

CRITIQUE TO REALITY IN *TERRA SONÂMBULA* AND *CHUVA BRABA*: CULTURE, LYRICISM AND MEMORIES

Martins Mapera

Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanidades, Universidade Zambeze, Mozambique

ABSTRACT

The novels by Manuel Lopes and Mia Couto were written in different historical and political times. Whilst *Chuva braba* was published in 1956, before the struggles for the liberation of the Portuguese colonies, *Terra sonâmbula* came to press in 1992, after the independence of Mozambique. The fact that, in the first novel, the drought problems that hit Cape Verde, followed by extreme poverty, urging a massive emigration of Cape Verdeans to Europe and America and that, in the second novel, the 16-year war that devastated Mozambique, flushing people out to find secure places, allowed the two pieces to share traces of unrest, insecurity, and disquiet of their characters, lyricizing life in war and poverty contexts that lead the human being to his ruin. Therefore, both novels offer a fertile soil for a comparative analysis of the fictional events. To that end, it is assumed that culture, Literature, Sociology, and Philosophy re(create) review patterns about the creation of states and nations characterized by the comprehension of reality through history and memory.

KEYWORDS

culture; literature; reality; lyricism; state; society

CRÍTICA À REALIDADE EM *TERRA SONÂMBULA* E *CHUVA BRABA*: CULTURA, LIRISMO E MEMÓRIAS

RESUMO

Os romances de Manuel Lopes e Mia Couto foram escritos em momentos históricos e políticos diferentes. Enquanto *Chuva braba* foi publicado em 1956, antes das guerras de libertação das antigas colónias portuguesas, *Terra sonâmbula* veio à estampa em 1992, depois da independência de Moçambique. No primeiro caso, os problemas da seca que assolaram Cabo Verde e a consequente pobreza extrema, que levou ao êxodo massivo dos cabo-verdianos para a Europa e a América e, no segundo, a guerra dos 16 anos, que devastou Moçambique e provocou deslocação das pessoas para regiões seguras e para os países vizinhos, fazem com que as duas obras partilhem traços de instabilidade, insegurança e desassossego das personagens, permitindo a liricização das vivências em contextos da guerra e da miséria que concorrem para o aluimento do ser humano. Deste modo, os dois romances configuram espaços férteis para uma análise comparística dos eventos romanescos, intuindo que a cultura, Literatura, Sociologia e Filosofia (re)criam formas críticas sobre a construção de estados e nações, os quais se caracterizam por compreensão da realidade a partir de história e memórias.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

cultura; literatura; realidade; lirismo; estado; sociedade

This paper derives from a research entitled “Realismo e lirismo em *Terra sonâmbula*, de Mia Couto, e *Chuva braba*, de Manuel Lopes” (Realism and lyricism in *Terra sonâmbula* by Mia Couto and *Chuva braba* by Manuel Lopes) conducted between 2010 and 2014 when undertaking the PhD Course in Cultural Studies whose thesis was defended in 2014, in the Department of Languages and Cultures at Aveiro University (Mapera, 2014). By resuming one of the chapters of the study, we intend not only to reuse the material that is often only used for the purpose of fulfilling the requirements for academic degrees and lastly fading into a symbolic oblivion without use for life, but also, we intend to show how the semiotics of novel permeates the syntax of culture, Anthropology, Sociology, and politics in the complex process of nation-building. This crossover is naturally very important because, based on the cultural approach, Literary Studies are somehow linked to life experiences and habits.

In the Semiotics of Literature, the meaning of culture arises from the relationship between human beings and the world; the characters and the reality and daily life; virtues and the unrelenting unrest. For instance, Manuel Lopes’ characters embody the misery caused by the drought that hit the archipelago of Cape Verde, in the first half of the last century, and Mia Couto’s work depicts the war dramatic wandering that started just after Mozambique’s independence in 1975 and lasted more than a decade and a half, until 1992. In both cases, the reflection about life has always been connected to human behavior and, therefore, it was necessary to reinvent the culture highly threatened by deaths, anguish exacerbated by poverty, discrimination, and various stereotypes. As it will be seen, this paper retakes a very important part of the thesis, mainly assuming chapter two on “novel and the construction of a social ideal” (Mapera, 2014, pp. 43-63).

Fascinated by the critique of Manuel Lopes and Mia Couto novels, we are hooked to assume, as the first reaction, that the drought problems in Cape Verde, the disastrous wars that take place decade-after-decade in Mozambique give room to the outbreak of stereotypes and social and cultural asymmetries in the Lusophone area, and they also help us to create memories, histories, utopias, and lyric promises in our countries.

NOVEL, CONCEPTS, AND PERCEPTIONS: REALISM AND LYRICISM

António Manuel Ferreira wrote something interesting in his chapter entitled “As dores da tristeza: o romance *Rainha da noite*, de João Paulo Borges Coelho” [The sorrows of sadness: the novel *Rainha da noite*, by João Paulo Borges Coelho], when saying: “in contemporary Mozambican literature, there is a canonical predominance of novel-like narrators” (Ferreira, 2015, p.43). This is an unquestionable fact provided that the Mozambican authors are of a lyrical culture, and part of a universe dominated by a tradition of tales and storytelling around the fire. Interestingly enough, this reality is also observed in other Portuguese-speaking countries of Africa, including Cape Verde, where, even in poetic writing, there is a narratological tendency.

Georg Lukács and Mikhail Bakhtin (1976, pp. 159-160), in *Problemi di teoria del romanzo*, assume its origin owing the French Revolution, from which, as a consequence,

there was a restoration of a new social rule that eliminated the problems of the “ghosts of the Roman period”, preserving the power of representation of daily life. Although they assumed the presence of homological and functional affinities between the epic and the novel, the two essayists focused their discussion on the formal and thematic diversity that distinguishes them.

Thus, it can be said that the artistic processes and the epicizing expression of cultural memories turned the novel into a generic construction that derives from traditional folk literature that deals with realism as the ground for a reifying imaginary of the paradoxes of life. It is from such ground that Georg Lukács, in his book entitled *Teoria do romance*, notes that the early novel aestheticians find it “ironic”, since it recognizes and nullifies the vitality of subjectivity in its linguistic-pragmatic structure (Lukács, 1989, p. 83).

In the past, the novel fabulation played the role of documentation since it was in charge of recording the fundamental memories of society. The contemporary strategy of the new memory forms dates back to the last decade of the 19th century, and lies in an interdisciplinary dimension to which a plethora of psychologists brought contribution, of which we can trace Bergson (2006), due to his important study of the relationship between the body and the spirit in modernity.

In practice, this article seeks to answer the questions regarding the framework of the novels by Manuel Lopes and Mia Couto in the domain of a socializing and memorialist literary culture and, given that, part, if not all the work, contains the core of aesthetic power that connects the novel construction nowadays prevalent.

Therefore, sociological trends have provided the largest number of interesting ideas for a comparative approach, in order to validate the main literary processes that establish the converging and diverging points between the two African realities. In this case, the branch of Comparative Literature allows the diagnosis of the aesthetic-pragmatic correlations that characterize the novels of Manuel Lopes and Mia Couto.

Assuming that the literary process needs insights and discretion in the linguistic-pragmatic, social and cultural domains, or rather, admitting, on the other hand, that the existence of authentic possibilities of alterity in the ideological conception of cultural identities in building a united and indivisible nation, Álvaro Manuel Machado and Daniel-Henri Pageaux (2001, pp. 157-158) defend that it is feasible and desirable to invest in a comparative ideology around the same literature. This view opposes the most widespread conceptions of Comparative Literature by the French school. Such postulations were brought by René Wellek and Austin Warren (1971, p. 60) in *Teoria da literatura*, when they assumed very unlikely the “methodological distinction” between a study of Shakespeare in France and another one about him in the 18th century in England. What Wellek and Warren meant is that the field of Comparative Studies of Literature should not only be judged based on a reductionist perspective. It is more productive and less risky to relate Comparative Literature to the study of literature as a whole, that is, to “general” or “universal” literature. The undertaking of a less irreducible comparative study offers reliability to its role in the literatures arising from the colonial ideological system such as Mozambique and Cape Verde. In these and other Portuguese-speaking African countries,

and especially during the period of colonial domination itself, the levels of differentiation of systems and cultures are more marked and especially relevant.

The study of the literature of Portuguese-speaking African countries, turns up a heated terminological and conceptual discussion around the so-called literature that assumes the nuances of the colonial system as opposed to what can be taken as the African literature in Portuguese language, or, what Manuel Ferreira calls Portuguese-speaking African literature. In the case of the so-called colonial literature, Manuel Ferreira considers it as the one on which the thought of the universality of European man develops. However, African literature conveys the ability to apprehend and reproduce the African. In this regard, Pires Laranjeira (1995, p. 26) defines, somehow in agonistic way, an alterity dimension between colonial literature and African literature in Portuguese language, when he noted that literary texts considered “of local colour” devoted attention to the theme of colonisation, in which white or black people were represented with an ambivalent hermeneutical content. Therefore, the ideological conception of “colonial literature” in relation to the literature produced in Portuguese language in African countries is, according to Manuel Ferreira (quoted in Laranjeira, 1995, p. 26), dissenting from the interpretation made about the same concept in Brazil:

in Africa, [colonial literature] means the written and published literature, mostly by the Portuguese settlers, assuming a perspective of exoticism, evasion, racial prejudice, and colonialist reiteration, in which the world view, the narrative focus and the main characters were white, settlers or travellers, and when they included black people, they would superficially judge them in an exogenous folkloric and ethnocentric way, without any cultural, psychological, sentimental and intellectual deepness. (Laranjeira, 1995, p. 26)

The interest of critique around the understanding of African literature led Russel Hamilton (1984, p. 15) to assume, for the case of Mozambican literature, an ambivalence of nomenclature that allows various interpretations in the assessment of the aesthetic values of Mozambican authenticity. The author argues that within the framework of the Mozambican literature domain, two designations of literary production should be adopted: on the one hand, “Mozambican literature” and, on the other hand, “literature in Mozambique”. From this perspective, the description of the Mozambican literature presupposes a strictly historical relationship with its origin and genre production.

Therefore, in order to allow a concise and efficient analysis of the Mozambican literature, it is vital to consider Gilberto Matusse (1998, p. 47) ideas from which, for cases of literature that emerges from colonial situations, the “comparative methodology” is, by option and preference, the best in order to clarify and justify the reality of the direction taken for a more accurate study of Comparative Literature.

It is through the prevalence of these conceptual dissents that I find fundamental to take this kind of study. This is due to the fact that both Mozambique and Cape Verde were Portuguese colonies – countries that were born indebted to the sources and therefore

forced to the influences and, from the cultural point of view, and using the terminology by Leyla Perrone-Moisés (1985, quoted in Trigo, n.d., p. 32), condemned to a “foreign debt”. Thus, one notes to what extent one can speak about the existence of the specific literatures of Portuguese-speaking African countries reflected on the image produced by realism and lyricism in the literature of Cape Verde and Mozambique. In fact, this is highlighted on the way in which Manuel Lopes and Mia Couto exploit the specific themes of drought and war in different moments and places of African literature. It is also studied the impact caused on the characters by the dramatic situations of poverty that characterize the two countries.

The dramatic narration of the drought in Cape Verde and the war in Mozambique represents a privileged ground for literary writing, deliberately exploiting significant dimensions of language in an intrinsically particular way. If, on the one hand, writers seem unable to resist the temptation to address these dominant themes, on the other hand, they transform them in different socio-cultural contexts, into factors that contribute to the maturation of social consciousness, allowing changes to emerge, giving room to a new way of conceiving life and developing culture and art.

While *Chuva braba* describes the dilemma of the colonial process and the problem of the drought, and *Terra sonâmbula* narrates the effects of poverty and fratricidal war, although in different contexts, both novels develop historical-cultural patterns that claim their own identities that aims at conceiving internal mechanisms for the survival of societies.

The narrative that describes the anguish provoked by drought and war and its consequences highlights the implicit allusion to the clear need for changes that have subsequently taken place in different fields of life in the two countries. Therefore, the voices of lyrical and realistic dimension, which emerge from the protagonists, outline a new framework of collective view against the sad realities of daily life.

The lyrical contemplation discernible in the novels represents the boldest expression of the mixture of perplexity and nostalgia for the land and historical events. This aspect attracts the attention of the readers increasingly interested in starting a dialogue with the works: “the creator starts (imaginatively or really) with his audience (even if sometimes this audience is himself) a dialogue that is never free, and intends to move, convince, inform, consolidate, free or depress” (Escarpit, 1969, p. 167).

The dialogue is functional because it sets up correlation points between the authors and the public to whom the works are directed. For many authors, the construction of the structurally lyrical and realistic novel is more fruitful in terms of changing their awareness of the state of affairs that characterise the social environment in accordance with time and space.

The authors really gained the attention of their readers, through simplicity, verisimilitude, and aesthetic and thematic sympathy, because these characteristics are close to the reality of societies, giving freedom and opportunity for the symbolic discussion of problems of social, cultural, and ideological interest.

The conflicting heterotopia in the novels of Manuel Lopes and Mia Couto contains a realism that goes hand in hand with lyricism. The imaginary facts that represent the universe of intrigues are the most impressive aspects, but no more extraordinary than the summoning of the aesthetic interest of the literary writing of reality. Therefore, the election of the lyrical mode, although it posits as a postulate to the “unreality”¹ of what is not in accordance with the natural laws of life, has value because it seeks to rescue the works from the system of common evidences. Apart from language, genre codes and lyrical and realistic modal features, novels also have to do with the specific societies demands (Escarpit, 1969, pp. 174-175). It can still be noted, in the novels in question, the specific recreation of writing adapted to the natural language of the people, the language of daily life, a fact especially relevant in the works of Mia Couto.

CREOLITY, STEREOTYPE, MYTH, AND OTHERNESS

Addressing the issue of Creolity in Portuguese language literature is a challenge. However, it is indispensable when analysing a literary work written by an author with Creole roots, taking into account the history that links Cape Verde to the Portuguese culture. It is a dichotomy that becomes apparent in Cape Verdean literary writing. This binary view sends us to the multidisciplinary relations between linguistics and literature, which then requires a permanent dialogue between these two fields of knowledge. Remember that the archipelago of Cape Verde was one of the few Portuguese colonies where the Portuguese language not only takes the position of a second language (L2), but also it is the second widely spoken language in the country: “you know that, here, people only speak two languages, Mr Joquinha: Portuguese and Creole. We don’t know more than that” (Lopes, 1997, p. 102).

The distinctive features that differentiate Cape Verdean literature from other Portuguese-speaking literature are partly and fundamentally due to the way Creole, as a socially active language, shapes the worldview². Therefore, the analysis of Manuel Lopes’ novel must take into account this historical factor. The analysis of a novel must not neglect its underlain social and historical contexts.

The study of specific literatures requires greater responsibilities, as it must highlight the essential aspects of the process of creating a formal thought of people’s life, its aesthetic features, language, cultural elements and other elements. For the particular case of Cape Verde, for example, one cannot imagine having the work fully completed by the publication of *Arquipélago* (1935), by Jorge Barbosa, or by the creation of *Claridade* magazine, in 1936. In fact, the artistic and cultural idiosyncrasies have always been (are)

¹ Vergílio Ferreira (2005, p. 80), in *Aparição*, says that “there is life behind life, an unreality present in reality, a world of mist forms, an incoherent and fleeting world, a world of surprise and warning”.

² According to the arguments brought by Mesquitela Lima (quoted in Gomes, 2008) into the discussion of the theme of Cape Verdean language and culture, “Creole” is described as “the cultural element that mostly assumes, establishes and expresses Cape Verdean values”, crystallizing the “memory with a feeling of identity that connects the whole archipelago and the diaspora, generating a well-established unique group conscience” (quoted in Gomes, 2008, p. 98). While meditating, Mesquitela Lima (quoted in Gomes, 2008) suggests Creole as a language that would take the name of Cape Verdean.

the focus of national literary art, “but the uniqueness was, one, before *Claridade*, and another, after *Claridade*” (Ferreira, 1989, p. 187)³ and they continue to be the subject in the heart of debates within the intellectual class, in attempt to incorporate new paradigms that emerge from the new generations of writers.

As a matter of fact, this paper focuses on the relationship between Creole language, culture, and literature, and on the way this hybridity is manifested in the narrative produced in Portuguese language⁴, in Cape Verde. Factors of aesthetic universality occur in the work of Manuel Lopes, which highlights the real density, relevance, and rationality of *Chuva braba*'s theme.

Life in the island is a kind of a common ground in space and time that the Cape Verdean uses to state his own identity. From the insular location condition emerged compromises and collusions, concessions and rapprochements, the hybridization of Europeans and Africans, giving birth to the Cape Verdean by the essential need for communication and survival. His own language, the Creole, reflects the expression in his eyes and in the singing, in the longing for the warm, in the appeal to sensuality⁵, in the value of his gastronomy, in short, the expressive and practical manifestation of his culture.

Creolity involves all these aspects that make Cape Verde a substantially different reality from other countries. From this background, the traces of a Capeverdeanity are inscribed in the common denominator of the island, namely the telluric spirit, the love rooted in the land, the aversion and willingness to leave, the deep religiosity.

The process of creolization simultaneously occurs together with the phenomenon of cultural and racial metamorphoses. In *Aventura crioula*, Manuel Ferreira states the following about the miscegenation of the cultures of Cape Verde and Portugal:

when miscegenation began to give a new physiognomy to the Archipelago, and very soon it happened, the language that the Cape Verdean created would have been neither African-Black nor European – but a third one: the Creole dialect, going through the previous phases “sabir” and “pidgin”. (Ferreira, 1967/1985, p. 72)

³ Manuel Ferreira (1989), in the chapter “O mito hesperitano ou a nostalgia do paraíso perdido”, published in the book *O discurso no percurso africano I*, analyses the question of peculiarity as not being a project that came out through the creation of literary magazines in the 30s of the last century. He relates this fact to the existence of opposition factors between Cape Verdean literature and that of other African countries, Portuguese and Brazilian literature, therefore, the Portuguese language literatures.

⁴ Orlanda Amarilis (1986, p. 179), in a talk at the international symposium on Cape Verdean culture and literature, recalls that, when Amílcar Cabral was in Guinea, he defended that “although the struggle of the African people was against the colonialist, the colonialist had something good. Such thing was the language, and, in this specific case, it was Portuguese”. In fact, after independence, African countries adopted Portuguese as an official language and, in the case of Mozambique, as a communication language for “national unity”.

⁵ Baltazar Lopes (1967/1985, p. XII), when prefacing *A aventura crioula*, a book by Manuel Ferreira, says that the “morna” is a popular manifestation that carries “a true value of the spiritual culture of the Archipelago” of Cape Verde. In the wish to exult native culture, Baltazar Lopes stresses that this cultural expression has always been present, with deep meaning, in the “June's feasts”, together with all the “abundant bulk of novelistic folklore, riddles and proverbs”, and playing a very important psychological and educational role in archipelagic society.

The Creole language is spoken throughout the archipelago, with comprehensiveness, rhythmic fluidity, and expressiveness, to such extent that Orlando Ribeiro (1997, p. 157) would think that “through reminiscences and hesitations, it is rare to find a Cape Verdean (in troubles or not) who does not understand and express himself sufficiently in our language”. In order to see how interesting, it is to assume this reality as a stereotype very specific to the Cape Verdean, Manuel Ferreira cites the same passage in his book *Aventura crioula* (1967/1985). In that quote, Ferreira points out that the Creole shares the same social and literary space with the Portuguese language. However, the essayist gives much prominence to the Cape Verdean language as the one that offers greater expressiveness to the feelings of the native and to the telluric traditions.

On the other hand, referring to the importance that Creole represents for Cape Verdeans, Manuel Ferreira (1967/1985) imagines something interesting in relation to the coexistence of Creole with the Portuguese language for the island communication. Such views suggest that, if one were to think, hypothetically, of the elimination of the Portuguese language, the Cape Verdean would have no difficulties to fulfill himself, manifest himself in normal life and continuously express his anxieties, his longings.

Conversely, the second view suggests that, if it were to eliminate the Creole language, the Cape Verdean would find it difficult to express the cultural aspects that identify it from other cultural societies with the same rhythmic easiness. Obviously, “it would mount to an amputation” (Ferreira, 1967/1985, p. 73) of the communicative possibilities. The process of lyrical and literary communication, as well as the current communication of the Cape Verdean would be devoid of allegorical validity of its identity genuineness. Concisely, Manuel Ferreira states the following about this thought:

and so true it is that, today and always, the deep desire of the people, the sorrows and joys, the jocular, the satire, the anguish, the hope, the conviviality, that powerful means of human survival, all those intimate experiences and small and big things of the daily adventure, the Cape Verdean expresses it, in its full dimension, using the language of the cradle. (Ferreira, 1967/1985, p. 73)

The study of the Creole language has been a long-standing point of discussion, involving important names from Portuguese literature and culture. Alfredo Margarido, for instance, a leading scholar on the linguistic reality and culture of Creole, has brought interesting reflections on the subject. In this debate, he acknowledges the social role of the native language in Cape Verdean literature:

the use of Creole as a literature vehicle can be understood in two ways: either as an attempt to establish popular elements as to give Cape Verdean literature a range of action that it does not have at the moment; or, what seems to be more logical, an imposition – even though harsh - of survives of the past that characterize a society in which the few technical elements at disposal fail. (Margarido, 2010, p. 73)⁶

⁶ Alfredo Margarido's text was included in a collection called *Antologia da ficção cabo verdiana contemporânea*, edited in 1960

Along with this dichotomy of views and, above all, with regard to the idea of Creole as a vehicular language simply within the Cape Verdean communities, one must indeed take into account that, in addition to this social and perhaps economic status, it offers an important tool for literary communication not necessarily in matrimonial relationship with Portuguese⁷. This is as true as it is inevitable to underline, with some boldness that the fundamental role of Creole is not only to communicate. It is much more than just using it to simply convey information. Communication is more than that. It involves communicating the traditions, history, experiences, sensitivity, and sensuality of a people rich in facts and mysteries. Communication involves tales, theatre, dance, painting, music, love, criticism, opinion, gastronomy, and clothing. Finally, communication means this whole complex of a society's life.

Therefore, despite the strong Portuguese influence in the archipelago, Creole is undoubtedly the language for common communication, at home, in the street, and in all cultural manifestations, in the most intimate and private or communal things. From that perspective, between 1890 and 1930, Eugénio Tavares, a prominent figure in Cape Verde's cultural, political, and social life, took advantage of the rich expressiveness of the "popular song (*morna*)" (Ferreira, 1967/1985, p. 128) and began literary writing, using the deep roots of Creole.

In *Chuva braba*, the concept of deepness does not imply emotional innerness, it does not mean a mere ideological expressiveness, but instead, a "compelling intimate, irreversible appeal" (Ferreira, 1967/1985, p. 159). This is easily observed on the way Manuel Lopes recreates the characters of the story, especially the image of the protagonist, who, with appropriate style, reinvents the discursive contributions based on the deliberate mixture of words:

I think yes, I do. You must come to your senses. I don't find the story of Porto boys good. (She knew Joanhina didn't want a man for her life. "Shut up, man, shut up, no" said the Mrs Ana's daughter, stretching her lips). You must come to your senses. (Lopes, 1997, p. 54)

as part of the commemorations of the discovery of the islands and, as part of the centenary of the *Infante*. In 2010, the same text was retrieved to be part of the collection of the commemorations of the literary magazine *Claridade*.

⁷ When recognising the importance of this marriage between Creole and Portuguese, it is also worth recalling that, as long as Portuguese is the language mostly rooted in literature, it cannot be denied that literature in Portuguese language will continue to dominate, not only a big part of Cape Verdean writers, but also others. In the case of Mozambique and other countries that, for several centuries, have lived with Portuguese linguistic culture, it will undoubtedly continue to be the most privileged language for literature for several generations, although some writers now choose to avoid the canonical patterns of European origin. This situation is due to too many factors. One of them is what we have just mentioned. But another fundamental reason is that both Creole and the regional languages of many Portuguese-speaking countries have communicability reach still very restricted to their ethnic boundaries. And for those who wish an open literary communication free from ethnical boundaries, will hardly limit themselves to a less comprehensive literature. This situation seems to have been pivotal for the decision taken by Frelimo to, for example, choose Portuguese not only as an official language, but also as an instrument for the unification of Mozambicans. The most important thing on that, is that the Portuguese language is, into a constant process of revitalization each time, in the context in which it is spoken, taking into account the ethnically marked linguistic realities.

The restatement is an important element in the lyrical aesthetics mainly in the Cape Verdean realism by, on the one hand, upholding its potential role as a communication vehicle and, on the other hand, by the ideology of feelings that contribute to the construction of regional identities of the Archipelago. Through Creole, the Cape Verdean moves towards a world where spiritual and artistic fulfilments and to where the human soul goes beyond the ontological sensibilities within the process of its projection to the outside world. Despite its regional tone, Cape Verdean creole shows expressions and phonetics similar to Brazilian Portuguese, enriched with words from African languages and some from American English because of the relationships between these two nations. Remember that many Cape Verdeans emigrated to Brazil, and also to the United States of America due to the navigability that the sea offers, connecting Cape Verde and that North American country.

The artistic expression is essentially marked by language, by the “sweet speech of a slave soul” (Ferreira, 1967/1985, p. 74). However, there is an uncertainty about the existence or not of a popular art that could be vital for the fortification of the Cape Verdean cultural industry. In this regard, Gilberto Freyre (1952, p. 250) states that “if one seeks a popular art that is Cape Verdean’s own and that marks, in its culture, an African survival cultivated with some affection: the decency of being African seems to explain such absence”. It can be noticed the strong “role” of miscegenation, the African-European hybridity rooted in the Cape Verdean because of the strong influence that the archipelago receives from the migrations it maintains with the world of other people.

The relationship between the Portuguese and people in the tropics made many changes in the way of being and behaving of different social groups. These interactions resulted in a symbiosis that the Brazilian sees it as an action of “convenience”, which results from the erotic and love relationships between the white man and the black woman. Perhaps, this is the reason why, even after the independence of the colonies, still, there is a tremendous maternal bond between the African and Portuguese people. The phenomenon of migration very common to the Cape Verdean population, does not differ from the image of a son who, fleeing from predators, seeks maternal protection. In fact, the Portuguese have left many descendants in Africa, which today represent an important part of the process of miscegenation.

When examining the impact of the process of miscegenation on the interaction between the Portuguese and the people in the tropics, Gilberto Freyre (1961, p. 72) states that there was a kind of “sociological libertine”, characterized by the disintegration of more rigid Western and Christian values, opening possibilities for greater freedoms and expression of self, either among individuals or among groups within or outside the system of social coexistence. These practices left markers in Portuguese-speaking Africa. In the work of Manuel Lopes, there are strong evidences of racial and ideological miscegenation.

INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION: BELIEFS, JUDGMENTS, AND FACTS

In this topic, the analytical approach of the theme will involve the characterization of Couto's language, which varies between the standard writing of European Portuguese and the oral discourse of Mozambican communities. Studies carried out indicate that the Portuguese spoken in Mozambique, despite the orientation to European roots, is basically marked by structures of languages derived from Bantu culture. The studies by Perpétua Gonçalves (2011) and the research carried out in the field of Bilingual Education by the National Institute for Curricular Development (INDE) prove the need to assume national languages as keys means for communication in Mozambique given that, not all can speak Portuguese, also because it establishes the evolution and vitality of the Mozambican languages. For instance, at the moment, 16 Mozambican languages are in use for teaching in the initial classes of primary schooling, based on the standardization defined in the Southern region of Africa.

Recognizing that the work of Mia Couto displays lexical and structural elements of the national languages, this study tried to identify these discursive elements, by analyzing to what extent the creativity and use of discursive forms marked by national languages depict the creation of ideological and cultural thought, as well as the literary production in Mozambique.

Mia Couto is undoubtedly a leading figure in the field of Mozambican literature, who considers the knowledge of Mozambican cultures⁸ and its history. The studies carried out by Maria Fernanda Afonso, in *O conto moçambicano: escritas pós-coloniais*, fully attest this assertion:

the legacy of knowledge, myths, and traditions, passed down through generations by the African masters, (...) has consequences for the literary writings that emerge in the 20th century. The relationship between written text and oral tradition manifests itself in various forms that range from symbols to textual and linguistic structures. It can be seen that while Western literatures limit themselves to telling myths, African literatures integrate the mental structures of myth within the writing. (Afonso, 2004, p. 207)

The Mozambicaness of Mia Couto allows us to understand many aspects that characterize the Mozambican literature, from poetry to tale, chronicle to novel. In fact, it is not, as one could imagine, the primary discourse on the attempt to build the Mozambicaness. There are important references that can be an example of the first practice in the process of claiming the legitimacy of language and culture: one of the most enlightening examples is cited by Russel Hamilton (1984), when taking the old poem "Quengueleze" by Rui de Noronha (1909-1943), which, although it bears a syntax (sonnet)

⁸ Despite the problems specific to a pioneer in the literary production domain, Mia Couto proved, in his first novel, *Terra sonâmbula*, an interesting and unique experience until today: the creation of linguistic structures in which the rules of Portuguese grammar and the grammars of the local languages spoken in Mozambique converge, as well as the creation of vocabulary from the Portuguese root. This experience is essentially unique, except in some simply naïve and dispersed works, which are doomed to failure due to the authors lack of a philosophical culture basis.

modulated by aspects of the European culture, it reveals a clear interest in the traditional values of Mozambicaness.

After him, several Mozambican authors got involved in this epic search for affirmation, and, among them, it is interesting to mention the special case of José Craveirinha, who left a deal of poetic narrative in *Xigubo* (1980), *Karingana ua karingana* (1982) and other works. Let us see, for example, in the poem “Sia-vuma”, how the issue of language integration and cultural affirmation is immersed in national literary themes through the poem “Sia-vuma”:

and the brides
stick to their kidneys
the purple vertigo of the capulanas
and repress in the bantu hearts
one by one the beads of sadness
and carve by teeth the xicatauana of patience
that the time of love does not fade
and while waiting the very long sleep
from the most real love also compensates
the hallucinating view of a new horizon
SIA-VUMA! (Craveirinha, 1999, pp. 216-217)

It is clearly obvious, in the previous verses, the use of terms that emerge from the Ronga daily life of Southern Mozambique, prophesying the utopia of a literary afronationality. The refrain, brought by the verse “sia-vuma”, flagrantly reifies the notion of linguistic and cultural Mozambicaness, provided that it derives from the historical substrate of the tale genuinely Mozambican. This reification highlights the ethnic relevance of the lyric that “the purple vertigo of the capulanas”, the “beads of sadness”, and the “xicatauana of patience” bestow on the traditional Mozambican woman.

For several years, the poetic conscience of the Mozambicaness was repressed by the then political system, which made many literary reviewers to adopt an attitude of self-flagellation and self-censorship. Even though, the African thought remained unwavering, and it achieved greater consistency with the advent of a conscience based on the project of creation of a “new man” and of a “new society”, brought to mind by Brazão Mazula (1995, p. 21), whose concreteness shows the beginning of a new era, in which contemporary thinkers promote a critique aimed at (re)mozambicanisation, contrary to the assimilationist system, which does not fit into the current context of values of national culture and literature.

As a result of this awareness, authors of literary fiction such as Paulina Chiziane, Mia Couto, and others are deeply committed to the development of a cultural imaginary concerned with the country, as continuation to the actions that, in 1974, began to produce encouraging results with the publication of the novel entitled *Norte*, by the writer Virgílio Chide Ferrão, which, according to José Ferraz Motta (2004, p. 186), was “the first

serious attempt to the Mozambicanisation of Portuguese”. However, in *Terra sonâmbula*, Mia Couto, impelled by a spirit of tenderness and lucidity, restates, in depth, the problems experienced during the 16 years of the bloody war in the post-independence period. Mia Couto’s writing is not only based on the theme, which is very strong, but also on the hybrid character of the syntax of his narrative. Although it is a novel, *Terra sonâmbula* brings tale-like narrative blocks. Let us see, for example, the following passage that sets out the episode entitled “A filha do Céu” (The daughter of God), Kindzu’s fourth notebook: “my name is Farida, began the woman her story” (Couto, 2002, p. 77). This passage denotes, by its structure, the presence of a tale in which Farida is a character described as “daughter of Heaven”.

It can be noticed the importance that the following paragraphs play in the intertwining of the plot and literary fiction. For example, the temporal expression “a few days later” (Couto, 2002, p. 77), at the beginning of the third paragraph, works as an essential element for textual expansion and narrative progression, which fits into the strategy of development of the canonical morphology of the tale. In fact, more important is to understand how resorting to narrative episodes allows the composition of the content related to the universe of the Mozambican history and traditions.

On the other hand, it is worth recalling the fact that this project of creating a polymorphic discourse of literature has always been taken by many writers with some degree of hesitation, since the colonial period. In this story of the language hybridisation, Ana Mafalda Leite (2002)– in the paper entitled “A fraternidade das palavras” (The fraternity of words) lists real examples of strong names from Mozambican literature such as Rui de Noronha, Noémia de Sousa, and Kalungane, the journalists of *Brado Africano*. José Craveirinha’s situation is *sui generis*, if we take into account the outreach of his poetry, whose style “is a reinvention of the Portuguese language characterized by a combination of forms and genres deriving from the Mozambican oral literature and the Western literary tradition” (Leite, 2002, p. 21). Thus, Mia Couto becomes one of those who pursues this project. But his creative style reaches the more profound levels of such “reception of an inventive tradition of the language – inherited from the literary production of José Craveirinha” (Leite, 2002, p. 23).

This outreach results from the fact that he goes beyond a simple linguistic construction of discourse and breaks down the transcultural barriers of the vast Mozambican territory. Therefore, the literary phenomenon in Mia Couto is made of such miscegenation that places the Portuguese language and the national languages in contact, moving the latter towards a perspective highly focused on the eminently Mozambique-rooted cultural aspects. Those are the resources that enable the author to extract, from reality the aspects of fiction, in this case, of tragic kind and often devastated by the cruelty of the narrative situations, although the literary tool has been able to nuance and soften, because, as Leyla Perrone-Moisés (quoted in Silva, 2000) states:

language has a referential function and claims to be representative. However, the world created by language will never totally be adequate to the real.

Telling a story is to reinvent it, even if it actually happened. Two people will never tell the same fact in the same way. (p. 177)

In Mia Couto's novel, the symbolic relationship between writing and orality shows that Mozambican national languages are becoming languages to be studied and valued as a vehicle of cultures, without, however, undermining the unifying role of the Portuguese language. Perpétua Gonçalves (2011, p. 21), in an article published in *Jornal Savana* on Portuguese language and cultures of the CPLP (Community of Portuguese Language Countries) day, quotes an important passage of Ungulani Ba ka Khosa's thought on the place that should be given to national languages:

the Portuguese language, the language of unity and development, was expected to share with other languages its hegemonic space in education, information, public and private spaces, similar to what happened at the beginning of the 20th century when, in the small town of Lourenço Marques, there was room for a bilingual newspaper, Portuguese/Ronga, the *Africano* and later *Brado Africano*, and a Daily newspaper in the English language-*Guardian*. The Portuguese language was never hurt by that multilingual coexistence.

According to Ungulani Ba Ka Khosa (quoted in Gonçalves, 2011), it is not a question of calling for the break between the Mozambican culture and the Portuguese language, although, using the phraseology of Soren Kierkegaard (1959, p. 30), it is clear that "when the time for weaning comes, the mother breast gets dark". In this trivial but fundamental logic, one could imagine that it would be harmful to the evolutionary process of Mozambican literature to think of a possible break with the Portuguese tradition. On the contrary, in *Terra sonâmbula*, the author brings, in literary practice, structures that revive these maternal ties taking into account that his writing actually obeys the Portuguese syntactical structure, to which a grid of neologisms⁹ from the vernacular rules of the language is added.

This is about allowing the Portuguese language to coexist with the Mozambican national languages, without necessarily signifying hegemony of one over the other. In this way, Mia Couto becomes an author of peculiar artistic convictions, for being able to set up the hybrid lexical game in a national type of literature. Through his art, the author of *Terra sonâmbula* claims the strengthening of the rational bonds with Portuguese culture, giving an opportunity to the acclamation of national cultures.

Therefore, this Couto's move means the generational rejuvenation of cultures, the perennity of languages. The theme that the writer develops in *Terra sonâmbula*, as well as his approach to it, generates an important semantic-pragmatic segment that indicates the transformation of the critical discourse of society, from the cultural and aesthetic points of view if we look at art from within and from the historical present.

⁹ By resorting to the language mixing in the novel production, Mia Couto avoids getting trapped in the mismatch that could occur between the European standard Portuguese and the human experience that embodies his novel, because it is closely related to sensitive issues of society in its diverse ethnolinguistic structure and organization.

Moisés de Lemos Martins (2011, p. 129), quoting Aristotle, says “man is defined by language” and “the word is, par excellence, the great myth of civilization”. I bring the citation as a way of highlighting the idea that Mia Couto does not invent the genres in his writing, he recreates them based on his inspiration together with the social and linguistic features of the reader. He creates his own symbology, his myths, his gods, and archetypal heroes based on a vocabulary from his own imagination.

It can be assumed, on the other hand, that Couto’s discourse is self-invented to be representative to the readers of his works because it must incite interactional discussion between culture and writing. The language in *Terra sonâmbula* works as a weapon from which the cultural traits are reconstructed, from which are reinvented the foundations for a land that collapses because of war and poverty.

Moisés de Lemos Martins is conclusive when stating that the pictorial word “has always threatened the western logos by bearing in it the *virtus* of separation” (Martins, 2011, p. 129). In the case of Mia Couto, *virtus* does not point to the intrinsic strength of separation. On the contrary, it deplores the evils of a destructive and breakaway conflict, implicitly longing for the opposite. This can concomitantly be seen in the characters of *Terra sonâmbula*, a kind of prototypical society that is perceived through popular fabulation. Couto’s characters convey a feeling of love and joy as opposition to the problems caused by war, hunger, and poverty. The environment that is lived in the narrative results from the ability the author has to employ the Portuguese language in service of art. The dialogue, established between the characters supports this utopian thought of building identity from the language:

as I did not attend the call, he held my arms and pulled me. Did he use violence? No. This is the strangeness: he handled me delicately, vice-versatile, I was almost girded to a dance. Then, I felt myself falling into his arms, succumbing. And the world all around disappeared. (Couto, 2002, p. 45)

The character Xipoco¹⁰, although suspicious to Kindzu, had no malicious inspiration. In fact, he instinctively held his prey, apparently, not to bring pain to someone from the family who could keep the eye on Kindzu’s fantasies and moves: “I doubted: I couldn’t be the anchor that was unnecessary. It was Xipoco, the spirit that had appeared to me on the beach of Tandissico. That boat was possessed, guarded against intruders” (Couto, 2002, p. 66).

The use of terms such as “strange”, “vice-versatile”, “belt”, “succumb” and “espiritado”, foreign to European Portuguese, turns Mia Couto into a forerunner of the creation of lexemes or expressions that seek to connect the language to regional speeches¹¹ of the

¹⁰ In the languages of Southern Mozambique, “Xipoco” means “ghost”, a dreamlike figure that can both do good if representing a family and can cause evil if intentionally sent to represent the interests of someone who wants the curse.

¹¹ Mia Couto says to have read Luandino, between 1977-1978, and assumes to have gained, in such reading, some inspiration for creation. Then, he read Guimarães Rosa. In the interview with Patrick Chabal (1994, p. 289), he confesses that he was still moved by the fact that Brazil had managed to create the Brazilian, which he could intuitively do “with a Mozambican flavor”, creating “beauty, showing a little of what can someone possibility do in his own language”.

vast linguistic context of contemporary Mozambican literature. All in all, we conclude that the criticism of reality is an artistic exercise that requires a careful examination of the existential factors of life, but, above all, it meets the demand of science that is expected to be based on reality. Therefore, the community culture subsists under the light of history and memories.

The study carried out allowed to find out that, for the most part, the novel episodes interpret spaces and rough times, where nature fills the void created by the unrest of war and hunger. The episodes, life, and daily life interactions reify the hope and the promise of a collective conscience, reviving the precepts of construction of symbolic nations in the light of the structuring realms of the lyrical-realistic narrative.

Translation: Arsénio Augusto Chelengo

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This work is funded within the scope of the “Knowledge for Development Initiative”, by Rede Aga Khan para o Desenvolvimento and by FCT – Fundação para a Ciência e Tecnologia, I.P. (nº 333162622) in the context of the project “Memories, cultures and identities: how the past weights on the present-day intercultural relations in Mozambique and Portugal?”.

REFERENCES

- Afonso, M. F. (2004). *O conto moçambicano: escrita pós-colonial*. Lisbon: Caminho.
- Amarilis, O. (1986). Crioulo/Português, uma inter-relação a considerar. In T. V. da Silva (Ed.), *Simpósio internacional sobre cultura e literatura cabo-verdianas: actas* (pp. 179-183). Praia: Instituto da Biblioteca Nacional e do Livro.
- Bergson, H. (2006). *Matéria e memória: ensaio sobre a relação do corpo com o espírito*. Sao Paulo: Martins Fontes.
- Chabal, P. (1994). *Vozes moçambicanas*. Lisbon: Vega.
- Couto, M. (2002). *Terra sonâmbula*. Lisbon: Caminho.
- Craveirinha, J. (1980). *Xigubo*. Lisbon: Edições 70.
- Craveirinha, J. (1982). *Karingana ua karingana*. Lisbon: Edições 70.
- Craveirinha, J. (1999). *Obra poética*. Lisbon: Caminho.
- Escarpit, R. (1969). *Sociologia da literatura*. Lisbon: Arcádia.
- Ferreira, A. M. (2015). As dores da tristeza: o romance *Rainha da noite*, de João Paulo Borges Coelho. In A. M. Ferreira, & M. F. Brasete (Eds.), *Pelos mares da língua portuguesa 2* (pp. 43-52). Aveiro: UA Editora.
- Ferreira, M. (1967/1985). *A aventura crioula*. Lisbon: Plátano Editora.

- Ferreira, M. (1989). *O discurso no percurso africano I* (1st ed.). Lisbon: Plátano.
- Ferreira, V. (2005). *Aparição*. Lisbon: Bertrand Editora
- Freyre, G. (1952). *Aventura e rotina*. Lisbon: Livros do Brasil.
- Freyre, G. (1961). *O luso e o trópico: sugestões em torno dos métodos portugueses de integração de povos autóctones e de culturas diferentes da europeia num complexo novo de civilização*. Lisbon: Comissão Executiva das Comemorações do Quinto Centenário da Morte do Infante D. Henrique.
- Gomes, S. C. (2008). *Cabo Verde: literatura em chão de cultura*. Sao Paulo: Ateliê Editorial.
- Gonçalves, P. (2011). Português e línguas bantu na construção de uma identidade cultural moçambicana. *Savana - semanário independente*, p. 2.
- Hamilton, R. (1984). *Literatura africana, literatura necessária II – Moçambique, Cabo Verde, Guiné Bissau, São Tomé e Príncipe*. Lisbon: Edições 70.
- Kierkegaard, S. (1959). *Temor e tremor*. Lisbon: Guimarães Editores.
- Laranjeira, J. L. P. (1995). *A negritude africana de língua portuguesa*. Porto: Edições Afrontamento.
- Leite, A. M. (2002). A fraternidade das palavras. *Via Atlântica*, 5, 21-28. <https://doi.org/10.11606/va.voi5.49718>
- Lukács, G. (1989). *Teoria do romance*. Lisbon: Presença.
- Lukács, G., & Bakhtin, M. M. (1976). *Problemi di teoria del romanzo*. Torino: Giulio Einaudi.
- Lopes, B. (1967/1985). Prefácio. In M. Ferreira, *A aventura crioula*. Lisbon: Editora Ulisseia.
- Lopes, M. (1997). *Chuva braba*. Lisbon: Caminho.
- Machado, Á. M., & Pageaux, D-H. (2001). *Da literatura comparada à teoria da literatura*. Lisbon: Editorial Presença.
- Mapera, M. J. C. (2014). *Realismo e lirismo em Terra sonâmbula, de Mia Couto, e Chuva braba, de Manuel Lopes*. Doctoral thesis, University of Aveiro, Aveiro, Portugal. Retrieved from <http://hdl.handle.net/10773/12369>
- Margarido, A. (2010). A antologia da ficção caboverdiana contemporânea. In F. Bettencourt & A. Silva (Org.), *Claridade: a palavra dos outros* (pp. 71-75). Praia: Instituto da Biblioteca Nacional e do Disco.
- Martins, M. L. (2011). O que podem as imagens. Trajecto do uno ao múltiplo. In M. L. Martins; J. B. de Miranda; M. Oliveira & J. Godinho (Eds.), *Imagem e pensamento* (pp. 129-135). Coimbra: Gráfica Editor.
- Matusse, G. (1998). *A construção da imagem de moçambicanidade em José Craveirinha, Mia Couto e Ungulani Ba Ka Khosa*. Maputo, Moçambique. Maputo: Livraria Universitária.
- Mazula, B. (1995). *Educação, cultura e ideologia em Moçambique*. Lisbon: Afrontamento.
- Motta, J. F. (2004). *Literatura moçambicana dos séculos XIX e XX*. Braga: Edições APPACDM.
- Ribeiro, O. (1997). *A Ilha do Fogo e as suas erupções*. Lisbon: Comissão Nacional Para as Comemorações dos Descobrimientos Portugueses.
- Silva, R. da. (2000). *Percurso da narrativa literária moçambicana: entre a história e a ficção*. Doctoral thesis, University Nova of Lisbon, Lisbon, Portugal.

Trigo, S. (n.d.). *Ensaio de literatura comparada afro-luso-brasileira*. Lisbon: Vega.

Wellek, R., & Warren, A. (1971). *Teoria da literatura*. Lisbon: Publicações Europa-América.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Martins Mapera is an Associate Professor at the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities at Zambezi University, who founded the PhD project in Language, Culture and Society. He is director of the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities at the Zambezi University. Doctorate by the University of Aveiro and University of Minho in Cultural Hermeneutics, in 2014. He has published, in the scope of Literature, Culture and Society, Intercultural Communication and Lusophone Studies. He is a researcher at the “Memories, cultures and identities: how the past weights on the present-day intercultural relations in Mozambique and Portugal?” project by the Communication and Society Research Centre (CECS) of the University of Minho, Portugal. He is currently a member of the editorial board of *Editora Pangeia*, of the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul and co-organizer of the *Guavira Letras* journal, of Postgraduate Studies at the same university. The publications include *Realismo e lirismo em Terra Sonâmbula, de Manuel Couto, e Chuva braba, de Manuel Lopes* (2015); *Cinzas de cão: ensaios críticos de literatura* (2018); *Poema aberto e a tela da diversidade* (2017) and several scientific articles published in peer-reviewed journals.

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7476-2986>

Email: lazifand@gmail.com

Address: Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanidades da Universidade Zambeze, Av. Alfredo Lawley, nº 1018, Matacuane, Beira/Sofala - Moçambique

Submitted: 08/05/2020

Accepted: 30/07/2020