knowledge regarding people's relationship with time. Moreover, the opposite approach, represented by the missionaries, is ridiculed, since even children know that they are wrong. Here, it could be argued, the hegemony is not yet established and the Western view appears as a conflicting one, but not as a superior one. Moreover, it is significant that the narrator takes the position of the locals.

The assumed moral superiority of the missionaries is also deconstructed, since it is described how they abuse the local girls:

> Findo o período da reflexão, atiravam-se então às jovens mulheres das redondezas com uma voracidade redobrarda [...], revelando que além de mvula e intermediário de um Deus ainda mal conhecido daquela terra, era também cada um deles um homem na força da idade, movido igualmente por desígnios particulares no outro lado do seu mundo. E essas raparigas cedidas pelas aldeias, que já não pertenciam ao seu mundo velho e ainda procuravam achar um lugar certo no mundo novo, submetiam-se na crença de que eram estes jogos parte do ritual que ainda estavam a aprender (*DSR*: 79).

Again, this could be seen as a signal of the initial contact, and again from the perspective of the locals: the religion the bearded men represent is seen through local concepts. However, in

this passage the monoculture of linear time is already present: the newcomers represent the new world and hence progress that the local girls are still learning to understand, while the 'local' world is already seen as the old world.

The presence of these suspicious men proves to be important though, since they bring new technological innovations to this location:

> Os carneiros hidráulicos trabalhavam então mais depressa, a água subia com mais força, alastrando por hortas e campos, como que a mostrar àquele mundo seco e difícil que as promessas por eles feitas eram mesmo para cumprir. E o povo quedava-se abismado, fazendo o que lhe mandavam, evitando o trabalho sempre que podiam, concluindo que por mais que tenhamos visto há sempre muito, e novo, para ver (*DSR*: 79).

Hence, although from a moral perspective the presence of the Portuguese fathers is questionable, some hints to their positive influence is brought up too. On the other hand, the requirements for growing the new plants have far reaching consequences – it points to the moment of starting to control the waters in an unnatural way: "Carneiros hidráulicos inauditos que iam contra a natureza trazendo água para cima quando é sabido que a natureza só a faz descer; novas plantas, boas de comer mas sequiosas, que não crescem sem essa água que sobe contra a natureza" (*Ibid.*: 78). This aspect can be seen together with the question of Cahora Bassa, which will be discussed further.

The cultural hybridity and its initial moments in the case of Western (or more specifically Portuguese and Catholic) culture are expressed here as well. The songs that are taught to the people appeal to them: "Mas foram sobretudo os cânticos que surpreenderam os filhos da terra e os maravilhavam" (*DSR*: 79). Moreover, they learn to sing the songs better than the missionaries. Another impressive novelty are the houses, and the church, especially: "A Casa, que revelava um cuidado extremo e uma imaginação desvairada o seu detalhe, onde os diabos esculpidos eram cobras com patas e leões com asas, mas cobras e leões, apesar de tudo, já bichos daquela terra" (*Ibid.*: 80). Here Bhabha's views can be brought up once again, especially the text regarding the English book – "Signs taken for Wonders". Bhabha (1994: 102) describes the role of the (religious) books in colonialism and argues that while the book and its discovery by the colonised marks the authority of the coloniser, it is also a "process of displacement that, paradoxically, makes the presence of the book wondrous to the extent to which it is repeated, translated, misread, displaced". Similarly, the songs and the figures in the

church become wondrous, but at the same time their meaning changes and they are displaced in a process that at the same time acknowledges the 'new' elements, but also questions the authority of establishing the meaning of those that deliver them. Moreover, the ruins of the church still provoke fear or at least respect in the locals after centuries: "Apenas inesperadas pedras irrompendo no meio dos capins, poderosas ainda para quem as pode adivinhar inteiras ou mágicas, só ligeiramente atemorizadoras para os restantes, como Suzé Mania e os seus dois amigos" (*DSR*: 80). The ruins seem to have magical – or sacred – power, although perhaps more from within the context of local religions than the one imposed by the missionaries.

The character of 'cafrealised Portuguese' abandoning his own culture and adopting that of the locals (to some extent), discussed in the context of Ba Ka Khosa's *Choriro*, is visible in *As Duas Sombras do Rio* as well. Curiously, this is again visible in geography and seems to point to the ability the names of the locations can have in revealing historical aspects. This is the case in the village of Kanyemba, which is named after the Portuguese Rosário Andrade, described in one of the parentheses and revealing how the historical character has become a part of local mythology:

> (aquele que depois de morto se transformou em leão, como veremos, com as quatro patas bem assentes na sua terra da margem sul, falando pela boca de camponesa Joaquina M'boa, pela boca de outros antes dela e, ainda pela boca de novos mvulas que virão quando esta se finar; enfim, o mesmo Kanyemba que deu o nome à vila do tenente Zvobo, já do lado do Zimbabwe, demonstrando assim que é tal a sua reputação que não há fronteiras que a detenham.) (*DSR*: 96).

Kanyemba is described as attacking villages at night in his own name, while during the day he governed Zumbo as a representative of the Portuguese. He is known for his cruelty and violence, on which his fame is based: he kills the people of the villages he attacks, castrates men to look after his women and is involved in the slave trade. His approach also provoked an attack against Zumbo. Hence, a figure that represented the colonial power – and also the greediness of the coloniser's approach in his own attacks – becomes a spirit that speaks through the chosen local person. Moreover, Kanyemba saves the villagers too, since he warns them of an attack through M'boa. Hence, the Portuguese coloniser is in this way appropriated exclusively in terms of the local culture and views, as in Ba Ka Khosa's novel *Choriro*. These figures can also be seen as using their power similar to other local chiefs, at least if compared to Ngungunhane, for example.

The hybridity, or appropriation of apparently external elements as part of local cultures is perhaps most visible in the history of the healer Gomanhudo. He survives a crocodile attack which he sees as a sign, leaves his profession as a fisherman and becomes a *nganga*, a healer. It is also at this point that he adopts the name Gomanhudo, which comes from the missionary Pedro da Santíssima Trindade who arrived at Zumbo's church in 1820. His character could be seen as marking the relationship between the church and capitalism: by forcing the locals to work he becomes rich and buys the produce of a successful year of cultivation. Then, later on when the village is struck by famine, he exchanges food for labour:

> E foi assim que juntando essas vontades de comer aos planos que Frei Pedro tinha na cabeça e nos papéis, foi possível erguer – batendo e alinhando pedra – a nova e imponente Igreja de Nossa Senhora dos Remédios. E desde essa altura ficou Frei Pedro chamado pelo povo de Gomanhudo, que significa martelo, pelo muito que se bateu com tal instrumento para que a igreja se tornasse real (*DSR*: 29).

The figure is similar to the men of the church described earlier, and all of these foreigners are similar when it comes to greediness and making use of the local resources. They, for their extraordinariness, become famous and their life stories become part of the oral tradition, and therefore the characters become possible as spirits that can become a part of the local mythology.

This also explains how Sixpence becomes the healer Gomanhudo:

> Frei Pedro da Santíssima Trindade, o Gomanhudo, morreu um dia como morrem todos os homens por igual, crentes ou não. E talvez pelo ouro que escavou ou pela chantagem escondida nas paredes da nova igreja, não se sabe bem, ficou a sua alma errando sem lugar para repousar até que encontrou o corpo de Sixpence e o roubou às fauces do nhacoco [...]. Ao fazê-lo, comprou um corpo onde se alojar pelo preço de o manter inteiro, salvando o pescador. Sixpence, reconhecido, deixou-se por sua vez morrer um pouco para abrir espaço para a alma errante do infeliz Gomanhudo. E como Frei Pedro fora também afamado curandeiro (o melhor no tocante aos óleos para o reumático), nasceu assim, desta extraordinária fusão, o nganga Gomanhudo (*DSR*: 30).

Here, moreover, the question of medicine and healing is brought up – it is Frei Pedro's healing powers that seem to lead his spirit's resting place to become a healer too. Hence, the figures are similar: both have spiritual power and both are destined and have skills to heal people too. This aspect draws attention to the similarity of these two apparently distant, or even contradicting positions. Gomanhudo's background also reveals how the figures are appropriated in a way that questions the approach offered by colonial history, and can also be

seen through 'loosing control' of the stories and how they are told, preserved and understood. The process reminds in this sense that of the process that takes places regarding Ngungunhane and his empire in *Ualalapi*. These aspects of *As Duas Sombras do Rio* can also be understood in terms of hybridity. It could also be said that these processes can be seen as negotiating the position of these figures: in life, they are seen as abusing the people, while as spirits they are actually working for the wellbeing of the communities they once abused. Curiously, the only cases in which spirits are present through the characters of the villages are those of coloniser's spirits.

Hence, although there are various references to historical characters, as well as to dates and other elements that are similar to historical narratives, it could be said that the history is appropriated as a part of the novel. Chaves quotes Francisco Noa's view on the novel and agrees with him that the novel doesn't simply create a fictive narrative based on historical facts, but rather shows the human – or inhuman – dimension of that specific historical event (Noa, *s.d. apud* Chaves, 2008: 192). In this sense, there are similarities between *As Duas Sombras do Rio* and *Ualalapi*, and Ba Ka Khosa's *Choriro* too. These, together with Couto's *O Outro Pé da Sereia* (2006) belong to the few Mozambican novels that discuss a more distant past of the country (Chaves, 2008: 193). However, in Borges Coelho's novel the past is discussed from the perspective of the present moment, while in *Ualalapi*, it could be argued, the present moment is less visible and discussed from the perspective of the past. It is probably not a coincidence that both Borges Coelho and Ba Ka Khosa are historians. Their work could be seen as discussing the history of Mozambique in a manner that serves to fill some of the gaps of the official history, as well as to introduce new perspectives to it. This approach, as was discussed in the context of *Ualalapi*, can be seen as a form of sociology of absences.

In order to conclude, it could be argued that *As Duas Sombras do Rio* points to many directions that question simplified readings regarding both Africa or Mozambique specifically, but also African literatures. The author's approach questions binary oppositions and the role of colonialism as the only history of the country, and shows how the Portuguese presence has become part of the local culture in a manner that at times is close to Couto's approach. It also avoids discussing the events on the level of the nation, this way bringing up the experiences of

the individuals within the course of history. The novel shows how the different historical and cultural encounters have shaped the current cultures, pointing also to their diversity. Hence, the myths, which could be seen as one of the staple elements of African literatures are updated and discussed in a more global context. These myths and their relationship with current events in the area where the novel takes place will be discussed in the following chapter.

3.4.3 Updated myths in *As Duas Sombras do Rio*

As *Duas Sombras do Rio* presents various myths which are both rooted in the local (oral) tradition, and at the same time can be seen as commenting on and relating to current issues, which can be seen in terms of transculturation and the idea of the 'tradition' being in movement and adapting to new situations. This process could be detected in *O Último Voo do Flamingo* as well, although in that case the myth is a 'new' invention. However, it clearly belongs to the longer tradition of myths expressed in oral tradition. Moreover, the way myths appear in Chiziane's novel is very close to Borges Coelho's approach here, as will be seen in the following chapter. Likewise, *Ualalapi*, basing on newer myths created of Ngungunhane, makes them discuss the near past. This aspect is most visible in Leónidas' disease and its various interpretations. Through it other questions emerge too, such as questions related to nature and also the mythological role of the river – to which the novel's title refers. As was discussed earlier, Leónidas is found on an island in the middle of the river and while he is still alive, he is not himself anymore, but divided into two – North and South, feminine snake and masculine lion. This explanation is offered by the healer Gomanhudo, but Leónidas himself seems to agree with it too. Gomanhudo doesn't find an immediate cure to Leónidas' condition which for him appears as a difficult challenge. The river, again, has a strong role in Leónidas' fate, as Gomanhudo explains: "O rio é a fronteira entre os dois poderes que lutam dentro dele. É ali que começa um e acaba o outro, ali acaba o norte e começa o sul. É ali que ele se sente bem, na arena neutra desse grande combate" (*DSR*: 33).

The references to the South and to the North and their different characteristics are not only myths, but they also reflect the organisation of the communities in terms of the role of men and women. These aspects are brought up by Chiziane in her *Niketche*, where she discusses the submissive women from the South of Mozambique and the more independent

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women of the North. These cultural differences are related to matrilineality in the North and patrilineality in the South. In *As Duas Sombras do Rio* the lion and the snake, the first represented by temper and images related to fire, and the second by serene deep waters, are present on other occasions too. It is the lion, M'phondoro, that speaks through his *mvula*, Joaquina M'Boa, as the spirit of the Portuguese Kanyemba. The river, representing the snake of the North, is present also in the character of Harkiriwa, "a makewana, aquela que chama a chuva, tradutora da jibóia" (*DSR*: 205). She is the representative of the M'bona spirit, and Gomanhudo seeks her help in order to resolve Leónidas case. Hence, it could be said that in order to resolve the problem Leónidas' condition represents and symbolises, cooperation is necessary. Ultimately, the condition that Leónidas suffers from can be seen as reflecting the root of all the problems in the country.

As previously mentioned, Leónidas goes to the administrator and insists on speaking to him. He explains to the administrator his view on the issue:

> – O problema, camarada administrador, não são os espíritos a chocar uns com os outros. O problema é que não há ninguém para me ouvir, para ouvir o que os espíritos querem dizer. Todos se riem de mim. E no entanto eu tenho muita coisa a dizer sobre o mau caminho para onde Moçambique está a ser levado, um caminho que só traz miséria e desgraça. Por isso, como não tenho povo que me ouça aqui, descobri que o meu povo é o povo moçambicano inteiro. Assim, como trabalho para todo o povo (que nem o camarada administrador quando dá ordens e escreve papéis), e como já não consigo pescar nem levar nada para casa, quero que o camarada administrador me dê um salário. Virei cá todos os meses buscá-lo (*DSR*: 42).

Leónidas' monologue can be seen as offering a key to the novel. Leónidas' condition results from the lack of interest towards the issues Mozambique is struggling with, and he has become the channel through which the two spirits try to express themselves. Hence, while it is Leónidas expressing the threat of *m'fiti*, it can be seen as a work of the two spirits that are not satisfied with the events taking place and are not being listened to, which reminds of the upset spirits mentioned in Couto's and Chiziane's novels too. Hence, the spirits and Leónidas condition is related to the country's current situation, which can be seen as updating myths and also using them to reflect on current issues, without having to use so-called 'modern' forms of assessment.

However, it seems that the healer Gomanhudo and the representative of the snake's spirit, Harkiriwa, are not able to understand the reasons for Leónidas' situation, which could

perhaps be seen as reflecting the new developments in Mozambique, causing the spirits to 'behave' differently. Gomanhudo feels tired in resolving Leónidas' condition:

> Já pensou, para si, que este é um caso que envolve muita pesquisa para descobrir quão genuína é a relação de Ntsato com espíritos muito mais fortes que o de Frei Pedro. E pesquisa significa andanças, a coxear para cá e para lá, uma chatice. Mas não resiste ao desafio. Entretanto, lança o veredicto oficial: é preciso ter paciência, aguardar para ver qual destas terríveis forças vai vencer o combate (*DSR*: 33).

Leónidas cannot rest while the spirits are discussing and wanders near the river: "Por fora está sereno; por dentro é incomensurável o seu sofrimento [...]. E é já um solitário Ntsato que assiste e alberga o combate que a noite desce e os dois espíritos – a cobra e o leão – se cansam de tão furiosa disputa" (*Ibid*.: 37). Harkiriwa, after listening to Gomanhudo suggests partially that the problem – the fire represented by the lion – can be resolved by the refreshing and calming water (*Ibid*.: 208). Harkiriwa's view is preceded by Gomanhudo's thoughts regarding the insignificance of his and Leónidas' problems:

> À medida que vai falando o nganga vai-se dando conta de quão pequeno é o seu problema (e, por inerência, o de Ntsato), comparado com aquele com que a makewana se debate, que diz respeito não a um Ntsato mas a muitos, a milhares, a toda aquela grande comunidade que um dia acordou dividida, em guerra com os seus valores e o culto dos seus espíritos, questionando mensageiros e destruindo santuários; em guerra com a natureza que lhe nega a chuva; em guerra consigo própria como se pode ver pela forma como os seus membros se matam uns aos outros, numa lenta e inexorável descida para a miséria e, para lá dela, para o caos e para o fim. (*Ibid*.: 207-208)

However, Harkiriwa argues that all the problems are equally big or small, and the collective pain can be only soothed by resolving individual cases – such as Leónidas'. However, as it is revealed in the novel, Harkiriwa and Gomanhudo are unable to resolve Leónidas' situation. They have a lengthy discussion regarding evidence and truth, and in Harkiriwa's view Gomanhudo is paying too much attention to evidence at the cost of the truth. These two concepts are at the root of the problem, and as Harkiriwa argues, some things are true without evidence: "– Falas na evidência. O que é a evidência? Os loucos não necessitam de evidência. Ou melhor, eles criam uma nova evidência todos os dias, uma evidência que para nós é inatingível [...] – Encontras alguma ordem na evidência desta guerra? Na maneira como ela avança?" (*Ibid*.: 230).

The lack of evidence has lead Gomanhudo to misinterpret Leónidas' situation. He himself sees this as a result of his spirit's characteristics:

> Talvez por intermediar as vontades de um espírito pequeno e subalterno, de um espírito que ainda por cima não é do lugar (um espírito mestiço, comprador de comida e construtor de catedrais), seja um nganga sem muito apego à tradição, à verdade como princípio e dogma. Do verdadeiro dono do seu nome herdou o vício de construir a partir do nada, trazendo de fora, que é como quem diz, de pôr a verdade ancestral um pouco de lado para perseguir a evidência e inventar a mudança (*DSR*: 231).

The discussion is difficult to interpret, but it can be seen as reflecting epistemological differences. Moreover, it could also be seen as a commentary regarding the concepts and approaches towards truth in the context of the so-called epistemologies of the South and in the process of disregarding them. The weight of evidence, represented in the character of Gomanhudo, is related to Western thought, while the concept of truth as seen by Harkiriwa is related to local tradition due to her position in the society and in the context of spiritual affairs. Furthermore, it could be concluded that a dichotomous view on these aspects is disregarded: neither one of them is apparently right, since Leónidas' case isn't resolved by them.

Moreover, Harkiriwa and eventually Gomanhudo too consider that at the root of the issue is the wrong approach that has been brought about by the changed values, as becomes apparent in their conversation:

> Harkiriwa responde-lhe com uma crítica aos tempos modernos e à arrogância humana de tudo querer explicar, de querer banalizar todos os porquês. Este caminho, Gomanhudo tem que reconhecer, é inútil, uma vez que não podemos avançar se os porquês forem esgotados (se o inexplicado deixou de existir então não temos porque avançar, já avançámos tudo). Além disso, esta arrogância provoca a ira dos espíritos, dos fazedores das leis, e o resultado está à vista nesta guerra sem sentido, sem direcção e sem fim (*DSR*: 232).

The conversation can be seen as pointing to the above question related to epistemologies and questions of truth, and complementing the necessity of questioning the role of evidence. Moreover, it also comments on Western scientific approaches and belief in their omnipotence. This is not, however, seen as a threat from the outside, but rather it is seen as a local problem and attitude, although the origins of the approach might be elsewhere. It can also be seen from the perspective of the narrator, who adds a comment and this way points to the Western concepts and belief in the ability to explain everything and disregard everything that cannot be scientifically explained. Moreover, this approach could also be seen in relationship with literature, which, unlike history, can grasp and discuss the inexplicable.

As became visible above, the world order has changed, which has caused the anger of the spirits. There are two principal elements in the novel that could be seen as representing the chaos: the war and the relationship with nature. While the war and the attacks were already described above, the relationship with nature requires a closer look. It seems that there are two principal themes related to this: poaching and the fate of Zambezi river, especially around Zumbo and in relation to the Cahora Bassa dam. One could even suggest that these are related to Leónidas' condition: while the allusion to the river is clear, the hunting could be seen as symbolising the lion. Moreover, these two aspects are both not only related to disrespecting the earlier values, but also to capitalism and global forces profitting from Mozambique's natural resources. Hence, the myths and their interpretation provide new tools for discussing the abuse of the resources, and also translate it to another language, through which new aspects can become visible.

Poaching is described throughout the novel. The main actors in it are Mama Mère, who buys and resells the ivory, and Suzé Mantia who provides the ivory for her. Mama Mère takes over the trade, although leaves still some space for the Zambian superintendent Million and a police commander who initially were the only ones trading ivory. They had started their business earlier, the first responsible for arranging the ivory, the second selling it further: "No final, havia uma boa maquia para os dois, no fundo sem roubar ninguém a não ser a mãe natureza que é dona de recursos inesgotáveis" (*DSR*: 45). This reflects the attitude that is questioned in the novel, and ultimately seen as one of the reasons for the chaotic situation of Mozambique: nature is not respected, in most cases in order to create profit for few people. Nature is seen as an endless resource, and hence can be exploited. This, clearly, is an approach that differs from the approach defined by the world views represented by the traditional healers, for example. The approach of the traders could be seen as representing the arrogance Harkiriwa mentions above, causing the anger of the spirits.

However, this trade is possible only by cooperating with those that can provide the ivory. Hence, Mama Mère adopts Suzé Mantia: "Chegou-lhe às mãos ainda garoto – bom caçador, é certo, muito bom mesmo, mas um garoto. Foi ela que lhe ensinou a ser homem, a não fazer simplesmente as coisas que lhe mandavam mas a pensar pela sua própria cabeça" (*DSR*: 51). Elsewhere it is described that Mantia learned his skills from his father. Hence, it

could be argued that he represents the usage of traditional knowledge for new purposes: illegal trade and illegal profit – mainly for others, rather than himself. Mantia and his men are also those who testify to the suffering and transformations caused by their actions. They kill an elephant couple:

> Segue-se um pesado silêncio que dá espaço ao eco da tragédia. As gazelas, com a delicadeza que faz parte da sua natureza, escapam-se em saltos elegantíssimos. Os pássaros calam-se de espanto. Mantia e os outros recuperam ainda o fôlego, trémulos, incapazes de um gesto, de uma atitude. Em segundos tudo mudou naquela planície e eles, de cada vez que tal acontece (e são muitas, que Mama Mère é insaciável), ainda se surpreendem com o enorme poder que têm nas mãos (*Ibid*.: 120).

The Zimbabwean lieutenant Zvobo is committed to finishing the poaching and illegal trade, but is unable to do much, although some of the poaching takes place in Zimbabwe too. Moreover, Zambian superintendent Million is obviously not cooperative. Zvobo suspects Mama Mère is involved in the trade: "Nada disso me diria respeito se ela limitasse as suas actividades a Moçambique, onde as coisas são tão complicadas que parece não haver autoridade" (*Ibid*.: 49). Zvobo's comment reveals both how the war and the general 'chaos' in Mozambique has consequences in terms of preservation of nature, but also how some of the issues would require international cooperation. Ultimately, it also reveals how the trade is related to corruption of the local administration.

However, Mama Mère's character is complex: she is also mentioned as bringing new ideas to the villages of Bawa and Zumbo, making them look forward (*DSR*: 227). Moreover, she is also depicted as fair and even friendly. Hence, it could be argued that besides pointing to refusing simple approaches, her character also points to the necessity of negotiations as a form of providing new ideas and aims to the otherwise stagnated atmosphere – of this an example is Amoda Xavier who is able to improve his conditions, and at the same time the whole village's, by the products he buys from Mama Mère. Hence, Mama Mère's death marks a change in two ways: it leaves the villages without the hope her negotiations symbolise, but indirectly it also means the end of poaching. Mantia's encounter with a rhino is described simultaneously with Mama Mère's death, which further points to the relationship between these two events:

> Mantia prepara-se para atirar no momento em que o gesto de aprestar a arma distrai os animais da sua fruição. O grande macho volta-se e encara-o. É um grande

> rinoceronte negro, de uma espécie que todos julgavam desaparecida há muitos anos, perseguida por gerações e gerações de caçadores como Mantia (ele próprio vira um, quando criança). Durante uns momentos olham-se nos olhos, caçadores e presa, como se de um jogo tratasse. Nem Mantia pressiona o gatilho nem o rinoceronte se inquieta. Olham-se simplesmente como se conhecessem. Mantia acaba então por virar-lhes as costas, iniciando o caminho do regresso. Como se um último suspiro de Mama Mère tivesse atravessado o mato para lhe dizer que já não valia a pena, que já não teria comprador (*Ibid*.: 217).

Mantia leaves the village after Mama Mère's death.

Another element, related to nature and more closely to the novel's principal theme, is that of the river and the water. The river is discussed on many occasions, and as was mentioned, it is where North is separated from the South. However, this division has grown over the time. This is brought up in different contexts. Harkiriwa, for example, points to her frustration regarding the situation to a hippo she sees:

> Pergunta-lhe, irritada, se foi a sua distracção que permitiu que a água subisse daquela maneira no rio, esmagando a terra e afastando ainda mais a margem sul, se foi por isso que a chuva tardou cada vez mais em vir, secando toda a promessa de comida e tornando inúteis os esforços do povo, se foi enfim por isso que estalou a guerra entre irmãos e vizinhos (*DSR*: 205).

The rising water has multiple meanings. It points to the growing distance between the margins of the river:

> O desmedido inchaço do rio comeu a terra das margens, fazendo com que os que a perderam fugissem para cima dos que dela alguma ainda tinham, desorganizando machambas e tornando rara a comida, inundando os santuários, que são os espaços para falar organizadamente com o céu. E, sobretudo, afastou as margens uma da outra de modo que as pontes se tornaram projectos impossíveis, que as vozes e os olhares deixaram de ter suficiente alcance para vencer o obstáculo dessas largas águas, que passou a ser muito difícil a reunião dos seus pobres habitantes (*Ibid*.: 236).

Therefore, the change is not only geographic, but it is also related to the people and to their religious sanctuaries. It also meant dislocating people. Moreover, it can also be seen as pointing to the future problems that are ahead due to the current approach towards natural resources.

The water rose due to the building of the Cahora Bassa dam by the Portuguese. In the novel the fame of the majestic river is spread by the slaves, taken by the river to foreign lands. The river awakes the interest of the white men who continue to send slaves, which the narrator compares to the animals Mantia hunts: "Colhiam-na tal como Suzé Mantia, um século depois, viria a colher elefantes e rinocerontes, enfrentado com prudência as suas fúrias, surpreendendo

pela dimensão da sua superioridade, vencendo sempre" (*DSR*: 235). In order to reach all of the people that could be sent as slaves abroad, the white men find a solution:

> Estudaram bem o problema, durante muitos séculos, sem achar a solução. Até que por fim, em parte por sua obra – e gigantesca – , em parte com a ajuda de Deus, também sentado na curva que o rio faz em Boroma, a estudar esse obstáculo, alargaram as margens do rio e fizeram um grande mar, bem ali no meio da terra – o mar de Kebrabassa. E teve esse mar uma dupla função, que era de facilitar e aumentar o escoamento humano e também de preparar essa carga para que ela já soubesse com o que contar – e não se surpreendesse – quando chegasse ao verdadeiro mar do Índico e por ele adentro partisse (*Ibid.*: 235-236).

The description of the creation of the lake points to continuities of colonialism, although the construction of it started in 1969.

This could be seen in relation to Ntsato's condition too, and is related to the anger the spirits Harkiriwa and Gomanhudo discuss. Moreover, it further points to the problems that modifying nature (here again, in order to make profit) cause. It also means that the South and the North grow further apart and the dialogue between them becomes more difficult. While Borges Coelho discusses the differences between North and South, these refer principally to local myths and do not build a discussion that would take these as referring to the colonised South – or the South of the epistemologies of the South – and the colonising North (or the global North). However, this kind of an interpretation would be possible too: the lake symbolises the work of the 'white men' which by force extended the distance between the North and the South and in this way prevents a dialogue from a wider perspective.

Moreover, these two interpretations do not exclude each other. This is further shown when the final destiny of the villagers is revealed. The last attack on Zumbo leads the people to leave the village. They end up leaving in a nearby ship that takes them to Cacessemo island. There the villagers find a balance:

> [A] ilha de Cacessemo mantém-se no meio do rio, na exacta fronteira entre o norte e o sul, descobrindo para fugir à tragédia um original equilíbrio entre o rugido do leão que vem de baixo e o silvo agudo da cobra que lhe chega do norte. Entre o vermelho-vivo da queimada que destrói para que possa haver recomeço e o azul da chuva que traz o segredo e a sabedoria desse recomeço. Será que a queimada se extingue antes que a natureza chegue ao fim e nada mais haja para arder? Será que a chuva vem para a germinar? (*DSR*: 228)

However, this balance is one of compromise rather than one of peace and future. Here, as mentioned, the lack of Amoda Xavier's future plans and Mama Mère's negotiations diminish the views and plans of the people. Hope has disappeared:

> O novo ataque ao Zumbo foi duplamente nefasto. Nefasto na repetição da catástrofe e também por ter acabado com a esperança. Se nos tempos recentes se instalara a ideia de que os dias da frente seriam melhores que os de trás, ele reinstalou um muro opaco da descrença entre a gente e o futuro (*Ibid*.: 224).

This quote demonstrates the impact of the civil war and the hopelessness it has installed. If considered from the wider perspective, this could be seen as representing the position that is offered to the 'ordinary' Mozambicans. They remain in between South and North, threatened by the excesses of capitalism and its effects on the surroundings and left without a future if turning their backs to it.

Ntsato, who fails to find a way to express what the fighting spirits in him are trying to say, doesn't come to the island with the others: "E assim, enquanto Ntsato, algures, procurava com tanto afinco um equilíbrio, foram os seus familiares e vizinhos que pelos insondáveis caminhos do acaso o acabaram por achar" (*DSR*: 228). His destiny can be interpreted in multiple ways. He drowns – on purpose, perhaps – in the waters of Zambezi: "Devagar, também, Leónidas Ntsato mergulhou nele nessa noite, ficando nós sem saber se procurava chegar a Cacessemo para alongar a sua perplexidade nessa fronteira, se lhe bastava perder-se nas águas para ganhar a tranquilidade e a indiferença dos afogados" (*Ibid*.: 236). The end of the novel could be seen as referring to the impossibility of finding peace in the current situation. In this sense, there are again similarities to the end of Couto's *O Último Voo do Flamingo*.

3.4.4 *As Duas Sombras do Rio*: conclusions

While *As Duas Sombras do Rio* might be the novel that is most closely related to Mozambican traditions and myths in Borges Coelho's work, it still questions postcolonial and Eurocentric approaches. Both colonialism and the civil war are seen through singular, discontinuous events and instead of representing a coherent narration of the nation and its phases, the focus is on the characters. The national history can be interpreted through the events that affect the specific villages and their inhabitants. While the novel and its village could be interpreted as a national

allegory, the interaction between the different nations and the fight against poaching that requires crossing borders question or at least widen this perspective.

Simplifying approaches are not permitted either since throughout the novel there appears to be a tendency to avoid judging any aspects of the history, which becomes visible when discussing the church and the technical innovations it is related to. Even those connected to poaching are shown from various angles and are not judged. On the other hand, the past isn't glorified either. The important themes are allowed to be present but the reader is left to judge them, although it could be argued that the issue of poaching and the impact of the construction of the dam are brought up as central themes. These, obviously, are not the most common themes in the more traditional postcolonial literature, and similar to what was discussed in the context of Couto's novel, there seems to be a shift from national issues towards wider perspectives, and on the other hand, topics such as capitalism are at least implicitly present. The topic of literary decolonisation in the context of Borges Coelho's novel may seem irrelevant, not least due to the writer's own position, but can offer new views to the discussion too. What Borges Coelho's novel seems to prove is that it is possible to 'discuss Africa' and bring up important questions without problematising the language use or the relationship with oral tradition.

On the other hand, Borges Coelho's work has much to do with the other writers that were discussed here. These themes, such as hybridity, avoiding dichotomous views and bringing up aspects of the history that have more recently gained attention, seem to be a result of the current phase, whereby the writers are extending their work to discuss new areas, even in terms of geography. This process and the new themes such as the relationship with nature also reflect the political situation in Mozambique and the shifting of the focus from colonialism and its heritages to other kind of issues. Moreover, Borges Coelho's position also offers new views towards the discussion regarding the position of African (Mozambican) writers, and Mozambican literature – from a more global perspective.

3.5 Paulina Chiziane: *O Alegre Canto da Perdiz*

O Alegre Canto da Perdiz takes place in Mozambique mainly during the time of Portuguese colonialism and it discusses the phases of one family. The main character is beautiful Delfina, who has been making a living as a prostitute to the white sailors. Her phases and relationships with different men are at the centre of the novel. Delfina is keen to improve her social status and sees that this is possible only by having a white man and mixed-race children.[9] All of her actions and their consequences are then brought up in different generations. The novel is based on Chiziane's experiences while living in Zambezia. She described how she came across a family in which the children were treated differently according to their skin tone, which she found intriguing and which gave her the idea for the novel (Chiziane, 2012). Another central theme in the novel is the position of women with regard to the men, which is also discussed on the level of myths. Chiziane points out that in the case of Mozambique, there are significant differences between the myths, depending on whether they come from patriarchal systems of the South, or from matriarchal systems, in the centre and in the North of the country (*Idem*).

The discussion will begin by taking a look of Chiziane's approach to writing and the principal themes of the novel and will consider the question of feminism. The following subchapters discuss two topics that have not been very widely discussed in Mozambican literature. The first one is that of an alternative take on colonialism, especially regarding assimilation and the experiences of women. The second subchapter deals with issues related to the question of skin colour, especially from the perspective of Mozambican or Zambezian women.

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[9] Paulina Chiziane uses the word *mulato* in her text. However, I have chosen to use the expression 'mixed-race' due to the negative connotation the word 'mulatto' has in English. The word has negative connotations in Portuguese too, and Chiziane's use of the word should be seen in the colonial context she describes in her novel. Nowadays in Portuguese it is more common to use the word *mestiço*.

3.5.1 *O Alegre Canto da Perdiz*: feminist storytelling?

In Chiziane's novel the questions of colonialism, skin colour and the position and roles of women are brought up in different eras, which also permits a discussion of the changes that have taken place in society. Moreover, they are brought up in a way that has rarely been discussed: from within the families, and also taking emotions into account, shedding more light on both the influences of colonialism on this level, but also explaining some events and personal choices that historically may have seem exclusively political. The approach shows the influence of social change on the families, but also takes part in a more general discussion regarding families, how they grow apart and become newly united. Family, as will be discussed further, can also be seen as an allegory of the nation. Moreover, it also offers a perspective on colonialism that doesn't set it up as an external evil, but points to the racism adopted by the colonised too. As a result, the narration escapes from dichotomous settings – to the extent to which it would be curious to see how it would be received if it had not been written by a Mozambican woman.

In this sense, like Ba Ka Khosa's work, the novel can be considered from the perspective of memory – but here from a more intimate perspective than in *Ualalapi*. It could be said that it manipulates the collective memory by unearthing and showing silenced, but shared experiences. However, it discusses a longer time span than *Ualalapi*, which permits also a comparison of the memories of different eras and the change of perspectives through the characters themselves. The myths regarding the women it brings up can also be approached from the perspective of memory, as ones that question the current memories and reach to further into the past in order to provide alternatives – as a form of counter-memory, it could be argued. Moreover, the myths can also be considered from the perspective of questioning the established views regarding men and women, differently from Western feminism and patriarchal approaches. As with Khosa's novel, Chiziane's novel brings up aspects that were wiped out during the socialist era, which reveals the problems of this phase. It also failed to permit a debate regarding colonialism that would have allowed discussing it from any other perspective than that established by the liberation fight. However, Chiziane's novel simultaneously criticises colonialism, just as Khosa's novel does. This as such already denies the approach that sets the two as opposing forces and leaves no other option than choosing

between one of two: defending colonialism or defending independence – which does not reflect the experience of the people.

The interest towards the people and their stories is evident at the level of language too: they are brought to the foreground and the language doesn't draw much attention. Whereas in her earlier novels there were more expressions and even whole songs in other languages side-by-side with Portuguese, in *O Alegre Canto da Perdiz* the language is more uniform, and the glossary is very short in comparison to Chiziane's earlier novels. For example, *Ventos do Apocalipse* starts as an oral narrative, while in *O Alegre Canto da Perdiz* the narrator is less visible, and although it is not very different from the previous ones, the connection to oral narration is not as clear here. However, the narrator, at the same time being omniscient, sometimes takes the liberty to comment on the characters, which is preceded by a neutral third person narration, and after that jumps inside the heads of the characters:

> Maria das Dores é o seu nome. Deve ser o nome de uma santa ou uma branca porque as pretas gostam de nomes simples. Joana. Lucrécia. Carlota. Maria das Dores é um nome belíssimo, mas triste. Reflecte o quotidiano das mulheres e dos negros.
> Ah, minha mãe, eis-me aqui à beira do caminho. Ao lado do vento amigo. Na margem de um rio desconhecido. Perseguida por mulheres tristes. Naqueles gritos ouvi também o teu grito, minha mãe (*ACP*: 16).

Whereas the third person narration is more suitable for reproducing the idea of oral narration, and the commenting narrator is very suitable for it, entering the thoughts of the characters as a first person narrator is not so familiar – unless the storyteller is speaking about herself. The narration also leaves little room for interpretation and emphasises the positions of the characters through strong expressions.

From these aspects it could be gathered that Chiziane's proximity to oral narration is not so much on the level of writing technique or forms of narration, but rather in the way she sees her own role: she is a storyteller instead of a novelist, as she has pointed out on various occasions (Martins & Caldeira, 2011; Chiziane, 2012). Similarly, the language is accessible – not as complex as Mia Couto's and not as sophisticated as Ba Ka Khosa's or Borges Coelho's, which can be seen together with Chiziane's interest in telling stories, as she has mentioned in an interview (Martins & Caldeira, 2011). Her language use is not specifically Mozambican, and in *O Alegre Canto da Perdiz* even the dialogue is rather simple compared to the dialogues in *Ventos do Apocalipse* that are filled with local colour in the form of how the speakers

address each other as mother or father of their child (*mãe de* Manuna), or how their speech is enriched with interjections that are used in Mozambique – and not in written Portuguese or European Portuguese. It seems that Chiziane's language has become more neutral as her writing career has progressed.

The changes in language use do not challenge Chiziane's position towards oral tradition, which is present in all of her novels. In *O Alegre Canto da Perdiz*, this is constantly present in references to the mythical Mount Namuli, and it could be even argued that this is the organising theme of the novel. Furthermore, oral tradition is more directly present in the passages referring to the myths regarding men and women and their coexistence. Chiziane mentions that the use of the oral tradition makes her works more dynamic and she thinks that in her mother tongue many things sound more beautiful than in Portuguese. Possibly due to these contradictions, she considers that she has been able to express herself in terms of the topics she has written about, but she is not happy with the aesthetic side of her work (Chabal, 1994: 300). There is also an aspect in Chiziane's work that is reminiscent of the statements of earlier African writers like Achebe and Ngugi. She argues that she wants to express herself freely, without worrying about linguistic sophistication and grammar, while it can be pointed out that these matters obviously haven't been left without attention in her work. In this way her message goes further in terms of Mozambique and Mozambican readers (Martins & Caldeira, 2011). This position is also visible on the level of the plot, the characters and even the principal themes of her work.

Four overlapping main elements can be brought up to sum up *O Alegre Canto da Perdiz*, which serve to emphasise the search for a way to discuss the stories of the people in multiple senses. To begin with, it is a story about women of three different generations, and in this sense it could be seen as being in dialogue with the earlier women's writing in Mozambique – Owen (2007: 24) shows how in the 1940s motherhood is an important topic among the women writers, most famous one of them being Noémia de Sousa. It would be possible to read Noémia de Sousa's poetry even as a reference to *O Alegre Canto da Perdiz,* which will not be explored here in depth. There is Serafina, who has suffered much during her life, and not least due to the Portuguese presence in Mozambique. Her two sons were deported and she never sees them again. Her daughter, Delfina, wanted to study, but for this she would

have had to be an *assimilada*. However, she was not allowed to become one: "Pediu ao pai para ser assimilado, a fim de ter acesso à escola oficial, onde as professoras eram mulheres normais e não freiras esquizofrénicas. Mas o pai disse que não. Porque os assimilados eram assassinos" (*ACP*: 78). Delfina then becomes a prostitute. The third generation is represented mainly by Maria das Dores. Delfina sells Maria's virginity to a witch doctor, Simba, who then doesn't allow Maria to leave him. Finally, Maria runs away with her children. Chiziane herself, in an interview to Ana Margarida Dias Martins (2006), refers to the novel as a story of the complicated relationship between the black and mixed-race Mozambicans – and at the same time, of the relationship between the mother and her children of different colours. She also explains that these issues are present especially in the Zambezia province, where there were many Portuguese, which resulted in miscegenation.

The second element to be considered are the questions of family and origin that often emerge, which are closely related to the first aspect and to questions of memory too. The origin of the characters is often questioned. They are asked where they come from, and they reply that they don't know. The loss of parents – and children – is a constant theme. José is longing for his mother, from whom he was separated when sent to the camps meant for criminals (*condenados*) – he was apparently randomly chosen to be forced to work. Delfina's children are longing for their fathers, and Delfina loses her children because of her own cruelty and then desperately misses them. Maria das Dores gives up her children to be raised by a white nun. The novel starts with a description of naked Maria das Dores on a river bank where she appeared from nothing, and when the inhabitants of the village try to identify her by asking where she came from and who her parents are, she doesn't reply. The first passage can also be seen as referring to the disorder resulting from Maria das Dores' past:

> Um grito colectivo. Um refrão.
> Há uma mulher nua nas margens do rio Licungo. Do lado dos homens.
> – Ah?
> Há uma mulher na solidão das águas do rio. Parece que escuta o silêncio dos peixes. Uma mulher jovem. Bela e reluzente como uma escultura maconde. De olhos pregados no céu, parece até que aguarda algum mistério.
> – Quem é ela?
> Uma mulher negra, tão negra como as esculturas de pau-preto. Negra pura, tatuada, no ventre, nas coxas, nos ombros. Nua, assim, completa (*ACP*: 11).

These situations and the loss of the view of one's origin can be seen as a result of colonialism. It could be seen as an allegory for society too: the people loosing their identities and loosing the connection to their parents can be compared to the impact of the rapid political shifts on society.

Thirdly, the story has plenty of references to Mount Namuli, located in the Zambezia province of Mozambique. It, again, is related to the previous elements: origin and memory. When questioned about the origin of the twins who seem to have appeared from nowhere, the wife of the local chief explains:

> – Outra vez a mesma pergunta? Não entenderam a minha explicação? Querem saber de onde eles vêm? E nós, de onde viemos? Está bem, mais uma vez vos digo. É aqui, nos Montes Namuli, o berço da Zambézia inteira. Eles vieram, sim, para nos lembrar tempos em que a terra era nossa e as montanhas pariam vida. Embora muitas digam que nascemos num éden distante e de um casal estrangeiro, vieram estes para nos lembrar a morte lenta dos nossos mitos. [...] Zambézia tem fronteiras? Não, porque aqui é o centro do cosmos. Todo o planeta terra se chama Zambézia. Os Montes Namuli são o ventre do mundo, o umbigo do céu (*ACP*: 40-41).

This is the birth home of the human beings, but also the place where people go to die. The Mozambican characters constantly refer to this place, longing for it, often at the same time longing for their mothers. Namuli has a special significance in Macua people's mythology, as expressed in Chiziane's novel. The Macua society is matrilineal. Besides the myths related to the mountain, Chiziane repeats different versions of a myth related to the relationship of men and women. The essence of these stories is that first there were women, living in peace and without problems, then the men somehow managed to access the women's world (the men also exist, but living only among themselves). The women seem to be weak in comparison to men and, hence, they were able to conquer the women's world, which leads to the destruction of their happy and stable lives.

The fourth main element is colonialism, especially from the perspective of the women, although not exclusively. Simply put, it can be said that the problems that the characters face are related to colonialism – and the racial hierarchy of it – and the position of women in Mozambican society. Means for survival are scarce and skin colour defines everyone's position in society. This leads Delfina to her selfish and cruel acts – she has decided to have a good life and this requires extreme means. All of the women appear doubly oppressed by the local approaches, but also by the colonial system. The stereotypes of the

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sensual African women (in comparison to the white Portuguese women, referred to as saints) are repeated, as well as that of the white men loosing their minds to the black women. The metaphor of colonised Africa as a woman is brought up too:

> Era uma vez uns navegadores que se fizeram ao mar. Iam a caminho da Índia, em busca de pimenta e piripiri, para melhorar a paladar das suas refeições de bacalhau e sardinha. Quando passavam pelo oceano Índico, começaram a sentir vontades. [...]
> Descobriram que a terra era imensa, com hipopótamos, crocodilos, elefantes e muitos pretos. [...] De todas as sereias, a Zambézia era a mais bela. Os marinheiros invadiram-na e amaram-na furiosamente como só se invade a mulher amada (*ACP*: 62).

The new language brought by the coloniser, as well as other effects of it are seen as elements of Mozambicanness – there is no way back to the time before the arrival of the Portuguese, who are often referred to as the sailors.

As Chabal (1996: 92) points out, Chiziane's "view of the condition of women in the past is in no way sentimental. The past persecutes us and lives with us in the present". She also doesn't romanticise the pre-colonial past, and in *O Alegre Canto da Perdiz* she shows the role of the Mozambicans who helped the colonial administration. The discussion regarding whether Chiziane is a feminist or not seems rather irrelevant, but feminist approaches towards her work can complement the analysis and bring up new perspectives, both towards her work and towards feminism. In Chiziane's work it seems that if she has an agenda, it is with the people and not only with women. At times, it even appears that she makes use of existing stereotypes regarding African women and her view on gender is quite conservative and fixed, exclusively based on heterosexual relations and identity without any space for negotiation or questioning. Sex is often violent, uncontrolled and related to negotiating power relations. The prostitution of young women is represented negatively, but there are some excerpts that provoke further questions regarding women: "José conhece o reflexo do seu corpo nos tremores orgásticos das mulheres violadas nas matas, suspirando és lindo, és macho, és homem" (*ACP*: 94). Clearly, this is José's vision in a moment when Delfina's mother is humiliating him, but it also brings up questions regarding feminism in Chiziane's novel. Hence, the perception of women in Chiziane's novels is much more complex than it might at first seem, and cannot easily be explained by the simple terms of feminism – or it can be seen as negotiating Western feminism and its principles and views regarding sexuality (not in the

direction of the above quote, but in a wider sense). It also clearly provides a view that is very far from the narratives regarding the heroines of the liberation fight, such as Josina Machel who had an important role in showing the way to new ideas regarding women and equality and whose legacy was employed in the narrative established afterwards by the leaders. Josina was also Samora Machel's first wife. She died at the age of 25.

However, for her choice of topics in her first five novels, Chiziane has often been labelled as a (postcolonial) feminist, and although this is not the principal approach of this analysis, it is worth taking a look at the discussion related to feminism. As Ania Loomba points out, postcolonial feminism works in "challenging both colour prejudices within white feminism and gender-blindness of anti-racist or anticolonial movements" (Loomba, 1998: 163). Clearly, Chiziane's position as an African woman writer brings these aspects to her text, and her work can also be read as questioning the Western conception of patriarchalism. While Western feminism has been criticised, its view on patriarchalism also needs to be questioned: "The notion of a universal patriarchy has been widely criticised in recent years for its failure to account for the workings of gender oppression in the concrete cultural contexts in which it exists" (Butler, 1999: 6).

In Chiziane's works the various contexts of patriarchalism in her home country become visible, as well as the role of the women in questioning them – or conforming. Although Chiziane herself does not discuss these aspects, her works can be seen as enriching the discussion regarding feminism in general, and African and Mozambican feminism in particular. As Macedo and Amaral argue, the search for a universal feminist identity is not possible anymore, and the postcolonial discussions have brought new particularities to the field. Inequality is not only related to relations between men and women, but also to women from different classes and races. The white hegemony is present in this area too (Macedo and Amaral, 2002: 403). As McClintock points out, referring to Hazel Carby, the white women were part of the process of benefitting from the oppression of colonised (or black) women. Moreover, as Cora Kaplan has discussed, many views are also based on fixed and natural sexual difference and on ideas of universal masculinity and femininity. Bell hooks points out that the discussion regarding black women has focused heavily on discussing the blackness, to

the extent whereby the invention of whiteness remains without analysis and discussion (McClintock, 1995: 7).

This issue of feminism is also related to subalternity: Spivak (1994: 90-91) sees that the muted subalternity of non-Western women cannot be tackled by Western feminism (or Western intellectuals) – it can even be seen as a part of constructing the impossibility of the non-Western oppressed women to speak. When discussing these women, they end up speaking for these women and representing them, instead of 'letting them speak'. Butler's comment can be seen as complementing Spivak's concern. She sees that the so-called universal feminism, by using Western concepts of oppression when discussing non-Western cultures, ends up constructing "a 'third world' or even an orient, in which gender oppression is subtly explained as symptomatic of an essential, non-western barbarism" (Butler, 1999: 6). In this sense, Chiziane's work has opened up new questions and topics of discussion, and even more importantly, broken silences, but perhaps seeing her work through the lens of feminism does not do it justice – as often happens when one perspective leads the reading.

The reluctance of Chiziane to accept being called feminist is related to the wider discussion regarding African feminism. Many African woman writers do not call themselves feminists for various reasons. Some of them are related to the difficult relationship between white, African American and African feminist movements. Feminism can also be considered as an elitist movement in Africa, since it is mainly restricted to urban, middle class women. Besides this, in many societies feminism is seen as a negative force since it threatens the traditional organisations and can also contribute to limiting the traditional power women may have had. There are also strong stereotypes regarding feminists – they are considered as women who hate men and/or lesbians (Arndt, 2002: 27-29). On the other hand, the rejection of this categorisation can also be read as a rejection of the role given to African authors by Western readers. As Owen (2007: 22) suggests: the literature written by women is considered through "gender exoticism, both in African and metropolitan litearry criticism, marginalizing Mozambican women's writing from the 'properly' literary sphere by regarding it in terms of spontaneity, intuition, and collective oral tradition". However, in Chiziane's case, she emphasises that what seems like feminism is actually a result of her natural choice of topic, which is a result of her being a woman herself. Moreover, one could also question whether the

eagerness to label African women writers as feminists is further related to stereotypes or generalisations regarding the position of African women as victims. Hence, although the women are in the spotlight in Chiziane's work, it does not do justice to her novels to label or discuss them only as feminist novels. In her novels colonialism and its consequences are criticised, and she clearly positions herself against colonialism. In *O Alegre Canto da Perdiz* this is visible in many ways, but she also widens the picture to include more perspectives than merely the categories of victim and explorer or colonised and coloniser. Here, to certain extent, echoes of Owen's (2007: 47) description of Noémia de Sousa can be detected, especially when it comes to *O Alegre Canto da Perdiz*: "[...] if de Sousa was not overtly headlining a call for women's liberation, she explored the specific experiences of women within the race dramas of miscegenation and assimilation [...]". As Owen points out, Sousa also brings up the position of the mixed-race women and calls their attention to their "black maternal genealogy", which is relevant in the context of Chiziane's novel too (*Ibid*.: 48).

Therefore, it is easy to agree with Chabal (1996: 93) who writes that Chiziane's work has the "immense merit of serving notice both that the African past ought also to be reinterpreted from a woman's perspective and that women writers can bring to prose fiction new and original dimensions". While it doesn't take a woman writer to write about women – as Couto's novels prove, especially the later ones – by emphasising the experience of the women the general narratives become questioned and are explored from new perspectives. It is in this sense too that the novel reveals the multiple, sometimes clashing views and memories of the people. Moreover, the multiplicity is further emphasised by bringing up the race dimension. It also reveals how the question of race is experienced differently according to gender.

In terms of literary decolonisation, bringing up and widening the discussion regarding colonialism can be seen as questioning the Eurocentric approach – such as universal feminism. Moreover, by questioning some of the most strongly established dichotomies, it also takes a step away from the earlier literary decolonisation processes. Ultimately, Chiziane's work can be seen as taking the task of discussing the gender aspects of colonialism and its continuities in current Mozambican society – a task that was also present in Noémia de Sousa's poetry. The position of women also brings up questions related to patriarchalism in general, and not

only limited to either colonialism or the 'traditional' society, but pointing to both. Moreover, *O Alegre Canto da Perdiz* doesn't limit the discussion to colonialism only, but similarly to the other writers here discussed, points to its continuities in globalisation too.

3.5.2 Alternative perspectives towards colonialism in *O Alegre Canto da Perdiz*

The way colonialism is described in *O Alegre Canto da Perdiz* can be seen as a form of sociology of absences on various levels – it brings up social experiences which, even when having taken place in the past, widen the view regarding the present moment. It discusses colonialism in a way that, although it has been previously discussed in literature, manages to bring up new perspectives, which is related to transcending the simple oppositions like coloniser-colonised or oppressor-oppressed. Here, there are 'colonisers' who defend their children from their 'colonised' mother's racism, 'colonised' who at the same time work for the 'coloniser' and 'oppressed' women who oppress other, more vulnerable women. Here, hence, the distance from the setting that was the essence of combat poetry has grown significantly, and the picture has gained more depth – and as a result raises more questions. It also brings multiple voices regarding events that have often been discussed from one singular (masculine) perspective or from a more general perspective. Moreover, it also reveals the motives for some actions that history has silenced by judging them, this way showing the role of emotions and the depth of colonialism: it is also an intimate experience and an experience related to identity, family relations and structure. The experience of the *sipaio*, colonial police, or the experience of the women whose sons were deported can be mentioned here as examples.

Moreover, these aspects have been silenced since emotions – sometimes in relation to the world views of the characters – are not discussed in conventional forms of history and as was seen above, they didn't always have space in Mozambican literature either. They don't explain the actions alone, but they do widen the picture and the perspective from political and economical aspects to other levels. Furthermore, these elements also take attention from the heroes or heroines such as Josina Machel (or villains) to the ordinary people and their choices, moral issues and daily struggles, thereby questioning the established narratives by counter-memories. Here, it could be argued that this kind of an approach is especially suitable to be expressed in novels, as this form permits more interiorised views and the development of the

characters in this direction, even when some of the dynamics are borrowed from oral tradition. Hence, in Chiziane's work the Mozambican novel – regardless of her objections to the labelling of her works under this genre – is quite close to the 'traditional' European novel in some aspects.

José is the character whose phases are most directly related to colonialism. He becomes an *assimilado* in order to improve his position in Mozambican society. The reason for his choice is Delfina – they get married and Delfina refuses to live a life of a poor woman. José has difficulty in pleasing his new wife, since colonialism has blocked all of the ways to make progress in society:

> Mas os negros só têm bananas e cocos, e Delfina quer ouro. Roubar aos brancos é candidatar-se a nova deportação. Surgem assim os primeiros sinais de revolta: maldita colonização, maldita hora em que nasci negro. Se eu fosse um branco, nada me faltaria. Existem algumas fórmulas frágeis para ser menos negro, pelos cremes, pelas roupas, pela textura dos cabelos (*ACP*: 114).

As Delfina cannot bring income into the house (she used to earn money as a prostitute), she sees that the only solution is that José applies for the status of an *assimilado*. José tries to protest because he does not want to work for the colonial administration, but gives up when he realises that there is no other way for survival. Curiously, he becomes an *assimilado* in a process close to a revolt against colonialism, which has changed the concepts of success and value in society.

José becomes an *assimilado* in a simple ceremony, in which he promises to abandon his earlier identity:

> Quem não se ajoelha perante o poder do império não poderá ascender ao estatuto de cidadão. Se não conhece as palavras da nova fala jamais se poderá afirmar. Vamos, jura por tudo que não dirás mais uma palavra nessa língua bárbara. Jura, renuncia, mata tudo, para nasceres outra vez. Mata a tua língua, a tua tribo, a tua crença. Vamos, queima os teus amuletos, os velhos altares e os velhos espíritos pagãos. José faz o juramento perante um oficial de justiça, que mais se parece com um juramento de bandeira. Com pouca cerimónia, diante de um oficial meio embriagado.
> – Eu juro – repetia.
> – Juras abandonar essas crenças selvagens, a língua atrasada, e a vida bárbara? (*ACP*: 117).

As discussed earlier, in the assimilation policy the hierarchy and the assumed superiority of the Portuguese culture, language and religion are expressed. Assimilation can be seen directly in relation to epistemological questions and it is also an experience that is brought up often in

Mozambican literature – such as Couto's *O Último Voo do Flamingo*, but also in Ba Ka Khosa's *Ualalapi* in the character of Ngungunhane's son Manua.

The *assimilados* become alienated in their own society, but they are also not accepted among the Portuguese. As was referred earlier too, Santos points out, paraphrasing Bhabha, that to be assimilated is emphatically not to be Portuguese. The situation causes a complex "blocked identity", since the assimilated are neither accepted as Africans, nor Europeans. (Santos, 2002: 14, 32). José struggles to find his place in Mozambican society: "Eu sou deles. Mas não se abandona a natureza por assinatura e nem se muda de raça por um juramento" (*ACP*: 128). José is not one of the Portuguese – it seems rather that he is their property. He is confused about his new status: he is supposed to have a new identity now, but his 'old identity' is still present. He feels that he has abandoned his own people and that he was fooled to believe in the superiority of the Portuguese system: "No princípio éramos apenas um. Um povo. Uma família, um exército de resistência. De repente ficámos diferentes. Eles lá e eu do lado de cá. Fizeram-me crer que do lado de cá está a nobreza e eu creio" (*Ibid*.: 128).

Since assimilation is also discussed in Couto's *O Último Voo do Flamingo*, it is interesting to compare the two characters. The translator's father, Sulplício, was one of the only black people to have a position within the colonial administration of the area, as a game keeper. He reveals the racism, but also points to the other side of the position: "Aprendera na tropa – só se dispara sobre o inimigo quando ele estiver perto. No caso dele, porém, ele estava tão próximo que arriscava disparar sobre ele mesmo. Ou fosse dizer: o inimigo lhe estava dentro. Isso que ele atacava era não um país de fora, mas uma província de si" (*UVF*: 140). The quote illustrates the hybridity of the position of the *assimilados*, especially those working for the colonial administration. Moreover, both José and Sulplício reflect the continuities of this situation – while they had power during colonialism, after it the position changed and their situation became insecure.

José's change of identity culminates with the moment he is given money to buy new clothes: "Realizou as primeiras compras da sua vida. Roupas, sabão, perfume e lençóis brancos. Experimentou tudo e foi ao espelho pela primeira vez. Sentada na cama, Delfina observava o marido a mudar de identidade como uma cobra na mudança de estação" (*ACP*: 118). The passage echoes McClintock's (1995: 31) discussion regarding soap and white cotton

as symbols of civilisation. Moreover, the view José takes of himself in the mirror reflects the change and a new personality he needs to become familiar with. The change distorts his view of his own past too: "José esforça-se por eliminar o passado como quem despe uma roupa desconfortável no corpo. Recorda o juramento recente. Eu creio no futuro. Eu juro. Eu já não sou. Serei" (*ACP*: 127). As Fanon states (2003: 183), colonialism has a way of affecting the past of the colonised: their history becomes valueless, much like what happens to José. In a desperate attempt to deny his previous life, José ends up becoming a cruel *sipaio*, of whom all the locals are afraid. In a novel, which ends in a discussion regarding the possibilities of the future, it is significant that history is brought up, and that it is seen from a new perspective, raising the voices of those that were not heard earlier, similarly to what Ba Ka Khosa did with regard to the Gaza Empire.

José leaves for war in 1953, aware of being only a second-class citizen compared to the Portuguese soldiers (*ACP*: 124). He becomes very cruel and gains the respect of the white soldiers: "Elogiam-no. Ele é um preto bom, um preto fiel, o melhor que já existiu. Se não fosse um cafre, podia até ser um fidalgo ou um general. É um belo exemplar. Até as mulheres brancas suspiram por ele" (*Ibid*.: 137). Fanon mentions a similar situation, where the assumption of all black people being illiterate savages is questioned. Always, whenever a black person is good at something, it is an exception. Skin colour is the most important quality, and that eliminates all need to consider the person's other features (Fanon, 1975: 129). This aspect was discussed earlier in Mozambican literature too, especially in João Dias' "Godido", where the main character dreams of progress and new possibilities, represented by the capital of the country, but is deeply disappointed when racism is revealed to him. José, even when respected by the Portuguese, is never accepted as one of them due to his race and position as colonised.

In discussing mimicry and resemblance, Bhabha argues that as the black colonised are considered inferior to the coloniser: the coloniser does not want to see any resemblance between himself and the colonised. When the resemblance becomes visible it causes fear (Bhabha, 1994: 90). The willingness of the Portuguese to destroy José can hence be analysed as an expression of fear. José is serving the colonial administration and spreading fear among the black Mozambicans and becomes so close to the coloniser that he is almost like them. As a

result, he is able to question the grounds for colonialism: if the Mozambicans can become like the Portuguese, the Portuguese presence in the country becomes questionable. José also challenges the racial hierarchy, showing that he is capable of doing the same things as the coloniser. José's Portuguese colleagues admire him, but are also convinced that he can't go on, and that he has to be destroyed. Their superior advises them that the man will be destroyed, since his weakest point is the woman he loves. When Delfina is giving birth to her third child, it is revealed that the father of the child is white. Delfina leaves José for Soares.

Before Delfina gives birth to a mixed-race daughter, José visits Moyo. Moyo is a healer who has been José's friend since childhood and who saved his life when he was bitten by a snake, and on another occasion when he was beaten up when trying to escape from the camp for criminals. José seeks Moyo out after oppressing his own people as a *sipaio*. He is desperate for a cure for his nightmares and the fear caused by his acts against his own people. He finds no help in his 'new' religion. "– A religião dos brancos não serve aos pretos – delira José dos Montes –, os deuses deles estão longe e os nossos perto. Os anjos deles mandam rezar e os nossos mortos respondem logo. Deus fala quando quer, os mortos dão uma resposta imediata a qualquer momento" (*ACP*: 160). Moyo explains that José has no reason to fear:

> – Os fantasmas não existem – tranquiliza Moyo.
> – Por vezes, a turbulência da mente projecta no espaço vultos medonhos. Não te assustes. São gritos de protesto dos homens que açoitas até a morte. Esses fantasmas são os amigos residentes na tua consciência, que te querem trazer de volta a razão (*Ibid.*: 161).

For Moyo, representing the opposite force of assimilation by being a healer, the violence of the *sipaio* and assimilation in general represent irrationality, and the 'ghosts' can serve to bring the lost person back to 'reason'. This way too the question of assimilation is related to questions of epistemology. Moreover, it can also be seen as an alternative view regarding colonialism – for Moyo, it doesn't represent progress and rationality. The encounter with Moyo and José also reveals the ambivalence of José's situation. He wants a fast cure, but at the same time he affirms his own position as superior to Moyo. He refuses to eat the food Moyo offers to him: "– O meu paladar já não está habituado às comidas cafreais. Agora como comidas finas" (*Ibid.*: 163). Here, it is possible to hear echoes of Ngungunhane's last speech from *Ualalapi*, where he predicted that the new generations will not know how to respect their past and learn new habits.

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Moyo sees that José should stop mistreating the people but he refuses to consider this: "– Não posso, tenho que cumprir as ordens. Os brancos castigam e ninguém reclama. Porque é que o castigo só dói quando vem de mim? Por eu ser negro e me julgarem irmão?" (*ACP*: 164). The long conversation turns into José's motivation for being a murderer.

> – Matas gente à toa. O que procuras tu na morte de outrem?
> – Muita coisa. Poder. Liberdade. Grandeza. Quero ser herói.
> – Como?
> – Os heróis das lendas sempre matam. Por isso são aclamados reis.
> – E o que farias tu com o heroísmo?
> – Mataria todos os brancos para viver em paz com a minha Delfina. Obrigaria qualquer pessoa a ajoelhar-se diante da minha presença, como fazem as sinhás, as donas, os prazeiros e os proprietários das companhias. Faz de mim o maior, tens poderes para isso, Moyo! (*Ibid.*: 169).

José, although killing his own people, is still able to think that he could chase away the coloniser and live in peace. The Portuguese soldiers, hence, were right to be afraid of José. He also wants a cure to conquer Delfina's heart. When Moyo refuses to give him what he wants, since he believes that José is requesting the cure in the wrong way and for the wrong reasons, José starts to threaten him and after an argument, takes his life. This episode can be seen as José expressing the ambiguity of his position – but at the same time, it is his way of definitively choosing his role as the feared *sipaio*. It also reflects how the presence of colonialism has changed the society and its values – the power José is thirsty for is based on colonialism and the hierarchy it established. Since the colonial values are established at the top of the hierarchy, the only kind of relevant power is related to these values.

José's story, however, doesn't end here. In the last pages of the novel it turns out that he changed his identity once more:

> Sou o José dos Montes, o assimilado! Bravo guerreiro! Arrasei todos os grevistas e silenciei todos os que se opunham à escravatura. Foi o sangue do povo que me elevou e me fez importante. Mudei de identidade e simulei a mudez durante quarenta anos, andei isolado, escondido, para me proteger de possíveis vinganças. Quando a noite cai, as vozes do passado se erguem contra mim e me torturam (*ACP*: 323).

If José's phases as an *assimilado* start from Delfina's suggestion, she also becomes one for being the wife of an *assimilado*. She does not assume her position with physical violence, but with arrogance and racism towards the black Mozambicans. It is Delfina's view that complements the discussion regarding assimilation and its association to representing hybridity. As McClintock points out, the gender aspect is not considered in Bhabha's work.

Instead, gender and class are eliminated from his analysis and hence "masculinity becomes an invisible norm of postcolonial discourse" (McClintock, 1995: 64). Hence, Delfina, who becomes an *assimilado* through her husband, is in a different position in comparison to the men. This applies both to the colonial context, but extends also to the forms in which she fights to improve her position.

Although Delfina's greediness and her cruelty towards her own children is underlined in Chizianes's novel, she does not seem to want to repeat the colonialist stereotypes of the African women who desire white men. Delfina herself blames her destiny on her own mother: "Por culpa da minha mãe que me fez preta e me educou a aceitar a tirania como destino de pobres e a olhar com desprezo a minha própria raça" (*ACP*: 44). Hence, the reasons for Delfina's situation are social rather than anything else. Her daughter, Maria Das Dores, also blames her mother for her suffering: "Tudo começou no dia em que o pai negro partiu para não mais voltar. Tudo começou quando a sua mãe vendeu a sua virgindade para melhorar o negócio de pão. Tudo começou com uma relação que envolvia sexo e amargura" (*Ibid*.: 27). Chiziane calls attention to the circle of abuse and the social situation caused by colonialism, which gave few opportunities to women. Maria Das Dores remembers her past in a very revealing way:

> Lembra-se de tudo, da terra e do mundo. Onde a cultura dita normas sobre homens e mulheres. Onde o dinheiro vale mais que a vida. Onde o mulato vale mais que o negro e o branco vale mais que todos eles. Onde a cor e o sexo determinam o estatuto de um ser humano. Onde o amor é abstracção poética e a vida se tece com malhas de ódio (*Ibid*.: 27).

On the other hand the women or the *assimilados* are not described as victims, but as active participants in the colonisation. Delfina confesses this openly at the end of the novel:

> Nós os assimilados remetemos o povo ao sofrimento. Facilitámos a opressão, o exílio, a deportação. O povo lutou, resistiu e a terra é livre. Quando tudo estava pronto assaltamos de novo o comando. São os nossos filhos, nós, os assimilados, que lideram a vida com o saber e a língua dos marinheiros (*ACP*: 332).

Delfina and her mother adopt completely the view of the Portuguese regarding the Africans, as her mother states regarding her own and Delfina's racist comments: "Palavras comuns na boca dos marinheiros. Que os próprios negros adoptam como verdades inquestionáveis. As frases ouvidas ganham forma de verdade" (*Ibid*.: 91). This can be seen as a confirmation of how

colonialism reaches the identities of the colonised, in the sense that Stuart Hall (1994: 394) has discussed in terms of identity:

> The ways in which black people, black experiences, were positioned and subject-ed in the dominant regimes of representation were the effects of a critical exercise of cultural power and normalisation. Not only, in Said's 'Orientalist' sense, were we constructed as different and other, within the categories of knowledge of the West by those regimes. They had the power to make us see and experience ourselves as 'Other'.

If Hall refers to colonialist literature, it is the same discourse that is heard in the conversations of the sailors. At many points throughout the novel the characters lament that they were born black. This lamentation is a result of colonialism and a society in which skin colour defines the possibilities of the people by constructing a colour barrier.

One of the main reasons for the problems of women is their position regarding men. Delfina describes her marriage with José:

> Delfina e José vivem um amor maravilhoso, único.
> Para o homem, a lua-de-mel é a tomada de posse de um corpo já conhecido como legítimo proprietário. Os beijos e abraços anteriores eram de crédito, dívidas, empréstimo. Para as mulheres é a inauguração do estatuto de serva. Agora traz-me café, agora a sopa, agora engoma a minha roupa. E ela sobe, amorosamente, ao seu trono de servidão, rainha de espinhos (*ACP*: 111).

In Chiziane's novel the relationship between men and women is deeply influenced by colonialism, as is visible in Delfina's and José's phases. However, although colonialism appears as a source of social imbalance, the traditional relationships are not seen nostalgically either. An alternative to the social organisation and gender relations is brought up in myths. Although it is impossible to know how much colonialism has influenced gender relations, it could be argued that it has also partially left legacies in the strict gender roles and heteronormativity, as Rothwell (2004: 134) has pointed out. Hence, while the myths seem to question the relationship between men and women in general, it can also be seen as deconstructing the Western (Christian) views regarding gender roles.

The myths can also be seen in the context of gender relations and women's experience of colonialism. As McClintock (1995: 31) argues:

> Symbolically reduced, in male eyes, to the space on which male contests are waged, women experience particular difficulties laying claim to alternative genealogies and alternative narratives of origin and naming. Linked symbolically to the land, women are relegated to a realm beyond history and thus bear a particularly vexed relation to narratives of historical change and political effect. Even more importantly, women

are figured as property belonging to men and hence as lying, by definition, outside the male contests over land, money and political power.

While the myths Chiziane includes in her novel, separately from the rest of the narration, can be seen in context of the difficulties of the female characters and the way men cause these difficulties, writing them can also be extended to the writing itself. Chiziane offers several slightly different narratives of origin which differ from the formal history (of men), and could perhaps also be seen as pointing to the way the national narrative excludes the specific experiences of (different) women in society. This same myth, or better, another version of it, is told in Couto's story "Lenda de Namarói" (1994), there described as being inspired by an account of a wife of Namarói's régulo and placed in Mount Namuli. Here, again, the intertextuality in Mozambican literature includes also myths and stories of oral origin.

The various myths regarding the coexistence of men and women draw attention to both the role of women, as well as to the double oppression, in being first abused by men in general and then, particularly by the Portuguese – on all of the levels that Delfina's phases tell of. Moreover, bringing up these narratives is also a form of questioning the silencing of these myths after colonialism. The novel's main story is cut through by four different versions of the first encounter between the two sexes, and in all of them the women end up loosing their liberties as a result of allowing men access to their world. The women appear as always longing for the peaceful state they were living in before the men started to rule them.

> No princípio dos princípios, o mundo era só de mulheres. Elas lavravam, caçavam, construíam e a vida florescia. Os seres humanos, como a flora, nasciam do solo. [...] Um dia, uma das mulheres caçou um ser estranho. Parecia gente, mas não tinha mamas. Tinha cabelo no queixo e, contrariamente aos outros bichos, tinha uma cauda curta à frente e não atrás. [...] Passado um tempo, um filho nasceu.
> O animal foi ao seu reino e falou da sua descoberta. [...] Os homens vieram, colonizaram todas as mulheres e instalaram-se como senhores. [...] Recebidos com amor, roubaram o poder às mulheres e por isso foram condenados a caçar cada vez mais longe e a trabalhar cada vez mais para sustentá-las. [...]
> [...] Foi assim com os marinheiros. Recebidos com amor, acabaram senhores (*ACP*: 270-271).

The conquest of women by men is in parallel to the conquest of the Mozambicans by the Portuguese. This way, the women are doubly conquered – originally by men and then later by the Portuguese (men). Regarding identity, Hall, in dialogue with Laclau, expresses the violent hierarchy present in terms of marked and unmarked terms. Unmarked terms, such as white and man are the 'standard' of which, for example, black and woman are exceptions (Laclau 1990

apud Hall, 1996: 5). The women are then always an exception, easily forgotten when the focus is on the (white) men. On a wider scale, which also affects postcolonial studies, the (black) colonised women remain in the shadow of the colonised men (Loomba 1998: 163).

The excerpt above, and the other myths in the novel also raise other questions. They question the Christian view on the birth of the human being, and give the women a different role than they have in the Bible. As Rothwell (2004: 140) interprets Couto's "Lenda de Namarói", "[t]he difference between this version of genesis and its biblical equivalent is that there is no need for god because women have always existed. God is necessary in order to secure male primacy, in order to explain how, on Earth, Adam preceded Eve". While Couto's representations of women is different from that of Chiziane's, the women in Chiziane's novels too maintain a peaceful coexistence, and the balance is disturbed only when men come along. This can be seen in terms of suggesting an another approach towards gender relations and the position of women, which would be an alternative background for the theories regarding women. Here, then, women are not seen as victims, but instead they are given responsibility regarding their own position. And perhaps more importantly, their position as victims is not their original position, but an exception from the original situation. It is, however, interesting to point out that in Couto's story, the men do not completely destroy the earlier organisation, but just create an illusion of having as much power as the women. Ultimately, the myths in Chiziane's novel can also be seen through the concepts of community and transgression as Noa (2010) has discussed, whereby the change in the social order leads to punishment – in this case the women seem to be punished from that moment on all the way to the present moment. This approach can also be seen in dialogue with the biblical creation narrative. In this context, the presence of colonialism can also be seen as the creator of hybridity because it has the power to question the myths and traditions, this way causing disorder in the communities.

Colonialism also breaks the traditional roles by installing a new social order. The lack of opportunities, especially in the cities, probably has much to do with the stereotype of the sensual, sexually liberal, colonised black women. Women were using their bodies in order to survive if other means were not available. There are several examples of this in Chiziane's novel, and this is another topic which has not been discussed – that of the subaltern position of the prostitutes – although it has been referred to in literature, often from a masculine

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perspective, as in Aldino Muianga's novels, for example. Ana Deusqueira's position as a prostitute in *O Último Voo do Flamingo* is depicted in less detail than Delfina's, but she too is described as a victim of male violence. However, her position is not as complex as it does not represent the taboos related to colonialism, as Delfina or Muianga's Meledina do. Delfina conquers her white man through sex, and later on sells her own daughter's virginity to Simba. Simba is a witchdoctor, but also Delfina's lover. In return, Simba is to use his magic to improve Delfina's bread business. Delfina also sets up a brothel:

> A casa era uma passerelle de velhos colonos satisfeitos, bebendo virgindades e taças de sangue, pisando corpos vivos com botas de soldados, derrubando a moral à força do ouro. E as raparigas recebiam depois umas parcas moedas, um cabaz de bacalhau e uma garrafa de vinho inquinado, das mãos de Delfina (*ACP*: 269).

Prostitution can be seen as a disturbing and provocative metaphor for Mozambican society: first Delfina is selling herself, and later she passes this role on to younger women. The circle of prostitution (and hence, exploitation) seems difficult to break. Delfina's brothel can also be read as a reference to the continuous, unequal and abusive relationship between the Portuguese and the Mozambicans, which continues after independence too and in which the *assimilados* have an important role. The Mozambicans, represented by the young girls, do not gain much from this relationship. The *assimilados,* represented by Delfina, first inferior to the Portuguese, appropriate their attitudes after the Portuguese leave the country and follow their example by abusing the poorest in society. Here, again, a dialogue with Noémia de Sousa could be further explored from the problematic (in her work too) idea of motherhood: "De Sousa's representation of Mother Africa [in *Sangue Negro*] as a 'black mother' actually entails a hybrid figuration positioned between a residual colonial exoticism, the tropes of erotic desire for the black mother, and an antiassimilationist anticolonialism, marked by the mestiça daughter's cultural reclamation of her blackness" (Owen 2007: 52). Delfina, too, is a very complex figure, while her mixed-race daughter questions her mother's views of race, and 'whitening' the family.

As a result of these unequal and complex relations, the women give birth to the new mixed race. Although it is often mentioned that having children with white men is an attempt to improve the race, to 'erase' the blackness, it is also a way for mothers to try to save their children from the misery caused by their own blackness. In a racially divided society, those of

mixed-race are in a better position than the black people – they have better opportunities. The generation of Delfina's children is already different from that of their parents and represent hope for a society where all colours can live together in a more equal way. While Delfina's and her mother's generation grew up in the colonialist system, adopting much of the colonialist's view of them, the generation of Delfina's children is already different. It seems that they are the generation that can achieve a balance between past colonialism and new freedom. They are the new race that Delfina gave birth to. It could be said that for them, colonialism and its consequences are part of their identities, but they have not completely adopted the colonial view of their society or of skin colour.

3.5.3 Women and race: new approaches and anticipating the future

In *O Alegre Canto da Perdiz* the question of skin colour is specifically related to women in the sense that they are presented as the creators of the new race, whose creation is related to colonialism, but as will be seen, also represents change and new possibilities. Although the men have their role in the process, the novel emphasises motherhood and womanhood. This issue has been discussed, but mainly by men, and rarely in Mozambique, not least because the discussions regarding skin colour take place on an informal level. These questions have, however, a strong presence even in other parts of the country, not only Zambezia, and, it could be argued, have a rather established significance. Chiziane (2012) argues that the racial conflict has remained silenced both in general discussions and in literature – and not only in Mozambique, since many Brazilian readers have found her discussion of it interesting. It could be argued that race is still related to power relations in the country, and it is also related to gender questions. Since the established racism has prevailed with the end of colonialism, the rest is not being discussed critically – and perhaps for that reason, literature can be an interesting tool for calling attention to these questions.

As discussed earlier, Fanon has expressed his own experiences in his *Peau noire, masques blanques* (1952): he (and any black person) is constantly defined by his skin colour, which in turn makes the person responsible for their body, race and ancestors. The black people are not only black, but they are black in the eyes of the white – they exist in two systems at the same time. Fanon, referring to his own situation in France, says that the white

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world (the same applies to white men) was the only considerable, serious world into which black people did not have access. Unlike other discriminated people, such as the Jewish, the black people are always overdetermined by their skin colour (Fanon, 1975: 122, 126-127). The same thing happens to the characters of Chiziane's novel: their skin colour defines their position. However, Fanon or Bhabha do not pay much attention to the specific situation of women – although much of what they say can apply to both men and women. Whereas it is common to point out that the women are doubly oppressed, they are seen as exclusively holding the position of victim.

While women surely had even fewer possibilities to study and work than men, some of them had the opportunity to improve their lives by getting involved with the coloniser. Although this situation is often described as the white men abusing the black women, and many of the mixed-race children were born as a result of rape, some of the women were probably able to improve their life conditions by deliberately having children with white men. This obviously does not diminish the oppressive and unequal nature of these relations. This situation already puts the women and men in a different position in relation to the coloniser, which is of interest when analysing Delfina's phases. This is also referred to by McClintock (1995: 6): "[C]olonized women, before the intrusions of imperial rule, were invariably disadvantaged within their societies, in ways that gave the colonial reordering of their sexual and economic labor very different outcomes from those of colonized men". Hence, the results of the influence of colonialism on women are most of the time related to their earlier position in society.

White skin, then, represents power and wealth in the colonial society – and a way out from poverty for some women, as Delfina's mothers' comment reveals: "– Minha Delfina, esperava que me dissesses: tenho um amante branco! Olha que eu aceitaria, pois na nossa mesa não faltariam migalhas de vinho, bacalhau e azeitona. Agora, um condenado?" (*ACP*: 95). Delfina desperately wants to change her destination defined by her blackness. Still, she cannot be like the white: although she is different from most of the black Mozambicans, and eventually close to the whites – almost like them – her otherness is always present. According to Bhabha (1994: 45) this is the area where the ambivalence of colonial discourse regarding identity manifests itself: "It is not the colonialist Self or the colonised Other, but the disturbing

distance in-between that constitutes the colonial otherness – the white man's artifice on the black man's body". It can also be said that racial identity during the time of colonialism is not as clear as it appears – of which Delfina's story is an example. The situation is further complicated by the mixed-race population in the colonies, as discussed in Chiziane's novel.

Delfina's hatred towards her own race is striking. She blames her difficulties on having been born black. Here skin colour defines everything from eating habits to religion and to the language that a person speaks. All the phases of her life are related to sex: first she is a prostitute for the sailors that arrive in Mozambique. Then she gets married after falling in love with José – but only to let the flame of the passion die. After that she moves on to the laps of the Portuguese man. And at last, after Soares abandons her, she sets up the brothel. Delfina explains to Maria das Dores her life with different men:

> Tive todos os homens do mundo. Dois maridos, muitos amantes, quatro filhos, um prostíbulo e muito dinheiro. O José, o teu pai negro, foi a instituição conjugal com que me afirmei aos olhos da sociedade. O Soares, teu padrasto branco, foi a minha instituição financeira. O Simba, esse belo negro, foi minha instituição sexual, o meu outro eu de grandezas imaginárias, que me deixou para ser teu marido (*ACP*: 44).

Her quest for an improved social position can also be seen as a way of liberating herself from the traditional position the society offered to women, and not only being accepted by – or as – white people.

Delfina's story can be read as an example of the idea of the black woman symbolising the colony – and the white men's lust for the black woman symbolises the colonisation. Hence, it repeats an idea of a feminised land as a terrain for the white men to explore, which is further related to concepts of private property and "possessive individualism", which McClintock relates to Enlightenment thought, arguing that "[t]he knowledge of the unknown land was mapped as a metaphysics of gender violence" (McClintock, 1995: 23). Delfina's character is also very close to the stereotypes of black women as an "icon of sexuality in general" (Loomba, 1998: 160). Loomba (*Ibid*.: 158) also mentions that the coloniser saw sexuality as a sign of the black people's immorality and there was an idea that black women always wanted white men. This is also brought up in McClintock's (1995: 22-23) discussion: the white men were warned of the aggressively sexual black women, considered as representing "sexual aberrations and excess". In Delfina's story many of these characteristics are expressed too – Chiziane has constructed the stereotype, but

writes the story from the black woman's perspective. These stories are often viewed from the point of view of the white men, which puts the women in the position of simple victims. However, as Delfina puts it: "As mulheres negras que casam com brancos sobem na vida. Comem bacalhau e azeitonas, tomam chá com açúcar, comem pão com manteiga e marmelada" (*ACP*: 78). Delfina's story reveals this side of the relationships between the white men and black women, and she uses the stereotypes regarding black women as a tool in her aim for a better life.

It is interesting to consider here what Fanon writes about black women who seek the company of white men in order to improve their lives. He verbally attacks Mayotte Capécia, a Martinican writer who is in a relationship with a white French man and discusses her preference for white men in her autobiographical novel. Fanon says that Capécia accepts anything from this man in exchange for a bit of whiteness. Fanon also refers to black women's willingness to have children with a white man, in order to whiten the race (Fanon, 1975: 56). Fanon's attitude towards women has been widely criticised, and it can be said that his views can represent the traditional views on the anti-colonial struggle and liberation. Although, as Sharpley-Whiting (1998) points out, Fanon has been misjudged as well – one can argue that his and others' perspectives can definitely be complemented by new perspectives regarding women and their experiences of colonialism. This discussion is interesting, for Capécia is seen as a victim in the name of feminism – the feminist readings end up limiting her autonomy more severely than Fanon: "In their logic, the only way a colonized black woman would ever acquiesce emotionally/sexually her oppressor was under extreme economic duress; it becomes unfathomable that a black woman would desire, 'love,', or 'sleep with the enemy,' so to speak" (Sharpley-Whiting, 1998: 39). Although it would be interesting to build a wider dialogue between Fanon's comments, the feminist response and Delfina's character, the above quote is already enough to point to both the difficulties of some feminist approaches, and even more importantly, the complexity of Delfina's character.

This theme is constantly repeated in Chiziane's novel. When Delfina presents José to her mother, she is angry: "– E tu, Delfina, escolhes o caminho do sofrimento. Vais casar com um preto, parir mais pretos e mais desgraças. Com tantos brancos que te querem bem. Não custa nada eliminar a tua raça para ganhar liberdade" (*ACP*: 101). Delfina eventually leaves

José, which also signifies that her black children lose their father and become subjects of oppression on the part of their own mother. When Maria Das Dores is asked about her mother, she replies:

> – No dia em que o pai negro partiu, a minha mãe não chorou. Embriagou-se. No dia
> em que o meu pai branco partiu, a mãe chorou e desmaiou.
> – E como era a tua mãe?
> – Muito bonita. Amava os brancos. Ela queria ser branca (*Ibid.*: 30).

The Manichean dichotomy is brought up – and questioned – in *O Alegre Canto da Perdiz*. Black is the opposite of white – in order to build the colonial hierarchy and to establish superiority the coloniser needs the Other too. As JanMohamed (1995: 20) puts it: "This enforced recognition from the other in fact amounts to European's narcissistic self-recognition since the native, who is considered too degraded and inhuman to be credited with any subjectivity, is cast as no more than a recipient of the negative elements of the self that the European projects on to him". JanMohamed (*Ibid.*: 19) presents the dichotomy as a fixed opposition between the [European] self and the other. Similarly, Mbembe (2001: 2) points out how Europe has a long tradition of seeing itself through the "absolute otherness of Africa". For him, this invention – imaginary signification – not only serves for the West to portray itself, but it is also related to the "exclusionary and brutal practices towards others" (*Idem*). However, the racism in the novel is expressed by Delfina, which questions the fixed oppositions and points to seldom discussed continuities of colonialism, even though the racism as such doesn't change. Her white partner is shocked by her racism towards her own children. Delfina, herself being colonised, considers herself at the same time to be superior to the other Mozambicans.

The position of Delfina is the most ambivalent in the novel. She represents both the stereotype of the sensual black African woman and a Mozambican who has adopted the coloniser's view on the black people. She is aware of her sensuality in comparison to the white women, who she considers as "santas e frias como os peixes" (*ACP*: 187). She also uses her sensuality in order to become as 'white' as possible:

> – O meu estatuto é maior a partir de agora! Mãe de mulata. Concubina de um branco.
> Não mais morrerei à míngua, com esta filha que é a minha segurança. Erguerei esta
> criatura como uma bandeira branca, a acenar aos marinheiros e a gritar: sou vossa!
> Juntei o meu sangue ao vosso na construção da nova raça. Eu te amei, marinheiro,
> cumpri a minha promessa, eis aqui o teu filho. Eternizei a tua passagem por esta

terra. Trouxe alegria ao coração da minha negra mãe. Segurança para a velhice do meu pai (*Ibid.*: 186).

Delfina considers herself almost white: "– Já sou quase uma branca, com os cremes que uso. Vivo como os brancos, como comida de branco e já falo bom português" (*Ibid*.: 225). She tells the Portuguese Soares that she is not black anymore, and that black people are nothing. Her opinions shock Soares who tells her that "Amei-te por seres negra e não por seres imitação de uma branca. Esposa branca tive eu. Muito branca, muito loira, com a pele tão branca como trigo nos campos" (*Ibid*.: 229).

In the relationship of Soares and Delfina the ambivalence and hybridity become visible. The power relations are not as fixed as it appears when colonialism is analysed through the Manichean dichotomies. Soares, the coloniser, wants Delfina to treat her children equally and defends the black Mozambicans when Delfina despises them. At the same time, he is the coloniser attracted by the sensuality of the exotic black woman. Delfina, the black colonised, has adopted the racism of the colonialism and considers the locals as the Other, as a negation of all positive aspects she associates with the white people. As seen above, Homi Bhabha has brought attention to this kind of situation where the identities of the colonised and coloniser overlap creating hybridity. As Loomba (1998: 104-105) points out, Bhabha's analysis provides more possibilities than JanMohamed's to understand the complex nature of colonialism – and does not necessarily lead to underestimating the vast consequences of colonialism. However, this does not necessarily question the existence of the Manichean dichotomy, which is often visible in the coloniser's discourse or the power relations. Unlike Delfina, regardless of his goodness and sympathy, Soares is free to leave the country and automatically has a higher social position, which he doesn't need to struggle for. The application of the concept of Manichean dichotomy has caused criticism also, because when the dichotomy is being exposed, it is at the same time re-created (*Idem*).

The complexities of the new race are expressed in the story of Jacinta, Delfina's mixed-race daughter, who she treats better than her black daughter, Maria. Her problematic identity is similar to José's with the exception that Jacinta's situation in society is defined in a different way by her skin colour. She is – like José through assimilation – not accepted as a white and neither as a black: "Diante dos pretos chamavam-lhe branca. E não queriam brincar

com ela. Afastavam-na, falavam mal da mãe e diziam nomes feios. Diante dos brancos chamavam-lhe preta. Também corriam com ela, falavam mal da mãe e chamavam-lhe nomes feios" (*ACP*: 247). On the other hand, there are continuous references to the racial hierarchy in the novel – those of mixed-race are superior to the black Mozambicans. Jacinta is very fond of her elder sister Maria, and as a result of her mother giving her away to Simba, Jacinta takes her brothers and leaves Delfina.

By turning her back on her mother, Jacinta also abandons her world view. Jacinta marries a white man, and Zezinho, Delfina's black son, marries a white woman, reflecting a rather simplified view regarding future race relations. Delfina goes to Jacinta's wedding without an invitation and is humiliated. Jacinta asks for Maria and accuses Delfina for her problems. "Os pretos e os brancos acusam os mulatos de todos os males do mundo: criminalidade, prostituição, leviandade. Jacinta respira fundo – sou o fruto dos teus conflitos, não, não me aproximarei de ti, minha mãe" (*ACP*: 283). Zezinho also chooses a path different from his mother's: "Não sei o que magia eu tenho, mas sou o que mata de amor todas as mulheres brancas, sou belo. Casei com uma branca por amor. No nosso lar abolimos a hierarquia das raças, preto e branco comem com a mesma colher e bebem água do mesmo cântaro" (*Ibid*.: 323). Furthermore, there is another family which can be seen as representing a peaceful coexistence between the different groups. José visits a man called Lavaroupa, whose family can be seen as pointing to the future of the country:

> – A princípio tínhamos orgulho dos filhos do branco. Representavam a sobrevivência, ascensão, o pão de cada dia. Suportámos o indiano, por representar crédito na loja e acharmos piripiri de boa qualidade. Os negros? Ignorámo-los por algum tempo. Mas acabámos amando a todos por igual (*Ibid*.: 201).

These changes in the novel show how a new generation can perceive society in a new way. However, Maria's story is different: due to her mother's choices she ends up as a third wife to the witchdoctor, Simba. She runs away from the miserable marriage with her children.

At the end of the novel most of the family gets together. The country is independent and the characters express their views on their past and present. Although the different races can now live more peacefully together, colonialism did not come to an end with independence, as José expresses in a conversation with Delfina:

> O colonialismo incubou e cresceu vigorosamente. Invadiu os espaços mais secretos e corrói todos os alicerces. Já não precisa de chicote nem da espada, e hoje se veste de cruz e silêncio. Impregnou-se na pele e nos cabelos das mulheres, assíduas procuradoras da clareza epidérmica, na imitação de uma raça. [...] Trinta anos de independência e as coisas voltaram para trás. Os filhos dos assimilados ressurgem violentos e ostentam ao mundo o orgulho da sua casta. [...]
>   –Neste aspecto, Delfina, foste a pioneira. A Zambézia inteira devia erguer monumentos a mulheres como tu, que deram a sua vida e o seu sangue para o nascimento desta nova nação (*ACP*: 332-333).

Chiziane seems to point at the women showing that they also had a responsibility in the process of colonialism – and that they are the mothers of the 'colonialism' that did not end when the Portuguese left the country.

Chiziane herself has commented on the situation in an interview: "Nós tivemos um processo de libertação da terra, bem sucedido, mas o processo de libertação da mente, aí ainda está em processo. Portanto o colonialismo para mim mudou de cor, mudou de raça e mudou de lugar. Porque o colonizador era o branco, era o português, mas o colonialismo ficou connosco. Colonialistas somos nós mesmos agora" (Martins, A., 2006). She also explains that using the word 'colonialist' might not be appropriate, but that some Mozambicans are behaving in exactly the same way as the Portuguese – making fortunes while some people don't have decent living conditions (*Idem*). Chiziane seems not to give much value to independence, since it did not lead to equality, but on the other hand, she sees that the mental liberation is an ongoing process, not an impossibility.

The last episode of *O Alegre Canto da Perdiz* seems to point to the future: the people come together, discuss the past openly, admitting their roles in facilitating or supporting colonialism and also admitting their roles in maintaining the 'colonialist' system in independent Mozambique. Moreover, it is tempting to see the family here as an allegory of the country, including also the history of colonialism. It can also be seen as constructed as an allegory to the future of the nation, whereby the notion of family has been expanded by colonialism and its continuities, but has also returned to its symbolical roots at Mount Namuli. The family members, regardless of the past, are able to be together and discuss the past. There are also allusions to a future in which skin colour would not have such significance. The marriages of Delfina's children who are able to maintain equality in their families although Jacinta's husband and Zezinho's wife are white point to this. This also reflects a change from both the white and the black populations, since the motivations for the relationship are very

different from those of Delfina's and Soares' relationship. This kind of a change can also be read as a step towards eliminating the remaining colonialism in Mozambican society. In this way the family in *O Alegre Canto da Perdiz* represents the different phases of Mozambique – and even the possible future of the country.

Chiziane's novel can be read against the wider background of coloniality. When discussing social classes and their relationship with the coloniality of power, Quijano argues that the significance skin colour has was established through colonialism and modernity. New social identities were established and these were defined by the skin colour or race of the colonised – and these markers still exist. This perspective on race and social classification is, as Quijano suggests, not only a European view, but also present in the societies that were exposed to the European hegemony. This process, which started in America, later became a worldwide system of racial classification, whereby skin colour defines the person's social class (Quijano, 2009: 74-75, 107-108). Chiziane's novel brings up this aspect of Mozambican society, especially in terms of social relations, which furthermore questions the narrative of national unity and equality. However, it is not only limited to racism in the sense Chiziane discusses, but also to the position the foreigners have in the country. This is slightly visible in the character of Soares, but in Chiziane's novel the present time is discussed from the perspective of Mozambicans (regardless of their skin colour), which could be seen as pointing to the idea that the key towards changing the situation lies with them.

The coloniality and traces of the trauma of colonialism still affect Mozambican society. However, there are some expressions of hope too, which can be discussed through the concept of sociology of emergences, widening the possible future experiences, and substituting the empty space seen as the future from the perspective of linear time (Santos, 2006: 108). In this novel this emerges from the representation of the present moment, which, taking into account the richness and diversity of social experiences, can also provide another perspective towards the future: "Enquanto a sociologia das ausências amplia o presente, juntado ao real existente o que dele foi subtraído pela razão metonímica, a sociologia das emergências amplia o presente, juntado ao real amplo as possibilidades e expectativas futuras que ele comporta" (*Ibid*.: 109). Chiziane seems to summarise the novel's contribution to this discussion in the following excerpt:

> Colocámos os pretos e os brancos na batalha das raças, mas eles tanto se bateram até que se beijaram. E se apaixonaram pela bravura de um e outro. Acabaram casados, numa só paixão, formando uma só família. Mataram-se, queimaram-se, até se tornarem o mesmo pó que a chuva molha e os artistas usam para esculpir monumentos da eternidade. No final desta guerra seremos um. Esses filhos metade pretos, metade brancos, metade asiáticos, serão os fósseis a partir dos quais se compreenderá a nossa História. Nas próximas gerações as raças se amarão, sem ódio nem raivas, inspiradas no nosso exemplo. [...] Terá chegado o momento de inventar novas raças e recriar novas humanidades. Os pretos, os brancos e seus mulatos deverão expurgar ódios, raivas e ressentimentos que ainda restem (*ACP*: 334).

Chiziane appears to bring up a possibility of societies where skin colour would not have such social significance. At the same time she refers to the violent way in which the different races were brought together – peaceful coexistence will be a result of a long fight, and possible only if the different races are willing to learn from the past and leave hatred aside. Significantly, in the last chapter of the novel there is an image of a mother with a newborn baby: "Segurar um bebé é segurar um mundo. Embalar um bebé é embalar o futuro com braços de mulher" (*Ibid*.: 336).

3.5.4 *O Alegre Canto da Perdiz*: conclusions

In terms of decolonisation Chiziane's novel too questions simplistic approaches regarding colonialism. Often the discussion regarding colonialism has been defined through the two opposing sides: the white coloniser and the black colonised. However, by bringing up the situation of the mixed-race population in Mozambique and of the Mozambican women who are willing to go very far in order to have children with the white men, Chiziane also questions the assumed fixity of the colonial relationships. This happens on various levels: first of all, some of the colonised do adopt the views of the coloniser and start seeing themselves and others through the colonialist view on themselves. They adopt the racism and discrimination and try their best to resemble the coloniser. For the women, one way to get closer to the coloniser was to have mixed-race children and in that way improve their social status – and gain distance to the other colonised people. Another example of this resemblance is the assimilation process expressed in José's story. Moreover, the novel brings up the perspective of women – although a very specific and not general one – within the history of colonialism and its continuities.

By expressing the racial hierarchy in which the mixed-race population is superior to the black and inferior to the white, Chiziane is able to express the racism within Mozambican society. Although colonialism and the arrival of the 'sailors' are the origin of the construction of the racial hierarchy, the Mozambicans themselves adopt this hierarchy – and racism is a way to establish a superior position in society. Much of Chiziane's criticism goes in that direction. Although during the novel most of the events take place during colonialism, the last episode happens 30 years after independence, and still at this time there are many references to the continuous unequal relations between the Mozambicans. Chiziane herself sees that although the country is now free, mentalities have not still been liberated, which has led to a new form of colonialism (Martins, A., 2006).

This can be seen as an example of the discussion regarding the anticipation of the future through literary means: it gives space to utopian thoughts that are not verified by the norms of science, but can still be powerful and permit the discussion of issues that in other forms seem too difficult to grasp and seem to escape a critical assessment based on the cornerstones of Western thought. Here, the question of memory is relevant too, since discussing it is a discussion related to future too, as Aleida Assmann & Linda Shortt (2012: 13) mention. However, in order for these literary discussions to gain more significance in the current situation, where written words don't have the same weight as they had during the independence fight, a new approach could be considered. The literature discussed here represents the knowledges and experiences that are being disregarded: "Os outros saberes, não científicos nem filosóficos, e, sobretudo, os saberes exteriores ao cânone ocidental, continuaram até hoje em grande medida fora do debate" (Santos, 2006: 90).

3.6 Decolonisation in *Ualalapi*, *O Último Voo do Flamingo*, *As Duas Sombras do Rio* and *O Alegre Canto da Perdiz*

While the differences between these novels are visible in the analyses, it is also useful to consider their similarities. Although these novels cannot be considered as representing the all current Mozambican novels, they discuss themes that are present in other novels too – in their

own production, but also in the work of other Mozambican writers. It is also useful to keep in mind that while here some 'trends' are brought up, it cannot be said that there is one specific trend or direction in Mozambican literature (or any), as the differences between the authors and their works discussed show.

It is interesting that these novels take place outside the capital, which can be seen as reflecting a search for new approaches provided by different cultures, myths and traditions. Moreover, if literature is seen together with 'narrating the nation', one can argue that it can be a powerful tool in deconstructing the position of Maputo to some extent, and bringing up other forms of being Mozambican as valid as any other. As Chiziane (2012) mentions, there are still plenty of cultures to be discussed – and she points out that the people who have 'found' themselves in her novels have been delighted. This shift of perspective can have many reasons, a practical one being the end of the civil war, which permits easier travel around the country. The others may be related to a necessity to seek new topics and approaches, which changing the location of the events of the novels permits. Moreover, including other locations also allows for interesting forms of intercultural dialogue.

This shift can also be seen in terms of cultural and epistemological diversity. Unlike in the earlier phase discussed above, there is no longer a request for a singular form of being Mozambican. Clearly, this is visible in the role of literature, which is no longer in the service of a revolution, but rather is reflecting on the current situation and the historical events that have led to it. In this sense, as was discussed in the context of Ba Ka Khosa's and Chiziane's novels, memory is a constant theme. It is also present in novels such as Couto's and Borges Coelho's, which principally discuss the recent past – through the characters and their past experiences. In this sense, the past becomes an important factor for the present, and for the future too.

The interest demonstrated towards the past is visible in the introduction of myths from different areas of the country, which aren't always compatible. While Chiziane brings up the myths regarding the role of the women, Couto discusses the invention of them, Ba Ka Khosa deconstructs the generalised myth regarding Ngungunhane, and Borges Coelho brings up a specific myth of a specific location. This reveals that they are not as uniform as might be expected. Through the novels it can also be seen that epistemological diversity is present, not

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only in terms of myths, but also topics such as nature and religion. These are often emphasised by discussing them together with the epistemologies and approaches considered as continuities of colonialism, in this way further building a dialogue. It could be said that the writers are directing their attention to knowledges that are not new, but rather revealing them – and participating in making them respond to current necessities. This can be seen together with the social changes: diversity is possible since the strict views that both colonialism and the socialist phase represented have receded. This, however, has not meant that in practice there is no inequality or negative attitudes towards the 'tradition', still often seen as the opposite of 'modern'.

The glimpses of multiple rationalities represented in the novels question the view of uniformity and singular views regarding epistemologies established earlier by colonial standards and later by socialist standards. Both approaches excluded diversity, and the models of knowledge are legitimised through Western concepts. Moreover, the current process of globalisation and capitalism is questioned by seeking alternative approaches that would not rely on Western concepts. Especially in the novels of Couto and Borges Coelho there are references to questioning capitalism through pointing to alternative views regarding nature and its resources. This can also be seen as a form of showing that the so-called traditional knowledges are not 'stagnated', but can also be used in discussing current – and global – issues. In all of the novels discussed, a certain anxiety about the future is visible – even when the novels do not directly point to it. This clearly stems from current issues: corruption, inequality and poaching, for example. There is also a clear direction towards discussing globalisation, through which colonialism and its continuities are present too.

What cannot be detected, however, is the approach that has been discussed here as the 'traditional literary decolonisation', represented by Ngugi in its most radical form, but discussed by other writers and researchers too. The distance from the theories regarding decolonisation and the types of novels that emerged in their context is also visible in the writers' approach to the colonial past. An aspect that seems to be shared with the writers and the novels discussed here is that of avoiding dichotomous settings. The cultural consequences of colonialism are discussed, but also included and appropriated as a legitimate part of Mozambican culture, at the same time deconstructing the hierarchy between the different

cultural heritages – and languages too. Even while discussing the so-called tradition, hybridity is often present. This can be seen as a result of a historical moment whereby colonialism can be discussed from some distance, differently from the earlier phases of independent Mozambique. This aspect also covers themes such as the approach towards oral tradition in written literature, and the language question too. As Fátima Mendonça (2011: 12-13) argues, regarding the literature written by the more recent generations of writers: "[...] Parece que o percurso temático – e, a um outro nível, o discursivo – desta literatura se orienta no sentido da transformação da natureza do diálogo com o passado colonial, de tal modo que os seus elementos estruturantes se vão naturalizando ou 'indigenizando'".

In terms of genre the question of the novel has not caused heated discussion, although it has been brought up. There has been a certain ambiguity in terms of separating novels and short stories, as seen above. In terms of narrative techniques an emphasis on not focusing on one principal character and discussing communities or larger number of people is present, but while Ngugi brings this approach up as a form of avoiding the tradition of individualism in the European novel, it could be argued that here it emerges for different reasons. As discussed in the context of Ba Ka Khosa's novel, it can be seen as resulting from contemplating past events and offering as many perspectives as possible, which further emphasises how the events are or were experienced in multiple ways and also left multiple marks – or memories – on those involved. While there isn't radical experimentation in terms of narrative techniques or in terms of the role of the characters, there are elements that are familiar from other literatures too – mostly modern and postmodern. Ba Ka Khosa and Borges Coelho in particular bring up the difficulty of creating cohesive narratives regarding the past, and their novels and Couto's pay attention to the narration. In Chiziane's work there is an emphasis on telling stories, but at the same time it does not focus on writing down oral narratives, and she includes separate texts as myths in her novel, for example, which can be seen as a form of intertextuality. Intertextuality is present in the other novels too. The question of the novel is also present in the disinterest towards discussing the genre. It is not problematised as an originally Western form – and perhaps it never was seen as one, either. It is seen from a more practical perspective: it permits a more developed narration than a short story.

The role of the (African) writer has also been deconstructed in the sense that the writers don't consider that they have a specific task simply by being African writers. Rather, they see their task from an individual perspective, and the possible social consequences of their writings is not something they consider while working. As was seen, there are differences in the approaches of the writers, Couto perhaps pointing more to the social responsibility of the writer and Borges Coelho denying it, while Ba Ka Khosa and Chiziane remain in the middle. It can be argued that the views of Ngugi and Achebe, while obviously a result of a different context and political and social situation, were quite close to the problematic generalised views regarding African writers that Jameson and later postcolonial theorists then adopted. While the literary history of Mozambique is different and hence similar approaches weren't common there, it can still be pointed out that the approach of these writers can be seen as deconstructing the stereotype of an African writer.

However, all of the novels discussed can be seen as taking part in a social discussion, which is probably inevitable with the topics chosen – although it should be also asked whether there are topics that would not be in a dialogue with the surrounding society. This doesn't, however, mean that the writers would be especially committed to social changes. Chiziane (2012), for example, denies thinking about the readers while writing, and neither does she consider that she can influence society, nor the position of the women through her writing – or at least she doesn't see her role as such. Similar attitudes were brought up by Ba Ka Khosa (2012) and Borges Coelho (2012) too. This approach can also be seen as shift in terms of the role of intellectuals and deconstructing social hierarchy. In terms of content, it becomes visible that the history of colonialism has become 'decentralised' and other issues – and encounters – have taken a central role. Simultaneously, the current situation is seen as a result of globalisation, but at the same time the current leaders of the country are discussed too. The change from a freedom fighter to a corrupted politician is brought up especially in *O Último Voo do Flamingo*, but it can also be seen in *As Duas Sombras do Rio*, although more subtly. This, together with emphasising the cultural and epistemological diversity can be seen as taking distance from the ideas of the socialist phase. It also points to the disappointment related both to the civil war and the role the so-called ordinary people have in globalisation – as its victims.

All the novels seem to question the earlier narratives of the history of Mozambique, both the one established through colonialism and the one established by the process of revolution. The diversity of history is brought up at the same time questioning coherent and simplified narratives. While Ba Ka Khosa questions the 'official' narratives regarding Ngungunhane, Chiziane brings up the histories of the women and the intimate experiences of colonialism. Borges Coelho shows how random the presence of the Portuguese was in some locations in Mozambique while in Couto's novel there are few references to colonialism and more references to deconstructing the narrative built by FRELIMO by showing the corruptness of the current leaders. This could be seen as a process of decolonisation as deconstructing the centrality of colonialism, and also the dichotomous view offered by FRELIMO. While this can be seen as a form of (literary) decolonisation, it can also be seen in the context of wider literary discussions and deconstructing so-called grand narratives by showing that there are no singular and coherent narratives that would not be based on exclusions and silences.

In terms of language the approaches are diverse, as in any literature. While earlier it was common to copy the forms of speaking of those who didn't speak Portuguese very well, currently the language question is rather pacific and other solutions have been found to show the distance between European and Mozambican Portuguese – of which the most obvious example would be Mia Couto's language use. There is not such a necessity to quickly resolve the language issue and it is seen as a process. Even new approaches can be traced. Chiziane's view adds an interesting perspective to the discussion regarding the cultural barriers and the role of languages in them, and suggests a non-dichotomous approach which recognises the existence of the barrier, but also suggests that it can be partially overcome. This way the process as such becomes an act of intercultural translation, and even though the process doesn't guarantee a complete translation, the result is still valuable (Chiziane, 2012). Santos (2009: 53) also refers to elements that cannot be translated – this is part of the intercultural translation. When discussing the biography of the healer, *Por Quem Vibram os Tambores do Além?*, Chiziane considers that much is left out due to the language question, arguing that languages are related to cultural universes. However, her example demonstrates the possibilities of crossing the barriers too. The healer speaks some Portuguese and more than

one African language, including Swahili. Chiziane explains that through effort, and sometimes with a help of a translator or interpreter, they were able to understand each other, concluding that maybe 60% of the reality becomes understandable, the rest staying behind the linguistic and cultural barrier (Martins & Caldeira, 2011).

The role of oral tradition is not as accentuated as it was earlier. It seems that there has been a shift towards more cohesive narratives in terms of language and oral tradition, which is visible in Chiziane's work, in which there are few quotes from the oral tradition in national languages, and in Couto's work, where the language has become simpler and there is no longer a need for a glossary. Moreover, in the younger writers' work there is a greater emphasis on writing in Mozambican Portuguese and including local, urban expressions in the text. However, while the language is less aggressive, the references to myths and co-existing world views still feature prominently. Perhaps there is more of a belief in the capabilities of the Portuguese language in transmitting these knowledges, now that it has been experimented with in other ways. This would point to the change of the role of language too.

4 FINAL REMARKS

While the results of the literary analyses were summed up above, it may be useful to review the topics that were brought up in the first part of the thesis in light of the discussion that followed. In the first subchapter decolonisation was considered from the following perspectives: the question of the novel, the question of social commitment and the role of African writers, and the question of language in African literatures. The question of the novel, as was discussed, is related to the problematic idea of origins. It is apparent that the Mozambican writers, instead of focusing on the origin of the concept, have liberated it from the Western context: it is used when it best serves their purposes. This is, as was pointed out, also related to the history of Mozambican literature, which further shows how not all African countries or writers struggled or struggle with questions similar to those raised by Ngugi. It is, however, necessary to point out that the forces related to the marketing of literature and the role of the publishing houses have had their share in establishing the position of the 'Mozambican novel'.

The question of social commitment was discussed earlier in detail: the writers do not consider themselves to have social responsibility, which is also related to the deconstruction of certain social hierarchies. Writers rarely consider themselves teachers of their people, but rather as intervenients in public discussion by bringing up new perspectives and alternatives. However, if considered from the perspective of the literary field and especially from the perspective of readers, the picture might become different. Regardless of how the writers see their position, it is not in their hands to decide how their work is received or even what kind of roles the reader attributes to the writer. In this sense, it could be argued, the social role of the writer has not been completely deconstructed. This is shown by the popularity of the Mozambican writers and the way they are invited to discuss matters that are not strictly related to literature; Mia Couto is an excellent example of this. It could be suggested, that there has also been a general shift from considering writers as intellectuals or social activists to seeing writers as celebrities.

It is useful to separate the writers from their work: the kind of social discussion their work may cause or participate in should not be seen in terms of the writers' possible

expectations or objectives. While that may seem obvious, from Ngugi's texts it is possible to get an impression of a writer in control of the results of his work: he seems to know how his novels 'work' in the society and in the group he considers his principal audience. However, the social impact is a result of how the texts resonate with the readers and how they interpret them from their perspective. This is an approach that can be extended to research. While the novels obviously guide the analysis in terms of topics, they are made to participate in wider discussions by the reader/researcher. The interpretations do not necessarily coincide with the possible intentions or objectives of the writer, but might as well; it is not relevant. What this approach suggests is that the discussion regarding decolonisation gains much from taking into account the reader and the literary field. It could be suggested that the earlier theories of decolonisation continued the discussion regarding the role of literature in social changes initiated by figures such as Fanon and Cabral, which has complemented the debate on the relationship between literature and society.

What was revealed in this work, is that literature can have a role in discussing aspects of society that are difficult to bring up through formal language use. In this sense, literature has a social role in introducing alternative narratives and memories. It can be seen as a platform for dreaming of a future and discussing multiple perspectives towards it. It is interesting to take a look at what kinds of futures the novels discussed may be seen as anticipating: in general, it seems that there is a search for diversifying the views regarding the past, but also dismantling the continuities of colonialism and of the socialist era. It is shown that there are multiple, overlapping ways of being 'modern', also in terms of knowledge, culture and approach to one's personal history. This is in line with the alternative globalisation sketched above. But literature not only brings up social issues – it also in itself broadens the concept of culture, the concept of literature and the approaches towards it. In order to reveal and discuss these aspects an interdisciplinary approach and a construction of a dialogue between theories from different eras and geographical locations seem fruitful. Ultimately, literature would not serve for much if it did not offer the readers fascinating stories and aesthetic experiences.

Also, the language question was discussed widely in the previous chapters. A similar approach could be applied to it as was applied to the question on social aspects of literature.

Literature, not single writers or single works, is part of the process that reflects on Portuguese language used in Mozambique. The writers don't often take a visible stand on the language question but their work as such participates in appropriating Portuguese. This takes place in dialogue with the reader: in Mozambique, the language question is related to language skills and literacy. While literature alone cannot teach anyone how to read and write, it can take part in the process of making the relationship with Portuguese language less problematic. In this sense, using Portuguese is eventually becoming less problematic. Moreover, Mozambican literature has an important role simply for being from Mozambique and discussing Mozambican realities since it is not long ago that the literary references for Mozambican schoolchildren were from Portugal. On the other hand, by bringing up diverse cultures and often referring to the linguistic diversity in the country, literature has a role in reminding the reader of the multilingual reality. Since there is a connection between languages and cultures, by bringing them up literature deconstructs the hierarchies in terms of language, but also in terms of cultures. This complex process is an essential part of decolonisation, which is far from being a settled issue.

Considering the initial perspective, discussing decolonisation as a theoretical approach and as a process in literature, it could be said that, as a result, both concepts widened in a process of dialogue. In terms of theory – a search for decolonial approaches – it became clear that there is an ongoing process of correcting, or better, eliminating, the Eurocentric views. The notion of Eurocentrism has also become more accurate: it includes approaches that are more subtle than those discussed by Chinweizu, Jemie & Madubuike, and they also change. In this sense, the earlier debates regarding literary decolonisation had a significant role in shifting the legitimacy to discuss African literatures from Western literary critics to African writers and researchers. In the case of Africa, the current discussion is not limited only to considering the power relations between Europe and Africa. Instead, the scope has widened to include other perspectives and histories that remove the position colonialism had earlier. However, it might be necessary to point out that colonialism and its continuities are actively being analysed from a wider perspective than before, permitted by an interdisciplinary dialogue. The process of decolonisation could be described in terms of a horizontal dialogue between different areas of knowledge, different geographical locations and different

languages. It is, as well, a process that brings the past and the future to the present moment. Hence, discussing decolonisation in literature provides new perspectives to decolonisation in other areas, while discussing literary decolonisation only in terms of literature ends up providing only a partial view.

The decolonial approach towards literature does not rely only on the researcher or the reader. Instead, it could be argued that literature, in this case Mozambican literature, also has a role in interfering with the attempts of applying Eurocentric perspectives to it. Current Mozambican literature could be seen as taking part in decolonisation by showing how the so-called 'tradition' is in dialogue with other cultures and both appropriates and excludes influences in an active process. This is relevant in terms of decolonisation since it places the influences of colonisation in the same position with other cultures: Portuguese influence is present among others, and from it useful and interesting elements can be appropriated, while this does not imply a commitment to all values in Portuguese culture. This, in terms of decolonisation, seems like a more powerful – and practical – approach than the one of trying to avoid something that is very difficult to mark off. Decolonisation, therefore, can be seen as a process that deconstructs hierarchies on many levels, culture and language being the most visible ones. The so-called 'Western influence' is no longer an uncontrollable threat. In this way, literature gains the role of liberating words, locations and narratives from the colonialist or Eurocentric context.

The approach sketched here also liberates the literary approaches of the writers from being either 'African' or 'Western'. It could even be said that it reinforces a view regarding literature without borders, free to create dialogues in many directions. While this could be seen in terms of questioning the national narratives, even this approach seems too narrow for discussing the novels in question: they take part in global debates from their particular angles. Clearly, this is not in contradiction with the presence of multiple cultural references or backgrounds, or rooting the work to local traditions, and does not diminish the significance of contextualising the works discussed. While some literary techniques were considered earlier as being Western (such as a story of an individual) or African (writing about a community), it is also possible to analyse these aspects from different perspectives, such as from that of narrative techniques in relation with the type of situation the novel discusses. In this way the

discussion regarding aesthetic aspects gains more depth as well. It seems that a key to correcting the views regarding African literatures lies in not discussing them exclusively as such – as African literatures – but as global literatures. From this perspective, a wider discussion becomes possible. Part of the decolonisation process has aimed, then, to liberate the African writers from representing their continent and 'African writing'. Moreover, this aspect could also be taken into account in terms of research: it might be interesting to compare contemporary writers from different parts of the world who discuss similar topics, such as globalisation or epistemological encounters. When seen like this, literary decolonisation gains more significance: it is a process that is part of the social and cultural decolonisation process, which could also be called alternative globalisation.

Decolonisation as it was described in the 1980s and earlier brought up questions that were important at the time, and it could be said that they are still useful in tracking changes in approaches related to the time and context. For this reason it is useful to consider Mozambican literature from the perspective of decolonisation: it provides a fruitful background for the discussion. The concept seems problematic due to its proximity to colonialism, but it can also be argued that it reveals the multiple continuities of colonialism without restricting the analysis to only discussing the colonial past of the countries, or seeing literature as a response to it. It reveals that the theories regarding decolonisation in a wide sense can be relevant in the Mozambican context since they offer new perspectives on literature – and on the other hand, it becomes clear that they cannot be applied as such to all literatures. Instead, applying them to specific contexts adds new perspectives and introduces new questions to the theoretical discussions.

In terms of African literatures there seems to be a shift: writers such as Adichie and NoViolet Bulawayo have attracted wide interest and have become popular. On the other hand, there also seems to be a shift towards more 'international' writing, which deals with the experience of emigration and racism in Western countries – in Adichie's *Americanah* (2013) and Bulawayo's *We Need New Names* (2013) the principal characters travel to the United States from Nigeria and Zimbabwe, accordingly. Tayie Selasi, whose novel *Ghana Must Go* (2013) discusses a Ghanaian-Nigerian-American family, has in her public appearances brought up the question whether African literature exists and this way brought these kinds of

issues to wider audiences. While it seems that there has been a change in the reception of literature which takes place, at least partially, in African countries, it can also be asked whether the experience of emigration and the link to the Western countries has facilitated the popularity of these writers. Ultimately, it raises the question whether these novels provide another, different kind of a mirror through which the Western readers see themselves and can observe the 'other' from a safe distance. What is clear though, is that the readers are interested in views that question and are distant from the colonial imagery and the requests for 'authenticity', which can be considered in terms of decolonisation in the literary field.

In terms of the Mozambican context, the up-and-coming writers, such as Lucílio Manjate, are bringing new approaches to the literary field and diversifying it further. It will be interesting to see what kind of a role the topics introduced by the generation discussed here will have. Perhaps the past and the questioning of the national narratives will not be as strongly present, and in this sense it seems that the writers discussed have taken on great responsibility, and have not been discussing minor issues or written more interiorised prose. This will influence the future research of Mozambican literature, and the questions regarding the Africanness and the role of the writer will most likely fade into the background, as well as the question of so-called European heritage or influences. It seems that the epistemological aspects and cultural diversity in a wide sense will be present and further investigated, both in literature and in literary research. The experiences of growing up and living in the cities is strongly present in the newer writers' and other artists' works. That builds an interesting dialogue with the earlier Mozambican prose and poetry coming from and discussing the suburb, which had a significant role in anticipating social change.

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