Women who Give Birth to New Worlds:

Three Feminine Perspectives on

Lusophone Postcolonial Africa

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Abstract

This thesis aims at analysing comparatively the literary production of three African female authors – the Cape Verdean Dina Salústio (1941), the Mozambican Paulina Chiziane (1955) and the Angolan Rosária da Silva (1959) – so as to observe the authors' cultural construction of their complex postcolonial nations from a female-focalized point of view and their representation of the women of these nations interacting with the transcultural contexts of each analysed country. Their works demonstrate the importance of thinking nationalism and national identity through gender, simultaneously highlighting the potential of situated gender analysis for the understanding and contestation of the power networks that consolidate the supremacy of hegemonic discourses. Hence, the main argument that this thesis develops in three distinct chapters (each one devoted to the literary production of each author) and in the light of a particular theoretical framework is that the building of the post-independence nations under analysis is structured through gender differentiation.

The point of departure for this project is the work developed by specific postcolonial theorists who analyse and deconstruct hegemonic discourses of identity. Hence, Benedict Anderson's understanding of the nation as an "imagined political community" (1991) is explored and widened by Homi Bhabha's theorization of the dynamics of national discourse (1990), whose instability comes from the friction between its pedagogical and performative dimensions. This emphasis on empowering marginality takes us to Edward Said's reflections on exile (2001). For Said, the condition of exile represents an irrecoverable displacement of the human being as regards her/his own homeland, a state which she/he will permanently try to revoke. Andrea O'Reilly Herrera (2001) uses the term *insílio* to emphasise the psychological and emotional dimensions of this state, which precedes the actual physical exile. Reflections on the active involvement of the displaced in the renegotiation of the nation are also at the core of Mary Louise Pratt's theorization of contact zones, autoethnography and transculturation (1991). The emphasis on the disruptive potential of autoethnography is recaptured in Graham Huggan's study of the Post-Colonial Exotic (2001), focusing specifically on the potential of what he called "celebratory autoethnography". Nonetheless, considering that these approaches are largely gender blind, the study questions their premises further by incorporating postcolonial feminist theories and feminist theories from sociology. Anne McClintock (1995) and Nira Yuval-Davis's (1997) important proposal of the analysis of nationalism through the lens of a theory of gender power gave access to multiple experiences of the nation. Amina Mama's (2001) proposal of the analysis of individual and national identity through gender with a view to understanding and dismantling the power structures in operation adds to these strong theorizations. Considering that the three examined countries had one-party socialist regimes immediately after independence, Catherine Scott's study on gender and development theories (1995) facilitates a situated analysis of gender as well.

Through this outlook, the study assesses the feasibility and limitation of the application of such theories to the gender-related issues in the specific context of postcolonial lusophone Africa. Furthermore, it explores the possible existence of common "lusophone postcolonial" spaces that link these women's experiences of Portuguese colonialism and the socialist experiment.

Women who Give Birth to New Worlds: Three Feminine Perspectives on Lusophone Postcolonial Africa, submitted by Maria Tavares to the University of Manchester for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, 2010.

Declaration

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If home is where one's heart is, my home is all of you.

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my beloved friend João Pedro C.

You will always be alive in my heart....

Introduction: "Bringing down the house": Female literary voices in dialogue in Postcolonial Lusophone Africa

> "Embora as assunções acerca da realidade das nações e das diferenças entre nações sejam vias socialmente significativas em que categorizamos o mundo em torno de nós e através das quais nos localizamos num sentido colectivo, a forma, o conteúdo e o significado dessas categorias permanecem abertos à interpretação individual e à negociação. Por isso, entendemos que a ênfase não deve ser posta apenas nos que constroem a nação, mas também nos que a (re)constroem, seja pela sua capacidade de retroacção, seja ainda pelo seu labor específico com vista à descoberta de alternativas."
>
> Gabriel Fernandes, *Em Busca da Nação*[1]

As suggested by its title – *Women who Give Birth to New Worlds: Three Feminine Perspectives on Lusophone Postcolonial Africa* –, this study sets out to put forward a comparative analysis of the literary production of three female authors who write from the particular contexts of their distinct countries of origin in the postcolonial era: the Cape Verdean Dina Salústio, the Mozambican Paulina Chiziane and the Angolan Rosária da Silva. Located in different regions of the African continent, Cape Verde, Mozambique and Angola are three very young lusophone nation-states which were Portuguese colonies until 1975, a year after the "Revolução dos Cravos" (which occurred on the 25th of April 1974) took place in Portugal, subsequently bringing the fascist regime and the state's imperial project to an end. Considering that their autonomy was achieved at the end of a long, complex and painful process of colonization and anti-colonial struggle, it comes as no surprise that literature should have acquired a very important role in the intellectual struggle for defining these nations. Used primarily as a vehicle for the affirmation and diffusion of anti-colonial and pro-nationalist ideals, literature became a privileged place for intellectual reflection on the emergence of an autonomous collective identity[2], which remained at the core of

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[1] Fernandes, Gabriel, *Em Busca da Nação: Notas Para Uma Reinterpretação do Cabo Verde Crioulo* (Florianópolis/Praia: Editora da UFSC and IBNL, 2006), p. 17.

[2] In accordance with post-Lacanian, Feminist and Post-colonial theorizations, identity is here understood as 'subjectivity'. See Ashcroft, Bill, Griffiths, Gareth and Helen Tiffin, *Key Concepts in Post-Colonial Studies* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), p. 220: "The concept of subjectivity problematizes the simple relationship between the individual and language, replacing human nature with the concept of the *production* of the human subject through ideology, discourse or language". For a discussion on the emergence of subjectivity in historical and modern conceptions of community see, for example, Bhabha, Homi K., *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994); McClintock, Anne, '«No Longer in a Future Heaven»: Gender, Race and Nationalism' in McClintock, Anne, Aamir Mufti and Ella Shohat (eds.), *Dangerous liaisons: gender, nations, and postcolonial perspectives* (London; Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), pp. 89-112.

those cultural discourses of nationhood[3] that followed the birth of the nation-states in the post-independence period.

Notwithstanding their common (cultural and linguistic) Portuguese colonial inheritance, the shared experience of resistance against the colonizer, and even the common alignment with Marxism after independence, the three countries discussed here have strikingly dissimilar historical trajectories, which are the outcome of particular pre-colonial, geo-social and cultural characteristics, as well as specific colonial projects, anti-colonial interventions, and postcolonial dynamics. Hence, literature as both producer and product of national culture reveals very distinct characteristics in each of these geo-cultural spaces. As the historian Patrick Chabal reminds us, in order to understand the origins and the impact of these national literatures in the construction of a national identity, it is necessary to take into consideration the contextual characteristics that distinguish these particular lusophone African countries not only from other African countries, but also, I would add, from each other.[4] Chabal identifies five crucial historical factors that ultimately determine these distinctions:

> (1) the distinctiveness of the Creole island cultures of Cape Verde and São Tomé and Príncipe; (2) the poor colonial integration, uneven economic development and the complex racial and social mix of Angola and Mozambique; (3) the social and cultural impact of the regime of the Portuguese dictator Salazar (the Estado Novo, or New State) on the African colonies; (4) the dynamics of nationalism, the effect of the war of liberation and, for Angola and Mozambique, of the 'civil' wars which followed and (5) the impact of outside cultural, intellectual and literary influences on the development of the literatures of Lusophone Africa.[5]

As a result, these specificities have come to condition, in diverse ways, both the emergence of literary national consciousness prior to the establishment of the nation-states, and the consolidation and development of this consciousness throughout the postcolonial era. It is also evident that due to the interrelationship between literature and nation in these African countries, from the start, literary texts became what Inocência

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[3] Discourse is henceforth to be understood, according to postcolonial theories, as deriving from Michel Foucault's conceptualization of the term as a set of practices, beliefs and orientations that are produced by a dominant group and internalized by dominated groups, thus constituting the social existence of a given community. There is, therefore, a structure of power in operation underneath the institutionalization of these 'discursive practices'. See Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (1998), p. 42. See also Berry, Peter, *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory* (Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press: 2002), pp. 175-177; Bhabha (1994); McClintock (1997).

[4] Chabal, Patrick, 'Introduction' in Chabal et al., *The Post-Colonial Literature of Lusophone Africa* (London: Hurst & Company, 2002), pp. 1-28.

[5] Ibidem, pp. 12-13.

Mata calls "*textos-memória* da História dos países" in the sense that they accompany the trajectories of the nations.[6]

Hence, as many scholars working on the study of lusophone African literatures in the early stages noted, given the urgency of anti-colonial cultural affirmation, these literatures were intimately related to the ideological and political projects of nationhood that were drafted in the nation-states from which they emerged.[7] However, the advent of independence and the various postcolonial forms that the nation took[8] brought about significant shifts of perspective that rearranged the priorities and concerns of these literatures, making them openly question and problematize in various ways and to varying degrees the national cultures under construction. As Mata points out, it was no longer the power structures operating within the relationship between the colonized and the colonizer that took precedence: rather, the analysis of the influence of colonial structures on the post-independence generation, and the subsequent socio-cultural effects of this, began to assume greater significance. As Mata puts it:

> Um dos territórios da enunciação pós-colonial é o desvelamento da continuidade da lógica colonial de dominação, agora internalizada, para além dos interrelacionamentos global/local nas relações internas transversais, que cruzam o interior destas sociedades. Este deslocamento do olhar para o interior, para as relações de poder internas torna-se, neste contexto, um dos critérios configuradores da estética pós-colonial.[9]

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[6] Mata, Inocência, 'Laços de Memória: *a escrita-testemunho como terapêutica na literatura africana – os casos de Angola e da Costa do Marfim*' in *Laços de Memória & Outros Ensaios sobre Literatura Angolana* (Luanda: UEA, 2006), pp. 17-31.

[7] For standard accounts of this, see, for example: Hamilton, Russell G., *Voices From an Empire: a History of Afro-Portuguese Literature* (Wisconsin: University of Minnesota Press, 1975); Santilli, Maria Aparecida, 'Três Literaturas Distintas' in *Estórias Africanas: História e Antologia* (São Paulo: Editora Ática, 1985), pp. 7-30; Laranjeira, Pires, 'Questões da Formação das Literaturas Africanas' in *De Letra em Riste: Identidade, Autonomia e Outras Questões na Literatura de Angola, Cabo Verde, Moçambique e S. Tomé e Príncipe* (Porto: Afrontamento, 1992), pp. 19-32; Laranjeira, Pires et al., *Literaturas Africanas de Expressão Portuguesa* (Lisboa: Universidade Aberta, 1995); Chabal et al. (2002).

[8] Taking into consideration the evolution and problematization of the terms 'Post-Colonialism' and 'Postcolonialism', the hyphenated version will henceforth be used to refer to a geographical reality, a historical period, and a political and ideological shift. The non-hyphenated version will be used to emphasize the contextualized analysis of cultural products, representing alternative discursive practices and strategies that aim at the decolonization of the mind and the imagining of new knowledge systems. See, for example, Ashcroft, Bill, Griffiths, Gareth and Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures* (London and New York: Routledge, 1989); Shohat, Ella, 'Notes on the «Post-Colonial»' in *Social Text*, No. 31/32, Third World and Post-Colonial Issues (1992), pp. 99-113; Ashcroft, Bill, Griffiths, Gareth and Helen Tiffin (eds.), *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995); McClintock, Anne, 'Introduction: Postcolonialism and the Angel of Progress' in *Imperial leather: race, gender and sexuality in the colonial contest* (London; New York: Routledge, 1995), pp. 1-17; Ashcroft et al. (1998), pp. 186-192; Leite, Ana Mafalda, 'Literaturas Africanas e Pós-Colonialismo' in *Literaturas Africanas e Formulações Pós-Coloniais* (Lisboa: Edições Colibri, 2003), pp. 9-40; Sharp, Joanne P., *Geographies of Postcolonialism: Spaces of Power and Representation* (London: SAGE, 2009).

[9] Mata (2006), p. 18.

In other words, the moment at which the cultural nation, as conceived within a political and ideological project, starts to be questioned by literature signals the attempt to deconstruct hegemonic and univocal discourses of nationhood, as well as opening up possibilities for rethinking national identity.

Considering that Cape Verde, Mozambique and Angola became one-party authoritarian, socialist states after independence, under the aegis of PAIGC, FRELIMO and MPLA respectively, it is worth highlighting the role of literature in postcoloniality as a key weapon for the intellectual subversion of cultural nationhood as it had been constructed by the Marxist-led political elites. One of the strategies used by these elites to legitimize their entitlement to power after independence, other than emphasizing their participation in the liberation struggle, was the reinterpretation of history in such a way as to make the birth of national identity coincide with the origins of the anti-colonial struggle. Hence, for example, the fact that the men who created the political parties that attained power after independence, namely Amílcar Cabral (PAIGC), Eduardo Mondlane (FRELIMO) and Agostinho Neto (MPLA), are considered as the military fathers of the modern nations.[10] This in turn would ultimately lead to the validation of a specific, unified and paternalistic Marxist conceptualization of national identity, one that canonical post-colonial writers such as Pepetela, Mia Couto, Manuel Rui, Paula Tavares, Luandino Vieira, Germano de Almeida, Ungulani Ba Ka Khosa, João Paulo Borges Coelho, and José Eduardo Agualusa – to name only a few of the best known and researched – have in very different ways interrogated and reworked, simultaneously proposing cultural and cartographical reconfigurations of the nation that exceed the myopic limits of the centralized cultural nation proposed by the ideological systems of the Marxist one-party state.[11] In other words, these writers have proceeded to produce a

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[10] On the roles played by Amílcar Cabral, Agostinho Neto and Eduardo Mondlane in the nationalist movements see, for example: Gentili, Anna Maria, *O Leão e o Caçador: Uma História da África Sub-Saariana* (Maputo: Arquivo Histórico de Moçambique, 1998), pp. 278-285; *Estudos Moçambicanos* Nº. 16 (Maputo: CEA UM, 1999); Cardoso, Humberto, O *Partido Único em Cabo Verde* (Praia: Edição de autor, 1993); PAIGC, História: A Guiné e as Ilhas de Cabo Verde (Porto: Afrontamento, 1974); Laranjeira, Pires, 'Agostinho Neto: impossível renúncia à negritude' in *Literaturas Africanas de Expressão Portuguesa* (Lisboa: Universidade Aberta, 1995), pp. 88-99; Lopes, José Vicente, *Cabo Verde: Os Bastidores da Independência* (Praia: Spleen, 2002), pp. 31-59 and 193-218.

[11] On the revisionary work proposed by these canonical post-colonial writers, see, for example, Peres, Phyllis, *Transculturation and Resistance in Lusophone African Narrative* (Florida: University Press of Florida, 1997); Matusse, Gilberto, *A Construção da Imagem de Moçambicanidade em José Craveirinha, Mia Couto e Ungulani Ba Ka Khosa* (Maputo: Livraria Universitária, 1998); Noa, Francisco, 'A Dimensão Escatológica da Ficção Moçambicana: Ungulani Ba Ka Khosa e Mia Couto' in *A Escrita Infinita* (Maputo: Livraria Universitária, 1998), pp. 11-19; Sepúlveda, Maria do Carmo and Salgado, Maria Teresa (ed.), *África & Brasil: Letras em Laços* (São Paulo: Atlântica Editora, 2000); 'Cape Verde:

reinterpretation of the past without allowing the process of history and memory to be subordinated to political and ideological demands. In doing this, they have opened up possibilities for the recovery of other subaltern spaces and the exploration of marginalized and contentious discourses and experiences, which had been left outside the boundaries of the national narrative by the centralizing cultural structures of the Marxist nation state.

Emerging from these three young, and very different, nation-states, the three female authors whose literary work is examined here are themselves very distinct, not only in terms of their generation, but also in biographical and bibliographical terms. They have, however, one very specific aspect in common, which is the fact that they were all the first female novel writers to publish in the context of their post-independence-countries, thus constituting a major breakthrough in the male-dominated literary canons of their cultural nations. In order to understand the significance of this breakthrough it is important to give a brief diachronic review of how gender was treated in the conceptualizations of collective unity generated within the contexts under analysis. According to Benedict Anderson, one of the most important theorists of nationalism and nationhood, 'nation-ness' and 'nationalism' are cultural constructions whose contemporary legitimacy is rooted in the historical and contextualized evolution of these concepts.[12] As such, the theorist defines a nation as an "imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign".[13] First of all, it is imagined because its members will always conceive of themselves as part of a shared

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Language, Literature & Music', *Portuguese Literary and Cultural Studies* 8 (Spring 2002), University of Massachusetts-Dartmouth; Padilha, Laura Cavalcante, *Novos Pactos, Outras Ficções: Ensaios Sobre Literaturas Afro-Luso-Brasileiras* (Lisboa: Novo Imbondeiro, 2002); 'Reevaluating Mozambique', *Portuguese Literary and Cultural Studies* 10 (Spring 2003), University of Massachusetts-Dartmouth; Chaves, Rita and Macêdo, Tania (eds.), *Literaturas em Movimento: Hibridismo Cultural e Exercício Crítico* (São Paulo: Arte e Ciência Editora, 2003); Rothwell, Phillip, *A Postmodern Nationalist: Truth, Orality and Gender in the Work of Mia Couto* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2004); Chaves, Rita, *Angola e Moçambique: Experiência Colonial e Territórios Literários* (São Paulo: Ateliê Editora, 2005); Sepúlveda, Maria do Carmo and Salgado, Maria Teresa (ed.), *África & Brasil: Letras em Laços* (São Paulo: Yendis Editora, 2006); Mata (2006); Chaves, Rita and Tania Macêdo (eds.), *Marcas da Diferença: as Literaturas Africanas de Língua Portuguesa* (São Paulo: Alameda, 2006); Chaves, Rita, Tânia Macedo and Rejane Vecchia (eds.), *A Kinda e a Missanga: Encontros Brasileiros com a Literatura Angolana* (São Paulo and Luanda: Editorial Nzila and Cultura Académica Editora, 2007); Padilha, Laura Cavalcante and Ribeiro, Margarida Calafate (ed.), *Lendo Angola* (Porto: Afrontamento, 2008); Ribeiro, Margarida Calafate and Paula Meneses (ed.), *Moçambique: das palavras escritas* (Porto: Afrontamento, 2008); Gordon, Maria da Conceição Lopes, 'The (Un)Holy Trinity: Women's Protagonism in *O Testamento do Sr. Napumoceno da Silva Araújo*' in *Portuguese Studies 25* (1), (2009), pp. 65-79.
[12] Anderson, Benedict, *Imagined communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991).
[13] Ibidem, p. 6.

structure. Secondly, it is imagined as limited due to its need to distinguish itself from other nations – no matter how flexible the boundaries might be. Thirdly, it is imagined as sovereign given its need to envision itself as free from any hierarchical orders (being those dynastic or divine). Finally, it is imagined as a community due to its urge to fantasize about its horizontalness, regardless of all the inequalities that might exist within it, because it is this horizontality that legitimizes the sacrifices that the members are meant to willingly make for the nation.[14] For Anderson, the emergence of nationalism in the eighteenth century was made possible by the economic, social, scientific and communication changes that occurred, which in their turn, brought about the collapse of fundamental cultural conceptions that oriented people's conceptions of the world.[15] Hence, the theorist continues, these rapid modifications prompted the search for a new paradigm of cultural comradeship, which was highly facilitated by the development of print-capitalism. Despite recognizing that this type of nationalism originated from Europe, Anderson defends the view that it was exported by the imperial powers to their colonies and consolidated there mostly through educational systems and printed press, which would ultimately enable natives to imagine themselves as members of the nation. Nevertheless, the intricacies of the colonial nation would end up generating bilingual intelligentsias who, due to their ability to access more than one conception of nationhood, would become the first creators of alternative paradigms of nation.[16]

The emphasis that Anderson places on the agency of those who are marginal to the homogenizing experience of the nation and, somehow, find ways to subvert it, becomes particularly relevant for the present study given that not only does it highlight the flexibility of the conceptualization of the nation (in the sense that it remains constantly open to renegotiation, regardless of the investment of powerful elites in maintaining it), but it also accentuates the potential of marginal discourses of nationhood, which problematize and reconstruct the nation, by proposing new alternatives. As Anne McClintock and Nira Yuval-Davis point out in their important studies on nationalism and gender, as discourses that constitute people's subjectivities

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[14] Ibidem, pp. 6-7.
[15] Ibidem, pp. 9-36. Anderson observes the downfall of three fundamental cultural conceptions: the first one believed that a specific language allowed a privileged access to ontological truth; the second one defended the idea that society was hierarchically organized around a divine monarchy; and the third one imposed a perception of temporality in which cosmology and history coincided.
[16] Ibidem, pp. 113-140.

and collective identities, all constructions of nationhood imply specific conceptualizations of gender which are not fixed and need, therefore, to be understood in their particular historical, geographical and socio-cultural contexts.[17] The generation of very clear representations of womanhood and manhood thus becomes central to the imagination of extended unity within communal projects, regardless of their political nature (colonial, anti-colonial or post-colonial), which means that constructions of nation are effectively rooted in gender difference. Considering that, as Cynthia Enloe put it, nationalisms have "typically sprung from masculinised memory, masculinised humiliation and masculinised hope", they impose a power structure based on gender difference which, on the one hand limits the access of women to the resources of the nation and, on the other hand legitimizes men's access to those same national resources.[18]

According to Yuval-Davis and Floya Anthias, women have frequently been involved in nationalism in five principal ways: as biological reproducers, as reproducers of the limits of the nation, as producers and disseminators of national culture, as symbols of national difference and as active participants in national struggles.[19] As such, and as McClintock observes, women emerge as the "symbolic bearers of the nation", although they have no real access to national agency.[20] Therefore, the analysis of nationalism alongside a theory of gender power opens up a wide variety of possible debates. If, as McClintock asserts, "there is no single narrative of the nation" as "different groups (genders, classes, ethnicities, generations and so on) do not experience the myriad national formations in the same way. Nationalisms are invented, performed and consumed in ways that do not follow a universal blueprint", this means that the examination of nationalism through the lens of gender will enable a questioning and rethinking of identity and national identity per se.[21]

In a text entitled *Gender and Power in African Contexts*, Amina Mama reflects precisely on the potential that emerges from analysing identity, at individual and national levels, through gender, as it enables a greater understanding of how power works, which structures are in operation and how they can be dismantled in order to

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[17] McClintock, Anne, *Imperial leather: race, gender and sexuality in the colonial contest* (London; New York: Routledge, 1995); Yuval-Davis, Nira, *Gender and Nation* (London: Sage, 1997).
[18] Cynthia Enloe quoted in McClintock (1995), p. 353.
[19] Nira Yuval-Davis and Floya Anthias quoted in McClintock (1995), p. 355.
[20] McClintock (1995), p. 354.
[21] Ibidem, p. 360.

make room for more inclusive and democratic ways of experiencing selfhood and/in nationhood.[22] The present analysis will ultimately facilitate further discussion of women's place within the discourse of nationhood, as well as exposing the impact of women's subversive strategies of national reconstruction, through what Mama calls "the politicisation of personal experience"[23], in a specific historical and geographical location – a renegotiation which occurs at the intersection of gender with structures such as ethnicity, race and class. This, in turn, brings us back to the work developed by the three authors under investigation here.

Considering the specific historical, geographical, social, political and cultural contexts of the three countries mentioned above, as well as the specific biographical contexts from which the three female authors write, it comes as no surprise that the debates on identity and nationalism that they portray fictionally through a gender perspective, should mirror and problematize the distinct discourses of nationhood built throughout history, so as to reveal the complex structures of power in operation which are based on shifting forms of difference. This means that, functioning both as women and as writers, in their work, the authors are simultaneously both subjects and objects. Hence, their reflection on fundamental questions regarding national identity, from a female-focalized point of view, and building upon those historical, social and economic occurrences that marked the consolidation of their nations is twofold, given that their voicing of the experiences of African women runs parallel to their own experiences as African female writers. It is worth remembering, at this point, the words of Laura Cavalcante Padilha and Inocência Mata in the introduction to the recently-published collection of essays on gender and women's writing in lusophone Africa entitled *A Mulher em África: Vozes de Uma Margem Sempre Presente*:

> No caso da literatura, vale lembrar que tal exclusão [women's] se repete em todos os sistemas literários nos quais há nitidamente uma predominância de vozes masculinas, pois os textos, como produtos simbólicos e como «documentos do imaginário», na expressão de Jacques le Goff, submetem-se aos mesmos aparatos de dominação impostos pelas ideologias hegemónicas.[24]

As mentioned before, they are, indeed, quite unique in various ways, particularly in the sense that as female authors who write from their post-independent countries not only

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[22] Mama, Amina, 'Challenging Subjects: Gender and Power in African Contexts' in *African Sociological Review*, 5 (2), 2001, pp. 63-73

[23] Ibidem, p. 67.

[24] Mata, Inocência and Laura Cavalcante Padilha (org.), 'Introdução' in *A Mulher em África: Vozes de Uma Margem Sempre Presente* (Lisboa: Edições Colibri, 2007), pp. 13-17 [13].

have they succeeded – to a greater or lesser extent – in disrupting the historical exclusion of female voices from the literary systems of their countries, but they have also conquered a space in the male-dominated sphere of novel writing.

Although, generally speaking, there are not many female voices in the Cape Verdean, Mozambican and Angolan literary canons, due to women's historically limited access to the public sphere, it is nonetheless a fact that there is a tradition of isolated female voices emerging in poetry, in different literary projects ruled by diverse agendas, as an analysis of some of the most important anthologies of lusophone African literature published to date demonstrates.[25] Scholars such as Maria Nazareth Fonseca and Laura Padilha have already examined the female presence in some of the most important anthologies and collections of interviews[26], with a view to observing the place occupied by women in the literary canons and the terms of their admission to those canons.[27]

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[25] See, for example, Ferreira, Manuel, *No Reino de Caliban: Antologia Panorâmica da Poesia Africana de Expressão Portuguesa,* Vols. I, II e III (Lisboa: Plátano Editora, 1997[2nd Edition]); Andrade, Mário Pinto de, *Antologia Temática de Poesia Africana: Na Noite Grávida de Punhais* (Lisboa: Sá da Costa Editora, 1976); Andrade, Mário Pinto de, *Antologia Temática de Poesia Africana: O Canto Armado* (Lisboa: Sá da Costa Editora, 1979); Almada, José Luís Hopffer Cordeiro, *Mirabílis de Veias ao Sol: Antologia dos Novíssimos Poetas Cabo-Verdianos* (Praia: Instituto Caboverdiano do Livro e Caminho, 1988); Feijoó K., J. A. S. Lopito, *No Caminho Doloroso das Coisas: Antologia Panorâmica de Jovens Poetas Angolanos* (Luanda: UEA, 1988); Mendonça, Fátima and Saúte, Nelson, *Antologia da Nova Poesia Moçambicana: 1975-1988* (Maputo: AEMO, 1989); Manjate, Rogério (org.), *Colectânea Breve de Literatura Moçambicana* (Porto: GESTO, 2000); Saúte, Nelson, *Nunca Mais é Sábado: Antologia de Poesia Moçambicana* (Lisboa: D. Quixote, 2004).

[26] The best known collections of interviews with lusophone African writers have been published by Michel Laban. See Laban, Michel, *Angola: Encontro com Escritores* (Porto: Fundação Engenheiro António de Almeida, 1991), Vols. I e II; Laban, Michel, *Cabo Verde: Encontro com Escritores* (Porto: Fundação Engenheiro António de Almeida, 1992),Vols. I e II; Laban, Michel, *Moçambique: Encontro com Escritores* (Porto: Fundação Engenheiro António de Almeida, 1998), Vols. I, II e III. It is worth mentioning three other works which compile interviews with Mozambican authors: Chabal, Patrick, 'Entrevistas' in *Vozes Moçambicanas: Literatura e Nacionalidade* (Lisboa: Vega, 1994), pp. 71-349; Saúte, Nelson, *Os Habitantes da Memória: Entrevistas com Escritores Moçambicanos* (Praia: CCP, 1998); Panguana, Marcelo and Jorge d'Oliveira, *Fazedores da Alma* (Maputo: Edição de Autor, 1999).

[27] See Padilha, 'A Diferença Interroga o Cânone' (2002), pp. 151-156 and Fonseca, Maria Nazareth, 'Mulher-Poeta e Poetisas em Antologias Africanas de Língua Portuguesa: O Feminino Como Exceção' in Mata and Padilha (2007), pp. 489-518. According to Padilha, in the anthology *No Reino de Caliban*, by Ferreira, the presence of selected female authors is legitimized by their educational background (intimately related with their race in the specific cases of Angolan and Mozambican literature), their involvement in the liberation movements or their relationships with important male writers. Padilha also highlights the fact that Laban's collections of interviews is very much male-dominated as well (Orlanda Amarílis is the only Cape Verdean female writer interviewed, out of twenty five writers; Paula Tavares is the only Angolan female author interviewed, out of twenty six authors; Glória de Sant'Anna, Noémia de Sousa, Lília Momplé and Paulina Chiziane are the four female authors interviewed by Laban, out of a group of thirty one writers), thus mirroring the marginalization of female authorship. Apart from looking at Ferreira's anthology, Fonseca also examines some poetic anthologies that were published after the independence, of which, given the scope of this study, we will bring attention to only three: Lopito Feijo's 1988 anthology entitled *No Caminho Doloroso das Coisas: Antologia Panorâmica de Jovens Poetas Angolanos* (Paula Tavares, Doriana [Ana Francisca Silva Major] and Ana de Santana are the only female authors included); José Luís Hopffer Almada's *Mirabílis de Veias ao Sol: Antologia dos Novíssimos Poetas Cabo-Verdianos*, also published in 1988 (the anthology includes six female authors:

Ultimately, they conclude that, indeed, a very small number of women writers of poetry were allowed into the literary canons, the most important being those who were actively involved in the anti-colonial struggle, through participation in the bulletin *Mensagem*, which was published between 1948 and 1964 by the Casa dos Estudantes do Império (CEI), in Lisbon, and whose literary work is considered to be foundational for the modern literatures produced in their countries of origin: Alda Lara and Maria Eugénia Neto (Angola); Noémia de Sousa (Mozambique); Alda do Espírito Santo (S. Tomé e Príncipe); and Vera Duarte (Cape Verde). Despite having a very clear ideological agenda, their works successfully broke the silence that surrounded female subjectivities and women's experience of nationhood, bringing forth a discourse of the nation very much based on motherhood (as opposed to fatherhood).[28] If throughout the anti-colonial struggle the need to prioritize the fight for independence and the construction of a national identity might have somehow conditioned these female authors' portrayal of the gender question, the aftermath of independence should theoretically have enabled women's liberation, given the strong emphasis placed upon it by the three liberation movements throughout the revolutionary struggle, since their logic of modernization included refusing all forms of discrimination (being that racial, ethnic, of class or gender).

PAIGC, FRELIMO and MPLA, the victorious movements which attained power after independence in Cape Verde, Mozambique and Angola, respectively, were generally speaking, socialist, and therefore they proceeded to the creation of governmental and societal structures inspired by socialism. Nevertheless, there were differences in their ideological positioning within socialism. For example, in Cape Verde PAIGC (and PAICV, after the 1980's separation into the two independent states of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde) took into consideration the historical socio-cultural characteristics of the island setting (a creole community; much more Western than

Alzira Cabral, Ana Júlia, Arcília Barreto, Dina Salústio, Lara Araújo and Vera Duarte); and the *Antologia da Nova Poesia Moçambicana: 1975-1988*, organized by Fátima Mendonça and Nelson Saúte (this collection includes only Noémia de Sousa and Clotilde da Silva as representatives of female authorship). According to Fonseca, although the space provided to the female voice within the literary canons is still very small, in these anthologies the focus of the female authors' writing is now much more intimate, approaching women's experiences and spaces, as well as the female body.

[28] For a problematization of the discourses of womanhood and motherhood in the work of Noémia de Sousa and how the author constructs and is constructed by them, see Owen, Hilary, 'A Hybridity of One's Own: Rereading Noémia de Sousa' in *Mother Africa: Father Marx. Women's Writing of Mozambique 1948-2002*, (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2007), pp. 43-105. For a comparative analysis of the works by Alda Lara, Alda do Espírito Santo and Noémia de Sousa, see Padilha, 'Silêncios Rompidos' (2002), pp. 157-172.

African-oriented, with a long and solid history of emigration) in its adaptation of socialism, whereas in both Angola and Mozambique (former settler colonies of a very heterogeneous nature), the MPLA and FRELIMO embraced a much more orthodox Marxist-Leninist stance. Notwithstanding the orientational distinctions between the three parties, they turned their respective countries into one-party authoritarian states.[29] Gentili defines the one-party ideology as follows:

> A ideologia do partido único que foi elaborada nos primeiros anos e resiste até hoje, com as suas diferenças e morfologias, pode ser reassumida nos seguintes pontos: o partido único exprime e concretiza a unidade nacional fundamental, **não reconhece nem admite divisões étnicas, tribais, regionais ou de classe; qualquer oposição ao partido único é considerada ilegítima porque dividida e, portanto, referida ao tribalismo** que, por sua vez, é fomentada por conspirações obscurantistas objectivamente aliadas e cúmplices das tramas imperialistas; finalmente, o partido único é democrático uma vez que nele está representado todo o povo e é o instrumento para o mobilizar, onde atingir a integração nacional e o desenvolvimento económico.[30]

In fact, this definition becomes particularly helpful when we consider the treatment of the women's question inside these socialist states. Although their policies did generally contribute to an improvement of women's living conditions (with the democratization of education and health, as well as the creation of legislation to protect women's rights in terms of access to work and justice, for example) and they did create some space for women's economic liberation and integration into the work force (mostly through the action of the Organizações de Mulheres – Organização da Mulher Cabo Verdiana, Organização da Mulher Moçambicana e Organização da Mulher Angolana[31]) –, the

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[29] On this subject see, for example, Chabal (2002), pp. 1-28; Gentili (1998), pp. 325-336.

[30] Gentili (1998), p. 334 (my emphasis).

[31] Emerging from inside PAICC, FRELIMO and MPLA, respectively, OMCV, OMM and OMA were mass organizations created with a view to involve all women in the parties and to create a space of debate over the specific issues that referred to womanhood. Despite their achievements throughout the anti-colonial struggle (OMM and OMA's, as OMCV was not created until 1981) and even in the post-independence era, in the long term they proved to be inefficacious in the promotion of a real gender struggle. As branches of their respective parties, their actions were limited to PAICV, FRELIMO and MPLA's decisions and negotiations of nationhood. For standard accounts of the nature and actions of OMCV, OMM and OMA see Isaacman, Barbara and June Stefhan, *A Mulher Moçambicana no Processo de Libertação* (Maputo: INLD, 1984); OAW – Organization of Angolan Women (Translated by Marga Holness), *Angolan Women Building the Future: From National Liberation to Women's Emancipation* (London: Zed Books, 1984); Foy, Colm, 'The Party and the Mass Organizations' in *Cape Verde: Politics, Economics and Society* (London; New York: Pinter Publishers, 1988), pp. 66-98; Scott, Catherine V., 'Contradictions in the Challenges to Dependency: The Roots of Counterrevolution in Southern Africa' in *Gender and Development: Rethinking Modernization and Dependency Theory* (Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1995), pp. 105-119; Santos, Naiole Cohen dos, *Para além das Desigualdades: A Mulher em Angola* (Luanda and Harare: ADRA/ DW/ SARDC, 2000); Sheldon, Kathleen, '«Today in FRELIMO the Mozambican Woman Has a Voice»: The Struggle For Independence and Socialism' in *Pounders of Grain: a History of Women, Work, and Politics in Mozambique* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2002), pp. 115-152; Ducados, Henda, 'Angolan women in the aftermath of conflict' in *Accord 2004.*

conceptualization of this liberation within a socialist framework was contradictory and, ultimately, often remained discriminatory for them. According to Hilary Owen and Phillip Rothwell, this happened for two main reasons.[32] Firstly, the regimes' emphasis on dismantling the colonial structures operating in social and political spheres located their field of struggle in the public realm only, where both women and men were perceived as equally oppressed by the colonial capitalist economic system. This meant that no other locations of struggle – namely the household within the private sphere – were contemplated or even recognized, which would, in turn, allow gendered power structures to persist.[33] Secondly, given that the private sphere was outside the limits of the modern discourse of the nation, it was immediately associated with traditionalism, obscurantism and backwardness. Hence, due to their historical link with the private sphere, women became the prime targets of modernization, being called upon to contribute to the modern project of the nation in the male-created revolutionary public sphere, while simultaneously continuing to fulfil their traditional roles in the private sphere – and hence, being subject to men's authority. Conversely, they were also sometimes forced to abandon precisely those traditional structures that empowered women.[34] In other words, the regimes' depolitization of the private sphere led to the maintenance and reinforcement of patriarchal socio-cultural structures that legitimized male authority over women.[35] As a result, the maintenance of men's utopias was often achieved at the expense of women, who were left with nothing but dystopias. This is something which emerges in the writings of all three female authors under analysis here.

[http://www.c-r.org/our-work/accord/angola/women-conflict.php] (29/11/09); Casimiro, Isabel Maria, 'Samora Machel e as Relações de Género' in *Estudos Moçambicanos Número 21*(Maputo: Centro de Estudos Africanos da UEM, 2005), pp. 55- 84; Pereira, Aline, 'Desenvolvimento de políticas públicas para a inserção da mulher angolana no mercado de trabalho', *Codesria 11th General Assembly 2005*, pp. 1-17 [http://www.codesria.org/Links/conferences/general_assembly11/papers/pereira.pdf]; Monteiro, Eurídice Furtado, 'A Luta pela Emancipação das Mulheres Cabo-verdianas: Um Breve Olhar' in *Mulheres, Democracia e Desafios Pós-Coloniais: Uma Análise da Participação Política das Mulheres em Cabo Verde* (Praia: INCV, 2009), pp. 71-105.

[32] Owen, Hilary and Phillip Rothwell, 'Introduction: Sexing the Differences: A Lusophone African Perspective' in Owen, Hilary and Phillip Rothwell (eds.), *Sexual/Textual Empires: Gender and Marginality in Lusophone African Literature*, Lusophone Studies 2 (Bristol: University of Bristol, October 2004), pp. V-XVI.

[33] Ibidem, p. VIII.

[34] Ibidem, pp. VIII-IX.

[35] See, for example, Urdang, Stephanie, *And Still They Dance: Women, War, and The Struggle for Change in Mozambique* (London: Earthscan Publications Ltd, 1989); Scott (1995), pp. 105-119; and Sheldon (2002), pp. 115-152.

As women of their time, born between 1941 and 1959, these authors contributed in different ways to the consolidation of the three parties that gained power after independence in each one of their countries of origin. But, most importantly, I would also add, they made use of the spaces created for women by the socialist governments in order to establish their literary voices, thus becoming the first female writers to publish novels in independent Cape Verde, Angola and Mozambique. Although the first works published by all three of them were poems[36], clearly echoing the earlier tradition of female poetic intervention in their countries' literary systems, the fact is that they were more or less successful, ultimately, in entering an historically male literary realm, the sphere of novel writing. In so doing, they made an important contribution to the construction of a space for the literary voicing of women within the openly masculinized literary canons of Cape Verde, Mozambique and Angola, a voice that projects itself at both national and transnational levels, as indicated by the extensive number of critical works on their literary productions published in recent years.

The following list is an example of the research that has been done so far specifically on the literary works of Dina Salústio, Paulina Chiziane and Rosária da Silva. I will start by highlighting the studies made by the historian Patrick Chabal and the postcolonial literary scholars Maria Teresa Salgado, Ana Mafalda Leite and Russell G. Hamilton. Chabal's *Vozes Moçambicanas: Literatura e Nacionalidade*, which is divided into two sections, provides an analysis of the origins and development of Mozambican literature and its impact on the construction of a Mozambican national identity.[37] This historical analysis, which demonstrates the intimate relationship between literature and history within the Mozambican context, also focuses on Mozambican writers themselves, by presenting a collection of twenty-two interviews in the second section of the study. It is worth highlighting that the only female writers who are part of this list are Noémia de Sousa and Chiziane. Salgado's approach focuses solely on Mozambican contemporary fiction and its specificities, looking particularly at the literary works by Mia Couto, Ungulani Ba Ka Khosa, Lília Momplé and Chiziane.[38]

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[36] See Chiziane, Paulina, 'A Paz' in *Tempo 1195*, Maputo, October 1993, p. 34; Salústio, Dina, 'Dina Salústio' in Almada (1988), pp. 151-159; Silva, Rosária da, 'Boas Entradas' in *Jornal de Angola,* Luanda, 8th January 1988, p. 12; Silva, Rosária da, 'Feliz Aniversário' in *Jornal de Angola,* Luanda, 8th February 1988, p. 10.

[37] Chabal, Patrick, *Vozes Moçambicanas: Literatura e Nacionalidade* (Lisboa: Vega, 1994).

[38] Salgado, Maria Teresa, 'Um olhar em direcção à narrativa contemporânea moçambicana', *SCRIPTA* 8 (Belo Horizonte: 2º sem. 2004), pp. 297-308.

According to the scholar, the works by these authors demonstrate a commitment to building new models that adjust to their national context and enable the affirmation of their identity[39], a proposal that finds echo in the study put forward by Leite. In Leite's 'Em torno de Modelos no Romance Moçambicano' the scholar aims her attention at some specificities of the Mozambican novel, especially from the mid-80s on, to observe the authors' proposals of new models and strategies which are more in consonance with the local traditions.[40] In this context, it is worth highlighting Leite's emphasis on the fact that Chiziane, as well as Marcelo Panguana and Ungulani Ba Ka Khosa, make use of a "escrita oralizada, que tenta recuperar as formas tradicionais da arte de contar", as this idea will be explored further on later in this study.[41] Finally, Hamilton's analysis entitled 'A Feminist Dance of Love, Eroticism, and Life: Chiziane's Novelistic Recreation of Tradition and Language in Postcolonial Mozambique' focuses particularly on the form, content and international appeal of Chiziane's literary work *Niketche: Uma História de Poligamia*.[42] The scholar gives much emphasis to the novel's portrayal and treatment of traditional issues and institutions such as, for example, polygamy, but what is particularly relevant in Hamilton's reading is the observance of the *mulata*'s racial and sexual connotations and placement within the 'national family', which shall be explored in depth in the present study as well.[43]

Regarding general considerations on female authorship, female literary representations, and the recovery of a female genealogy through the focus on an alternative female-focalized point of view, I would like to reference the studies collected in *O Rosto Feminino da Expansão Portuguesa – Actas II*, which were the result of an international conference that took place in Lisbon, in 1994. By focusing on female voices, the studies presented by Inocência Mata, Fernanda Cavacas and Simone Caputo Gomes, for example, attempt to rescue women and women writers from a historic place of silence, renegotiating their places in history and within their respective literary canons.[44] It is also worth mentioning here the work by Fernando Vale on the

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[39] Ibidem, p. 300.

[40] Leite, Ana Mafalda, 'Em torno de Modelos no Romance Moçambicano' in *Portuguese Literary and Cultural Studies* 10, (Spring 2003), pp.185-199.

[41] Ibidem, p. 187.

[42] Hamilton, Russel, 'A Feminist Dance of Love, Eroticism, and Life: Paulina Chiziane's Novelistic Recreation of Tradition and Language in Postcolonial Mozambique', *Portuguese Literary and Cultural Studies* 10, (Spring 2003), pp.153-167.

[43] Ibidem, p. 161.

[44] Mata, Inocência, 'As Vozes Femininas na Literatura Africana: Passado e Presente – Representações das Mulheres na Produção Literária de Mulheres' in *O Rosto Feminino da Expansão Portuguesa – Actas II*

conditions under which African women writers of children's and juvenile books write, emphasising the work by Salústio.[45] With reference to specific studies on the literary works by the authors under analysis here, there are many of them which could be referenced at this point (especially on the work developed by Chiziane). As such, and taking into consideration the scope of the present study, I have made a selection according to the literary works which will be analysed and the analytical postures which will be adopted. Regarding Salústio's literary work, the critical work developed by Caputo Gomes is of great relevance here, as she is one of the few scholars who has been working on Cape Verdean female authorship and Salústio, in particular. As such, it is important to reference her articles entitled 'Mulher Com Paisagem ao Fundo: *Dina Salústio Apresenta Cabo Verde*' and 'Echoes of Cape Verdean Identity: Literature and Music in the Archipelago', in which the scholar focuses on the short-story collection *Mornas Eram as Noites*, its emphasis on a female Cape Verdean perspective of national identity and the parallel between women's experiences and the 'mornas' as a cultural item.[46] In this context, it is important not to forget Jorge Valentim's study on the structure and content of the same literary work through the lens of Roland Barthes's reflections on music as a "forma independente das outras ciências da linguagem pelo facto de ser ela mesma uma qualidade de linguagem".[47] Fátima Cristina Correia's MA Dissertion entitled *Marcas da Insularidade no Romance Cabo-Verdiano "A Louca de Serrano, de Dina Salústio"* adds to this important work developed on Salústio by reflecting on the author's reinterpretation of the question of insularity, a historically explored theme within Cape Verdean literature.[48]

(Lisboa: Comissão para a Igualdade e para os Direitos das Mulheres, 1995), pp. 251-258; Cavacas, Fernanda, "A Mulher nas Literaturas Africanas de Expressão Portuguesa" in *O Rosto Feminino da Expansão Portuguesa – Actas II* (Lisboa: Comissão para a Igualdade e para os Direitos das Mulheres, 1995), pp. 267-274; Gomes, Simone Caputo, 'Cabo Verde: Rosto e Trabalho Femininos na Evolução da Cultura e da Literatura' in *O Rosto Feminino da Expansão Portuguesa – Actas II* (Lisboa: Comissão para a Igualdade e para os Direitos das Mulheres, 1995), pp. 275-284.

[45] Vale, Fernando, 'A Situação das Mulheres Escritoras de Livros para Crianças e Jovens nos Países de Língua Portuguesa' in Martinho, Ana Maria Mão-de-Ferro (ed.), *A Mulher Escritora em África e na América Latina* (Évora: Editorial NUM, 1999), pp. 59-70.

[46] Gomes, Simone Caputo, 'Mulher Com Paisagem ao Fundo: *Dina Salústio Apresenta Cabo Verde*' in Maria do Carmo Sepúlveda and Maria Teresa Salgado (org.), *África & Brasil: Letras e Laços* (São Paulo: Atlântica Editora, 2000), pp. 113-132; Gomes, Simone Caputo, 'Echoes of Cape Verdean Identity: Literature and Music in the Archipelago' in *Cape Verde: Language, Literature & Music*, *Portuguese Literary & Cultural Studies* 8, (2003), pp. 265-285.

[47] Valentim, Jorge, 'Do Conto ao Canto: as Mornas Cabo-Verdianas na Voz Feminina de Dina Salústio' in Mata, Inocência and Laura Cavalcante Padilha (org.), *A Mulher em África: Vozes de Uma Margem Sempre Presente* (Lisboa: Edições Colibri, 2007), pp. 253-268.

[48] Correia, Fátima Cristina, *Marcas da Insularidade no Romance Cabo-Verdiano "A Louca de Serrano, de Dina Salústio"* (Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas da Universidade Nova de Lisboa, 2004).

With reference to Chiziane's work, I will start by mentioning Mata's article entitled 'Paulina Chiziane: Uma Colectora de *Memórias Imaginadas*', which observes the illusion of an autobiographical identity journey, from a feminine perspective, through the recovery of memories, which Chiziane's main characters seem to engage in in *Balada de Amor ao Vento* and *Ventos do Apocalipse*.[49] Maria Nazareth Fonseca's study entitled 'Campos de guerra com mulher ao fundo no romance *Ventos do Apocalipse*' focuses on the peculiar structure of the novel and its invocation of micro-narratives through the recovery of the ritual of story-telling 'Karingana Wa Karingana'.[50] In 'Novos Espaços no Feminino: Uma Leitura de *Ventos do Apocalipse, de Paulina Chiziane*', Deolinda Adão explores questions of female identity construction and power relations within gender through the lens of works by theorists such as Judith Butler, Gayattri Spivak, Chela Sandival, Donna Haraway and Trinh T. Minh-ha .[51] Considering African women as victims of a double marginalization (due to their gender and race), Adão advances that although they are actively engaged in the reconstruction of their own identities, they are limited in their actions by the male hegemonic power.[52] Still focusing on the literary work *Ventos do Apocalipse*, Shirlei Campos Victorino's 'A Geografia da Guerra em *Ventos do Apocalipse* de Paulina Chiziane' aims at observing how the novel promotes the problematization of African women's situation in extreme conditions.[53] Sheila Khan's study on the same novel puts forward an analysis that highlights Chiziane's portrayal of the identity exile which the Mozambican population experienced throughout the internal conflict as a result of the post-independence social, ideological and political measures, as well as the war context itself.[54] Finally, Sandra Campos proposes a reflection on *Balada de Amor ao Vento*, *Ventos do Apocalipse*, *O Sétimo Juramento* and *Niketche: Uma História de Poligamia* which observes the

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[49] Mata, Inocência, 'Paulina Chiziane: Uma Colectora de *Memórias Imaginadas*' in *Metamorfoses 1*, 2000, pp. 135-142.

[50] Fonseca, Maria Nazareth Soares, 'Campos de guerra com mulher ao fundo no romance *Ventos do Apocalipse*', *SCRIPTA* 7 (2º sem. 2003), pp. 302-313.

[51] Adão, Deolinda, 'Novos Espaços no Feminino: Uma Leitura de *Ventos do Apocalipse, de Paulina Chiziane*' in Mata, Inocência and Laura Cavalcante Padilha (org.), *A Mulher em África: Vozes de Uma Margem Sempre Presente* (Lisboa: Edições Colibri, 2007), pp. 199-207.

[52] Ibidem, p. 199-202.

[53] Victorino, Shirlei Campos, 'A Geografia da Guerra em *Ventos do Apocalipse* de Paulina Chiziane' in Mata, Inocência and Laura Cavalcante Padilha (org.), *A Mulher em África: Vozes de Uma Margem Sempre Presente* (Lisboa: Edições Colibri, 2007), pp. 351-364.

[54] Khan, Sheila, 'Velhas Margens, Novos Centros: A Língua do Exílio em *Ventos do Apocalipse*, de Paulina Chiziane', *Teia Literária* 1 (2008), pp. 119-132.

literary representations of the female body and sexuality and their inscription of difference within femininity.[55]

Lourenço do Rosário's article entitled '«Niketche» – O Existencialismo no Feminino' notes the effort made by the author to focus on the experience of women from distinct cultural backgrounds within the Mozambican nation.[56] In 'Paulina Chiziane: romance de costumes, histórias morais' Leite also promotes a discussion on Chiziane's *Niketche: Uma História de Poligamia* (as well as on *O Sétimo Juramento*), not only emphasising the novelty of a feminine perspective within the African literary realm, but also celebrating what the scholar called "[a] carnavalização dos géneros".[57] In addition, Ana Margarida Martins's study entitled 'The Whip of Love: Decolonising the Imposition of Authority in Paulina Chiziane's *Niketche: Uma História de Poligamia*' builds upon Homi Bhabha's concepts of the performative and the pedagogical in the narration of the nation as a cultural product to explore Chiziane's production of a counternarrative of the nation that simultaneously rejects Frelimo's discourse of socialism and exposes the marketing discourses that generate the gender exotic which is consumed by the Portuguese public.[58] Robson Dutra's reading of the same literary work focuses on the seduction dance named 'Niketche' as a symbol of traditional cultural which is subverted by the main female character, Rami.[59] Finally, Patrícia Rainho and Solange Silva's article entitled 'A Escrita no Feminino e a Escrita Feminista em *Balada de Amor ao Vento* e *Niketche, Uma História de Poligamia*' reads both literary works with a view to providing a reflection on the distinction between feminine writing and feminist writing and their manifestations in the abovementioned novels.[60] Regarding the work developed by Rosária da Silva, there is only one study to

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[55] Campos, Sandra, "Corporeal Identity: Representations of Female Sexuality and the Body in the novels of Paulina Chiziane" in Hilary Owen e Phillip Rothwell (eds.) *Sexual/Textual Empires: Gender and Marginality in Lusophone African Literature* (Bristol: HIPLAS. Lusophone Studies 2, 2004), pp. 137-154.

[56] Rosário, Lourenço do, '«Niketche» – O Existencialismo no Feminino' in *Singularidades II* (Maputo: Texto Editores, 2007), pp. 115-118.

[57] Leite, Ana Mafalda, 'Paulina Chiziane: romance de costumes, histórias morais' in *Literaturas Africanas e Formulações Pós-Coloniais* (Lisboa: Edições Colibri, 2003), pp. 75-87.

[58] Martins, Ana Margarida Dias, 'The Whip of Love: Decolonising the Imposition of Authority in Paulina Chiziane's *Niketche: Uma História de Poligamia*' in *The Journal of Pan-African Studies 3*, vol. I (March 2006), pp. 69-85.

[59] Dutra, Robson, '*Niketche* e os Vários Passos da Dança' in Mata, Inocência and Laura Cavalcante Padilha (org.), *A Mulher em África: Vozes de Uma Margem Sempre Presente* (Lisboa: Edições Colibri, 2007), pp. 309-315.

[60] Rainho, Patrícia and Silva, Solange, 'A Escrita no Feminino e a Escrita Feminista em *Balada de Amor ao Vento* e *Niketche, Uma História de Poligamia*' in Mata, Inocência and Laura Cavalcante Padilha

refer here, which is Hamilton's 'Uma Reconfiguração Pós-Colonial de Realidades e Ficções: *Totonya*, o Primeiro Romance Angolano Escrito por uma Mulher'.[61] In this study the scholar proceeds to the presentation of the literary work *Totonya*, exploring its women-related themes, its female perspective and the reinterpretation of national identity as it is portrayed by Da Silva.

Studies of female authored literary production within the literary systems of each country under analysis here were also very useful for this study. At this point, it is relevant to underline the works developed by Caputo Gomes, Sônia Maria Santos and Hilary Owen. In 'A mulher lê a realidade: escritura feminina em Cabo Verde' Caputo Gomes explains the research that she had been working and describes her work methodology.[62] Aiming at mapping the female authored literary prose produced in Cape Verde, she proceeded to the critical reading of the literary works, within specific theoretical frameworks, so as to explore the cultural construction of gender, the operation of the patriarchal ideology (in society and within the construction of the national literary canon) and the interdisciplinary studies of gender.[63] The same scholar also presented the study entitled 'O Texto Literário de Autoria Feminina Escreve e Inscreve a Mulher e(m) Cabo Verde' in which Caputo Gomes proceeds to introduce the Cape Verdean islands, gives a panoramic view of the Cape Verdean female authors (from Antónia Gertrudes Prisich to Vera Duarte), and provides extracts of literary works by Fátima Bettencourt, Dina Salústio, Vera Duarte, Orlanda Amarílis, Ivone Aída and Maria Margarida Mascarenhas.[64] In her article on 'Experiências Femininas no Quotidiano Crioulo' Sônia Maria Santos also focuses on Cape Verdean female authors, providing a study of the works by Orlanda Amarílis, Dina Salústio and Fátima Bettencourt from a perspective which give emphasis to the recovery of the feminine

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(org.), *A Mulher em África: Vozes de Uma Margem Sempre Presente* (Lisboa: Edições Colibri, 2007), pp. 519-525.

[61] Hamilton, Russel, 'Uma Reconfiguração Pós-Colonial de Realidades e Ficções: *Totonya*, o Primeiro Romance Angolano Escrito por uma Mulher', *Ellipsis. Diverse Encounters/Encontros Diversos* 2, 2000, pp. 60-70.

[62] Gomes, Simone Caputo, 'A mulher lê a realidade: escritura feminina em Cabo Verde' in [http://bibliotecavirtual.clacso.org.ar/ar/libros/aladaa/caputo.rtf] (08/11/2006).

[63] Ibidem, p. 2.

[64] Gomes, Simone Caputo, 'O Texto Literário de Autoria Feminina Escreve e Inscreve a Mulher e(m) Cabo Verde' in Mata, Inocência and Laura Cavalcante Padilha (org.), *A Mulher em África: Vozes de Uma Margem Sempre Presente* (Lisboa: Edições Colibri, 2007), pp. 535-558.

daily experience and its impact on the process of rewriting national identity.[65] Finally, Hilary Owen's study entitled *Mother Africa: Father Marx. Women's Writing of Mozambique 1948-2002*, which focuses on issues of nationalism and gender, provides an important and up-to-date analysis of the literary works by the Mozambican female authors Noémia de Sousa, Lina Magaia, Lília Momplé and Paulina Chiziane and their contributions to the construction and continuous debate of national identity. Given the scope of this work, the emphasis was placed on the chapter entitled 'Paulina Chiziane: The Unmanning of Mozambique', which provided a crucial contribution to this study, as it questions the viability and the limitations of a multi-ethnic Mozambican society.[66]

Regarding studies of female authored literary production coming from distinct literary systems, in a comparative perspective, I have to underline the works developed by Mata, Pires Laranjeira, Joana Passos and Ana Margarida Martins. In 'Mulheres de África no Espaço da Escrita: a Inscrição da Mulher na sua Diferença' Mata explores the literary works by female authors from within the context of Lusophone Africa to trace their impact in the construction of nationalist resistance and transition to the post-colonial era.[67] The scholar starts by focusing on the generation of women who wrote from within the anti-colonialist and anti-fascist resistance (Alda Espírito Santo, Alda Lara, Noémia de Sousa, etc.), and therefore were limited in their approach to female claims.[68] Then, she moves on to focus on the newer generation (Ana Paula Tavares, Chiziane, Salústio, Odete Semedo, Vera Duarte, Conceição Lima, etc.) which provokes an important shift in terms of the themes explored and within the male-dominated literary systems.[69] In 'O Feminino da Escrita: Espinhoso Marfim' Pires Laranjeira proposes three critical texts which were adapted to form a whole text.[70] These critical texts are on Conceição Lima's poetry book entitled *O Útero da Casa*, on Mata's collection of critical essays entitled *Literatura Angolana: Silêncios e Falas de Uma Voz*

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[65] Santos, Sônia Maria, 'Experiências Femininas no Quotidiano Crioulo' in UEA-Críticas e Ensaios in [http://www.ueangola.com/index.php/criticas-e-ensaios/item/221-experi%C3%AAncias-femininas-no-quotidiano-crioulo.html] (19/10/06).
[66] Owen, Hilary, 'Paulina Chiziane: The Unmanning of Mozambique' in *Mother Africa: Father Marx. Women's Writing of Mozambique 1948-2002*, (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2007), pp. 150-199.
[67] Mata, Inocência, 'Mulheres de África no Espaço da Escrita: a Inscrição da Mulher na sua Diferença' in Mata, Inocência and Laura Cavalcante Padilha (org.), *A Mulher em África: Vozes de Uma Margem Sempre Presente* (Lisboa: Edições Colibri, 2007), pp. 421-440.
[68] Ibidem, p. 424.
[69] Ibidem, pp. 425-434.
[70] Laranjeira, Pires, 'O Feminino da Escrita: Espinhoso Marfim' in Mata, Inocência and Laura Cavalcante Padilha (org.), *A Mulher em África: Vozes de Uma Margem Sempre Presente* (Lisboa: Edições Colibri, 2007), pp. 527-534.

Inquieta and Chiziane's *Niketche: Uma História de Poligamia*. Focusing specifically on the scholar's last text, it is important to highlight Laranjeira's effort to generate a parallel between the works of Chiziane and Mia Couto, in which, by comparison, Chiziane's appears to presents flaws.[71] Passos's study entitled *Micro-universes and Situated Critical Theory: Postcolonial and Feminist Dialogues in a Comparative Study of Indo-English and Lusophone Women Writers* proposes a comparative approach between the works of female authors in which Salústio and Chiziane are included (through the analysis of the literary works *A Louca de Serrano* and *Ventos do Apocalipse*).[72] These works are compared by the scholar with other literary works by female authors who write from within an Anglophone universe (Nayantara Sahgal, Arundhati Roy, Githa Hariharan) in an Anglicised theoretical framework (Postcolonial and Feminism Studies). Finally, Martins's PhD thesis entitled *The "Postcolonial Exotic" in the Work of Paulina Chiziane and Lídia Jorge* presents a comparative analysis of the works by Chiziane and the Portuguese female writer Lídia Jorge in which the scholar focuses particularly on the strategic use of gender and sexual difference to deconstruct structures of exoticism.[73] With respect to interviews – and to finalize –, I underline the works by Chabal, Laban and Martins, as the three scholars have been able to make available their interviews with Chiziane.[74]

Moving back to our analysis, it is relevant to point out that along with the post-Utopian writers already mentioned above, these three women authors develop a reflection on the limitations of the socialist concept of nationhood that emerged in their respective countries. In order to achieve this, Salústio, Chiziane and Da Silva focus specifically on the workings of patriarchy in the socialist era, as well as in the democratic era. Hence, another very important aspect that the three authors share is a common thematic framework focusing on the condition of Cape Verdean, Mozambican and Angolan women through the recuperation of female memories that traverse and cut across the histories of the cultural nations under discussion. This recuperation then

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[71] Ibidem, pp. 531-533.

[72] Passos, Joana, *Micro-universes and Situated Critical Theory: Postcolonial and Feminist Dialogues in a Comparative Study of Indo-English and Lusophone Women Writers*, (Universiteit Utrecht, 2003).

[73] Martins, Ana Margarida Dias, *The "Postcolonial Exotic" in the Work of Paulina Chiziane and Lídia Jorge* (PhD thesis submitted to the University of Manchester, 2009).

[74] Chabal, Patrick, *Vozes Moçambicanas: Literatura e Nacionalidade* (Lisboa: Vega, 1994), pp. 292-301; Laban, Michel, 'Encontro com Paulina Chiziane' in *Moçambique: Encontro com Escritores* (Porto: Fundação Engenheiro António de Almeida, 1998), Vol. III, pp. 972-994; Martins, Ana Margarida Dias, Unpublished Interview with Paulina Chiziane (Minneapolis: October 2006).

opens up and develops the debate on national identity as it is experienced by diverse groups of women, thus enabling an investigation of gendered social relations through the historicization of female genealogies, the analysis of how female identities came to be constructed and negotiated by the discourses of community and nationhood, and the exploration of the strategies put forward by women, in different contexts, to deconstruct hegemonic patriarchal conceptions of the world and the consolidation of certain male roles within it. Hence, the three authors all demonstrate the potential for rethinking national identity through gender, from a female-focalized point of view, as it discloses the power structures in operation within the dominant ideologies that construct discourses of cultural community. Ultimately, I will argue that this contributes to broadening our discussion of the need to reimagine subjectivities and/in collectivities at national and transnational levels.

The common thematic issues outlined above, and the strategies deployed to explore them, as well as the connection between the national and the transnational levels which will be relevant here, all indicate the value of applying a comparative methodology to the study of the literary production of these three authors. If it is true that comparative literature is a discipline that, from its origins, was markedly Europe and Western oriented, it is also a fact that the emergence of "new" literatures promotes the opening up of the field, with a view to providing it with greater flexibility and adaptability to those contexts that elude a purely western logic. In other words, the discipline has had to adjust to the needs of other literatures, a move toward decentralization which, in its turn, not only promotes the valorisation of those literatures in terms of their differences outside any universalising logic, but also creates space for the adequately contextualized and localized analysis of these emerging literary phenomena.[75] One of the most important aspects of this reconfiguration has been the realization that the study of these literatures would also imply an opening up to fields of expertise beyond the literary. Due to the complexity of the sociocultural contexts from which these literatures emerge (arising at the intersection of intricate and differentiated

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[75] On the reconfiguration of the discipline of Comparative Literature see, for example, Chevrier, Jaques, "Les Littératures africaines dans le champ de la recherche comparatiste" in Brunel, Pierre and Yves Chevrel (eds.), *Précis de Littérature Comparée* (Paris: P.U.F., 1989), pp. 215-243; Abousema, Mona, "Towards a New Strategy for Comparative Literature" in *Os Estudos Literários: (entre) Ciência e Hermenêutica (Actas do I Congresso da APLC)* Vol. I (Lisboa: Associação Portuguesa de Literatura Comparada, 1990), pp. 263-270; Coutinho, Eduardo F., "Reconfigurando Identidades: Literatura Comparada em Tempos Pós-Coloniais na América Latina" in Buescu, Helena et al., *Floresta Encantada: Novos Caminhos da Literatura Comparada* (Lisboa: Dom Quixote, 2001), pp. 315-331.

networks of interaction, social practices, habits and visions of the world), only an interdisciplinary approach encompassing history, anthropology and sociology alongside literature can produce sufficiently rigorous accounts of these literary phenomena and the specificity of their identities.[76] In the particular case of lusophone literatures, Salvato Trigo takes the view that their study requires an anthropological and archaeological basis so as to explain their specific structure, functioning and properties, thus emphasising the distinct ways of textualising the world through the appropriation of and/or confrontation with the common Portuguese language.[77] Hence, Trigo defends elsewhere, the view that the application of a comparative methodology to the lusophone literatures will permit the observation and affirmation of the uniqueness of each:

> O método comparativo, aplicado aos vários sistemas literários de língua portuguesa, esclarecerá a dialéctica da identidade/alteridade, isto é, da língua/linguagem, que subjaz às literaturas brasileira e africanas lusófonas. Facilitar-nos-á, portanto, a compreensão do fenómeno das "nacionalidades literárias" de língua portuguesa e da sua qualitização estética. Interessa, no entanto, precisar que o acto de comparar, no âmbito do literário, se, tradicionalmente, pode ser entendido no seu sentido dicionarizado, é aqui por nós assumido não propriamente como um processo de descobrir influências, rastrear fontes, buscar semelhanças temáticas, mas, antes, como a procura da diferença de postura cultural e existencial, quer dizer, estética, que a mesma língua permite traduzir a povos que suportaram um processo de mestiçagem cultural e biológica com traços comuns. O comparatismo literário no espaço da língua portuguesa visa, em suma, conhecer a diferença cosmogónica e ontogónica manifestada por essas literaturas que, na origem, partiram de uma matriz comum".[78]

At the same time, it will allow the acknowledgment of possible points of dialogue between these texts, which have distinct cultural backgrounds and a common language, as Trigo also reminds us.[79] Indeed, the methodology put forward by comparative literature, as it is here understood, enables the creation of a space for reflection on the question of identity in the sense that it focuses on that which is particular to a given literary corpus, thus providing it with originality and uniqueness, while simultaneously permitting debate over that which goes beyond the national limits and traverses, transnationally, the works of the three authors under analysis. As Eduardo Coutinho

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[76] Chevrier (1989).

[77] Trigo, Salvato, "Antropologia e Arqueologia Literária – Uma Redefinição da Teoria da Literatura" in *Ensaios de Literatura Comparada Afro-Luso-Brasileira* (Lisboa: Vega, 1986), pp. 11-19.

[78] Trigo, Salvato, "A Importância do Comparatismo nas Literaturas de Língua Portuguesa" in *Os Estudos Literários: (entre) Ciência e Hermenêutica (Actas do I Congresso da APLC)* Vol. I (Lisboa: Associação Portuguesa de Literatura Comparada, 1990), pp. 145-153.

[79] Trigo, Salvato, "Da Urgência do Comparatismo nos Estudos Literários Luso-Afro-Brasileiros" in *Ensaios de Literatura Comparada Afro-Luso-Brasileira* (Lisboa: Vega, 1986), pp. 21-33.

asserts, comparative literature emerges in this context as "um diálogo transcultural, calcado na aceitação das diferenças".[80]

The present study is, therefore, organized in three different chapters, each of them being dedicated to the individual analysis of selected literary works by each of the three authors. The opening chapter dedicates itself to the exploration of two literary works by the Cape Verdean author Dina Salústio, namely the novel *A Louca de Serrano* and the short story collection *Mornas Eram as Noites*.[81] Born on the 27th of March 1941 at Santo Antão island, in Cape Verde, Bernardina Augusta da Purificação Fortes de Oliveira Loureiro Salústio is the oldest of the three authors under analysis. Having studied in Angola and Portugal, and obtained a degree in Social Work, she has been actively engaged on the Cape Verdean sociocultural scene over many years, as she is a former member of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' staff, a member of the OMCV, and a founding member of the Associação de Escritores Cabo Verdianos (AEC). As a poetry and fiction writer, she has published widely in some of the most important national and international newspapers and magazines, of which I highlight *Pré-Textos*, *Ponto & Vírgula*, *Revue Noire*, *Tribuna*, *A Semana* and *Mudjer*.[82] Along with the poet Vera Duarte and the short story writer Fátima Bettencourt, Salústio is one of the most dynamic Cape Verdean female authors, as to date she has made available to the public two novels and one short story collection. Given that the novel *Filhas do Vento* was published only recently, in January 2010, it is not included in this study.[83]

According to Salústio, her personal trajectory had a major impact on the routes she chose to follow throughout her literary projects. In an interview granted to the present author in November 2009, at Cape Verde's National Library (located in the Capital city of Praia), Salústio revealed that her desire to become a writer emerged early in her childhood.[84] Given that she did not want to go to school until she was old enough to join the third grade, she spent a lot of her time wandering about the neighbourhood,

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[80] Coutinho (2001), p. 328.

[81] Salústio, Dina, *Mornas eram as Noites* (Lisboa: Instituto Camões, 1999) [1st Edition: 1994]; *A Louca de Serrano* (São Vicente: Spleen Edições, 1998).

[82] See, for example, Salústio, Dina, 'No Feminino' in *Tribuna 22*, Praia, April 1986, pp. 1 and 8; 'Um Caso de Amor' in *Tribuna 56*, Praia, December 1990, p. 21; 'Chuva Amor' in *Pré-Textos*, Praia, October 1991, p. 12; 'Cantar…ou chorar apenas' in *Revue Noire*, Cabo Verde/Paris, 10: 25, Set-Nov 1993, p. 25; 'Introdução: Cabo Verde, o Mar e os Selos' in Tiago Estrela, *O Mar nos Selos Postais da República de Cabo Verde* (Praia: Instituto da Biblioteca Nacional e do Livro, 2003), pp. 9-12.

[83] Salústio, Dina, *Filhas do Vento* (Praia: IBNL, 2009).

[84] Tavares, Maria, Unpublished Interview with Dina Salústio (Praia: November 2009).

observing the people and listening to their stories. She was particularly marked by the stories of the "desterrados" – those who were punished by being forcefully sent to other islands – and the "contratados" – those who, in an attempt to escape the difficult living conditions on the islands, were hired as a labour force to work in very harsh conditions at the "roças" in S. Tomé e Príncipe. This made her want to write about people in a whole different dimension, one that would not conform to the realist Cape Verdean tradition. The daily contact in S. Vicente with the intellectuals Jorge Barbosa and Baltazar Lopes, two of the founding members of the *Claridade* movement who were friends of her father, was also very significant for her. However, the author claims that what really fascinated her from an early age was the world of female experience:

> Mas, as mulheres eram muito altivas, tinham muitas coisas para contar, tinham muitas histórias, tinham muitas brigas. Portanto, elas cercavam-nos, protegiam-nos. Tudo isso veio dar-me um conhecimento razoavelmente maior das mulheres do que dos homens. Mas, os homens estão sempre lá na minha escrita. Não só como a sombra, a motivação, mas como o outro lado da mulher.[85]

One of her most important realizations came when she became aware, through Brazilian magazines and newspapers that reached the islands by ship, that women could also be writers and publish. Hence, the advent of independence, which brought education and prompted women to occupy a space in the public sphere, generated more empowering conditions for women to enter literary circles in the second half of the eighties.

As a woman of her time and social sphere, Salústio was mobilized by PAIGC's representatives on the island who were clandestinely working for liberation.[86] It is, therefore, not surprising that after independence, Salústio was so enthusiastic about the party[87], which brings us to another area of influence on her literary production: the work

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[85] Ibidem.

[86] The author recognizes the influence of her teacher Dulce Almada Duarte, one of the first women to join PAIGC's struggle. See also Lopes (2002), p. 149, in which the author points out that Dina Salústio, as well as Joaquim Salústio, who would later become her husband, were part of a group of youngsters who were mobilized in S. Vicente by Manuel Rodrigues, one of the first persons to go back to Cape Verde under-covered, as a PAIGC's spokesperson.

[87] See, for example, the abovementioned poem 'Um Caso de Amor', which was published in the newspaper *Tribuna* and focuses on the love story between PAICV and Cape Verde: "O PAICV e o Cabo Verde, sem dúvida um caso de amor. / Lutaram juntos e juntos conquistaram a independência. / Sem outros sóis, sem outros ombros, / Sem outras vidas, sem outros senhores / Apenas eles / Cabo Verde e PAICV. / Nas raízes profundas da terra juntaram-se as mãos dos camponeses, dos trabalhadores, dos jovens, das mulheres todas e dos homens todos e iniciaram uma era e juraram que nesta terra jamais a fome e a ignorância, a doença, o medo e a injustiça voltarão a ter lugar. / Sem outras mãos, sem outras lágrimas / Sem outras forças, sem outros senhores / Apenas eles / Cabo Verde e PAICV. / Com persistência, com seriedade, competência e afinco, com infinito respeito e realismo, com os pés fincados na terra destas ilhas, sem aventureirismos constroem o desenvolvimento que já se sente humanamente

that she did and the challenges that she met as a member of the OMCV, of the Instituto da Condição Feminina and the Instituto Cabo-verdiano para Igualdade e Equidade de Género later on. Her important sociological study entitled *Violência Contra as Mulheres*, which was published in 1999 by the ICF (currently ICIEG, a governmental entity that is responsible for the proposal and implementation of policies promoting gender equality), as well as her active public engagement in the promotion of the ICIEG's projects give proof of this interaction.[88] Salústio claims that the short story collection *Mornas Eram as Noites* is the one which reflects more deeply on the living conditions of Cape Verdean women and their complicity with the legitimization of those conditions. This happened mostly because the short stories were initially written to be published as newspaper articles, so they were up-to-date and very much oriented towards what was happening at the time in society. Although her work does not have any international projection, as Chiziane's does for instance, the awards she has won, the inclusion of her work in important anthologies and the Cape Verdean national educational curricula and even the tentative national and international academic production (articles and theses) on her writing certainly legitimize and affirm the quality of her work, simultaneously contributing to its dissemination.[89] Nevertheless, Salústio still believes that the Cape Verdean literary scene is very much male-defined and oriented, as well as paternalist towards women writers. Without devaluing her own work, she questions its inclusion in the educational curricula, claiming that it might be a strategy of tokenism, given that there are so few Cape Verdean female authors.

Through her persistence and dedication, Salústio has managed to take advantage of the space created for women within the literary circle of the islands and to make a clear statement through her work that opposes the historically masculine predominance in the Cape Verdean literary canon. This statement shifts the literary perspective towards the Cape Verdean female experience of nationhood, thus generating a space for reflection on the female dimension, from a female point of view, as well as voicing a historical absence. The chapter of the present study which is dedicated to Salústio's

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palpável. / Sem outros braços, sem outros suores / Sem outros risos, sem outros senhores / Apenas eles. / Cabo Verde e PAICV.".

[88] Salústio, Dina, *Violência Contra as Mulheres* (Praia: ICF, 1999). It is also worth highlighting that the author participated in an ICIEG campaign which was broadcasted on national television.

[89] In 1994, Salústio was awarded the first prize in a national literary competition of books for children. In 2000, she was awarded the third prize in a literary competition of books for children within the PALOP (Países Africanos de Língua Oficial Portuguesa). Regarding the insertion of her work in anthologies, see, for example, Almada (1988), pp. 151-159 and Silva, T. V. da (ed), *Antologia da Ficção Cabo-Verdiana: Vol. III – Pós-Claridosos* (Praia: AEC-Editora, 2002), pp. 161-191.

works *A Louca de Serrano* and *Mornas Eram as Noites* focuses on and discusses precisely this recuperation and empowerment of women's micro-histories, which are relegated to the silent margins by the macro-history of the nation. Given the emphasis Salústio places on the discussion of Cape Verdean cultural identity and its reading from women's perspective, this study will focus primarily on the novel *A Louca de Serrano* by examining the national discourse and its subsequent cultural manifestations in order to achieve a better understanding of the historical, social and cultural construction of identity – particularly gender identity – within the Cape Verdean nation, and also to evaluate the renegotiation strategies and alternatives proposed by the author.

Building upon Benedict Anderson's conception of the nation as an "imagined community" that "has to be understood by aligning it, not with self-consciously held political ideologies, but with the large cultural systems that preceded it, out of which – as well as against which – it came into being"[90], this analysis attempts to show how the literary work proceeds to deconstruct and renegotiate Cape Verdean national identity, from a female perspective. The study is primarily informed by background historical information that observes the colonial inheritance of cultural and racial miscegenation, as well as the extent of luso-tropicalist ideological influence. The particular nature of Socialism on the islands is also considered, since it is also responsible for shaping social structures and behaviours and forging subjectivities in the postcolonial setting. Subsequently, the analysis moves to discuss the consequences of this cultural inheritance for the construction of Cape Verdean identity. Following on from Anne McClintock's theory that national discourse dictates power structures that manifest themselves in terms of gender, class and race, which, then become categories that need to be studied together in order to be fully understood[91], this examination proceeds to observe how daily life demonstrates the intersection of these categories in Salústio's work. Finally, given that according to the above theory, both women and men are socially constructed in national discourse and, therefore, have different roles and positionings, the current study places the emphasis on the author's depiction of gender conceptualizations. Hence, it explores women's and men's location within the Cape Verdean *national family* by analysing the general development of women's social status and the portrayal of female gender that Salústio proposes. At the same time, it also

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[90] Anderson (1991), p. 12.
[91] McClintock (1995), p. 360.

explores Cape Verdean masculinity and the demystification of the "super-macho" ideal.[92]

Following on from this work, the study moves to examine the short story collection *Mornas Eram as Noites*. The thirty-five short stories that constitute this literary work present a kaleidoscope of Cape Verdean reality, focusing, above all, on people and, consequently, on subjectivities. Given the author's selection and treatment of themes (women's position; the construction of female and male subjectivities in different settings; childhood; emigration; colonial interference pre and post-independence), my analysis relies on Homi Bhabha's conception of the dynamics of national discourse, with a view to proving that by invoking these subjectivities, that expose the different layers that make up the "imagined community", Salústio questions the official conception of nationhood and, simultaneously, displaces the centrality of national discourse.[93] For Bhabha, the identity of a nation is a narrative construction which often reflects the stories of a dominant group, to the detriment of other narratives by minority groups, as a homogenising experience that all people are meant to identify with. The theorist emphasises the temporal dimension of these discursive strategies in order to oppose historicism's notion of nation as a simultaneous and horizontal experience, which tends to be exclusivist.[94] As such, he claims that

> The space of the modern nation-people is never simply horizontal. Their metaphoric movement requires a kind of 'doubleness' in writing; a temporality of representation that moves between cultural formations and social processes without a 'centred' causal logic. And such cultural movements disperse the homogeneous, visual time of the horizontal society because 'the present is no longer a mother-form [read mother-tongue or mother-land] around which are gathered and differentiated the future (present) and the past (present) ... [as] a present of which the past and the future would be but modifications'.[95]

The conceptualization of this "'double and split time' of national representation", the theorist continues, enables us to regard the entity "people" as an ambivalent construction emerging from various discourses, in a narrative movement which is always double, given that the "people" are simultaneously historical objects of the authoritarian, constitutive and (apparently) stable nationalist pedagogy, and subjects of

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[92] Yuval-Davis (1997), p. 4.

[93] Bhabha, Homi K. (ed.), 'Dissemination: time, narrative, and the margins of the modern nation' in *Nation and Narration* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), pp. 291-322.

[94] Ibidem, p. 292.

[95] Ibidem, p. 293. The author quotes Derrida (1981, 210).

a repetitious and continuous performativity of the nation.[96] If, on the one hand the pedagogical dimension of national identity arbitrarily defines the nation and its limits, on the other hand the national subjects are continuously reinventing the nation and defying its limits through performativity. Bhabha claims that "it is through this process of splitting that the conceptual ambivalence of modern society becomes the site of *writing the nation*".[97] In other words, the ambivalent nature of national discourses provokes their incessant displacement by other experiences of nationhood, thus proving the impossibility of fixed universal discourse and allowing constant renegotiation to take place. Focusing specifically on the works of Franz Fanon and Julia Kristeva, Bhabha defends the view that as discourses that voice those who were historically marginalized (in this case, colonized and women), post-colonial and feminist temporalities are extremely disruptive and innovative in the sense that "they challenge us to think the question of community and communication *without* the moment of transcendence".[98] Considering that in *Mornas* national discourse is continuously renegotiated, allowing marginality to emerge as a potential site for the formation of counter-narratives and, thus, for the renegotiation of identities, the study will provide a reading of the short-story collection through a gender mapping of Bhabha's theorization of the pedagogical and performative dimensions of national identity.

The second chapter of this study provides an analysis of the three literary works *Ventos do Apocalipse*, *Niketche: Uma História de Poligamia* and *O Alegre Canto da Perdiz* which were written by the Mozambican female author Paulina Chiziane.[99] Born on the 4th of June 1955 in Manjacaze, Gaza province, Paulina Ricardo Chiziane is the most well-known of the three authors under examination. Having moved to Lourenço Marques at an early age, Chiziane studied at a Catholic Mission school, notwithstanding the fact that her family was Protestant. She has studied Linguistics at Eduardo Mondlane University and was a member of the Mozambican Red Cross's staff for many years. She is also a member of AEMO (Associação de Escritores Moçambicanos). As a writer she has been rather active for many years, having published, amongst other things, some pieces with *Tempo* magazine, a testimony in a collection entitled *Eu Mulher em Moçambique*, five novels – *Balada de Amor ao Vento*, *Ventos do*

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[96] Ibidem, pp. 295-297.
[97] Ibidem, p. 297.
[98] Ibidem, p. 304.
[99] Chiziane, Paulina, *Ventos do Apocalipse* (Lisboa: Caminho, 1999) [1st Edition: 1996]; *Niketche: Uma História de Poligamia* (Lisboa: Caminho, 2002); *O Alegre Canto da Perdiz* (Lisboa: Caminho, 2008).

Apocalipse, *O Sétimo Juramento*, *Niketche: Uma História de Poligamia* and *O Alegre Canto da Perdiz* –, and the short story collection *As Andorinhas*.[100] In addition, she has recently edited, along with the Angolan writer Dya Kasembe, a collection of testimonies by Angolan women who have survived the civil war, which is called *O Livro da Paz da Mulher Angolana: as Heroínas sem Nome*.[101] Considering that, in comparison with the remaining two authors, Chiziane has produced a notably larger body of literary work to date, only the three novels specified above will be explored here.

According to Chiziane, her desire to write manifested itself very early and, to a certain extent, it was very much a consequence of her upbringing and the environment in which that upbringing occurred.[102] Born to a very modest Tsonga family in the countryside, she spoke Chope and had a very traditional education, which defined clearly the roles both women and men were supposed to perform. When her family moved to Lourenço Marques at the beginning of the 60's, aside from learning Ronga and Portuguese, and entering the Catholic school, she was able to observe the continuities between the two types of education she was then receiving – traditional and Catholic – as regards the predefined roles of women.[103] Her close observation of discriminatory social conditions such as these was her point of departure to start thinking and writing about the human condition, in general, and women's in particular. Books, particularly those by the Portuguese female poet Florbela Espanca, as well as the stories that her grandmother used to tell her around the fire had a great impact on Chiziane.[104] Therefore, soon after she started producing her own texts, she began to dream about writing a novel: a dream which was postponed because she got married and wanted to become what she had been educated to be, that is a good wife. Nevertheless,

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[100] See Chiziane Paulina, 'O Futebol é sempre a mesma coisa!' in *Tempo 1033*, Maputo, July 1990, pp. 46; *Balada de Amor ao Vento* (Lisboa: Caminho, 2003) [1st Edition: 1990]; 'A Paz' in *Tempo 1195*, Maputo, October 1993, p. 34; 'Eu, Mulher…Por uma Nova Visão do Mundo' in *Eu Mulher em Moçambique* (Maputo: Comissão Nacional para a UNESCO em Moçambique e Associação dos Escritores Moçambicanos, 1994), pp. 12-18; *Ventos do Apocalipse* (Lisboa: Caminho, 1999) [1ª Edição: 1996]; *O Sétimo Juramento* (Lisboa: Caminho, 2000); *Niketche: Uma História de Poligamia* (Lisboa: Caminho, 2002); *O Alegre Canto da Perdiz* (Lisboa: Caminho, 2008); *As Andorinhas* (Maputo: Índico, 2009).

[101] Kasembe, Dya and Paulina Chiziane (eds.), *O Livro da Paz da Mulher Angolana: as Heroínas sem Nome* (Luanda: Nzila, 2009).

[102] Chiziane (1994), pp. 14-15.

[103] Ibidem, pp. 14-15. The author states that "Apesar das grandes diferenças na educação da casa e da escola, encontrei harmonia na matéria que dizia respeito ao lugar da mulher na vida e no mundo. Educação tradicional ensina a mulher a guardar a casa e a guardar-se para pertencer a um só homem. A escola também ensinava a obediência e a submissão e preparava as raparigas para serem boas donas de casa, de acordo com o princípio cristão".

[104] See Tavares, Maria and Ana Margarida Dias Martins, Unpublished Interview with Paulina Chiziane (Maputo: August 2008); Chiziane (1994), p. 14.

her marriage did not work out and that made her think in greater depth about her own and other women's social conditions, a theme that became her greatest inspiration:

> Olhei para mim e para outras mulheres. Percorri a trajectória do nosso ser, procurando o erro da nossa existência. Não encontrei nenhum. Reencontrei na escrita o preenchimento do vazio e incompreensão que se erguia à minha volta. A condição social da mulher inspirou-me e tornou-se meu tema. Coloquei no papel as aspirações da mulher no campo afectivo para que o mundo as veja, as conheça e reflita sobre elas. Se as próprias mulheres não gritam quando algo lhes dá amargura da forma como pensam e sentem, ninguém o fará da forma como elas desejam.[105]

Having been actively engaged in Frelimo's activism when she was a youngster, this involvement enabled her to become more aware of the limitations of the Marxist-Leninist conceptualization of nation and of the socialist discourse for women.[106] In addition, her own experience as a black woman struggling to write a novel, get it published and be recognized as an author within the male-dominated AEMO influenced her significantly. Hence, her writing projects frequently offer reflections on these limitations, simultaneously pointing in alternative future directions that recuperate and recycle certain socialist principles. Although she does not like her work to be generally labelled feminist, Chiziane did assert that her first novel to be published, *Balada de Amor ao Vento*, is very much a feminist book in the sense that, in the author's words, "a minha mensagem é uma espécie de denúncia, é um grito de protesto".[107] By the time that she published her second novel, *Ventos do Apocalipse*, she was more careful with the characterization of her work, emphasising a women-centred point of view to the detriment of a feminist stance.[108] This novel was written in the aftermath of the work Chiziane did with the Red Cross during the internal conflict, which opposed Frelimo and Renamo forces from 1977 until 1992. A particular story that she heard at a refugee camp about a woman called Minosse who had lost her pregnant daughter the previous night, remained in her mind and prompted her to write a reflection on that war.[109] Again, Chiziane created very rich, important female characters, whose complexity allows the observation not only of predefined gender roles, but also of how their supposed predictability was used in the war context. As Chiziane put it,

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[105] Chiziane (1994), pp. 15-16.
[106] See Martins, Ana Margarida Dias, Unpublished Interview with Paulina Chiziane (Minneapolis: October 2006); Chabal (1994), pp. 298-299.
[107] Ibidem, p. 298.
[108] See Guerreiro, Manuela Sousa, 'Paulina Chiziane: a Escrita no Feminino' in [http://www.ccpm.pt/paulina.htm] (22/05/06).
[109] See Tavares, Maria and Ana Margarida Dias Martins (2008).

Quis mostrar que as mulheres não são só vítimas. Nesta guerra vi casos concretos. A Renamo tinha um truque muito bom. Quem fazia o trabalho de reconhecimento da aldeia e das zonas que eram atacadas eram as mulheres. A mulher aparecia na aldeia, conversava, ia buscar água e observava, porque sabia de tácticas de guerra. Era depois ela quem dava o sinal às tropas que estavam escondidas. Os estereótipos colados à imagem da mulher funcionaram muito bem nesta guerra, na qual participaram de uma forma muito cruel. E ninguém deu por isso. Quando eu digo que as mulheres são invisíveis, são-no em todos os aspectos.[110]

The novel *Niketche: Uma História de Poligamia* emerged as a consequence of Chiziane's work in the northern province of Zambézia, where she had the opportunity to make contact with matrilineal cultural traditions, which were very different from the patrilinear ones she knew: according to the author, the cultural disparities were so significant that she actually felt like a foreigner in her own country.[111] Nevertheless, Chiziane claims that she particularly enjoyed the process of writing this novel, as well as the feedback that she was able to obtain from both ordinary Mozambican readers in informal situations and international readers, who surprised her by demonstrating the universal dimension of the literary work.[112] In *O Alegre Canto da Perdiz*, Chiziane's most recent published novel, which also portrays Zambézia, she expresses her astonishment at the experience of *mestiçagem* and the interaction between races in Quelimane. This novel required a great amount of historical research on a theme which has several levels of complexity in a country such as Mozambique, that contains many 'countries' within it. According to the author, although she was aware that the theme might interest other audiences, this was a book that she wrote for her country and for the first time with an awareness of that country.[113] In an interview given to Gil Filipe, a reporter from the Mozambican newspaper *Jornal de Notícias*, Chiziane claimed that with this novel she hoped to make use of her own experiences in Zambézia and of all the region's historical specificities, to reopen the debate on the project of the nation and national identity:

É um povo muito sofrido, sei que outros povos que formam o povo moçambicano também sofreram, mas ali… É na sua terra onde o regime colonial português experimentou as suas grandes teorias de miscegenação, falando concretamente das teorias políticas de Gilberto Freyre. É uma coisa que se sente, ou seja a pessoa entra naquela terra e sente que "aqui houve alguma coisa". Eu colocava-me questões como "como foi possível, o que é que aconteceu, como é que se deu este processo?...". E foi com muita mágoa que eu percebi que a materialização destes grandes princípios políticos e filosóficos foi feita no corpo das mulheres. Portanto, é o sangue

[110] Guerreiro (22/05/06).
[111] See Tavares, Maria and Ana Margarida Dias Martins (2008).
[112] See Tavares, Maria and Ana Margarida Dias Martins (2008).
[113] See Tavares, Maria and Ana Margarida Dias Martins (2008).

delas que, de certa maneira, esteve no prato da balança para a construção deste projecto de nação.[114]

Although, to a certain extent, the amount of published work speaks for itself, there are many other factors that demonstrate Chiziane's clear recognition at both national and international levels. Notwithstanding the fact that her first two novels had already been published in Mozambique (the first by AEMO and the second self-published), it was not until she participated in Frankfurt Book Fair that her work attained visibility. From 1996 onwards, her work began to be published by the Portuguese publishing house Caminho and to date it has been translated into English, French, German, Spanish, Catalan and Italian. In 2003, AEMO and HCB (Hidroeléctrica de Cahora Bassa) created the José Craveirinha Literary Prize, which is the most important Mozambican literary prize, and awarded it jointly to both Paulina Chiziane (for the literary work *Niketche: Uma História de Poligamia*) and Mia Couto. Naturally, this prize helped to consolidate Chiziane's work, its acceptance and recognition. Her work has, therefore, been incorporated into Mozambican educational curricula,[115] included in various important anthologies and widely discussed and disseminated by academic researchers.[116] Despite acknowledging that Mozambican academia still offers significant resistance to her work, Chiziane claims to have conquered her "space", one which has been legitimized by the recognition of international scholars such as Russell Hamilton and Hilary Owen, and also by her many anonymous readers in Mozambique. In common with Dina Salústio, Chiziane affirms that she had to be very persistent over time in order to get her books published and to have them taken seriously, particularly in Mozambique, where, in her opinion, the literary scene was dominated by a recognized cultural elite (composed of people who had somehow been connected with the liberation struggle or belonged to an important social group). As a black woman from a non-privileged social group, her struggle was

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[114] Filipe, Gil, 'Hasteámos a bandeira e parámos de discutir o projecto de nação – Alerta Paulina Chiziane, que convida moçambicanos para um debate afogado... pelo tempo' in [http://www.zambezia.co.mz/component/content/article/100/4854-hasteamos-a-bandeira-e-paramos-de-discutir-o-projecto-de-nacao--alerta-paulina-chiziane-que-convid?format=pdf] (19/04/09).

[115] This information was provided to us by Professor Nataniel Ngomane and Professor Gilberto Matusse, who teach Mozambican Literature at Eduardo Mondlane University, in Maputo. Both Professors also showed me and my colleague Ana Margarida Martins various essays and dissertations produced by the students on the literary production by Paulina Chiziane. They claimed that her work was extremely popular amongst the student population.

[116] Regarding the insertion of Chiziane's work in anthologies, see, for example, Chabal (1996), pp. 91-93; Laban (1998), pp. 969-994; Panguana and d'Oliveira (1999), pp. 155-170; Manjate (2000); Saúte, Nelson (ed.), *As Mãos dos Pretos* (Lisboa: Dom Quixote, 2000).

to prove that people from those social circles could also produce interesting, high quality material. Through her projects, she thus presents alternative ways of thinking subjectivity and national identity, always assuming a female stance, criticising obsolete patriarchal social structures, recuperating traditional empowering tools for women and proposing new strategies for building a more gender equal society.

Hence, the second chapter of this study is devoted to the analysis of the three afore-mentioned literary works focusing on the author's depiction and updating of the nation's utopia from a women's point of view, renegotiating it in two distinct moments of Mozambican history: throughout the civil war and during a post-civil war period. In all of her works Chiziane attempts to provide readings of Mozambican society, placing women and the female voice at the core of the discussion and defying the limits of their idealization within the socialist nation. This analysis will, therefore, attempt to show how Chiziane updates the utopian ideal of the Mozambican nation firstly by revealing its tendency to exile rather than integrate and then by proposing strategies to overcome this propensity for exile – strategies which always emerge from an ideal of the "imagined community" that is inscribed in a given context, at a certain moment in time, as a permanently open process.

In light of this thematic framework, I will provide a reading of these literary works drawing on Edward Said's reflections on exile and Monserrat Guibernau's considerations on Nationalisms.[117] According to Said, exile materializes into a fracture between the human being and her/his own homeland which is beyond repair.[118] It is a "sense of constant estrangement" in which the absence of a sense of belonging translates into the urgency of re-establishing uninterrupted links to the origins – a restructuring agency that develops in different ways.[119] Hence, building upon Said's definition of exile, this study will primarily analyse the post-independence nation as an internally exiled "imagined community". In research based on various accounts of experiences relating to the Cuban Diaspora in the USA, Andrea O'Reilly Herrera uses the term *insílio* to refer to this very particular type of exile.[120] Herrera claims that this

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[117] Said, Edward, *Reflections on Exile and Other Literary and Cultural Essays* (London: Granta Books, 2001), pp. 173-186; Guibernau, Monserrat, *Nacionalismos: O Estado Nacional e o Nacionalismo no Século XX* (Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar Editor, 1997).
[118] Said (2001), p. 173.
[119] Ibidem, p. 175.
[120] Herrera, Andrea O'Reilly, *Remembering Cuba: Legacy of a Diaspora* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001), pp. xvii-xxxiii.

"inner" or "internal" exile is a state of mind that precedes the physical parting from the homeland and materializes into feelings of denial or frustration towards the official governmental entity itself and the discourse that it sustains.[121]

In *Ventos*, this exiled community, which materializes into the group of villagers that become refugees, assumes different shapes and behaviours, according to the distinct stages of the identity journey that the narration unravels. Hence, my analysis will also focus on Chiziane's renegotiation of the nation. Developing on Anthony D. Smith's and Anderson's theorizations of the nation, Guibernau asserts that the power of nationalism comes from its ability to create a sense of belonging to a certain community, so that "a solidariedade nacional é uma resposta à necessidade de identidade de natureza eminentemente simbólica, na medida em que ela proporciona raízes baseadas na cultura e num passado comum, assim como oferece um projeto para o futuro".[122] The present study will, therefore, attempt to reveal the proposals advanced by Chiziane, through different moments and within various societal contexts, to recuperate a sense of community, resorting in the process to the renegotiation of traditions, symbols and rites that speak to the population in a modern, post-independence scenario.

However, the examination of the experience of gender within that of exile will also reveal and problematize its own homogenising tendency, simultaneously demonstrating that gender exile itself is not a single, unified experience. In *Niketche*, women, whose bodies materialize the different parts of the State, represent the community of the exiled within the patriarchal nation, on account of their marginality. Their behaviour will be observed throughout the various moments of the novel, as they become aware of themselves and their alienation, and gradually generate the conditions to recreate the nation through the voicing of women, the reappropriation of the female body and the inscription of women's difference. At the same time, my study will deconstruct gender exiles by examining how social categories of race, class, colour and ethnicity interact to bring about distinct experiences of womanhood within both a patriarchal power structure and a female power structure. To this end, Said's theorization of exile will be informed by Carlos Serra's social study on racial and ethnic representations in Mozambique in the democratic era, which is entitled *Racismo,*

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[121] Ibidem, p. xxii.
[122] Guibernau (1997), pp. 11-13.

Etnicidade e Poder: um Estudo em Cinco Cidades de Moçambique.[123] According to Serra, racism and ethnicism are phenomena that emerge in the intersection of social interaction, the dispute over power resources and education.[124] Hence, people who are racist or ethnicist make sense of the world by creating power structures in which certain groups are somehow more suitable for accessing power.[125] The results of the study revealed that Mozambicans do indeed perceive racism and access to power and resources as interconnected realities.[126] Although gender was largely absent from Serra's debate, his study generally demonstrates the potential of a multidimensional approach to the subject of gender as it unveils, in this specific context, multiple experiences of gender exile.

This reflection on gender and race is taken up again in *Alegre Canto*, as Chiziane undertakes the construction of a female genealogy, through the genderisation of memory. In their introduction to a volume on "Literature as Cultural Memory" entitled *Gendered Memories* John Neubauer and Helga Geyer-Ryan claim that "we can assume that memory is influenced by the particular social, cultural, and historical conditions in which individuals find themselves. And since men and women generally assume different social and cultural roles, their ways of remembering should also differ".[127] Through the analysis of the stories of three generations of Zambezian women, Chiziane recuperates micro-memories of the region and the nation, which dialogue with the macro-memory, simultaneously unveiling the act of remembering as a gendered act. In addition, the complex construction of the female characters illuminates the debate on how memories are marked not only by gender, but also by other social conditions such as race and class.

Finally, the third chapter of this study is devoted to the analysis of the literary work *Totonya*, which was written by the Angolan writer Rosária da Silva.[128] Born on the 4th of April 1959 in Gulungo Alto, Kwanza Norte province, Rosária Manuel da Silva is, of the three authors under analysis, the youngest, the least known and the one who

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[123] Serra, Carlos (ed.), *Racismo, Etnicidade e Poder: um Estudo em Cinco Cidades de Moçambique* (Maputo: Universidade Eduardo Mondlane, 2000), pp. 14-166.
[124] Ibidem, pp. 20-21.
[125] Ibidem, pp. 2-22.
[126] Ibidem, pp. 79-83.
[127] Neubauer, John and Helga Geyer-Ryan, 'Introduction – Gender, Memory, Literature' in Neubauer, John and Helga Geyer-Ryan (ed.), *Gendered Memories* (Amsterdam: Editions Rodopi, 2000), pp. 5-8.
[128] Silva, Rosária da, *Totonya* (Luanda: Brigada Jovem de Literatura de Angola, 2005) [1st Edition: 1997].

has published the least. Having studied at the University Agostinho Neto, in Luanda, where she obtained a degree in Educational Sciences, specializing in Portuguese Linguistics, she has been very active on the Angolan cultural scene for many years. As a journalist, she has contributed to various newspapers (*Kilamba*, *O Independente*, *Jornal de Angola* and *Kilombo Kwanza-Norte Actualidade*) and has written in different genres (essays, short-stories, poetry, plays), which were published in different outlets.[129] Considered to be a key point of reference in the Angolan literary generation of the eighties, Da Silva is a founding member of the Brigada Jovem da Literatura de Angola, a literary movement that was created in 1981, and also a member of the UEA (União de Escritores Angolanos).[130] Although she is the first female novelist in the history of modern Angolan literature, to date she has only made available to the public the novel *Totonya*, which was published in 1997 and republished in 2005. When the second edition was released, the author stated in an interview that she was about to publish a new literary work.[131] Yet, to date, this new work has not appeared.

Despite all efforts to contact Da Silva, I was unable to trace the author and, thus, have the opportunity to interview her and find out more about her biographical trajectory, impressions, projects and proposals. Hence, all the information that I have accessed about her was gleaned from other sources, including the valuable article already referred to, entitled 'Uma Reconfiguração Pós-Colonial de Realidades e Ficções: *Totonya*, o Primeiro Romance Angolano Escrito por uma Mulher', which was written by Russell Hamilton, who has had the opportunity to meet her personally in the past.[132] Hamilton starts by emphasising the fact that Da Silva is the first black, indigenous Angolan female novel writer, a fact which is reinforced in the book itself when the author dedicates it "à memória dos meus antepassados familiares (família Mbaxi Ya Mukuta)", a family of the Mbundu ethnic group (Kimbundu speaking people, who are the second largest ethnolinguistic group of Angola).[133] The critic also highlights the innovative nature of *Totonya* in terms of three specific aspects: the

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[129] See, for example, Silva, Rosária da, 'Boas Entradas' in *Jornal de Angola,* Luanda, 8th January 1988, p. 12; 'Feliz Aniversário' in *Jornal de Angola,* Luanda, 8th February 1988, p. 10.
[130] Kandjimbo, Luis, 'Para uma Breve História da Ficção Narrativa Angolana nos últimos 50 anos' in *Revista de Filologia Românica*, *Anejos*, 2001, II, pp. 161-184.
[131] See AngolaPress, 'Escritora angolana Rosária da Silva reedita obra "Totonya"' in [http://www.portalmulher.net/aarticles.asp?id=2305] (19/10/06).
[132] Hamilton (2000), pp. 60-70. Hamilton met the author at the Primeiro Encontro Internacional Sobre Literatura Angolana, which took place in Luanda, in December 1997.
[133] Silva (2005), p. 3; Hamilton (2000), p. 61.

author's use of language, the thematic framework chosen and Da Silva's awareness of a foreign readership.

Regarding her use of language, Hamilton claims that the author promotes the dissemination of Bantu languages by deliberately choosing to resort to what she calls the "ortografia científica" (scientific orthography) of African languages, as opposed to the "ortografia administrativa" (administrative orthography).[134] With reference to the thematic framework chosen by Da Silva, Hamilton claims that through its content, its daring selection of unusual themes such as eroticism, women's sexuality, gender relations and tensions, and domestic violence, as well as the unveiled treatment of these themes, *Totonya* is a novel that reflects the tendency of post-independence Angolan literature to become more open and free in social and ideological terms.[135] Finally, on the subject of the readership for whom the book is destined, Hamilton underlines Da Silva's enthusiasm and her desire to get *Totonya* distributed outside Angola as part of the dynamic atmosphere that surrounded the emerging Brigadas Jovens da Literatura and the Angolan literary generation of the eighties as a whole. According to Hamilton, although the author is writing in Angola, about Angola and for Angola, the way she cleverly provides a reflection on a localized reality which is also very much a universal one – that of domestic violence and gender struggle in a rapidly changing post-colonial era – reveals her agenda of making the novel travel beyond the frontiers of Angola.[136]

Considering that at the time Angola became independent Da Silva was only sixteen years old, that she was of Kimbundu origin and was born and raised in Kwanza Norte (an ethnic group that supported the MPLA and a region which was under the party's control throughout the civil war), and that she moved to Luanda to enrol at the university, there is much to suggest her engagement in MPLA's ideological conceptualization of the post-colonial Angolan nation. There are, indeed, some biographical facts that support that assumption by demonstrating her active involvement at various levels in MPLA's socialist machine over a period of time. As mentioned before, she became a founding member of the BJLA at the age of twenty-eight, which

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[134] Hamilton (2000), p. 66: "A tal «ortografia administrativa» é a convencional, formulada por missionários e adotada pelas autoridades administrativas nos tempos coloniais para transcrever vocábulos das línguas indígenas. Por outro lado, a «ortografia científica» deriva do alfabeto fonético internacional e é preferida por linguistas, e também pelos reconfiguradores das realidades sócio-históricas, culturais e pedagógicas em vários países africanos".

[135] Ibidem, pp. 64-68.

[136] Ibidem, p. 68.

clearly indicates that she took advantage of the educational opportunities and the public space opened up for women by the MPLA socialist government. Furthermore, she is the author of the lyrics for the OMA congress, an indicator of her belief in both the party and the organization, that suggests an involvement in the promotion of women and defence of their rights within a socialist logic. It is also very relevant to point out that the first edition of *Totonya* was sponsored by three governmental entities – the National Bank of Angola, the Luanda Port and the Ministry of Fishing – and a private foundation that belongs to José Eduardo dos Santos, MPLA and Angola's president – the Eduardo dos Santos Foundation (FESA).[137] This last fact points most certainly to a hidden agenda on the part of the MPLA, which might have emerged from the fact that Da Silva was the first female novel writer in post-independent Angola (thus revealing the MPLA government's tokenist gesture to publicly affirm their support for women, generally speaking, and women writers in particular). It might also arise from the fact that *Totonya* focuses on women's emancipation and renegotiation of female identities, from a female point of view, in a post-independence scenario (again, a project to which the governmental entity would most certainly like to have been linked, during the period when the World Bank had imposed the "woman question" as one of the priorities of the 1990's development plan for African countries that intended to access its funding[138]). Nonetheless, considering the treatment of the "woman question" in *Totonya* and the scope of the proposed discussion, it is feasible to suggest that Da Silva took advantage of the contextual historical circumstances in order to put forward her own subversive proposal, impose her literary voice, and somehow oppose the male dominance on the Angolan literary circuit.

Despite having been awarded a "Menção Honrosa" in the 1996 literary competition named after the Angolan poet António Jacinto, the work of Rosária da Silva still remains very much unknown outside Angola, with the exception of a very few academic works and references.[139] In an interview given to Mayrant Gallo, when

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[137] Ibidem, p. 62.

[138] On this subject, see Scott, Catherine, 'Gender and the World Bank: Modernization Theory in Practice' in *Gender and Development: Rethinking Modernization and Dependency Theory* (Boulder; London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1995), pp. 69-86.

[139] Apart from the already mentioned 2000 article by Russell Hamilton and 2001 article by Luis Kandjimbo, see Owen, Hilary, "Women's Histories" in Poddar, Prem et al. (eds.), *A Historical Companion to Postcolonial Literatures: Continental Europe and Its Empires* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008), pp. 498-502; Gallo, Mayrant, 'Guerreira das Letras Africanas: Entrevista com a Escritora Isabel Ferreira' in
[http://www.tabuleirodeletras.uneb.br/secun/numero_02/pdf/entrevista_isabel_ferreira.pdf] (28/02/10).

she was asked about which writers are read in Angola, the Angolan writer Isabel Ferreira claimed that Angolan readers generally tend to look for those authors who are circulated and recognized at an international level.[140] Ferreira added that besides this established generation of writers who make up the Angolan literary canon there is another good generation who, although they have made great efforts to produce and get published, find themselves ignored and even "ocultada intencionalmente".[141] In Ferreira's words:

> Existem escritores da nova geração que já vão obtendo algum sucesso em Angola, mas que não são conhecidos no círculo internacional, por falta de divulgação ou por ausência de uma política de distribuição das obras e dos autores, como Jacinto de Lemos, Conceição Cristóvão, Botelho de Vasconcelos... O Ondjaki já vai sendo conhecido a nível internacional, embora jovem... E tem mais! Na literatura feminina, as autoras vêm mostrando um posicionamento aguerrido, desafiando as regras com uma escrita ousada e inquieta. Falo de escritoras como Amélia Dalomba, Elsa Major, Chó do Guri e Ana Branco. Há também a Rosária da Silva, a única romancista angolana cuja obra foi muito bem referenciada no círculo nacional, com o romance "*Totonha*".[142]

When considering the lack of recognition of Da Silva's work outside Angola, this statement by Ferreira becomes particularly illuminating, especially if we take into account, for instance, that the dissemination of Salústio's work has been mostly made by international academic researchers and that Chiziane's work only gained projection after the German translation was made available at the Frankfurt Book Fair. Indeed, the consolidation of these two authors' works, their inclusion in their respective national literary canons and, thus, the "guarantee" that they will be given the opportunity to carry on publishing, seems to depend substantially on an international recognition that Da Silva has not yet achieved. This assumption explains her urgent need to get *Totonya* studied outside Angola, her eagerness to translate it into English, and even perhaps the fact that she is still to publish a new novel, which supposedly would have been released in 2005. Notwithstanding the almost deafening silence that surrounds *Totonya*, it is a literary work of reference that provides a daring critical reflection on the post-independence socialist conceptualisation of Angolan nationhood from a female point of view, thus defying the patriarchal, male-oriented nature of modernity in those terms and opening space for the rethinking of female subjectivities.

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[140] Gallo (28/02/10).

[141] Ibidem.

[142] Ibidem.

My third chapter will, therefore, analyse *Totonya*'s deconstruction of the Marxist-Leninist ideological discourse of nationhood through the exposition of cultural, ethnic and gender marginalization. In the novel, cultural and ethnic forms of exclusion emerge in the delimitation of two *Angolas* – the twin cities of Luanda and Benguela – that confront each other directly. Gender struggle cuts across this friction, as the examination of gender representations in both settings unveils power structures that entrap women in positions of subalternity in relation to men. Building upon these premises, and expanding on Phyllis Peres's research on the works of contemporary Angolan fiction writers, my analysis will provide a reading of *Totonya* through the lens of Mary Louise Pratt's theorization of contact zones, autoethnography and transculturation, as well as Graham Huggan's study of the Post-Colonial Exotic.[143] In *Transculturation and Resistance in Lusophone African Narrative*, Peres proposes a reading of Luandino Vieira, Pepetela, Uanhenga Xitu and Manuel Rui's literary works as narratives of resistance that promote a debate on Angolan national identities and communities.

In this context, Pratt's understanding of transculturation becomes very useful for Peres's research, as it enables a deeper understanding of how the Angolan authors problematize the construction of an Angolan national identity by reflecting on the different layers of complexity that make up the acculturation imposed by the dominant Portuguese culture which, in their turn, also reveal uninterrupted negotiations of socio-cultural elements such as race, gender, class, generation, ethnicity, region and tribe.[144] With a view to exploring in greater depth the issues that concern sex and gender, the present study will also make use of Pratt's theorization, in order to dismantle *Totonya*'s thematic proposal and intellectual approach. According to Pratt, the term 'contact zone' refers "to social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today".[145] These contact zones, Pratt continues, can be positive or negative, and they always question instituted models of community. In colonial environments, where negative contact zones occur,

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[143] Peres, Phyllis, *Transculturation and Resistance in Lusophone African Narrative* (Gainsville: University Press of Florida, 1997); Pratt, Mary Louise, 'Arts of the Contact Zone**'** in *Profession 91*. New York: MLA, 1991. 33-40 [www.class.uidaho.edu/thomas/English.../Arts_of_the_Contact_Zone.pdf] (16/10/2009); Huggan, Graham, 'African Literature and the Anthropological Exotic' in *The Post-Colonial Exotic: Marketing the Margins* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), pp. 34-57.
[144] Peres (1997), pp. 10-15.
[145] Pratt (1991), p. 1.

autoethnographic texts are particularly important tools for dismantling predefined representations, as they "are representations that the so-defined others construct *in response to* or in dialogue with those texts [ethnographic texts]".[146] This dialogue is, thus, materialized in transculturation, another phenomenon that occurs in the contact zone and a concept created by the Cuban sociologist Fernando Ortiz to enunciate the active role of marginal groups in selecting and appropriating certain features of the dominant culture (as well as vice versa).[147] It is, therefore, an empowering phenomenon in the sense that it opposes the univocality of the "imagined community" and forces it to recreate and update itself.

Totonya will, as a result, be read as a novel that exposes and dismantles the assimilative nature of the official discourse of nationhood through a female strategic autoethnography, which takes us to Graham Huggan's study of the Post-Colonial Exotic. While reflecting on the reception of African literature by western audiences and its treatment by western publishers in a text entitled 'African literature and the anthropological exotic', Huggan concludes that there is a general tendency by those publishers to create a masquerade of Africa in order to make it more appealing for western consumers. Nonetheless, this phenomenon which he describes as "the anthropological exotic"[148] is met with "ethnographic counter-discourse[s]" emerging from contemporary African literary production, which he moves on to explore.[149] In this approach, Huggan understands both phenomena within an oppositional logic that emphasises the confrontational relation between colonized and colonizer, colonial and anti/post colonial, thus bypassing other power struggles that traverse these occurrences. Considering the characteristics of *Totonya*'s approach that were already mentioned, my analysis will, therefore, focus on "celebratory autoethnography" as a strategy of ethnographic counter-discourse emerging in postcolonial Angola with a view to dismantling, resisting and renegotiating sex and gender power structures, and giving the debate on nationalism and national identity a whole new dimension.[150]

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[146] Ibidem, p. 2.
[147] Ibidem, p. 2.
[148] Huggan (2001), p. 37.
[149] Ibidem, p. 40.
[150] Ibidem, p. 43: Huggan describes 'celebratory autoethnography as follows: "(…) turning the language of Western evolutionist anthropology against itself, [it] enables an allegedly 'subordinate' culture to regain its dignity; and to reclaim its place, not within the imagined hierarchy of civilization, but as one civilization among others – and a sophisticated one at that".

My concluding remarks will demonstrate how, through their different literary projects and from the situated experience of Cape Verdean, Mozambican and Angolan women, Salústio, Chiziane and Da Silva propose reflections on individual and national identities that question power dynamics and explore their intricacies, thus proposing subversive challenging identities which question and subvert patriarchal and exclusivist conceptualizations, and giving birth to new worlds that emerge from this continuous rethinking exercise, that can ultimately allow the emergence of more democratic ways of experiencing selfhood in/and nationhood. As Mama put it,

> The intellectual challenge of identity lies in the exercise of adding gender to the arsenal of analytical tools required to rethink identity, so that we can deepen our understanding of power, and increase our strategic capacity to engage with and challenge its destructive capacity. Being an optimist, I assume that we still have the chance to do so.[151]

Considering the quality of the challenging work developed by the three afore-mentioned authors, this is a view that the present study strongly endorses.

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[151] Mama, (2001), p. 69.

Relocating the margins and the centre: the reinvention of the nation in Dina Salústio's *A Louca de Serrano* and *Mornas Eram as Noites*

> "What is certain is that 'normality' cannot be separated
> from the hierarchization of identities. The great hegemonic, rational,
> political-philosophical mechanisms are precisely what fabricate normality,
> with the consent of the group concerned."
> Etienne Balibar, *Globalisation/Civilisation*[152]

Dina Salústio is a Cape Verdean female author who has contributed greatly to the establishment of a feminine space in the male dominated literary canon of the archipelago. Poet, essayist, and fiction writer, she has published a wide variety of texts in different genres, having been the first Cape Verdean woman writer to produce a novel. This chapter will focus on the analysis of two of her literary works: the short-story collection *Mornas Eram as Noites* (1994) and the novel *A Louca de Serrano* (1998).[153] In these works Salústio attempts to recuperate women from the margins of Cape Verdean history and culture by re-reading them from a feminine perspective. Giving centrality to the universe of women – their experiences of nationhood, their anxieties, and their struggles –, the author portrays and discusses the conceptualization of masculine and feminine in the Cape Verdean context, simultaneously unveiling the importance of tradition in defining cultural roles and proposing strategies for the renegotiation of these elements that constitute the identity of a specific group.

As such, this chapter will focus on Salústio's effort to retrieve women's voices from the silent margins of the official nation by recapturing and legitimizing their micro-histories, which disturb the stability of the macro-history of the nation. Given the emphasis that the author places on the examination of how a cultural identity comes to be constructed and on the definition of the specific parts the members of the "imagined community"[154] are to play, this analysis will attempt to show how the literary works proceed to deconstruct and renegotiate Cape Verdean national identity by exploring the

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[152] Balibar, Etienne, 'Globalisation/Civilisation Part 1 Interview: Etienne Balibar, Catherine David, Nadia Tazi, Jean-François Chevrier' in David, Catherine and Jean-François Chevrier (ed.), *Politics, Poetics: Documenta X – The Book* (Ostfildern: Cantz-Verlag, 1997), pp. 774-785 [p. 777].

[153] Salústio, Dina, *Mornas eram as Noites* (Lisboa: Instituto Camões, 1999) [1st Edition: 1994]; *A Louca de Serrano* (S. Vicente: Edições Spleen, 1998).

[154] This expression, which was advanced by Benedict Anderson, is to be understood here in accordance with the author's definition of nation in *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London and New York: Verso, 1991).

consequences of cultural inheritance in the construction of *Caboverdianidade* and observing the place of women within the *national family*. Thus, my examination will focus primarily on the novel *A Louca de Serrano*.[155] Building upon Benedict Anderson's conception of the nation as an "imagined community" that "has to be understood by aligning it, not with self-consciously held political ideologies, but with the large cultural systems that preceded it, out of which – as well as against which – it came into being"[156], this analysis will provide a reflection on the emergence and consolidation of Cape Verdean national identity. This discussion will be informed by relevant background historical information that observes the colonial inheritance of cultural and racial miscegenation, the extent of the influence of luso-tropicalist ideology, the impact of the discourses of *Africanization* throughout the anti-colonial struggle, the post-independence socialist ideological conceptualization of nationhood, and the post-socialist revitalization of creolization in a multiparty democratic context. It will also recall the evolution of women's roles in Cape Verdean society throughout the colonial, the anti-colonial and the post-colonial periods with a view to understanding how female identity got to be culturally constructed as subaltern.

The study will, then, move on to discuss the consequences of this cultural inheritance for the construction of Cape Verdean identity – particularly gender identity – by following on from Anne McClintock's theorization on gender and nationalism.[157] For McClintock, national discourse dictates power structures that are materialized in the construction of sociocultural categories such as gender, class and race, which emerge interwoven and, therefore, should necessarily be studied together, in their specific context of emergence.[158] At this point, the emphasis will be placed on the author's capturing of scenes from daily life so as to depict cultural habits, behaviours, traditions, and gender conceptualizations – especially, the Cape Verdean masculine and the myth of the "super-machos" –, which are considered to be elemental components of national identity. Finally, this study will proceed to explore the location of women within the Cape Verdean *national family* by analysing simultaneously the diachronic development of their social status generally, Salústio's portrayal of female gender, and the renegotiation strategies and alternatives that the author proposes.

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[155] Henceforth referred to as *A Louca*.
[156] Anderson (1991), p. 12.
[157] McClintock, Anne, *Imperial leather: race, gender and sexuality in the colonial contest* (London; New York: Routledge, 1995).
[158] Ibidem, p. 360.

Following on from this work, the study will focus on the short story collection *Mornas Eram as Noites*[159] with a view to analysing some of the thirty-five short stories in which Salústio puts forward a kaleidoscopic portrayal of Cape Verde, from a female-focalized perspective. Considering the author's emphasis on how identities – and especially gender identity – come to be officially constructed by national discourse and the active role people play in the continuous renegotiation of those identities, the analysis will rely on Homi Bhabha's conception of the dynamics of national discourse.[160] Bhabha claims that national identity is a narrative construction that refutes the homogenizing temporality of the historicist conception of nation as a simultaneous and horizontal experience.[161] It does so, according to the theorist, because it involves a double movement which arises from the disruption between its continuous and accumulative pedagogical dimension and its repetitious and continuous performative dimension.[162] In other words, Bhabha asserts that national identity is ambivalent because it possesses an arbitrary pedagogical dimension that is constantly challenged and renegotiated by national subjects through performativity. In this sense, this ambivalence is empowering, as it becomes a priviledged site for rewriting the nation.[163] As such, this study will provide a reading of *Mornas* through a gender mapping of Bhabha's theorization onto the pedagogical and performative dimensions of national identity so as to observe the collection's attempt to renegotiate national discourse, allowing marginality to emerge as a potential site for the formation of counter-narratives.

As mentioned before, this emphasis on the disruption of women's historical marginality within the Cape Verdean discourse of national identity through an empowering voicing of their experiences goes right through Salústio's work and, thus, can be traced back to the novel *A Louca*. This work, which is divided into twenty three chapters, tells us the story of Serrano, a village in a non-identified country that owes its name to a madwoman. In its introductory chapter the narrator presents us with the setting and the historical background that will allow us to have a better understanding of

[159] Henceforth referred to as *Mornas*.
[160] Bhabha, Homi K., 'Dissemination: time, narrative, and the margins of the modern nation' in Bhabha, Homi K. (ed.), *Nation and Narration* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), pp. 291-322.
[161] Ibidem, p. 292.
[162] Ibidem, pp. 295-297.
[163] Ibidem, p. 297.

this place, its inhabitants and their behaviours. Although no direct references are made to Cape Verde – an aspect which gives a much more universal feature to the novel as a whole –, it is possible to recognize cultural elements that lead us to somehow associate Serrano with this country, as we will now see.[164] Following on from Anderson's theorization of the nation as an "imagined political community" that emerges from specific cultural systems in which it is repeatedly negotiated, we can say that here, through a shared *national imagination* a parallel is created between both the fictional and the real historical worlds.[165] Therefore, there is "no need to specify this community by name: it is already there".[166] The author is hereby proposing a revisiting of the history of the Cape Verdean nation as an "imagined community" from a female point of view.

The first references made to Serrano weave a portrayal that characterizes it as being an isolated, peculiar, rudimentary, and forgotten village on the periphery of a non-identified capital:

> Serrano, **esquecida da civilização**, comprimia-se entre os caminhos remotos que levavam a uma **longínqua saída para a capital** e a região selvagem que se estendia até se perder as vistas, **imersa num mundo povoado de seres de estranhos costumes** (…).[167]

If, one the one hand, this description directs us to Serrano's isolation, which might lead us to recall Cape Verde's insularity, on the other hand, it exposes the gap between Serrano and the capital city, since the former appears to represent an "uncivilized" space, as opposed to the latter's civilization. The emphasis on Serrano's stagnant nature, from which it is only possible to escape by going to the capital city, suggests a confrontation between two distinct ways of experiencing community: one rural and one urban. Considering that the rural community appears negatively connoted as obscure and obsolete, we are somehow reminded of PAIGC/PAICV's socialist discourses of modernity, as we shall see later on, which, again, directs us to the everyday lived experiences of the archipelago.

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[164] See Gomes, Simone Caputo, 'Mulher Com Paisagem ao Fundo: Dina Salústio Apresenta Cabo Verde' in Maria do Carmo Sepúlveda and Maria Teresa Salgado (org.), *África & Brasil: Letras em Laços* (São Paulo: Atlântica Editora, 2000), pp. 113-132. See also Correia, Fátima Cristina, *Marcas da Insularidade no Romance Cabo-Verdiano "A Louca de Serrano"*, de Dina Salústio (Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas da Universidade Nova de Lisboa, 2004).
[165] Anderson (1991), pp. 6, 12 and 30.
[166] Ibidem, p. 32.
[167] Salústio (1998), p. 14 (my emphasis).

After providing these introductory references, the narrator tells us about the legend that surrounds the creation of Serrano, a story that associates the village with the destiny of an old woman, who was a giant of stone that had been thrown into the sea. At some point in her existence, this woman threw away pieces of her own body, and these pieces became little islands that spread throughout the world. This reference clearly invokes the mythical story of the creation of the Cape Verdean Islands. According to Correia, the legend tells us that after having created the Earth, God "limpou as mãos uma na outra", and the little pieces of rock that He dropped fell onto the sea, becoming the archipelago of Cape Verde.[168] However, the fact that the author chose to recreate the myth by drawing on the indispensable contribution of the body of an old woman to the foundation of Serrano unveils important features of this particular place and, simultaneously, suggests a relation of analogy between Serrano and Cape Verde. Firstly, it indicates the existence of a system of traditional authority which is based on a matriarchy, since Serrano's highest authority is a woman – the *parteira*. Secondly, it highlights the fact that in this female dominated context, women appear as fragmented beings, since the formation of the community is only achieved through the dismembering of their bodies. Hence, a paradox is put forward: women are represented as powerful due to their reproductive ability, but their encapsulation in that representation inhibits their real access to power in society.

The narrative continues to disclose aspects of Serrano, which is described almost as a living entity: "Serrano abraçava-se sobre si mesma, deixava-se perder no entrelaçar das árvores e das pedras e respirava tranquila, quase bela, quase mulher, quase homem"[169]. It appears closed in upon itself, self-sufficient, and almost ignorant of what lies beyond its limits. As Correia observes in her study, this isolation invokes the insularity which is normally associated with the people who live on islands – and, therefore, the Cape Verdeans – and, sometimes, have difficulty in accessing other worlds.[170] Yet, Serrano is "um pedaço de terra forte"[171], one with strong roots and a very strict cultural code, which defines traditions, behaviours, habits, and beliefs. There is a clear reference to the instinct of survival that the community of Serrano seems to have, but there is also the implication of their lack of ability to examine the village in

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[168] Correia (2004), p. 139.
[169] Salústio (1998), p. 15.
[170] Correia (2004), p. 142.
[171] Salústio (1998), p. 15.

itself, with its flaws.[172] The madwoman and Gremiana, a wild girl who refuses to accept living in the false image of perfection projected by the community, seem to be the only exceptions in this panorama of consensual blindness that affects the whole population, given their capacity to see beyond, and their refusal to live behind masks.

At this point we are led to recall some historical facts that concern the Cape Verdean society and the progressive struggle to consolidate a Cape Verdean identity, and, thus, might shed light upon this portrayal. Located on the coast of Senegal, Cape Verde is an archipelago composed of ten islands and thirteen uninhabited islets. Since its early occupation on the second half of the fifteenth century, it was made up of a Creole society – so, one in which the majority of the population is *mestiça* and the culture results from a mixture of European and African traditions.[173] The uniqueness of this society and the geographical and economical specificities of the archipelago led to its particularization in terms of the colonization implemented by the Portuguese. The singularity of Cape Verde was much used by the Estado Novo in order to build a discourse which would justify to the world Portugal's maintenance of colonies in the post-Second World War period. According to Cláudia Castelo, in its appropriation of Gilberto Freyre's cultural theory of luso-tropicalism, the dictatorial state used the reality of biological *mestiçagem* to propagate the myth of the distinctive character of Portuguese colonization:

> As teses de Gilberto Freyre – o tradicional não racismo dos portugueses, a sua capacidade de adaptação aos trópicos, a unidade de sentimento e de cultura que caracterizaria o «mundo que o português criou» servem, melhor do que quaisquer outras, os interesses político-ideológicos da política externa portuguesa.[174]

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[172] Ibidem, p. 15: "Era um pedaço de terra forte, sim, e não era qualquer acto de menos fôlego que a deitava abaixo, e os seus pontos fracos, tinha-os como todo o mundo, ninguém por muito prevenido que estivesse se apercebia deles, nem do que lhe ia debaixo da pele lamacenta, ou no fundo da alma rochosa".

[173] See Andrade, Mário Pinto de, *Origens do Nacionalismo Africano* (Lisboa: Dom Quixote, 1997). The author defines Creole societies in the following manner: "Afigura-se-nos que as sociedades crioulas se caracterizam como ambientes societais, produto de amalgamento biocultural num espaço de relativa exiguidade, com uma língua própria de comunicação, em tudo emergentes de um processo de transculturação. Existe a tendência de considerar *crioulo* todo o nativo africano portador de valores induzidos pelo encontro simbiótico da cultura da comunidade étnica de origem com a ocidental portuguesa. (…) Não resta dúvida de que factores históricos e económicos análogos presidiram à formação de Cabo Verde e São Tomé, arquipélagos estreitados, como demonstrou Francisco José Tenreiro, pela sua «forte cor africana». Mas à homogeneização progressiva da matriz crioula do primeiro, correspondeu, a partir do século XIX, com a introdução do café e do cacau no segundo, um ritmo periclitante da sociedade daquele tipo evoluindo para uma «mestiçagem inter-africana»", p. 23.

[174] Castelo, Cláudia, *O modo português de estar no mundo: o luso-tropicalismo e a ideologia colonial portuguesa (1933-1961)* (Porto: Edições Afrontamento, 1999), p. 61.

Castelo observes that the luso-tropicalist ideology was very well received by Cape Verdean intellectuals, in the first half of the twentieth century, who read it as scientific proof of their individuality and turned their attention towards themselves and the archipelago's sociocultural reality.[175] Notwithstanding the impact of this discourse of creolization on the imagination of a creole national identity, it is important to observe its evolution throughout the distinct historical moments of the nation-state.

In his study on the conditions of emergence of a Cape Verdean national imagination, Gabriel Fernandes, a Cape Verdean expert in Political Sociology, concludes that in Cape Verde there are no elements that support the existence of a nationalism *strictu sensu*, nor of a nationalism that makes culture and politics coincide.[176] For Fernandes, this happens due to the structural conditions of the Cape Verdean society, among which he highlights creolization (which made political mobilization based on ethnicity impossible), education (which provided the indigenous people with the cultural tools to negotiate their social status and circulate within the Portuguese colonial universe, simultaneously facilitating the emergence of a creole self-conscience), diaspora (which makes the nation exceed its geographical limits), and political and ideological constructs (which complicated the emergence of a creole nationalist subjectivity and facilitated its transnational trajectory).[177] Nonetheless, Fernandes continues, one cannot deny the existence of a *sui generis* Cape Verdean nation, of which creolization is the most defining factor.[178] As such, he builds upon the interventions of cultural and political Cape Verdean elites to identify three crucial moments of nationalist effort.

The first moment, that he calls "A era da desconstrução simbólico-cultural", coincides with the one Castelo observed earlier. From the beginning of the twentieth century until the 1950's, Nativist and *Claridade* intellectuals began a symbolic and cultural struggle from within the colonial system in which "a luta pela superação do quadro de dominação e pela alteração da correlação de forças dentro da nação obedece a uma estratégia de integração, e não de confrontação".[179] The second moment, "A era da

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[175] Ibidem (1999), pp. 83-84.

[176] Fernandes, Gabriel, *Em Busca da Nação: Notas Para Uma Reinterpretação do Cabo Verde Crioulo* (Florianópolis/Praia: Editora da UFSC and IBNL, 2006), pp. 243-244.

[177] Ibidem, pp. 55-239.

[178] Ibidem, p. 245.

[179] Ibidem, p. 248. See also Brito-Semedo, Manuel, *A Construção da Identidade Nacional: Análise da Imprensa entre 1877 e 1975* (Praia: IBNL, 2006), p. 258: with reference to the Nativist generation

confrontação político-militar", which refers to the period of the anti-colonial struggle, i.e. from the mid-1950's until 1974, replaced the symbolic struggle with a political and military struggle, based on the principle that all peoples are entitled to their autonomy outside the constraints of colonialism.[180] As such, the discourse of *Africanization* that characterized this struggle implied the refusal of both the Portuguese and the Cape Verdean discourses of community: creole culture was too flexible to suit the intentions of essentialist nationalism.[181] Hence, from 1956 onwards, through the formation of the liberation movement that united Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde under the leadership of PAIGC (Partido Africano da Independência da Guiné e de Cabo Verde) in the fight for independence, Guinea-Bissau became the symbolic identity reference for Cape Verdean nationalist intents, which represented the "suspension" of a national imaginary based on creole culture:

> No caso cabo-verdiano, ela [a luta anticolonial] terá funcionado como uma faca de dois gumes: por um lado, tendo contribuído para a remoção do colonialismo, ela revelou-se fundamental à consecução da independência política e, por consequência, à afirmação da nação cabo-verdiana; por outro lado, no seu próprio transcurso, ela teria postergado e omitido essa nação. Ou seja, contraditoriamente, a mesma luta viria a destacar-se como uma das mais seguras condições de possibilidade da nação cabo-verdiana, também teria sido, por um certo período e sob certos condicionalismos, sua principal condição de impossibilidade. De resto, uma situação a todos os títulos atípica já que, por todo esse período, os ditos nacionalistas crioulos terão lutado por uma nação cujos contornos ignoravam, por jamais explicitados.[182]

Finally the third moment identified by Fernandes, "A era da (re)construção ideológica-discursiva", which corresponds to the post-colonial period, observes two

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(represented by the writer Eugénio Tavares in this work), the author claims that these intellectuals shared a common interest "(i) na defesa dos interesses dos *filhos das Ilhas*, (ii) da exclusão das leis de discriminação entre os filhos da Metrópole e os *filhos da terra*, (iii) da afirmação da autonomia de Cabo Verde e (iv) da confirmação de um grande amor à Pátria Portuguesa". Regarding the group of intellectuals who gathered around the important arts and humanities' review called *Claridade* (of which the author highlights the writer Baltazar Lopes), Brito-Semedo asserts that they generally "propunham-se, ainda que de forma não expressa, alcançar os seguintes objectivos: (i) exprimir, literariamente, a situação e a movimentação do homem cabo-verdiano; (ii) inventariar e estudar os elementos que integram a cultura cabo-verdiana (cultura no sentido etnológico do termo) e (iii) estudar os "processos" de formação social das ilhas crioulas (Mariano, 1963)" [p. 319]. On a historical analysis of the review's issues and how they reflected distinct strategies of renegotiation of a Cape Verdean identity, see Sapega, Ellen W., 'Notes on the Historical Context of Claridade' in 'Cape Verde: Language, Literature & Music', *Portuguese Literary and Cultural Studies* 8 (Spring 2002), University of Massachusetts-Dartmouth, pp. 159-170.

[180] Fernandes (2006), pp. 248-249.
[181] Ibidem, p. 249.
[182] Ibidem, pp. 249-250. See also PAIGC, *História: A Guiné e as Ilhas de Cabo Verde* (Porto: Afrontamento, 1974), in which the party recuperates a connection between Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau and Africa by focusing on the historical trajectories of peoples from countries such as Mali and Ghana; on European colonial systems in Africa; on African liberation movements; on the historical trajectories of Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau (which always emerge interwoven); and on the creation and consolidation of PAIGC.

distinct directions of the nationalist effort: primarily through the affirmation of Africanism and, susbsequently, through the reaffirmation of *Caboverdianidade*.[183] Following the achievement of independence in 1975, PAIGC's political agenda led the party to put forward once again an imagination of the nation based on unity between Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau, thus emphasising an Africanist cultural orientation to the detriment of a creole one.[184] Nevertheless, the political separation between Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde in November 1980, followed by the creation of PAICV (Partido Africano da Independência de Cabo Verde), opened up a new stage for the development of national identity, marked by an "acentuada *desideologização* da cultura", in which *Caboverdianidade* was galvanised again.[185] It is, however, important to point out that the newly created PAICV reinstated the adoption of the one-party political regime, thus emphasising the conceptualization of a nation based on centralism and unity. Furthermore, its ideology had strong Marxist-Leninist roots, and the party itself had important connections amongst the socialist bloc.[186] Nonetheless, given the distinctiveness of the creole archipelago, this party had to take care to adjust socialist policies to the specific Cape Verdean context. This led Elisa Andrade to state that:

> Though officially socialist, Cape Verde was in practice governed by what Aristides Lima called «an administrative and paternalist system of power» - that is essentially a pragmatic state in which the government ruled with the consent of the majority of the population – as expressed in one-party legislative elections. He writes: «…the national revolutionary democracy, as it is understood in the constitution, embodies both a political and social dimension. As a national democracy, it aims to consolidate the nation. As a revolutionary democracy, it seeks to establish a society free of exploitation, especially as the hitherto powerless social strata have now been brought into power.[187]

1990 was the year that marked the end of the one-party regime in Cape Verde. According to Patrick Chabal, this change occurred not because of the party itself – since PAICV was generally successful in the improvement of people's living conditions –, but because of what it represented: an ideology that was obsolete and, thus, "not flexible and open enough".[188] Hence, the need for Cape Verdeans to proceed to their nation's

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[183] Fernandes (2006), p. 250.
[184] Ibidem, p. 250.
[185] Ibidem, p. 251.
[186] See Lopes, José Vicente, *Cabo Verde: Os Bastidores da Independência* (Praia: Spleen, 2002), pp. 465-512. See also Foy, Colm, *Cape Verde: Politics, Economics and Society* (London/New York: Pinter Publishers, 1988).
[187] Andrade, Elisa Silva, 'Cape Verde' in Patrick Chabal et al., *A History of Postcolonial Lusophone Africa* (London: Hurst & Company, 2002), pp. 268-269.
[188] Chabal, Patrick, 'Lusophone Africa in Historical and Comparative Perspective' in Patrick Chabal et al. (2002), p. 94.

political and social modernization by implementing the multiparty system, which would allow MPD (Movimento para a Democracia) to take power in 1991. Humberto Cardoso, a commissioner for MPD, is much more implacable in his analysis of Cape Verdean civil society throughout the fifteen years under the one-party regime.[189] Cardoso emphasises the ideological and structural colonial continuities in post-independence and claims that PAIGC/PAICV's authoritarian and monolithic posture, legitimised by an armed struggle which occurred outside the geographical limits of the nation-state, alienated and ultimately suppressed Cape Verdean civil society. He adds that

> Uma violenta crise de valores instalou-se, criando o espaço para o alcoolismo endémico, o consumo público de drogas e o sexo indiscriminado. As crianças, particularmente, são objecto de assalto, não se lhes deixando espaço para realmente viverem a sua infância sem os constrangimentos de se submeterem ao exercício da vaidade dos pais e ao sexismo adoptado pela sociedade adulta.[190]

Indeed, Fernandes observes that the MPD intended to revoke this alienation by allowing Cape Verdeans to find themselves again. Yet, the party's political treatment of this debate led it, once again, to promote an imagination of *Caboverdianidade* not as self-referential, but in relational terms, this time having Africa and Europe as its cultural references.[191] This translocal orientation of Cape Verdean national identity[192], very much conditioned by historic and socio-economic factors, does not make *Caboverdianidade* non-viable because, as Andrade reminds us, Cape Verdeans have a "relatively homogeneous Creole culture".[193] Fernandes highlights the fact that taking into consideration the potential for a cosmopolitan creolization historically presented by Cape Verdeans, this translocation might actually be an interesting site for the continuous renegotiation of Cape Verdean identity in the contemporary setting.[194] This refusal to conform to univocal conceptualizations of identity and this urge to evolve, which is generally expressed by Cape Verdean society, can be recognized in the female characters of the Madwoman and Gremiana, who openly defy the established order in *A Louca*.

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[189] Cardoso, Humberto, *O Partido Único em Cabo Verde: Um Assalto à Esperança* (Praia: INCV, 1993), pp. 181-230.
[190] Ibidem, p. 191.
[191] Fernandes (2006), pp. 251-252.
[192] Ibidem, p. 255.
[193] Andrade (2002), p. 265.
[194] Fernandes (2006), pp. 263-272.

In this context, it becomes important to observe the historical evolution of women's roles within Cape Verdean society. In a recently published work on Cape Verdean women's participation in social life, Marisa Carvalho observes that since early colonization, African women had a fundamental, though discrete role in this setting, as white women's substitutes (as they rarely travelled into the islands), and were, thus, greatly responsible for social and physical reproduction, and slaves.[195] After the abolition of slavery, Carvalho continues, the private sphere remained women's realm, as they carried on taking care of the domestic area, particularly of children, who sometimes never got to know their fathers.[196] At this point, the author observes these facts as marks of a socially accepted unofficial polygamy, which would come to influence future societies dramatically. Considering the calamities that have affected the archipelago over time (such as drought and famine), Cape Verdean women have been forced to face extremely hard difficulties, and very often to deal with those on their own, as heads of families, given that men would frequently emigrate in search of better lives.[197] PAIGC's pro-liberation struggle would come to refute women's stagnant construction by insisting on their active incorporation in the nationalist effort, in a socialist emancipatory logic that emphasised their liberation, alongside men's, from colonial constraints.[198] In the words of Amílcar Cabral, PAIGC's founder,

> The freedom of our people also means the liberation of women (...) [The party must] defend women's rights, respect and require respect for women... but convince women of our land that their liberation must come about through their own efforts, by their work, dedication to the party, respect for themselves and first and foremost resistance against all affronts to their dignity.[199]

According to Eurídice Monteiro, women's struggle for their rights had a strong impulse during the liberation struggle and achieved many goals, throughout the first fifteen years after independence, which aimed at improving women's lives.[200] The creation of OMCV (Organização das Mulheres de Cabo Verde) in 1981 is one of the high points of this struggle throughout PAIGC/PAICV's single-party government, as the organization successfully promoted women and opened the debate on the oppressive

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[195] Carvalho, Marisa, *A Participação da Mulher na Vida de Cabo Verde* (Ermesinde: Edições Ecopy, 2010), p. 66.

[196] Ibidem, p. 66.

[197] Ibidem, p. 66-70.

[198] Foy (1988), pp. 91-98.

[199] Cabral (1980, pp. 97-98) quoted in Foy (1988), p. 92.

[200] Monteiro, Eurídice Furtado, *Mulheres, Democracia e Desafios Pós-Coloniais: Uma Análise da Participação Política das Mulheres em Cabo Verde* (Praia: INCV, 2009), pp. 77-84.

sexual construction of women.[201] From the 1990's on, in a multiparty political context, OMCV became an NGO, and many other interventionist institutions that work towards the emergence of a more equalitarian society were created.[202] Notwithstanding these solid advances, Monteiro claims that in contemporary Cape Verdean society women's subalternity remains alive. On the one hand, male practices of physical and psychological abuse towards women within the household are still very common; on the other hand, women are still overloaded, having to work within the public and the domestic spheres.[203] Regarding people's access to education and work, Monteiro asserts that despite the general improvements, the number of illiterate women is still much higher that the number of illiterate men. Furthermore, women carry on sacrificing their careers for their families; they still earn less than men do; many remain economically dependent of their husbands; and job vacancies in the public sector, as well as in structures of governmental power are still very much male-dominated.[204] Finally, Monteiro emphasises the existence of structures of power within womanhood, which refute this category's homogeneity:

> Para além de as relações de poder entre os sexos, fundamentadas pelas leis patriarcais, são visíveis as relações de poder entre as próprias mulheres, marcadas sobretudo pelas desigualdades sociais, confirmando assim a ideia de que as mulheres cabo-verdianas não fazem parte de uma categoria social homogénea, mas pertencem a um colectivo social composto por múltiplas identidades.[205]

Again, Salústio's project of examining the representation of Cape Verdean women's historical roles at the intersection of social elements such as gender, class and race seems to aim at making the scope of their interpretation more complex, in a more realistic framework, which takes us back to the analysis of *A Louca*.

The arrival of five outsiders in quiet and peaceful Serrano completely changes the course of the story for this peculiar village. These foreigners, who do not belong to the scenario and, for that reason, look down on the villagers, interfere inopportunely in the population's way of acting by imposing their different methodological approaches to

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[201] Ibidem, pp. 84-86.
[202] Ibidem, pp. 87-89. It is worth highlighting the creation of the public institution ICIEG (Instituto Cabo-Verdiano para a Igualdade e Equidade de Género, which was initially called INC – Instituto da Condição Feminina) in 1991 and the NGO MORABI (Associação de Apoio à Auto-Promoção da Mulher no Desenvolvimento) in 1992.
[203] Ibidem, pp. 101-102. See also Salústio, Dina, *Violência Contra as Mulheres* (Praia: ICF, 1999).
[204] Ibidem, pp. 102-105.
[205] Ibidem, p. 105.

the world.[206] By forcing the villagers to position themselves in an arbitrary system which is unfamiliar to them, these men from the capital entrap the villagers in a kind of *colonial* sphere that can be interpreted in different ways.

An immediate post-colonial reading of the story evokes the Cape Verdean colonial past. Salústio's depiction of the five men's behaviour can be interpreted as a reference to Portuguese colonialism, which was initially almost non-existent, and only became really effective during the Twentieth century (given the possibility of losing the colonies). Initially, the "fiéis servidores do reino" (20) arrive only to ensure that the territory has got a name and to observe its potential. Two hundred years later they return with an imperialist attitude and an ideology:

> (…) quando voltou nova missão, desta vez com forte protecção militar, ficaram a saber que aquele local tinha sido destinado a obras de importância vital para o desenvolvimento da zona e para a segurança do **país**.[207]

This behaviour corresponds to the colonial policies advanced by the Colonial Act (1930), according to which "os domínios ultramarinos de Portugal denominam-se colónias e constituem o Império Colonial Português".[208] It also invokes the official luso-tropicalist discourse that the Estado Novo presented to the world, whereby: "Portugal constitui uma comunidade multirracial, composta por parcelas territoriais geograficamente distantes, habitadas por populações de origens étnicas diversas, unidas pelo mesmo sentimento e pela mesma cultura".[209] Nevertheless, this episode in the novel unveils the impossibility of such a discourse, since the villagers fail to completely identify with the foreigners.[210] There is no cultural reciprocity: there is only one superior culture forcing the *other* to assimilate to it, and a misleading discourse elaborated to serve the colonizer's interests.

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[206] Regarding this specific aspect, it is relevant to observe the words the narrator advances to refer to these outsiders: "o estrangeiro" (17), "os forasteiros" (17), "funcionários públicos da cidade" (17), "desconhecidos" (18), "os intrusos" (19). Such a selection of words emphasizes the distinction between the villagers and the foreigners. Moreover, there seems to be a gradual intensification of this distinction in the words selected to refer to them in each of the specific moments, which themselves are progressively organized in terms of intensity.

[207] Salústio (1998), pp. 20-21 (my emphasis).

[208] Third article of the Colonial Act, quoted in Castelo (1999), p. 46.

[209] Ibidem (1999), p. 97.

[210] Salústio (1998), p. 21: "A palavra país não lhes dizia nada e, no seu modo de pensar, os homens que os obrigaram a dar um nome à sua terra eram tão estrangeiros como as gentes que possivelmente moravam no outro lado do mundo. Não tinham nada em comum e, mesmo a língua, eles não a compreendiam muito bem e continuavam a pensar que para todos os efeitos, quanto mais afastados se mantivessem de outros povos, tanto melhor para o sossego do seu pedaço de chão".

A second reading, however, suggests inner cultural tensions in Cape Verde. The emphasis on the return of the authoritarian colonial two hundred years later generates a parallel between the colonial and the post-colonial. Despite the urge of the post-independence one-party socialist government to emphasize the necessity of bringing a whole nation together under a single cultural language in order to make it stronger, this forced unification can be interpreted as a castrating one in Salústio's work. Considering that the majority of leaders of PAIGC were Cape Verdean, but the imaginary of the nation had Guinea-Bissau as its reference, this episode may represent a clash between the socialist ideas defended by these elite intellectuals and the real situation of the population. Although the general belief is that there are not many differences amongst the Cape Verdean people[211] – at least not as obvious as in other ex-colonies such as Angola or Mozambique – the truth is that each island has its own sociocultural particularities. Furthermore, and recalling the afore-mentioned opening description of Serrano in which the binary opposition between urban and rural setting is emphasised, this discrepancy can be read as a reflex of the revolutionary discourse of the nation's alienation of civil society and its cultural references. Considering that the national space was built upon the memory of colonial space, this postcolonial spatial reconfiguration, which clearly implies a cartographical exercise of remapping and renaming, is somehow imbued with fundamentalism and authority. The space of the city – in the novel, the capital city –, which emerges as historically linked with colonial power, is recaptured as the known point of departure for the recognition and occupation of the unknown wilderness – "a região selvagem que se estendia até se perder as vistas"[212] –, the space occupied by *others*. Devaluing certain cultural behaviours and cataloguing them as being barbarian because they do not belong to the elite culture remains a colonial act, even if carried out in the name of a post-independence single nation ideal. The suggestion of this parallel can, therefore, be allusive to colonial continuities in the postcolonial imaginary of nationhood.

The forced positioning of the community leads it to gain consciousness of a *national* identity, which emerges from the creation of a name for the village:

> A palavra que se ouvia pela primeira vez vibrou ponderosa na cabeça dos camponeses que levaram as mãos ao peito, onde o sangue bate mais forte, e por largas horas, a montanha, as serras, o vento, a ribeira, e os animais da terra, do ar e das águas, as folhas das árvores, as fontes

[211] See Chabal (2002), p. 92.
[212] Salústio (1998), p. 14.

> e a fonte repetiram Serrano para que o nome da povoação ficasse gravado em tudo que tivesse vida e igualmente em tudo que não a tivesse.[213]

The *parteira*, or head of the community, is the one who is led to come up with this name for the village, and in this almost exhausting task, she is assisted by the madwoman. By giving the *louca*'s name to the village, the old woman ties up their two destinies, as we will observe later. The most important aspect to focus on here is the (re)naming of the village: if on the one hand, it leads to the birth of a sense of shared cultural identity, on the other hand, it reinterprets the community's history, in order to make it fit the purposes of a historicity dictated by the revolutionary discourse of nationhood. Hence, the community's *other* historicity is disrupted and suspended, ultimately foretelling the end of the cultural community as it existed up to that point. Nonetheless, that sense of a new born common identity does not produce estrangement in the population, as even the madwoman is accepted by them, even if only for five days.

According to Anderson, the "imagined community" is always a shared conceptualization, yet it also defines itself by establishing limits, boundaries, and margins.[214] Despite accepting the madwoman as belonging to this nation, the population confines her to the margins. Considering, at this point, that the only members of the village who are ostracized are the Madwoman and Gremiana, we can interpret this gesture as one that perpetrates sexual hostility. It suggests that despite the society being matriarchal, the elaboration of a national imagination is male-dominated. As McClintock notes, national discourses project specific roles for both genders, and by doing so, they "limit and legitimize people's access to the resources of the nation-state".[215] Since the public sphere was continuously forbidden to women throughout history, they were *imagined* as the "symbolic bearers of the nation", the ones that ensure its continuity, but remain socially and politically disempowered.[216] If, as McClintock reminds us, gender identities need to be understood within the specific project of nationhood from which they emerge, the choice of the official common cultural discourse to keep women in a stagnant conceptualization proves to be deliberate and

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[213] Ibidem, p. 19.
[214] Anderson (1991), pp. 6-7.
[215] McClintock (1999), p. 353.
[216] Ibidem, p. 354.

strategic, since a sense of cultural continuity is achieved through the maintenance of conventional gender identities.[217] As such, women's uninterrupted entrapment in their colonized bodies reveals that the limits of this nation are defined in the female body.

However, this projection of femininity can only be understood when confronted with the construction of masculinity. Given that they were always dominant both in the private and the public spheres, men were responsible for the elaboration of national discourses – and they were also constructed as such. Therefore, power structures within gender can only be fully understood when placed in a particular context in which other categories interfere as well. In her analysis McClintock builds upon the conviction that the maintenance of imperialism depended on specific constructions of gender, class, and race, which emerged as interdependent categories that had to be examined relationally.[218] In chapter three, we are able to observe how class, race, and gender interact in the social setting.

It starts by highlighting a very important social characteristic: class differentiation. We are introduced to the San Martins, a traditional family of the capital city that has succeeded in surviving throughout difficult times of change thanks to their ability to readjust and maintain their financial supremacy. One of the habits that the women from this family have is promoting charities along with the Church to help the poor people from the capital. This generous act is actually a way to ensure the maintenance of the social gap between rich people and poor people. In their social acts, the rich women are supported by the Church, through the figure of the priest who struggles a lot to defend them publicly against the envious comments and acts of poor people. Having himself been an object of charity in the past, he uses the catholic discourse to lead poor people to accept their condition and, therefore, propagate social differentiation. Despite the emphasis on class struggle, the question of race appears connected to it when we acknowledge that Joana San Martin's biggest fear is that her daughter Genoveva is in love with Roberto, a young sportsman who despite all his qualities, does not fit the profile that families look for in prospective boyfriends:

> Normalmente um nome sonante e, sobretudo, um respeitável património. Encantada, a mocinha jurava que ele era o homem da sua vida e fazia contas aos anos que faltavam para o casamento,

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[217] Ibidem, p. 354.
[218] Ibidem, pp. 6-7.

ignorando as recomendações da mãe que, inconformada, acusava o desportista de **pobre, negro e ignorante**.[219]

Finally, gender is also contemplated, since it is through the control of the female body – a control that is asserted through the female lineage – that the class structures and the racial order are maintained.

Again we are confronted with an analogical resemblance between the fictional social reality of the capital city – representative of the official discourse of nationhood – and the historical facts of Cape Verdean social reality. Regardless of the fact that Cape Verde is generally conceived to be a geocultural space where racial differentiation is not so significant as it manifestly is in other spaces of the lusophone universe, the fact is that social stratification exists in the archipelago, and it emerges in accordance with people's colour and degree of miscegenation. Historically, the fact that Cape Verde's population is majorly mixed-blood limited racial tensions in society, but as Russel Hamilton reminds us, that does not imply these tensions did not exist:

> (…) indeed a homogeneous, mixed-blood population in the upper stratum has helped to assuage traditional racial antipathies, although the legacy of distinctions determined by color and the presence of a black population, mostly lower class, still serve to maintain race consciousness. Cape Verde does not have the visceral racism and tensions of other multiracial societies, but traditional attitudes and socioeconomic factors do make color an important consideration throughout the archipelago.[220]

Maria Manuela Afonso's 2002 study on education and social classes in Cape Verde also illuminates this debate.[221] Afonso defends the view that in contemporary Cape Verdean society, racial differentiation, as well as inter-island cleavages, urban and rural oppositions, or religious differentiations, although they do exist, are generally not as relevant for social differentiation as class.[222] Afonso concludes that since the colonial era, social classes were at the core of the structuring dynamics of Cape Verdean society. Although the class structure changed significantly since independence, due to the widening of educational opportunities, the researcher claims that "o acesso não é suficientemente democratizado para disfarçar o seu papel de classe. A importância da

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[219] Salústio (1998), p. 46 (my emphasis).

[220] Hamilton, Russel G., *Voices From an Empire: A History of Afro-Portuguese Literature* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1975), p. 236.

[221] Afonso, Maria Manuela, *Educação e Classes Sociais em Cabo Verde* (Praia: Spleen, 2002).

[222] Ibidem, p. 67.

educação como símbolo de mobilidade social é acentuada mas também o é a realidade do seu papel como reprodutor de desigualdades".[223] Hence, Afonso claims that education and the educational system privilege the social classes that belong to a "petite bourgeoisie", which is connected with the governmental entity.[224]

As such, because Roberto belongs to the group of black Cape Verdeans that constitute the lower class, he is not allowed to move up the class ladder, thus being unworthy of Genoveva: it is a circular process of interdependence between class and race. Therefore, all the racial prejudices that are usually attached to black people – lazy, ignorant, dumb – arise from the fact that they are poor. In addition to this, the female body is at the centre of the whole dynamics: Genoveva is meant to marry a candidate who her parents think of as suitable to her social condition so as to maintain the order. Once more, we observe Salústio's use of the community's self-*imagination* so as to originate recognition and discussion.[225] By depicting the stagnant nature of these social dynamics, which echo colonial structures, the author promotes an intersection between fiction and historical reality, consequently questioning national identity. Simultaneously, by building characters who neglect to identify with the established order and, therefore, present subversive behaviours that demystify it, she renegotiates these elements.

As McClintock reminds us, "there is no single narrative of the nation", therefore, each specific individual and/or group that integrates the nation experiences it in a different way.[226] This means that nationalism is invented by a dominant group, who, at a given historical moment, *selects* symbolic and cultural elements to construct a power structure in which it has a dominant role.[227] Nevertheless, the national discourse is never closed, so it can be continuously renegotiated. Going back to the moment of awareness of Serrano's community identity, there is a clear suggestion that it is male-oriented, which not only implies that individuals – both women and men – imagine themselves according to predefined gender identities, but also that female gender is sacrificed to ensure that the order remains patriarchal. Gender conceptualization is, indeed, greatly emphasized throughout *A Louca*. From the beginning of the novel we understand that

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[223] Ibidem, p. 211.
[224] Ibidem, pp. 207-212.
[225] Anderson (1991), p. 30.
[226] McClintock (1995), p. 360.
[227] See Yuval-Davis, Nira, *Gender & Nation* (London: Sage, 1997), p. 4.

despite women's dynamism in the organization and maintenance of the social structure, every action is taken to support male social dominance. As opposed to women's dynamism, men are always portrayed as passive beings. This happens in such a way that sometimes it seems that the male characters are alienated, living some kind of reality which belongs only to them and is completely out of step with what is going on around them. Despite being officially dominant in the power structure, Serranese men are disempowered for their inability to ensure the physical – and, thus, social – reproduction of the community. Indeed, they are marginal to these processes, yet they must maintain the lie that enables them to remain socially dominant. Through the exposure of this reality, both women and men have the opportunity to rewrite their own identities.

Since distinct gender constructions imply different positions and expectations, in these settings – village and capital – masculine gender is culturally constructed to project the *super-macho* ideal, an image which all men are expected to identify with. This image is primarily projected in the reproductive field – the most important one in this society. Although the men of Serrano are unaware of their infertility, they do know that something is not right regarding reproduction in Serrano. They prefer not to give much thought to the subject, which is, in fact, one of their most commonly used strategies towards the world around them: deliberate ignorance and blind acceptance of everything that would ensure the maintenance of male empowered identity as stable and continuous. Given that reproduction is their first social obligation, another strategy men use to reject any ideas that may question their virility is to blame women:

> Sim, porque nas suas poucas falas, os homens de Serrano diziam que as mulheres é que podiam falhar na procriação, porque os **machos**, estes, nada tinham a ver com tal tarefa e bastava ver o mecanismo visível da sua sexualidade que, de cada vez que enchia e desenchia, um filho poderia nascer; dezenas, centenas, milhões de filhos poderiam nascer. A terra é que pode ser fértil ou não e **terra eram as fêmeas** e os seus úteros que às vezes não passavam de terra seca – afirmavam, frustrados, quando os descendentes demoravam a aparecer, para aceitarem com normalidade, quase com orgulho, os filhos que um dia acabavam por chegar.[228]

Hence, these men live according to a falsely projected image of themselves, and not questioning nor acknowledging are the guarantees of survival of male superiority. For this reason, the outspoken Madwoman has to be tagged as mad and maintained in the margins of the community. Furthermore, Gremiana – the only woman who dares to speak openly about the fact that Serranese women are getting pregnant by men other

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[228] Salústio (1998), p. 63 (my emphasis).

than their Serranese husbands in order to secure biological and cultural procreation – has to die. She is a threat to social order and, thus, to the "national community", which is clearly created by and for men. In the capital city the situation is the same. Through the San Martin family we understand that they are unable to have more children because the patriarch is sterile since he caught a venereal disease from an unknown woman he slept with. Yet, the official version of this unfortunate fact is that his wife has had pregnancy complications in the past and, therefore, is unable to give birth to other children.

In *A Louca*, it is also made clear that women are required to identify with an established female conceptualization, one that at some point gets to be equally deconstructed. The first image of the text is that of the *parteira*, the wisest woman of the village. From the small window of her well-known house she eagerly updates her counting of the number of inhabitants of Serrano.[229] At this moment in the text, we learn about two of the most important defining characteristics of this community: the first one is that in terms of power structures, a woman is the highest authority of Serrano and it is also she who makes the major social decisions; the second one is that reproduction is very important, because this powerful woman is the midwife of the village, the one who ensures its continuity. The more we learn about the *parteira*, the more we realize how empowered she is: it is she who not only brings people into life, but also initiates boys in their sex life, cures men's sexual dysfunctions, helps women to get pregnant and decides on dead people's burials. Yet, this woman, who is the "dona da única porta mágica do povoado e arredores que parecia alargar quando as dimensões do corpo que entrava ou saía o exigiam, ou quando ela assim o decidia"[230], is also the loneliest person of the village. Having been chosen for the position, she has to dedicate her life to serve the village, immediately annulling her individuality in order to perform the role of *parteira* and, therefore, leader of the community. Hence, the survival of Serrano relies on the traditional roles of women, fully represented by this woman. However, all the *parteiras* of Serrano end up dying in bizarre circumstances that, somehow recall suicides: the first one dies because she drinks too much water (yet, the Madwoman

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[229] Ibidem, p. 67: "(…) uma povoação de cento e noventa e três habitantes incluindo uma jovem louca, as crianças recém-nascidas e as três outras por nascer, duas delas gémeas, conforme a parteira descortinou de uma frincha da janela da sua casa na sombra da mulher que passava no outro lado do largo (…)".
[230] Ibidem, p. 14.

states that, in fact, she had been drinking *grogue*[231]); the second one is entrapped between the big door of the house and a basket that she is carrying, and ends up dying as well; and, finally, the third one disappears right before Serrano is destroyed by the waters. This may suggest the inevitability of disappearance of the female conceptualization in these terms or, at the least, the need for it to die so that female identity can be reimagined outside the constraints of that symbolism.

This emphasis on motherhood implies that women have the responsibility of ensuring the survival of Serrano, which is an extremely stressful task in this particular setting. Therefore, they have to adopt strategies in order to adjust to the community's gender expectations. Women that cannot conceive are not considered to be complete women, as Maninha proves. Despite the authority of the *parteira*, the only power that women maintain in this society relates to reproduction. Therefore, Maninha is completely disempowered and, consequently, a cause of mockery in the community. She is despised by both men and women: the former scorn her for being unable to reinforce Jerónimo's virility; and the latter look down on her for being less of a woman:

> Maninha atravessava uma crise aguda de neurastenia depressiva e somente as famosas ervas locais conseguiam animá-la a fazer as lides da casa e a conviver com as mulheres da vizinhança que, maldosamente, conduziam as falas para gravidezes, partos e coisas estéreis.[232]

Although she knows that all the women in the village have given birth to children by men other than their Serranese social fathers, the whole community connives in maintaining the traditions and secrets of Serrano in order to guarantee its continuity and the maintenance of the social order.

In his 1988 study of the Cape Verdean islands, Basil Davidson reports this

> (…) ferida profunda dentro desta sociedade. A garantia da sua continuidade depende sempre das mulheres. Mas, no dia-a-dia, elas dependem dos caprichos dos homens e da sua vontade". …Aqui as mulheres são duplamente vítimas: vítimas do desgoverno colonial e ruína do arquipélago e vítimas do domínio do homem, um machismo áspero e desgastante que mesmo agora, quando as coisas começam a ser diferentes, se encontra a cada passo.[233]

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[231] An alcoholic drink produced in Cape Verde, very much like rum, which is made out of sugar cane.

[232] Salústio (1998), p. 56.

[233] Davidson, Basil, *As Ilhas Afortunadas: um estudo sobre a África em transformação* (Lisboa: Caminho, 1988), p. 199.

In an interview with Joana Fonseca Modesto, a local secretary for the Women's Organization (OM) in Santo Antão island, Davidson learns that it is part of the Cape Verdean tradition that only women who have a man and, thus, children can be respected – even if that man is not their husband and does not intend to become a social father to the children. Hence, there is a kind of consensual "sexual liberty" that alleviates men of any responsibilities and entraps women.[234] Modesto ends by stating that regardless of the efforts made to change this situation, it has proved to be a very difficult task given the deep rooting of cultural, religious and sociological beliefs. Yet, Maria das Dores, the spokeswoman of OM told Davidson that various measures were being taken in terms of protective legislation for women. The great problem they were facing was, according to the spokeswoman, the application of these laws among the female population, because the majority of women had to have their attitude worked on so as to accept these changes.[235]

Salústio's emphasis on reproduction from a female-focalized perspective gives it a whole new dimension. It shows that in a patriarchal society such as this, reproduction is historically the realm of masculine realization: male identity is defined by men's ability to procreate. At this point, it is worth mentioning a story that Davidson recalls to confirms this statement:

> Num dos meus «passeios» pelo interior das ilhas acabei por visitar o tio de um dirigente do Partido, um emigrante que, habitualmente, vive na Europa e vem passar as férias com a família. … Acabo por ficar a saber que o nosso anfitrião tem vinte e um filhos vivos. «Ou talvez mais», diz ele com satisfação. «Nem sempre é possível contá-los». Já o seu pai tinha tido sessenta e três filhos, «mas também é possível que fossem mais». …Mais tarde perguntei ao sobrinho: «Como é que ele sustenta tantos filhos?». «Sustenta alguns. Os outros são sustentados pelas mães».[236]

Regardless of the power it entitles women to in other respects, the archipelago's post-independence social and cultural existence remains patriarchal – a fact to which the colonial inheritance contributes. In other words, women's bodies continue to sustain the community. Yet, in this Serranese setting, in which all men are sterile, women make possible the reinterpretation of reproduction, demonstrating their decisive role in the physical and social continuity of the community. They are no longer just passive wombs waiting to be fertilized: they have the power of decision over the community's faith. On

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[234] Ibidem, p. 200.
[235] Ibidem, p. 202.
[236] Davidson, (1988), p. 199.

the one hand, this perception demonstrates the discrepancy between the official patriarchal discourse of community and the practice of it, as women actively subvert the power structures in reproduction. On the other hand, their choice to remain silent so as not to disturb the prevailing order reveals their connivance with the crystallization of conventional gender identities. Although Serranese women seem to be cleverer than Serranese men, they do not attempt to surpass the limits of their allowed social intervention – which is limited to passive reproduction –, thus reassuring men's social superiority. This passive behaviour of women culminates in the condemnation and death of Gremiana: "o remorso de não terem movido uma palavra ou um gesto para a defender e salvar. Para se defenderem também".[237]

The characters Fernanda/Genoveva and later Filipa present, in this context, dissonant behaviours. The former starts by failing to identify with her expected role by sleeping with Roberto and getting pregnant with his baby against her family's will. Later, because she proves that her capacity to give birth does not make her a mother, Fernanda/Genoveva shows that a committed father can also bring up a child. Furthermore, her social detachment (given her mental alienation) from Serrano opens up possibilities for her, such as, for example, her capacity to give birth without the involvement of the *Parteira* or the help of any other woman. As for Filipa, she always proves that she can think for herself and make her own choices. Regardless of having had numerous families throughout the years – families who would always abandon her – she does not give up the search for her own voice and independence. The many issues that surround her birth and her upbringing - having been abandoned by her mother who she never knew; having been sent by Jerónimo to the capital to live with her mother's family, who rejected her; having known only dysfunctional families – condition her ability to imagine herself outside this portrayal. Nevertheless, she fails to identify with any sociocultural constructions or gender predefinitions.

The author progressively deconstructs the ideal of men as *super-machos* in this context as well, by showing the falsity of this concept and the flaws that Serranese men insist on hiding. The only man who seems to be able to present an alternative in this panorama is Jerónimo. Although he attempts to conform to the ideal of masculinity projected by the community's imaginary, he finds it an extremely difficult task. After

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[237] Salústio (1998), p. 74.

having served with the Military, he dreams about a different life in the capital. Yet, he sacrifices his dreams of liberty for the sake of the continuity of Serrano. With great effort, he gradually becomes a slave of the community's habits and avoids thinking at all so as not to suffer for this treason that he performed against himself. The only thing that Jerónimo cannot accomplish is the general thing no other Serranese man can do: provide his wife Maninha with children. Naturally, the whole community and Maninha herself believe that she is to blame for the situation. The possibility is confirmed later on, when Jerónimo brings a pregnant girl into the village. The fourteen year old Genoveva San Martin is the amnesiac girl who Jerónimo finds wandering in the fields in the aftermath of a plane crash. Not knowing her true identity, he renames her Fernanda and takes care of her. However, the child she is carrying is not his, and his non-revelation of this fact makes him, in the eyes of the community, the first Serranese man able to reproduce. After giving birth to Filipa, Fernanda/Genoveva leaves for another city near the capital city, abandoning both Jerónimo and the baby girl, who he raises as his own child.

At this point, it is interesting to point out how much of a different man Jerónimo has become. Despite constantly attempting to conform to the "laws" of survival in Serrano, he finds it extremely difficult. Moreover, he is the first Serranese man to have his *own* child and to take care of the baby even in the absence of Fernanda/Genoveva. Finally:

> Jerónimo era um homem respeitado na povoação, embora tivesse sido mais, se depois do trabalho ou durante a pesca, como os outros, falasse das intimidades da companheira, da Fernanda e das outras mulheres.[238]

He fails to identify with the male projection imagined by the community. Indeed, he is a "serranês falhado".[239] That becomes clear when Serrano is destroyed by the construction of a dam. He leaves for the capital to become a mechanic, as he had always dreamt. He also becomes the only man in the novel who is able to officially recognize and verbalize his incapacity to procreate, thus assuming his marginal place in biological reproduction. Yet, he never stops looking for Filipa, so he reaffirms his new central place in cultural

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[238] Ibidem, p. 101.
[239] Ibidem, p. 95.

reproduction. Hence, he is able to detach himself from Serrano – and its representations – and renegotiate his own identity.

In terms of male contribution for the rewriting of gender identities, it is also important to acknowledge the subversive role of the character Roberto. Although we do not know many details about him, we know that because of his socio-economic condition and, hence, racial status, he is considered less of a man by Genoveva's family. As it was mentioned before, he does not fulfil the ideal of masculinity that is instituted by the capital's society. Nevertheless, he is the only male character that we get to know in the novel who is fertile and Genoveva gets pregnant with his child. Roberto, thus, represents a new kind of masculinity, which emerges from the disruption of the institutionalized sociocultural orders. As such, he is the only man *worthy* of procreating and biologically contributing to the emergence of a new imagination for the nation.

Finally, it is essential to examine the Madwoman, the somehow mythical woman who gives name to the novel:

> [A] mulher que baptizou Serrano, conhecedora de todos os segredos do vale, origem desta breve narração… **uma jovem que não encontrou homem, mulher, bandido ou animal que fosse, que a tivesse chamado filha, que a tivesse feito mulher** e por isso, para se vingar, amaldiçoava as criaturas do lugar que, por cumplicidade, tinham torcido o seu destino e a conheciam por Louca de Serrano. Ciclicamente, aparecia no povoado por artes desconhecidas, para desaparecer do mundo visível dos vivos quando completava os trinta e três anos e já tivesse visto tudo o que tinha para ver, e ouvido tudo o que tinha para ouvir. Depois voltava a aparecer, filha de gente nenhuma, de lugar e tempo nenhuns, criança, mulher.[240]

She represents, from the beginning, a dissonant voice that emerges from within the setting, but simultaneously dissociated from it in the sense that she is not constructed by the "imagined community". She is deviant, therefore, unable to fit a preconceived profile. For this reason, she is called Madwoman and sent to the margins of the "nation". The fact that she dies and is reborn every thirty-three years lends her a messianic aspect, and, as it was mentioned above, her destiny is linked to the village's when the *parteira* decides to name it after her. This act can be interpreted as the condemnation of Serrano (and everything that it represents) to disappearance and posterior rebirth with a new identity. And, indeed, when Jerónimo, Genoveva/Fernanda, and Filipa get together again as a family, the Madwoman's destiny is fulfilled: a new family arises from the margins to recreate national identity. It is a dysfunctional family

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[240] Ibidem, p. 26 (my emphasis).

and we do not know if it will survive in the future, but the fact that these three wanderers, who were always displaced within the community discourse, manage to succeed outside of it and, finally, get together shows the potential of alternative discourses. They are rewriting their identities within the community's imagination and, therefore, revealing a world of possibilities for society.

The work Dina Salústio develops in *A Louca de Serrano* is, indeed, a revisionist one. Through analogy, the author promotes the analysis of the historical, geographical, sociological, and cultural aspects which intersect to originate the conceptualization of Cape Verde as a nation. Primarily, it opens a window that looks over Cape Verde as an *imagined community*, so as to provide an understanding of how it came to be constructed. Then, through the selection and treatment of themes, in which gendered, racial and class constructions emerge entangled, Salústio takes the reader to reflect upon the colonial continuities in a post-independence setting, in which structures of social discrimination remain at the basis of the national imaginary. Ultimately, by proposing actions and behaviours which move diversely from the established national discourse, not only she questions it, but also she widens the horizons of national representation. Just like the Madwoman who gives name to it, the novel proves the potential of subversion as a site of resistance and creativity. This emphasis on the possibilities which might emerge from marginal experiences of the nation is taken up again by Salústio in the literary work *Mornas Eram as Noites*.

This collection of thirty-five short-stories that constitutes a kaleidoscopic representation of Cape Verdean experience presents a wide variety of themes. The particularity of Salústio's approach to the *mornas* as an identity-reference is intimately connected with the sub-title that the author chose to add – *…De como elas se entregaram aos dias* –, which indicates that, once again, women and the feminine perspective on Cape Verdean daily life will be at the core of discussion. Hence, Salústio rescues these women from silence and exposes an alternative "nation" within the nation. She guides the reader through the pages, leading him/her to assume a Cape Verdean female perspective and skin so as to analyse the different layers of which this "imagined community" is composed. Fundamentally, the author's main purpose seems to be that of deconstructing female identity as it is conceived in an official national discourse of *Caboverdianidade* in order to unveil the colonial continuities that are still visible in a post-independence setting. She does so by presenting diverse portrayals of distinct

women that come from different social backgrounds, act in different contexts and lead different lives. In her own words:

> (…) a necessidade de publicar as inúmeras histórias de mulheres, histórias de vida que passam por mim. (…) para querer mostrar o meu reconhecimento a estas mulheres caboverdeanas que trabalham duro, que fazem o trabalho da pedra, que carregam água, que trabalham a terra, que têm a obrigação de cuidar dos filhos, de acender o lume. (…) Falo das mulheres intelectuais, daquelas que não são intelectuais, daquelas que não têm nenhum meio de vida escrito, falo da prostituta, falo de todas as mulheres que me dão alguma coisa, e que eu tenho alguma coisa delas (…) Em Cabo Verde, quando nasce uma menina, ela já é uma mulher.[241]

These accounts will provide the reader with the knowledge to understand not only the various places of women in the postcolonial national discourse of Cape Verde, but also how these diverse feminine identities came to be formed and how conditions such as gender, class, and location interact and conflict within the national discourse so as to construct individuals' identities. At this point, we are led to recall the work developed by McClintock, in which the author advocates that the reading of women's subjectivity (or its suppression) emerges from the analysis of a given national discourse – that is always gendered – and of its various relational categories at a specific moment in time.[242] The selection of short-stories that I have made, thus, takes up themes that speak to the collective and come together in a way that resembles a patchwork.

These themes will be examined against the cultural, social, historical and geographical background of the archipelago in order to support the argument that Salústio's *Mornas* sets out to be a work of social analysis that <u>questions</u> the construction of female and male subjectivities in post-independence; <u>traces</u> women's cultural impact in the Cape Verdean nation by voicing them; and <u>proposes a displacement</u> of the official national discourse and, thus, of its underlying power structures through the examination of how subjectivities are continuously renegotiated in day-to-day experience of the nation. As such, I will provide an analysis in the light of Homi Bhabha's theorization of national discourse so as to show that by focusing on the untold stories, which expose the frailties of the official "imagined community", the author demonstrates that it is constantly open to being renegotiated by different social actors, whose active engagement in the rewriting of the nation can produce much more challenging and

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[241] Salústio, Dina, Entrevista a Simone Caputo Gomes, Praia (Cabo Verde), Novembro de 1994 in Simone Caputo Gomes, 'A Mulher Lê a Realidade: Escritura de Autoria Feminina em Cabo Verde' in [http://bibliotecavirtual.clacso.org.ar/ar/libros/aladaa/caputo.rtf] (08/11/2006).

[242] McClintock (1995), pp. 7-9 and 16.

democratic ways of experiencing the nation.[243] Bhabha problematizes the nation with a view to dismantling a historicist perception of it as a simultaneous, horizontal and homogeneous experience. In the theorist's view, this fixed conception is highly totalizing, as it is incapable of representing multiple social experiences of and constant social dynamics within the nation.[244] Perceiving nation as a narrative construction, Bhabha emphasises the temporal dimension of the discursive strategies used to legitimize a historicist conception of nation so as to undermine it by focusing on "a particular ambivalence that haunts the idea of the nation, the language of those who write of it and the lives of those who live it".[245] Hence, he claims that this ambivalence grows out of the gradual awareness that "the cultural temporality of the nation inscribes a much more transitional social reality".[246] As such, he states that

> The space of the modern nation-people is never simply horizontal. Their metaphoric movement requires a kind of 'doubleness' in writing; a temporality of representation that moves between cultural formations and social processes without a 'centred' causal logic. And such cultural movements disperse the homogeneous, visual time of the horizontal society because «the present is no longer a mother-form [read mother-tongue or mother-land] around which are gathered and differentiated the future (present) and the past (present) ... [as] a present of which the past and the future would be but modifications».[247]

For Bhabha, this "discursive liminality" becomes a very privileged place for the renegotiation and rewriting of national identity, as it enables the understanding of how the ambivalent entity "people" comes to be constructed, resulting from various discourses, in a double narrative movement.[248] Hence, if, on the one hand the nation and its limits are pedagogically dictated, on the other hand, national subjects are continuously defying those definitions through social performance.[249] Focusing specifically on the potential of marginal discourses to contest and displace the centrality of cultural hegemonies, Bhabha emphasises the challenging nature of post-colonial and feminist temporalities.[250] Through a gender mapping of Bhabha's theorization of the pedagogical and performative dimensions of national identity, this analysis will, thus, argue that the collection *Mornas* defends the non-existence of absolute and stable limits

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[243] Bhabha (1990), pp. 291-322.
[244] Ibidem, p. 292.
[245] Bhabha, Homi K., 'Introduction: Narrating the Nation' in Bhabha, Homi K. (ed.), *Nation and Narration* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), pp. 1-7 [p. 1].
[246] Ibidem, p. 1.
[247] Ibidem, p. 293. The author quotes Derrida (1981, 210).
[248] Ibidem, pp. 295-297.
[249] Ibidem, p. 297.
[250] Ibidem, p. 304.

of the nation, by empowering those occurrences that take place outside the constraints of national discourse, which enables the emergence of liminality as a privileged place for the elaboration of new conceptions of the nation.

Considering the characteristics already mentioned that shape the historical evolution of *Caboverdianidade*, and focusing particularly on the post-independence setting in which *Mornas* was published (keeping in mind that the short-stories were published regularly in newspapers, so they were based on contemporary occurrences in Cape Verdean society prior to their compilation and release in 1994), I believe that it is possible to state that the pedagogical discourse of the nation throughout the period represented was very much based on the assumption of a masculine supremacy. Notwithstanding the socialist and post-Marxist emphasis on an equalitarian society, in which women are emancipated alongside their male peers, the imagination of a continuous and uninterrupted *Caboverdianidade* was achieved through the crystallization of the historical power dynamics between genders within both the private and the public spheres. As such, a supposedly-stable univocal and one-dimensional historicity of the nation emerges, imposing patriarchal constructions of femininity and masculinity as "tradition", and ultimately shaping all social structures. Nevertheless, in *Mornas*, Cape Verdeans' daily experience of the nation continuously displaces that univocal and one-dimensional time, through the recognition of challenging social performances that demonstrate the fluidity of time.

Building upon these premises, it is worth starting by analysing the way in which the masculinised pedagogical conceptualization of the nation constructs manhood, as the roles men are expected to perform are also defined and maintained by this same pedagogical discourse of the nation. Through the analysis of various, particular moments of the Cape Verdean reality portrayed we come to realize that in fact, the masculine is a shadowy presence in the short-stories, rarely intervening directly or defying the sociocultural stability that legitimises its supremacy. According to the collection, there is a specific conception of manhood who all Cape Verdean men are meant to identify with: the 'super-macho'. This is a man who moves across all classes and races and survives through the projection of an image of himself as centre. Honour is meant to have an important impact on the definition of manhood in the archipelago, and this explains some of the male attitudes – such as domestic violence towards

79

women, for example – we will explore. According to João Lopes Filho, there are different sorts of honour men can relate to in this setting:

> O sentido de honra encontra-se profundamente inculcado no homem cabo-verdiano e constitui um dos valores fundamentais por que esta sociedade se rege. (…) a honorabilidade e o respeito que determinado indivíduo recebe dos seus concidadãos tem a ver, por um lado, com a **conotação económica e social de honra** (…) Abrange também o conceito de honra o sentido da virtude, esta especialmente associada à mulher, tendo uma conotação religiosa e sexual e portanto diferente do tipo de honra que vimos acima, intimamente associada aos valores masculinos. (…) **A honra é, normalmente, uma questão masculina.** (…) No entanto, a grande preocupação com o olhar dos estranhos fora do contexto familiar, recai sobre a conduta das mulheres, elementos fundamentais no que concerne à honra da família. **A contribuição da mulher tem sido essencialmente de ordem passiva, para que seja positiva, diferenciando-se do papel do homem, a quem compete a acção**.[251]

Curiously, the most frequent attitude coming from men in the whole collection is absence – they remain in silence and passivity. Despite their social and physical dominance in the Cape Verdean universe, men's absence from daily life – the realm where stagnant identities come to be renegotiated – can anticipate their urge to preserve their authority. As such, in these texts they are passive entities because they intend to crystallize their exercise of control over women, who appear very active in different settings of the everyday experience – so, despite their apparent stability, the power structures are being contested by women. Hence, in spite of their self-definition as the centre in the pedagogical conception of the nation – as opposed to women, who remain in the margins of the national project –, they are inactive in a performative day-to-day sense, and thus marginal to the process of constant renewal of the nation. As a result, women prove to be the nation's real core.[252]

There is one single short story in the whole collection that speaks specifically about men. It is entitled "Campeão de Qualquer Coisa" and tells us an episode in which the narrator receives an outsider in a typically Cape Verdean gathering and treats him like he/she would treat any other man from the archipelago, so, any other man who fitted the 'super-macho' profile. The guest does not recognize himself in that profile and both of them end up discussing the issue a little, highlighting the importance of living an open life, with no disguise, and without having the need to constantly prove that one is "campeão de qualquer coisa". Unusually, the action takes place in a social environment which seems to correspond to the empowered Cape Verdean social class,

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[251] Filho, João Lopes, *Ilha de S. Nicolau. Cabo Verde. Formação da Sociedade e Mudança Cultural*, Vol. II (Lisboa: Editorial do Ministério da Educação, 1996), pp. 135-6 (my emphasis).
[252] Ibidem, p. 143.

which not only shows that the machismo we are talking about is not confined to a specific social class, thus reaching different social groups, but also suggests, once again, that the alternative to this behaviour has to emerge from this empowered context as well:

> A noite ia a mais de meio. Grupos de homens e grupos de mulheres **convenientemente estabelecidos**. Eu fazia o protocolo e chegaste e como manda a praxe, fui-te passando um copo para as mãos e porque não te conhecia disse-te: os campeões das anedotas estão ao fundo, ao lado, os campeões da política internacional, à esquerda os do futebol, os do sexo, debaixo do abacateiro, os dos copos, junto ao bar e iniciei a retirada porque não havia mais nada que dizer (…) Foi então me disseste que **não eras campeão de coisa nenhuma** e nem sequer eras bom em qualquer coisa e que eras um tipo normal.[253]

When the narrator enumerates the groups that the guest might want to choose from, there is the suggestion of a homogeneity which is solidified through male dominance over women. Nevertheless, the outsider takes the narrator by surprise by not recognizing himself in that 'champion' profile, so the latter carries on insisting, almost interpellating[254] the former to fit in one of the groups predefined by the profile, telling him that all he needs to do is lie to be accepted. However, the outsider presents a whole set of alternative behaviours which are totally opposed to those underlying the conception of the 'super-macho', i.e., that expose the true face of a new man who flatters himself for being fragile and 'normal':

> Ensinaram-nos que devíamos ser heróis de qualquer coisa. **Exigem que façamos permanentemente exercícios de auto afirmação**. Não nos educaram para corajosamente debatermos os nossos medos, falhas, hesitações, infernos. **Apetrecharam-nos com o mito de super-machos e esperam que sejamos sempre vencedores**, fazendo-nos inimigos da própria maneira de estar, escamoteando a verdade, falseando as fronteiras. E porque somos apenas normais e temos vergonha da nossa normalidade, passamos o tempo todo a pensar numa roupagem que impressione. E vestimo-nos de atletas e mascaramo-nos de campeões, para, às escondidas, chorarmos a nossa simplicidade, a vulgaridade que enforma os nossos sentimentos íntimos. Não temos coragem para dizer não sou o melhor e não tenho que o ser, nem justificar-me da minha fragilidade. Entrar em competição com as minhas fantasias e as dos outros seria sinal de simples imaturidade e falta de respeito por mim próprio – prosseguiste descontraído, quase a rir.[255]

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[253] Salústio (1994), p. 11 (my emphasis).
[254] 'Interpellation' is here to be understood in conformity to Althusser's theorization. See Peter Barry, *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press: 2002), p. 165: "Interpellation is Althusser's term for the way the individual is encouraged to see herself or himself as an entity free and independent of social forces. It accounts for the operation of control structures not maintained by physical force, and hence for the perpetuation of a social set-up which concentrates wealth and power in the hands of the few".
[255] Salústio, p. 12 (my emphasis).

There is no predefined place for this outsider, no established role for him to identify with, because he realizes that the power men possess of defining gender roles according to their necessities actually turns against them, since it also demands a very specific behaviour from them. Any existence outside this 'super-macho' ideal is equivalent to not being a real male (as we will see, for instance, through the sixteen year old boy's episode in "Mãe Não é Mulher"), and therefore not having a particular reference group at the party, nor a place in society. Nevertheless, it is also a source of empowerment, given that through the realization of his social construction in the pedagogical dimension of the nation he can build a reaction to it and, thus disempower it by assuming the control of his destiny as an individual, through his own renegotiated version of manhood. He himself represents an alternative behaviour: this new man emerges from the marginality of the 'super-macho' and establishes his strength through the friction that occurs between the pedagogical discourse and the performance which is made of it.

If, on the one hand, the emergence of this 'new man' in the novel is very important for presenting the male displacement of a masculinised univocal historicity (so that men's active involvement in the deconstruction of a stagnant patriarchal nation arises as a liberating experience for them), on the other hand, it opens up possibilities for the emergence of a 'new woman' too. "Liberdade Adiada" is the first short story of the collection that introduces us to what we may call the 'typical' Cape Verdean woman, as pedagogically constructed by the nation. She is a twenty-three years old hardworking mother who has a moment of weakness while facing a *barranco* (ravine). For a moment, while she contemplates it, her life runs in front of her eyes and she feels that the only way to achieve her freedom is by committing suicide: "Atirar-se-ia pelo barranco abaixo. Não perdia nada. Aliás, nunca perdeu nada. Nunca teve nada para perder.".[256] However, she does not do this. There are two major elements in her life that somehow seem to dictate her actions: her children and her *lata de água* (water can). She is what McClintock calls a "symbolic bearer of the nation", although she has no power of decision over her life.[257] On the one hand, she sees motherhood as a huge burden that eliminates her access to freedom of choice. Therefore, she hates *that* part of her body and her children, and she does not identify with either of them. Her *lata*, on the other

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[256] Ibidem, p. 6.
[257] McClintock (1995), p. 354.

hand, is almost an extension of her own self. It is described as being a friend of hers; they could almost merge with each other:

> A lata e ela, para sempre, juntas no sorriso do barranco. Gostava da sua lata de carregar água. Tratava-a bem. Às vezes, em momentos de raiva ou simplesmente indefinidos, areava-a uma, dez, mil vezes, até que ficava a luzir e a cólera, ou a indefinição se perdiam no brilho prateado.[258]

She clearly identifies with that object, since both of them carry the faith of the land: the can carries the water, which is particularly important for Cape Verde and its people (considering the historical droughts and famine); women ensure the biological and cultural reproduction of the nation; and finally, women carry the cans of water, a fact that demonstrates how vital they are to the physical survival of the nation.

In addition, the fact that the woman carries the can of water is presented somehow as an imposition, almost as faith, something she cannot or does not know how to escape: all she really knows is her *lata*, and that is the reason why they are so close – they share each other's burden. Simultaneously, this woman feels a kind of pleasure that emerges from the fact that this vital aspect of the nation is controlled by her, so she feels responsible for it. There is a clear interpellation being made by the conceptualization of the nation that calls upon this woman to perform a role which corresponds to the structure that holds the nation together. Despite being physically and mentally exhausted, she does not have the courage to give everything up because of her children, those children that she loves and hates at the same time: she *must* do what she is *expected* to do. Hence, we can say that this "Liberdade Adiada" is a contextual imposition, since she is never really given a choice: the survival of the nation as she knows it depends on her continuous acceptance of it as it is, so her freedom to choose alternative ways of experiencing womanhood is constantly postponed. It is also important to highlight the fact that she does not have the tools to stop, through performativity, the propagation of her pedagogical construction as subaltern in this patriarchal nation, because she is poor. Due to the existence of a male economic supremacy in operation in this setting, poverty is feminized, thus forcing poor women to have their gender freedom postponed on account of their class.[259] She is, therefore,

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[258] Salústio (1994), p. 6.

[259] It is worth recalling at this point the work developed by Monteiro (2009), in which the author points out that men still emerge economically empowered in contemporary Cape Verdean society due to their

prevented from accessing the means to express herself or contest her positioning, the alternative to her present life being suicide.

Hence, there is a gap between the pedagogical discourse of the nation and the performative one: the former creates an identity for this woman which is meant to be stable and to remain undisturbed, but the woman's inability to completely adjust to it (despite being forced to accept it) demonstrates that the totalizing nature of the pedagogical discourse is impossible to achieve. On the one hand, she confronts the official emancipatory and equalitarian discourse of the nation with its patriarchal limitations for women, thus forcing it to acknowledge its support of a male-oriented supremacy. On the other hand, the image of her entrapment calls upon women's complicit behaviour as regards preserving their subaltern identities. This woman's postponed freedom disrupts the fixed temporality of the pedagogical discourse by demonstrating that cultural identities are always opened to being renegotiated and can be altered through empowering performances of social change. It is from the friction between these two different interacting times that something new emerges; a new way of looking at what is taken from granted – and this is something constant throughout the short stories. As Bhabha observes,

> Insinuating itself into the terms of reference of the dominant discourse, **the supplementary antagonizes the implicit power to generalize, to produce the sociological solidity**. (...) The power of supplementarity is not the negation of the preconstituted social contradictions of the past or present; **its force lies (…) in the renegotiation of those times, terms and traditions through which we turn our uncertain, passing contemporaneity into the signs of history**.[260]

It is precisely this renegotiation that occurs throughout the *Mornas*. As Gomes reports, Salústio brings a new outlook to Cape Verdean social reality so as to debate situations that have remained the same for so long that they have became generally accepted as part of *Caboverdianidade* – which does not necessarily mean that they cannot be confronted, questioned, and changed.[261]

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easier access to education and better jobs, and also due to the fact that they still earn more than women do.
[260] Bhabha (1990), p. 306 (my emphasis).
[261] Caputo Gomes, Simone, 'Echoes of Cape Verdean Identity: Literature and Music in the Archipelago' in *Cape Verde: Language, Literature & Music*, *Portuguese Literary & Cultural Studies* 8, (2003), pp. 265-285 [p. 280]: "Daniel Spínola maintains that Dina Salústio «inaugura uma nova forma de comunicar e um novo modo de percepção do mundo» (…) in Cape Verdean fiction, one that involves readers and provides them with a new way of looking at social or existencial situations which have ossified or have become stagnant.

It is precisely a reaction to the postponed freedom explored previously that emerges in "A Oportunidade do Grito", the short-story that immediately follows "Liberdade Adiada". The story builds upon a conversation that a group of women is having. They express the need to disturb the pre-established order and focus on the potential of dissident behaviours and their importance to fight the stagnation of traditional gender roles and power structures:

> Pedes a Deus? Idiota! Tens é que discutir com Ele. Enfrenta-O como mulher. Mostra-lhe as tuas razões. Grita se for preciso. Ele é que te pôs aqui, não é? Pois que assuma a sua parte da responsabilidade. Enfrenta-O. Deus gosta de mulheres fortes – gritou.[262]

God emerges as representative of a pedagogical discourse that constructs women according to the doctrines of Catholicism. In a context in which 90 per cent of the population consider themselves to be Catholic, this comes as no surprise, which makes women's escape from their sociocultural construction as subaltern even harder to achieve.[263] There is, therefore, a suggestion of union among women, so that together, and through sharing, they can overcome the difficulties they face – that is where the strength to create an opportunity to protest comes from. Only by focusing on themselves and actively engaging in rewriting their own identities they can refute the hegemony of those which are imposed by the dominant discourse. According to Bhabha, individual initiatives are particularly confined to marginality in order not to become dangerous.[264] Hence, the suggestion of union among women can be interpreted as the means to overcome this obstacle and disturb the social structure, as we shall see further on.

It is important to point out that given their posture, concerns and even thoughts, these women seem to have a higher social status than the previous short story's protagonist. This suggests that women's emancipation, as well as the creation of opportunities to resist, depends on social classes, particularly those who have greater educational and economic access to the nation's public sphere and, thus, to the tools that can formally dismantle its discourse. In "E porque havia de não gostar" there is, again, a reunion of women, seven of them, who, again, seem to emerge from an educated and

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[262] Salústio (1994), p. 8.

[263] Foy (1988), pp. 97-98. The author recalls one episode which occurred in 1987 in which OMCV faced great criticism from the Catholic Church and PAICV for having supported the creation and approval of a new law on Voluntary Interruption of Pregnancy.

[264] Bhabha (1990), p. 302: "…we have learned that the most individuated are those subjects who are placed on the margins of the social, so that the tension between law and order may produce the disciplinary or pastoral society".

economically empowered social class. They discuss the frustration of not being able to explore their potential as individuals and women, and to fulfil their dreams:

> Sete mulheres. Nenhuma delas notícia. Os sonhos guardados intactos, porque não vividos eram o muro onde agora se sentavam para olhar o horizonte, eternamente futuro. (…)
> – Somos o passado e por isso rejeitamos o presente.
> – Qual presente? Os outros, os outros, sempre os outros? E eu? E tu? E os sonhos? E as quedas? Os risos….[265]

Through sharing, these women are able to state all the things they could have been, but were unable to be because even after independence they remain entrapped in a stagnant frame, as passive "symbolical bearers of the nation", that the national discourse refuses to update.[266] They are compelled to adjust to an image that refers to the past – women's traditional conception –, which clearly shows that after independence, women remained absent or only present in very limited ways from the socialist agenda and from Cape Verdean national discourse: they were prevented from living their gender in full, since they were socially recognized only when performing their roles as wives and mothers, and never as women. According to Bhabha, "The pedagogical finds its narrative authority in a tradition of the people, described by Poulantzas as a moment of becoming designated by *itself*, encapsulated in a succession of historical moments that represents an eternity produced by self-generation".[267] Hence, when in this scenario, these women propose the destruction of the old in order to build something new as the only act that makes sense, their proposal is a performative one, in order to disrupt the authoritarian temporality of the pedagogical order. *This* city is not enough for these women anymore: "E se incendiassem a cidade? (…) tudo a arder e elas no bar cheio de fumo a rir e a chorar. Idiotice! Onde está a cidade? É isto uma cidade?".[268] The focus on the particular site of the city is quite revealing at this point. As an important component of both the colonial spatial occupation and the post-colonial spatial reconfiguration, the city is associated with the power of decision-making, connecting the material and the ideological dimensions. Therefore, the proposal to set fire to the city may metaphorically suggest a cartographical reconstruction that refutes any space and time essentialism with reference to the sociocultural location of women.[269]

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[265] Salústio (1994), pp. 29-30.
[266] McClintock (1995), p. 354.
[267] Bhabha (1990), p. 299.
[268] Salústio (1994), p. 92.
[269] Bhabha (1990), p. 306.

In order to create the conditions to reformulate their social positioning they have to be, above all, aware of their own situation in the social sphere – and this may be the kind of awareness that not everyone can access, hence the author's insistence on the responsibility of women of higher social status. In "O Conhecimento em Debate" knowledge is, as the title indicates, debated by a group of women who, once again, fit the abovementioned social profile (they appear to be educated, economically empowered, but having their roles defined in relation to their husbands and children). After having gone for dinner all together, they gather "na intimidade de mulheres" (38) to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of knowledge. Some women find knowledge to be dangerous and somehow intimidating, given its capacity to force people to face reality as it is and, subsequently, to require a reaction from them. Other women, however, find it to be an extremely important source of power not only because it allows people to deal with what they really *are*, as opposed to what they *pretend to be*, but also because only real knowledge of a given issue – in this setting, of the role of Cape Verdean women and of the heterogeneous character of this group – will allow them to dismantle it and to propose alternatives. The moment of awareness of a patriarchal structure in operation is also the moment in which the existence of a power structure amongst women is exposed. The moment of knowledge is also, therefore, a moment of violence, in which these women strip the national discourse, expose its most disgusting aspects – its *entranhas* – and confront it with its own monstrosity, so as to force it to rewrite itself:

> Nojo? É isso. Nojo é a palavra certa. Quando nos conhecemos uns aos outros, sentimos nojo porque o tempo todo fingimos o que não somos, o que não podemos ser, o que desejaríamos ser e o conhecimento mostra a realidade, as tripas fora, a pequenês. É por isso que querer conhecer alguém é violentá-lo, despir-lhe a armadura, exibir-lhe as cicatrizes, o intestino.[270]

Again, it is worth recalling Bhabha at this point, as the theorist alerts us to the importance of knowledge for the confrontation between pedagogical and performative discourses. For Bhabha, the pedagogical gets its strength from the people's tradition. Therefore, only by acknowledging that there is an ideology which interpellates them and keeps them under a unifying control are these women able to question and interrupt this tradition: through performance they are able to build a new perspective; to provide a new time and space for the emergence of new narratives and the rewriting of the their

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[270] Salústio (1994), p. 39.

multiple identities within the nation and the national discourse; and, finally, to fight recurrent acts of ideological authoritarianism, even when they occur amongst themselves.[271]

Concerning the second role women are expected to perform – motherhood – the collection presents explanatory examples of what it means to be a Cape Verdean mother. "Mãe não é Mulher" brings us the dilemma in the life of a sixteen year old adolescent who is slapped by his mother after having misbehaved towards her. The situation gains larger proportions due to the Creole belief that "bofetada de mulher na cara de rapaz impedia a barba de crescer".[272] Naturally, the youngster descends into a deep depression thinking that he would never be a *real* man again, and it is not until his mother tells him a story about Jesus and his mother Mary that he relaxes, concluding that "se Jesus dizia que mãe podia bater na cara, mulher é que não, então não havia motivo para preocupações".[273] Several indications about the conception of Cape Verdean motherhood by the pedagogical discourse of the nation are given to us in this short-story: firstly, the role of these mothers is defined so as to mirror the image of Jesus's mother, Mary:

> Agora, pensando na minha mãe é que eu vejo como ela se identificava com Nossa Senhora e falava dela, como uma amiga. Às vezes dizia: Maria sofreu muito porque Jesus às vezes saía e nem lhe dizia para onde, mas eu não vou admitir que tu faças o mesmo.
> - Olha o que lhe aconteceu no fim![274]

Again, the influence of Catholic tradition is shown to be determinant in the construction and maintenance of women's paradoxical incorporation of Virgin Mary and Eva in their subjectivities. Furthermore, it has stimulated women's relational role within the family structure, as they are continuously defined in relation to the men in their lives – their fathers, their husbands, and their sons. Caught in this predefined complex identity, women are continually alienated from their own selves. Secondly, mothers appear as important cultural transmitters, not only because they have a very privileged relationship with their children (given their unique proximity), but also because the latter inherit their knowledge of the cultural nation from the former, thus having their character shaped by the pre-established roles that are taught to them by their mothers in

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[271] Bhabha (1990), p. 299.
[272] Salústio (1994), p. 33.
[273] Ibidem, p. 34.
[274] Salústio (1994), p. 34.

the domestic sphere.[275] Finally, in the archipelago setting, to be a woman implies being a mother, but the opposite is not so. Hence, motherhood emerges as a reality alienated from womanhood, revealing that women must live to fulfil the biological and cultural reproduction of the nation, automatically annulling themselves as sexed-desiring individuals:

> Ao contar-vos esta história, lembro-me de uma vez em que um dos meus filhos, ainda adolescente e confuso, me perguntou: Mãe, se fosses mulher, tu gostavas de mim?[276]

This pedagogical effort to keep women in this problematic positioning translates into performative contradictions. If on the one hand, women's sexuality encapsulates them in reproduction, as cultural and biological reproducers and disseminators of the nation, on the other hand, they are prevented from fully experiencing their sexuality due to their prior duties in respect of the nation.[277] In his interpretation of Sheila Kitzinger, Lopes Filho advances the following:

> «Na maior parte da sociedades a mulher é um paradoxo. Ela é perigosa, misteriosa e impura mas também, como mãe, altamente venerada. Como não-mãe e objecto erótico representa as forças das trevas, da natureza animal que desvia os homens do que é espiritual, um agente de forças malignas que ameaça privar o homem dos seus poderes vitais. (…) Por outro lado, como mães, as mulheres são fontes de criatividade e de amor; a personificação da caridade e do sacrifício.» Este paradoxo da condição feminina origina contradições tanto no modo como a mulher é vista pelo homem como no próprio modo como ela se vê, como tem consciência da sua individualidade e do seu papel sexual (de mulher). Uma dessas contradições é o «tremendo fosso entre as suas ideias e a dos homens sobre a mãe ideal e a mulher real que tenta viver este ideal impossível».[278]

Hence, this episode places the pedagogical discourse of the nation in tension with the performance of it to show that the former is impossible to achieve on a performative level, which inevitably leads to the emergence of counter-responses from Creole women.

It is also important to point out that the Creole belief that "bofetada de mulher na cara de rapaz impedia a barba de crescer"[279] is clearly created to shape masculine behaviour according to a pre-conceived ideal: if a boy allows a woman to beat him, he will never become a man. Hence, the male ideal hereby explored refers to the typical

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[275] Filho (1996), p. 129.
[276] Salústio (1994), p. 34.
[277] Yuval-Davis and Anthias quoted in McClintock (1995), p. 353.
[278] Filho (1996), pp. 143-4. The author quotes Kitzinger.
[279] Salústio (1994), p. 33.

"super-macho", which is also pedagogically constructed. Resorting to this comical and almost innocent episode in the lives of a young boy and his mother, the author suggests conditions for a male subversion of manhood as it is imagined within the patriarchal Cape Verdean pedagogical discourse. The mother, being aware of her role within the reproduction and legitimization of this cultural construction, is empowered to use it against patriarchy, as she teaches her son other ways of performing manhood outside the constraints of a traditional male identity which is invoked by the Creole belief. In other words, she fights patriarchal domination from within its own limits, by getting hold of the same weapons which were given to her by the dominant discourse to reinforce it and using them to disempower it.

Accordingly, the short story "Filho és, Pai serás" presents an alternative to the general gender identity panorama, a deviation from the path that is traced for women. It reports an episode in the life of a Cape Verdean mother who forgets about Mother's Day and is reminded of the date by her own mother, who calls her to congratulate her. The older woman is described in a curious manner, appearing associated with "uma série de provérbios ditos em português que, no contexto quotidiano crioulo, adquiriam um peso e um estatuto que nos amedrontavam" and, thus, represented the "sentença suprema".[280] What we see invoked here is the cultural origins of the role of mothers in the archipelago, which in the text are Portuguese, and western. As mentioned before, since the beginning of the colonization of the Cape Verdean islands, African women (who completely replaced white women, who rarely travelled to the archipelago) were responsible for biological reproduction, and the situation did not change after the abolition of slavery. They remained very much attached to the private sphere throughout the years, most of the time being fully responsible for their families, as men often travelled abroad in search of better lives conditions or simply did not care about women or their children, acting according to a logic of unofficial consensual polygamy.[281]

The fact that the narrator's mother ends the telephone call saying one of her favourite proverbs – 'Filho és, pai serás, assim como fizeres, assim acharás' – also reminds us, once again, of the importance of motherhood for cultural transmission, as well as of the strength of the pedagogical patriarchal discourse. We can read it as a means to point out that this intergenerational exchange is the perfect point of rupture

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[280] Ibidem, p. 19.
[281] See Carvalho (2010), pp. 66-70.

with the dominant discourse, given motherhood's potential to dismantle the roles of both men and women, which are defined throughout childhood, and therefore within the domestic sphere, and only then projected into the public sphere. Hence, this indicates that the narrator, who is a mother herself, will be confronting the pedagogical and institutionalized ideal of motherhood which is represented by her own mother. As we will be able to analyse further on, through her performance she will displace it. Having received a congratulating phone call from her *codê* (her youngest offspring), the narrator feels guilty and decides that she needs a "vingança urgente".[282] Therefore, she calls another one of her children using her mother's discourse and repeating the same Portuguese proverb she had heard from her earlier. The son starts by justifying himself, but when he hears the proverb coming from his mother, "que lhe sabe a praga"[283], he fails to recognize it and, thus, asks the narrator if she really means what she is saying. She immediately understands that the reason why her son is confused is because she herself is different from her mother and has reproduced a different cultural conception in her children. Therefore, she tells him about his grandmother's phone call and both end up laughing at the situation.

The narrator is clearly a mother who, through her performance, distances herself from the pedagogical conception of motherhood within the dominant patriarchal discourse, and, thus, from her mother, who represents it. Hence, there is a clear genealogy break in the national narrative which is achieved through the recovery of an alternative performance of motherhood. By doing this and acting through marginality, she enables the creation of an alternative universe personified by her own children – the fact that they do not recognize themselves in the dominant discourse is proof of that:

> Ao desligar, pediu-me: por favor, não voltes a dizer aquela do «Filho és, pai serás». É que me sabe a praga. A mesma sensação que eu sentia em criança, reconheci, pensando em coisas como filhos, educação, famílias. E na minha mãe.[284]

We can read this as both a distancing from the traditional (colonial and post-independence) Cape Verdean conceptualization of cultural transference, and a reinforcement and embracing of cultural recreation in the postcolonial and post-Marxist

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[282] Salústio (1994), p. 20.
[283] Salústio (1994), p. 20.
[284] Salústio (1994), p. 20.

setting of Cape Verde. It is important not to forget the attitude of the *codê* who, as mentioned before, did not forget the date and called his mother

> Dando os parabéns e dizendo uma série de mimos que geralmente precedem um pedido seja do que for, normalmente de outras ternuras, mas desligou sem mesmo perguntar por um dinheirinho extra e isso aumentou a minha culpa por não me ter lembrado de telefonar para a minha mãe.[285]

There is a suggestion that this youngest child might be influenced by a western behaviour that goes back to an identity reinstatement of the traditional colonial values. This kind of recuperation of a traditional family concept might be read as a neo-colonialist initiative, the proposed consequence of the non-confrontation of the colonial structures and, subsequently, of the maintenance of a social situation that remains stagnant. If, as Bhabha claims, "This double-writing or dissemi-*nation*, is not simply a theoretical exercise in the internal contradictions of the modern liberal nation. (…) the liminal figure of the nation-space would ensure that no political ideologies could claim transcendent or metaphysical authority for themselves", the disregard for the daily updating of the nation and its predefined identities will ultimately lead to a blind acceptance of the nation and its contradictions as a totalizing and finalized construct, which, of course, materializes in the continuous recycling of essentialist and exclusivist behaviours – which are transferred from generation to generation.[286]

Hence, childhood emerges intimately related to motherhood. In this collection this is an issue that comes also to us in the shape of a denunciation, given that it emerges through child abandonment, abuse and prostitution. The new Cape Verdean post-independence generation is, in these texts, a lost generation, forgotten, doomed, with no roots and extremely poor. There is, therefore, a reference to the situation of these children without any roots who, due to their social and economic condition, are caught in a vicious circle from which they are unable to escape. Nevertheless, this uniformity is disrupted in "Natal", a short story in which class differences are emphasized when a specific time of the year is approached. It is the Christmas season and in a shop there is the confrontation between the elite, who shops, and three poor children, who enter the shop merely to observe the toys. Due to the bad atmosphere suddenly generated, the shop assistant expels the children from the shop. In general, this

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[285] Ibidem, pp. 19-20.
[286] Bhabha (1990), p. 299.

is a short story that demystifies Christmas as an important cultural celebration and also as a family celebration. It denounces it as a time to shop and to give in to capitalist values, simultaneously unveiling the artificiality of a society which tries to maintain a European tradition that no longer has any place:

> Não estou de acordo. É bom haver Natal. É bom escrever aos amigos e dizer-lhes que estão comigo o tempo todo, apesar do meu silêncio. É bom haver Natal e poder dizer-te que tenho saudades tuas, que te amo e que te queria abraçar forte. É bom haver Natal, quando não é época de sacrifícios e angústias e dívidas, para se manter uma ridícula aparência de sucesso.[287]

There is, in the text, a false image of the nation being projected, because the real nation only exists for the elite that creates it and manipulates it according to its needs: it is a nation in which only some are allowed in the imagination of a temporal simultaneity that enables everyone to have equal access to the nation's goods. Through its social position, this elite accesses all the privileges, in this case, economic privileges. Therefore, the children, who are marginal due to their poverty, are excluded from the nation.

Nevertheless, they manage to reverse the marginalizing gaze of the buyers and shop assistant:

> Há um sorriso nos mocinhos que eu não percebo, como se não fizessem parte de nós. Como se fôssemos uns palhaços para os divertir. Ou quem sabe, uma certa nostalgia de não serem palhaços como nós. Tranquilamente saem, em busca de outras lojas de sonhos.[288]

Through the performance of their imagination, they manage to escape both the margins that are built to confine them, and the illusion of centre, in which the elite lives, building a kind of third space for themselves. As Bhabha reminds us,

> Minority discourse sets the act of emergence in the antagonistic *in-between* of image and sign, the accumulative and the adjunct, presence and proxy. It contests genealogies of 'origin' that lead to claims for cultural supremacy and historical priority. Minority discourse acknowledges the status of national culture – and the people – as a contentious, performative space of the perplexity of the living in the midst of the pedagogical representations of the fullness of life.[289]

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[287] Salústio (1994), pp. 59-60.
[288] Ibidem, p. 60.
[289] Bhabha, (1990), p. 307.

Their presence forces the pedagogical discourse to acknowledge its incapacity to account for the multiple experiences of the nation. In addition, their performance exceeds the limitations of their construction as marginal, as they contribute so actively to the reimagination of a solid tradition such as Christmas.

In sum, the short-story collection *Mornas* brings us a subtle confrontation between the colonial and the postcolonial social structures in terms of the definition of the identities of men, women and children in the Cape Verdean nation. Concomitantly, the short stories denounce the existence of some continuities and links between the dominant colonial discourse and the post-independence socialist discourse, in terms of the cultural identity of Cape Verde. The stories reveal the maintenance of structures of social power in terms of gender and class in the post-colonial society, which means that even after independence men continue to 'colonize', women are 'colonized' and children emerge as the result of the interaction of these identities in obsolete social structures, that are unadjusted to the contemporary context, i.e, which are incapable of responding to the social changes which occur in the archipelago. They also unveil the maintenance of social differentiation according to class and the subsequent increasing difficulties of accessing the nation for those who are economically disempowered. Due to this identity stagnation, it becomes more difficult to keep up with the mutations that affect the nation. Hence, the author highlights the need to create new identities through the exploration of alternative and marginal behaviours, which renegotiate the traditional within the modern world, questioning the centrality of the dominant discourse and proposing new plurivocal discourses.

Indeed, in both the literary works *A Louca de Serrano* and *Mornas Eram as Noites*, analysed here, Dina Salústio's proposal was to debate nationhood and national identity within a framework in which gender issues and perspectives were at the core. Throughout this project, her exploration of *Caboverdianidade* and how it came to be constructed exposed a set of colonial continuities which were transposed into the postcolonial conceptualization of the nation, thus promoting the crystallization of certain sociocultural structures and discriminatory habits which came to be interpreted as creole 'traditions'. These structures were particularly hard on women, as they fed upon a solid patriarchal culture that was constantly legitimized by women's continuous dissemination of their own subaltern subjectivities. But they also run right across womanhood, emerging in the intersection of elements such as gender, race, colour and

class. Hence, Salústio's denunciation moves to expose the functioning of these social dynamics of exclusion so as to dismantle the power structures operating at their core, promote the decolonization of the minds and ultimately encourage the emergence of challenging behaviours that might bring about a more equalitarian and democratic society. In other words, for Salústio, national identity can only make sense as a permanently open debate.

A State without a Nation: reading Paulina Chiziane's rewriting of the nation's utopia in *Ventos do Apocalipse*, *Niketche: Uma História de Poligamia* and *O Alegre Canto da Perdiz*[290]

> "The exile is a person who, having lost a loved one, keeps searching for the face he loves in every new face and, forever deceiving himself, thinks he has found it."
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> Reinaldo Arenas, *Before Night Falls*[291]

Of the three authors under analysis in the present study, the Mozambican female writer Paulina Chiziane is the one whose work is most widely known, and also who has published most, five novels and a short-story collection to date: *Balada de Amor ao Vento* (1990), *Ventos do Apocalipse* (1993), *O Sétimo Juramento* (2000), *Niketche: Uma História de Poligamia* (2002), *O Alegre Canto da Perdiz* (2008) and recently the short-story collection entitled *As Andorinhas* (2009). Given that the main emphasis will be placed on the conception of the nation during the internal conflict and throughout the period that followed it, this chapter will focus solely on three selected literary works *Ventos do Apocalipse*, *Niketche: Uma História de Poligamia* and *O Alegre Canto da Perdiz*.[292]

In all of her works Chiziane attempts to provide readings of Mozambican society, placing women and the female voice at the core of her discussions and defying the limits of their conception within the socialist nation. Building upon her own knowledge of the Mozambican reality and experience as a former FRELIMO militant, she simultaneously challenges the limits of the socialist nation itself, unveiling the fissures of the utopian ideal of a Mozambican nation and proposing a new imagination of the community project as a whole.[293]

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[290] The first part of the title is borrowed from chapter six of Monserrat Guibernau's work entitled *Nacionalismos: O Estado Nacional e o Nacionalismo no Século XX* (Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar Editor, 1997), p. 126.

[291] Quoted in Herrera, Andrea O'Reilly, *Remembering Cuba: Legacy of a Diaspora* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001), p. xxiv.

[292] Henceforth referred to as *Ventos*, *Niketche* and *Alegre Canto*.

[293] In the author's words: "em termos de conhecimento da realidade do meu país, eu sou especialista". In Chiziane, Paulina, Entrevista a Ana Martins, Minneapolis (E.U.A.), Outubro de 2006 (unpublished).

With reference to this particularity, in her recently published work entitled *Mother Africa: Father Marx. Women's Writing of Mozambique 1948-2002* – which has a chapter dedicated to Chiziane's work – Hilary Owen makes the following statement:

> The ongoing influence of state socialist thinking, despite her critique of Frelimo, often resurfaces in her appeals for the cultural reform of community life, her endorsement of cooperative forms of social organization, and her strong awareness of the material realities behind the symbolic systems of exchange. It is by deconstructing the Marxist-Leninist period from within its own terms, that Chiziane points towards new, transversal directions that gender struggle might adopt within a changing national project for the post-Marxist era.[294]

Building upon this analysis, this chapter will attempt to show how Chiziane updates the utopian ideal of Mozambican nation firstly by revealing its tendency to exile rather than integration and then by proposing strategies to overcome this propensity for exile – strategies which always emerge from an ideal of the "imagined community" that is inscribed in a given context, at a certain moment in time, as a permanently open process.

Using this thematic framework, I will provide a reading of all three literary works through Edward Said's reflections regarding exile and Monserrat Guibernau's considerations on Nationalisms.[295] According to Said, exile materializes into a fracture between the human being and her/his own homeland which is beyond repair.[296] It is a condition that implies the loss of something which is forcibly left behind and can never be recuperated again, thus producing a "sense of constant estrangement" in those who are exiled.[297] Therefore, the author continues, both nationalism and exile emerge as interconnected, as two opposed realities that inevitably inform and constitute each other, since the former is built upon a very restricted sense of belonging that consequently defines the binomial 'us/the others', and the latter is placed beyond that boundary, on "the perilous territory of not-belonging".[298] Hence, for Said "exile, unlike nationalism, is fundamentally a discontinuous state of being".[299] The absence of a sense of belonging translates into the urgency of re-establishing uninterrupted links to the origins. This act

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[294] In Owen, Hilary, 'Paulina Chiziane: The Unmanning of Mozambique' in *Mother Africa: Father Marx. Women's Writing of Mozambique 1948-2002*, (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2007), p. 151.
[295] Said, Edward, *Reflections on Exile and Other Literary and Cultural Essays* (London: Granta Books, 2001), pp. 173-186; Guibernau (1997).
[296] Said (2001), p. 173.
[297] Ibidem, p. 175.
[298] Ibidem, p. 177.
[299] Ibidem, p. 177.

of restructuring a national identity and a nation, which always occurs outside the original context, develops in different ways. One of these ways is, according to Said, the exacerbation of feelings of inclusion towards those who are the "same" and of feelings of hostility towards the "others" – even if those share the same condition of being exiled.[300]

Hence, taking Said's definition of exile as a point of departure, this study will proceed first of all to the analysis of the post-independence nation as an internally exiled "imagined community". In her study on various accounts of experiences relating to the Cuban Diaspora in the USA, Andrea O'Reilly Herrera advances the term *insílio* to refer to this specific type of exile.[301] According to the researcher, this "inner" or "internal" exile is a state of mind that precedes the physical parting from the homeland and translates into the refusal of or the disenchantment towards the official governmental entity and its discourse: "In others words, they claim to have experienced a kind of exile of the inner imagination or spirit – a mental exodus, as it were – long before they left Cuba; in consequence, their initial exile experience was psychological as opposed to physical".[302] The specificities of Cuba, its historic and cultural coordinates obviously condition the experiences of *insílio* explored in the book. However, those specificities are not so relevant to this study as the concept of *insílio* itself is, since its application to the particular Mozambican context will allow us to look at the experiences of exile within the geographical limits of the nation-state, as portrayed by Chiziane.

In *Ventos*, the exiled community assumes different shapes and behaviours, according to the distinct moments of the narration: firstly, the village of Mananga before being attacked; secondly, the group of survivors fighting for their lives; and thirdly, the Aldeia do Monte struggling to rebuild itself. The characters of Sianga and Emelina will also be read separately, as those who were exiled by the exiled and whose subsequent response in the form of disruptive behaviours produces the two great calamities that befall the communities.

In *Niketche*, women, whose bodies materialize the different parts of the State, represent the community of the exiled within the patriarchal nation due to their gender's marginality. However, because this exile is not experienced equally by all women, this

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[300] Ibidem, p. 178.
[301] Herrera (2001), pp. xvii-xxxiii.
[302] Ibidem, p. xxii.

study will analyse gender along with other categories such as class and race so as to explore the different exiles that co-exist within the gender exile. For this reason, the construction of the polygamous husband's wives and mistresses will be observed throughout the novel with a view to understanding how each of them occupies a specific place within gender exile, a place that changes according to the economic and racial spectrum. In this context, the character of Eva will also be examined in relation to the wives as also possibly exiled by the exiled. Despite the fact that at some point this female character nearly becomes one of the polygamous husband's wives, the study explores the possible non-existence of redemption for Eva at the end of the novel, a fact that can be related to the character's race and also to her infertility.

This reflection on the various types of exile that emerge in the intersection of gender, class and race is taken a step further in *Alegre Canto*. In this literary work, Chiziane recuperates a female genealogy by focusing specifically on the stories of three generations of Zambezian women. If on the one hand these women emerge in the novel as exiles in patriarchal and male-oriented colonial and post-colonial contexts, on the other hand their experiences of marginality differ according to the colour of their skin, a representation which unveils in the novel new power structures in operation. Building upon the defence of memory as an act which is conditioned by social circumstances such as gender, race and class, Chiziane makes an effort to bring into dialogue complex female micro-stories of the region and a macro-history of the nation. This project not only opposes women's alienation of a memory of continuity, but also allows the recovery and problematization of a memory of miscegenation. Ultimately, it asserts the need for the collective memory to incorporate historically marginalized memories (of the region, in general, and women, in particular) in order to be complete. Nonetheless, the absence of the character Maria Jacinta from the "new family" that emerges at the end of the novel will be problematized, as this fact is justified by the character's race.

At a subsequent stage, the analysis will focus on Chiziane's renegotiation of the nation. Developing Smith and Anderson's theorizations of the nation, Guibernau asserts that the power of nationalism comes from its ability to create a sense of belonging to a certain community, so "a solidariedade nacional é uma resposta à necessidade de identidade de natureza eminentemente simbólica, na medida em que ela proporciona

raízes baseadas na cultura e num passado comum, assim como oferece um projeto para o futuro".[303]

Hence, this analysis will move on to discuss the proposals advanced by Chiziane, through different moments and within various societal contexts, to recuperate a sense of community, by resorting to the renegotiation of traditions, symbols and rites that speak to the population, and recovering other histories of the nation in a post-independence and modern scenario. In *Ventos* this renegotiation occurs mostly during the journey to the village and at the "Aldeia do Monte", because those are the moments in which the population is forced to recreate and reshape its world in order to survive. In *Niketche* this is a transformation which develops as the characters themselves evolve, becoming increasingly aware of themselves as individuals and of their cultural representations. Yet, it culminates in very significant moments – such as when the women know each other and bond so as to be able to renegotiate their construction, when they meet Eva, when they have to deal with Tony's fake death, and when they all dance the Niketche –, which will be analysed here. Finally, in *Alegre Canto* the recuperation of women's stories of Zambezia enables the widening of communal memory. The historical analysis of miscegenation, from a female-focalized point of view, permits the understanding of how racial representations came into being, and will ultimately lead to the emergence of a new "national family", which will also be problematized.

The examination of the realities portrayed in all three literary works – particularly *Ventos* and *Niketche* – requires a retrospective analysis of Mozambique's history to contextualize the civil war and thus allow an understanding of what happened after independence. According to Malyn Newitt, there are some key factors which need to be outlined in order to achieve this understanding.[304] The historian advances the argument that firstly it is important to go back to the pre-war period before the independence and explore the colonial inheritance left by the Portuguese, who prevented the north and the south of Mozambique from ever being connected – which means that several areas of the country remained isolated –, and also selected a capital city which was located in the extreme south of the country. This act instigated the

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[303] Guibernau (1997), pp. 11-13.
[304]Newitt, Malyn, 'Mozambique' in Patrick Chabal et al, *A History of Postcolonial Lusophone Africa* (London: Hurst & Company, 2002), pp.185-235.

enlargement of the cultural gap between the people from the north of Mozambique, who are broadly speaking matrilineal, and the people from the south, who are patrilineal, thus reinforcing the transformation of the ethnic, linguistic and cultural multiplicity of Mozambique into fragmentation.[305] The amplification of this situation came in the shape of communication systems which were built to bring various regions of Mozambique closer to their neighbour countries (Rhodesia and Nyasaland) than to other parts of Mozambique itself.[306]

The growing dissatisfaction towards the authoritarian and centralized Portuguese colonial rule culminated with the formation of FRELIMO (Frente da Libertação de Moçambique) in 1962 and the beginning of the war of independence, in 1964. However, the formation of Frelimo was not peaceful, due to the difficulties of bringing together fighters from distinct ethnic backgrounds under one single line of thought and strategy against the colonizer – which leads us to the second factor that is important to point out. The solution that Frelimo found to solve this problem and achieve unity and stability was to banish some of the founding members of the movement. In his interdisciplinary approach to the Twentieth Century Mozambican economy and development, and specifically in his study on the Mozambican Socialist Experience (1975-1986), João Mosca observes that:

> Muitos dos militantes expulsos na crise de 68 da Frelimo eram do centro, entre os quais Uria Simango, que pertenceu ao triunvirato da direcção do movimento de libertação após a morte de Eduardo Mondlane; posteriormente o MNR (depois Renamo), possuía uma importante base de cidadãos pertencentes às etnias do centro do país (sobretudo *ndaus*). Nos processos eleitorais é ainda possível identificar o «voto étnico». André Matsangaíssa e Afonso Dhlakama são naturais do centro de Moçambique.[307]

Hence, after 1969 the majority of effective Frelimo members and leaders came from the south of the country, a fact that not only increased hostility between southern and northern groups[308], but has also laid the grounds for Renamo's vehement support in the centre of the country as well. Notwithstanding the impact that this reality came to have in the post-independence panorama, it is imperative to highlight the fact that the so-called civil war that erupted in the newly-born nation-state was not an ethnic war,

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[305] Ibidem, pp. 186-187.
[306] Ibidem, p. 188.
[307] Mosca, João, *Economia de Moçambique: Século XX* (Lisboa: Instituto Piaget, 2005), p. 155.
[308] Newitt (2002), p. 190.

since it was largely externally funded by both Rhodesian and South African regimes, as we will acknowledge later.

The third factor that contributed to the post-independence panorama is related to the strategies implemented by the colonial entity in order to combat Frelimo's impact. According to Newitt, the Portuguese started by concentrating the population into *aldeamentos* to assure their continuous access to education and health services, to defend them and, most of all, to prevent them from having any kind of contact with Frelimo, thus guaranteeing their political support. Then, they looked for the specific support of traditional chiefs, religious organizations, and Special Forces (groups of soldiers who were recruited from the African population).[309] This structure would prove to be much more rooted and difficult to dismantle than Frelimo would ever expect it to be.

After the military coup in Lisbon on the 25th of April 1974, independence came for Mozambique, but that would not represent the end of the problems for the new born country, both externally and internally. Aware of its frailty as a movement that was supposed to represent the entire nation's interests and also of the opposition that might emerge on the immediate post-independence period, Frelimo sought to consolidate its position rapidly by becoming a party and having the government power transferred to it directly. This would come about through the signing of the Lusaka Agreement on September 1974, which established a transitional government that strengthened Frelimo's positioning. Once in power, Frelimo began to put in practice its programme for the restructuring of Mozambican society, which due to its openly socialist affiliation consisted on the immediate nationalization of all social areas and the development of a central economic plan, both measures aimed at forging a centralized government that would be less vulnerable to enemy assaults – from inside and outside the country. [310]

The construction of a new Mozambique implied sacrifices in the name of a cohesive nation. This leads us to another important measure of Frelimo that would leave its permanent mark on the history of the country: the non-recognition of ethnic and racial difference with the purpose of conveying a consistent image of national unity and simultaneously fighting regionalism and tribalism – which emerged associated with

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[309] Ibidem, p. 190.
[310] Ibidem, pp. 194-195.

colonial structures. Notwithstanding this effort, Mosca reminds us that an examination of the party's representatives shows that, indeed, Frelimo had very specific social alliances with certain ethnic and minority groups that worked together to ensure and maintain its exclusive control of power.[311] In Mosca's perception,

> A questão étnica foi sempre um tabu dentro da Frelimo. A preocupação da unidade nacional aparecia no discurso político para consumo das massas. (…) parecem existir evidências que a Frelimo, pelo sistema de alianças e também como resultado das lutas intestinas, pela decisão de constituição num partido marxista-leninista e pelas opções económicas, não contribuiu para uma efectiva unidade, sobretudo ao nível das elites. (…) Alguns observadores conhecedores de Samora acreditam que o presidente era um convicto anti-racista e antitribalista, mas também um defensor intransigente do poder; outros não duvidam de o considerar um ditador e tribalista em defesa do poder.[312]

Consequently, in terms of economic and social power structures, Frelimo's incitement to the suppression of the 'tribe' with a view to enabling the rise of the 'nation' consisted of the exclusion of "traditional chiefs (*régulos*) and heads of families, and religious organisations as well as plantation companies and industrial complexes controlled by Portuguese or multinational companies", and of any entities assumed to have been actively connected to colonialism (regardless of whether this connection was real or not) with the purpose of imposing a unique programme to be followed by the entire nation-state.[313]

In order to guarantee the successful implementation of this programme and also to facilitate the people's access to services such as education and health, Frelimo decided to adapt one of the most polemical measures that the Portuguese had employed during the war of independence: the *aldeamentos*. In these villages the people were to follow a very rigorous political and social programme and, thus, to identify with a specific conceptualization of *Moçambicanidade* which did not recognize ethnicities, races or sex difference as political.[314] In reality, this imposed standardization meant two very important things: firstly, that the image of Mozambican citizenship that the people should incorporate was markedly influenced by southern culture, which dominated Frelimo's composition, meaning that all other cultures should 'dissipate' and people were to assimilate to the habits which were considered to be characteristic of a 'modern'

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[311] Mosca (2005), p. 153.
[312] Ibidem, pp. 154-56.
[313] Newitt (2002), p. 196.
[314] See Mosca (2005), p. 149.

nation; and secondly, that despite the emphasis both the liberation front movement and the political party put on women's independence, the elimination of practices (such as polygamy, arranged marriages, *lobolo* and initiation rites) which were considered to be oppressive to women, and the creation of legislation protective of women's rights, their liberation was always regarded as primarily economic, so alongside men's – as something that all citizens are entitled to, and never in its difference, as opposed to men's. As Owen advocates, women were conceptualized by Frelimo within a classic Marxist-Leninist framework, which was largely gender blind:

> Frelimo endeavoured to put into practice the classic Marxist-Leninist conceptualization of women's emancipation in economic terms, emphasizing women's historical and sociocultural oppression by colonial capitalism. This often-cited «productivist bias» advocated the economic liberation of women through their integration into the forces of production, particularly in non-traditional areas of waged labor. What the Marxist-Leninist project ignored, however, was the significance for women of the conditions of sexual reproduction since it notoriously lacked a theory of gender struggle, equivalent to the discourse of class struggle, with which to critique the patriarchal practices of men within the liberation movement itself.[315]

Hence, regardless of the fact that women were being called upon to participate as fully-recognized citizens in the construction of the Mozambican nation, their role and place was highly contradictory within Frelimo's discourse. As Stephanie Urdang points out in her 1989 study on the place of Mozambican women in the war for independence and in the post-independence contexts, the party refused to update this debate by discouraging its discussion, thus devaluing its importance, and asking women to carry on patiently performing their lifelong duties within the household and happily embracing their new roles outside the household.[316] They were not to confront their husbands, expect them to share the household tasks or demand equality in the domestic sphere: they should always "speak with kind words".[317]

Following the same line of thought, the social researchers Isabel Casimiro and Kathleen Sheldon assert that the agency of OMM (Organização da Mulher Moçambicana) itself might have been very significant for the consolidation of these

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[315] Owen (2007), p. 33.
[316] Urdang, Stephanie, *And Still They Dance: Women, War and the Struggle for Change in Mozambique* (London: Earthscan Publications Ltd, 1989), pp. 160-161.
[317] Ibidem, p. 161.

measures amongst society.[318] Formed in 1973, the organization opened up a space for the debate on the place of women within the Mozambican society. Nonetheless, OMM was a structure of Frelimo, so it followed the party's political, economic, and social policies. As Frelimo's spokespeople, the members of this organization regarded the emancipation of women and their integration in all levels of Mozambican life within a framework which was defined by the male-dominated socialist party. As a result, OMM was a channel that linked both the party and the people, ensuring the application of Frelimo's directives and never discussing the gender-related issues, in their specificity, outside the constraints of the party's Marxist-Leninist conceptualization.[319]

Inevitably, the OMM's agency reflected the party's contradictions in the representation of women within the Mozambican society, which, in certain occasions, translated into the reproduction of a more traditional social imaging of womanhood. In this respect, Sheldon points out that

> OMM projects included classes in crocheting, teaching newly urban how to care for their apartments, and sewing infant clothes for sale. One of OMM's priorities in preparation for Frelimo's Fourth Congress in 1983 was to clean the city. (…) These activities involved women in the endeavour of developing a socialist Mozambique without raising more disturbing questions about gender inequality and power relations.[320]

OMM's agency in the villages was no less contradictory and faced several difficulties, as Frelimo's establishment of a socialist society did, in general.

Throughout this early socialist reform period Frelimo was very successful in terms of the results achieved. Nevertheless, these gestures to consolidate the party's concept of a modern nation implied the alienation of various social groups that became increasingly numerous and began to form a loud opposition that Frelimo continuously struggled to silence. Due to the characteristics of the party's agency, this antagonism rapidly assumed an ethnic and regional dimension. Although the organized resistance to Frelimo was not formed inside Mozambique, the fact is that many of its members had been exiled by Frelimo.[321] Plus, once it got inside the country it found a lot of support

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[318] Casimiro, Isabel Maria, 'Samora Machel e as Relações de Género' in *Estudos Moçambicanos Número 21*(Maputo: Centro de Estudos Africanos da UEM, 2005), pp. 55- 84; Sheldon, Kathleen E., *Pounders of Grain: A History of Women, Work, and Politics in Mozambique* (Portsmouth: Heinemann: 2002).
[319] Casimiro (2005), pp. 73-74.
[320] Sheldon (2002), p. 142.
[321] As Mosca (2005) points out, "Para a mobilização das populações, a Renamo, para além do aliciamento étnico, explorava o descontentamento dos camponeses relativamente às aldeias comunais, a

amongst those who had been pushed away from power and excluded from the modern nation.[322] The MNR (Mozambique National Resistance) later to be known as RENAMO (Resistência Nacional Moçambicana) was founded in 1975, in Rhodesia (although its most effective supporter was to be South Africa). Having had strong western and anticommunist influences, it was supported by white minority governments from the surrounding areas of Mozambique (particularly South Africa) to whom Frelimo's agency – within the country and towards other African guerrilla movements outside this area – was regarded as highly threatening.[323] In their 1983 study on the Mozambican twentieth century, Allen and Barbara Isaacman highlight the fact that the coalition formed by Rhodesians and South Africans proceeded to the recruitment of people who might somehow be interested in preventing Frelimo from being successful in its intentions. As a result, it looked for the support of individuals who had been connected to the colonial regime in Mozambique (Portuguese settlers, and former members of PIDE and the colonial army, among others) and, as mentioned before, it also targeted alienated ex-Frelimo members.[324]

Its anti-Frelimo strategy was based on the infiltration of the country, the progressive destruction of the socialist government's project and structures, and ultimately the annihilation of the sense of collective identity and of the population itself. Hence, given that it set out to question, subvert and destroy Frelimo's authority, Renamo's practical point of departure on the ground was the retrieval of those who had somehow been marginalized by the former in order to create a network of loyalties and troops. Traditional chiefs were among those who were used by Renamo in order to achieve its goals.

In her 1997 study on the Mozambican war and its impact on people and society, Carolyn Nordstrom references one of the first analyses which was conducted by the social scientist Christian Geffray in the 80's, in two villages of Nampula province, each

marginalização das autoridades étnicas, linhageiras e as antigas autoridades gentílicas, assaltava os campos de reeducação e capturava homens e jovens que eram integrados compulsivamente como militares, etc. Vários trabalhos referem-se a estes aspectos, como por exemplo o relatório Gersony. André Matsangaíssa (primeiro presidente da Renamo) e Afonso Dhlakama fugiram de campos de reeducação, Honwana (2003: 187).", p. 144.

[322] Urdang (1989), pp. 199-200.

[323] See, for example, Nordstrom, Carolyn, *A Different Kind of War Story* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), pp. 36-73.

[324] Isaacman, Allen and Barbara Isaacman, *Mozambique: From Colonialism to Revolution, 1900-1982* (Colorado: Westview Press, 1983), pp. 176-177.

affiliated to Frelimo and Renamo respectively, with a view to gaining an understanding of the conditions that facilitated the consolidation of Renamo's ideals amongst the population in the countryside.[325] According to Nordstrom,

> Geffray attributes much of village Mozambican's disenchantment with Frelimo, and the early successes of Renamo, to Frelimo's practice of implementing socialist policies in the countryside. Problems revolved around two central tenets of Frelimo strategy: the production of communal villages and the proscription of traditional power structures and culture.[326]

With respect to communal villages, Geffray came to the conclusion that regardless of the emphasis placed by Frelimo's official discourse on the advantages arising from the construction of cooperative villages in the countryside, the real intention behind their creation was to maintain ideological control over the countryside. Yet, not only were they incapable of meeting the population's needs, but they were also highly disruptive of people's lifestyles in the majority of cases observed.[327] As for Frelimo's exclusion of traditional power structures and condemnation of traditional culture as obscurantist, such policies provoked what Geffray calls "a battle between the old power and the new"[328]. Traditional chiefs were banned by Frelimo from positions of power within the villages. Yet, Renamo promised to reinstate this power, if these chiefs would commit to their cause. Hence, Renamo, which according to Geffray presented few characteristics that would allow its classification as a political group, started to exert its authority over the villagers it controlled through these traditional chiefs, who were responsible for their local areas and had to assure Renamo's needs were met and its directives were followed.[329]

Later, some of the traditional chiefs came to realize that Renamo's aim was not to propose an alternative governmental agenda, but to undermine Frelimo's, especially when they were confronted with the violent nature of the group. Renamo carried out a horrendous war against the innocent population and the infrastructures that guaranteed communications, education, farming, and economy within the country, forcefully fragmenting it, isolating communities and forcing thousands of people to become refugees. These destructive attacks that contributed to the progressive downfall of

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[325] Nordstrom (1997), pp. 101-110.
[326] Ibidem, pp. 101-102.
[327] Ibidem, p. 102.
[328] Quoted in Nordstrom (1997), p. 102
[329] Ibidem, p. 102-103.

Frelimo's Marxist programme coincided with floods and famine throughout the country, in the 1980s specifically, which worsened the already critical situation for communities in the affected regions.

Regardless of their awareness of Renamo's terrorist nature, traditional chiefs could not, however, demonstrate their dissatisfaction towards its agency, nor go back to the areas which were occupied by the Frelimo, as they had fear of retaliation from both sides.[330] Therefore, as Nordstrom highlights in her interpretation of Geffray's findings, it is important to understand the traditional chiefs' positioning in the midst of this confrontation that was a "war of power and politics":

> Geffray stresses that the chiefs did not rebel against the state because it was a state per se, but because they had been marginalized from power and dignity. They thought Renamo offered them a means toward an independent existence where they could maintain a valued lifestyle. But chiefs, too, became pawns in a larger military contest, and people, freed from the communal villages, found they were yet again displaced to Renamo control areas for security reasons. Little if any improvement was gained under Renamo, and the enthusiasm for Renamo promises waned.[331]

Hence, as Geffray's study proved, the villagers were always victimized, regardless of whether they were under Frelimo's or Renamo's control, a fact which, from the villagers' point of view, minimized the apparently major differences between both entities.[332]

Notwithstanding the fact that initially Frelimo did not regard Renamo's opposition as a threat, soon the party realized that it could not ignore it anymore. By the late 1980's, Frelimo's inability to respond and simultaneously deal with all the internal issues that were affecting Mozambique forced it to look for external help from Western countries and, subsequently, detach itself from the Eastern Bloc. Obviously, this help came at a cost: Mozambique had to act according to Western interests.[333] From mid-80's on, the conflict between Frelimo and Renamo assumed different forms, given that both began to engender diplomatic offensives with international projection and to consolidate these offensives internally by finding firm supporters. In 1992 the signing of

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[330] Ibidem, p. 103.
[331] Ibidem, p. 104.
[332] Ibidem, p. 104. As Nordstrom brilliantly points out, "in essence, what the villagers encountered was a continuing cycle of violence. The final picture Geffray paints was one of contending armies fighting over unarmed civilians. (…) People faced a harsh life in both locations. The only difference Geffray notes was that the Frelimo army, unlike Renamo, is subordinate to a civilian authority".
[333] Urdang (1989), p. 213.

the General Peace Agreement (which was prepared and mediated by the UN) by both parties would put an end to this internal conflict so that within two years the country would have its first multiparty elections. It would also provide the recognition of Frelimo as the legitimate government, given that the party won the elections, and of Renamo as a legitimate political party.[334] Although the elections that occurred in 1994 were undisturbed and reaffirmed the legitimacy of Frelimo's government, the task of bringing together such a fragmented society was not a simple one. In Newitt's words: "What, however, emerged most clearly after peace was eventually established was that Mozambique was divided very much along regional lines, with Frelimo commanding overwhelming support in the south and Renamo receiving strong backing in the central provinces north and south of the Zambesi".[335]

Hence, one of the big challenges of the post-civil war period is precisely that of redefining the concept of *Moçambicanidade*: debating it and allowing it to be flexible, pluralist and adjustable to a democratic setting. The present analysis will, thus, attempt to show how the work developed by Chiziane in *Ventos*, *Niketche* and *Alegre Canto* portrays this framework in the sense that it reflects on the post-independence, modern condition of *Moçambicanidade* by exposing and renegotiating the different exiles co-existing within the Mozambican society, with a particular emphasis on the exiles that refer to gender, ethnicity and race.

In *Ventos* the main emphasis is placed on exile as "a contemporary political punishment"[336], although not in the exact same sense that Said describes it. As mentioned before, Said's theorization associates this punishment with the forced abandonment of the homeland, as a geographical space to which it is impossible to return, and, consequently, with deprivation of the history, roots and identity that emerge attached to it.[337] The literary work, however, focuses on this same identity alienation within the limits of the State. This *insílio* is a point of departure of the disruptiveness which will spread into a variety of exiles within that exile. Taking these nuances into consideration, Said's theorization will be read alongside Nordstrom's anthropological research, which was carried out in Mozambique throughout the post-independence war. As mentioned before, in her work Nordstrom proceeds to the analysis of the creative

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[334] Ibidem, pp. 214-222.
[335] Newitt (2002), p. 218.
[336] Said (2001), p. 175.
[337] Ibidem, pp. 175 and 177.

strategies employed by the civilian population to dismantle the structures of violence that surrounded them in an attempt to strangle their culture and identity as much as to annihilate the people.[338] The reading of the literary work through the filters of Said's theorization and Nordstrom's social findings will, for that reason, allow us to observe the limitations of the application of Said's reflections on exile in the specific context of the Mozambican nation-state throughout this particular period.

The book is divided into three sections: the prologue (*Vinde todos e ouvi / Vinde todos com as vossas mulheres / e ouvi a chamada. / Não quereis a nova música de timbila / que me vem do coração?*), the first part (*Maxwela ku hanya! U ta sala u psi vona* – Nasceste tarde! Verás o que eu não vi.) and the second part (*A siku ni siko li psa lona* – Cada dia tem a sua história.). In the first section, the readers are called to listen to the stories which are about to be told with clear reference to the tradition of storytelling around the fire, which brings together the eldest and the youngest to share knowledge and ensure its propagation from one generation to the other:

> Quero contar-vos histórias antigas, do presente e do futuro porque tenho todas as idades e ainda sou mais novo que todos os filhos e netos que hão-de nascer. Eu sou o destino. (…) é época de vindima (…) Chegam todos ao mesmo tempo. Preparam a fogueira e quando tudo está a postos dizem em uníssono: aqui estamos, avô. Conte-nos bonitas histórias.[339]

These references direct the reader to a common and shared knowledge that bestows verisimilitude on the short stories, approximating them to a recognizable reality. There are three stories in this prologue and they are entitled "O marido cruel", "Mata, que amanhã faremos outro" and "A ambição da Massupai". Each story is retrieved and incorporated into the main narrative – each of them appearing at one of the three distinct moments in which the narrative is subdivided.

The second section explores the first moment of the narrative by telling us the story of the village of Mananga and its inhabitants up until the point when it is attacked. Finally, the second and third moments of the narrative – that refer respectively to the journey of the group of refugees and to their arrival, adaptation and reintegration into the Aldeia do Monte – are explored in the final section of the book. Hence, the choice of the structure of this book, which is unique amongst Chiziane's works, also seems to be

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[338] Nordstrom (1997).
[339] Chiziane (1999), pp. 15-16.

quite revealing as it discloses a latent discontinuity that surfaces intimately related to the theme explored, as the main narrative unravels. I will come back to this later, when analysing the latent disruptions that emerge throughout the book.

As mentioned above, the first moment of the text introduces us to the village of Mananga in a particularly difficult scenario. We acknowledge that this population is in great despair due to drought and consequent famine, and also to the rumours of an approaching war, which led many youngsters to depart in order to survive, leaving elders, women and children behind. A sense of isolation, abandonment and ultimately of annihilation surrounds the village, not only suggesting that the people are left to deal with their issues on their own, without any kind of governmental support, but also that they might not succeed in surviving what lies ahead, which will forcefully bring about the recreation of their world. Minosse, one of the main characters, describes this environment as follows:

> Chegou a perdição de Mananga. Já não há remédio que sirva; nem Deus, nem espíritos, nem defuntos. A terra abre violentas fendas ávidas de água. Será necessário desabar o céu inteiro para dar de beber à terra e aos homens com ela. Se isto continua assim morrerá o último homem e a última mulher, predigo eu – pensa Minosse –, aí Deus vai aprender a lição. Terá a grande maçada de recriar de novo o Licalaumba e a sua companheira Nsilamboa mas, antes disso, será necessário reinventar a paisagem original, trabalho que ele pode evitar enviando alguns grãozinhos de chuva.[340]

As we are progressively introduced to the main individual characters we realize that each of them represents a specific type of exile that is closely related to the exile of Mananga as an imagined community and evolves in distinct ways. The first characters we encounter are the couple Sianga and Minosse. Sianga is the former *régulo* of the village who has been doubly disempowered – as a man and as a leader, so in both the private and the public spheres – after independence, due to the revolutionary State's resolution of dismantling the former structures of power and eradicating traditional cultural practices associated with them in favour of a centralized and modern government and of modern collective villages as well. He, therefore, represents the present's alienation from the past, as he now spends his days meditating on his bitterness and hostility towards the modern nation that, in his view, ostracized him:

> Vê o trono a ser arrastado pelos ventos da revolução e independência. São as oito esposas que abalam, ficando apenas a mais nova e a mais desprezada. (…) A minha boca transpira agruras,

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[340] Ibidem, pp. 31-32.

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frustrações. Sabes bem que não consigo conciliar o passado e o presente. Fui árvore, fui flor e régulo desta terra. Agora não sou mais do que um ramo seco ou fruta podre. Já não sou nada nem ninguém, minha querida esposa. Comprei-te com dinheiro vermelho a ti e às outras oito. Veio o vendaval e carregou as que partiram pelo mundo levando cada uma todos os filhos que geraram.[341]

Sianga has been excluded from the new conception of the nation he belonged to and, thus, made an exile within it, and ultimately it is his strong awareness of this exile that prompts the disclosure of the Mananga community's exile.

Minosse is Sianga's ninth wife and the only one who does not abandon him after independence. She is a "esposa dos velhos tempos"[342] who still maintains and propagates the traditions of a patrilineal culture that have been inculcated into her. Stripped of a sense of individuality in order to perform the role that is expected from her, she is a devoted wife and mother who maintains the household at any cost: when the land refuses to provide food for her family, she assumes this task by selling sex for some food in return.[343] This is the only reality Minosse knows, and the only one that she can make available to Wusheni, her rebellious daughter. Regardless of her silent thoughts of protest against patriarchy and old patriarchal practices, Minosse remains entrapped in a profile that is still to be renegotiated. As the sexual power structures unfold, she appears before us as an exile within the nation on account of her gender. Minosse materializes a specific type of exile that travels through time, bridging both past and present, and also future, as we will discuss later.

Her space of self-reinvention is opened up by Wusheni's strong reaction against her own entrapment. Notwithstanding her vehement refusal of a traditional arranged marriage, it is only by getting pregnant by her beloved Dambuza – a man not the one her father had chosen for her – that she is finally able to open a breach in the chain of patriarchy. Motherhood, which usually works as a device that traps women in patriarchy, is hereby presented as a weapon that backfires: "Minosse fica radiante. A existência de uma vida no ventre da única filha coloca de lado todos os preconceitos que tem sobre a origem do homem que a engravidou. Todas as possibilidades estavam

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[341] Ibidem, pp. 30-31.
[342] Ibidem, p. 27.
[343] Ibidem, p. 29: "Vendi amor a alguém que só a ti direi quem é, em troca de sustento para a minha família. Ai, Deus, homem que se preza, morre de fome preservando a honra, mas o meu vende-me para encher a pança".

vedadas ao Muianga, esse cretino. A tia Rosi cai fulminada. O jogo está perdido".[344] Its shielding usage allows both mother and daughter to make use of the specificity of gender to present an active opposition to the economic dynamics of the patriarchal lineage, thus opening possibilities to a new reality in which women regain power over their bodies and rewrite the feminine identity outside the constraints of a wholly male-oriented conception. Although Wusheni's act does not disrupt women's dependency towards men, as she remains a possession that is transferred from her father's to her husband's household, the expression and imposition of her choice successfully disturbs this process, which evidences women's awareness of their own condition and, simultaneously, their engagement in actively subverting it within the limits of the patriarchal frame imposed. We shall come back to this very specific type of exile later.

We are provided with another important characteristic of Mananga's community through the description of the character Dambuza, namely its isolation. Despite being the nephew of someone who belonged to the community[345], he was regarded as a foreigner, and therefore unworthy of being treated as equal: "É da nossa tribo mas não é do nosso clã. (…) Para quê tratá-lo bem se ele não é do nosso clã? É um estrangeiro, e se se sente mal que regresse à sua origem".[346] This attitude on the part of the villagers reveals the consequences of the modern nation's discourse for the creation of national unity – the imposition of a unique imagined community common to all the members of the nation – so as to consolidate the nation-state. Mozambique's civil post-independence discourse refuses to recognize cultural difference, promotes ethnic assimilation and repudiates multiplicity in favour of a univocality that emerges from a specific conceptualization of the community to which all the people are expected to adjust. In its urgency to create a united nation "Do Rovuma ao Maputo"[347], it deliberately refuses to acknowledge the existence of cultural realities that precede the formation of the nation-state and, consequently, ends up being unsuccessful in its project. In this sense, like the character Sianga, Dambuza embodies the present's exile of the past.

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[344] Ibidem, p. 84.
[345] Ibidem, p. 38: "É filho do irmão da tia Mafuni, e foi ela quem o transportou para aqui".
[346] Ibidem, p. 38.
[347] "Do Rovuma ao Maputo" was a slogan created by Frelimo with reference to their intents of freeing the entire country, given that the Rovuma river is at the extreme north of the country and the Maputo river is at the extreme south, thus conveying the idea of the geographical territory of Mozambique as a whole. It is also included in the Mozambican National Anthem.

It is worth mentioning again here that despite the fact that in the particular Mozambican case political power was controlled in its vast majority by southern ethnic groups, it would be false to say that the post-independence war was an ethnic war, especially if we take into consideration Renamo's open self-characterization as anti-Frelimo.[348] However, in *Ventos* there is a suggestion of fraternal annihilation through the deaths of Wusheni and Manuna, who are brother and sister and end up killing each other during the village's attack.[349] This disruption coming from inside the family structure points towards an exile that might emerge from the treatment afforded to the issue of gender in this setting. Manuna, one of the sons of the village (and the *régulo*'s son), is manipulated by the Renamo terrorist cell to become one of the soldiers who is responsible for the destruction of Mananga. So, in *Ventos* he can be read as the materialization of the consequences of all the nation-state's frailties being exploited and manipulated, in a very vulnerable context (famine and drought), by a group whose only intentions are to discredit the governmental entity and, subsequently, to destroy the nation from within. By resorting to the forced recruitment of male youngsters to exterminate every structure that supports their own community and the collective entity that the modern nation seeks to create, the Renamo group succeeds in exposing and taking advantage of specific weaknesses that characterize this conceptualized nation, namely its internal fragmentations and its patriarchal family structure.

Therefore, in Mananga we can observe the occurrence of the abovementioned internal fragmentations through the people's behaviour, as those who are considered to be outsiders to the community are immediately marginalized: regardless of being a "filho da comunidade" to whom no one would deny some food in the good days, Dambuza is openly discriminated against.[350] Nonetheless, his is an empowering exile. His continuous struggle for survival makes him physically stronger and more independent than all the other young men of the village. In addition, the fact that he lives on the margins of the community makes him develop a critical perspective on the community values, as well as a strong individual identity detached from its flaws.[351] So, in the eyes of the population he is repulsive for his difference and for being able to

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[348] See, for example, Isaacman and Isaacman (1983), pp. 171-188.
[349] Chiziane (1999), pp. 117-118.
[350] Ibidem, p. 37.
[351] Ibidem, pp. 42-43.

successfully survive outside the community's rules, but his independence and ability to readjust are simultaneously very attractive and an object of envy.

Dambuza emerges as the representative of a disruptive male identity: he does not fit the social profile that would make him eligible to belong to the traditional patriarchal lineage, because he is both an *estrangeiro* and poor, so unable to pay for Wusheni's *lobolo*; yet, he is presented as a real man, much cleverer, more capable and generous than all his counterparts. He is shown to be worthy of Wusheni and together they try to impose a new order that disempowers all the other discourses imposed, traditional and modern, by moving beyond both class and gender constraints in the recreation of their identities within this social setting. These two agents of change that for a moment get to open up new possibilities for predefined social identities in the future (given that Wusheni is pregnant with Dambuza's child) have, however, a tragic end, as Wusheni and the baby die at her brother's hands and Dambuza commits suicide when confronted with this reality. They represent a project that was brutally interrupted just when it was being set in motion. This not only reveals the population's powerlessness before the incomprehensibility of a war that overtakes them very suddenly, it also demonstrates the overwhelming need to suspend the various struggles (such as gender and class struggles) that were taking place, because survival had to be prioritized.[352] Nevertheless, Chiziane seems to indicate how gender and class equality would, indeed, help survival too, if only they were prioritized as well.

Indeed, the exploration of the abovementioned characters allows us a better understanding of the elements that compose the particular setting of exile in which Mananga is embedded. As famine, drought and rumours of the proximity of war become the villagers' daily reality, a sense of abandonment increasingly grows for each of them. In this vulnerable condition, an emerging oppositional discourse infiltrates the village through a group of soldiers who look for the support of those who had not been protagonists of the Frelimo State's national discourse supposedly to fight the modern nation which was, according to their understanding, highly dissatisfying and elitist. Not surprisingly, Sianga is the first person to be contacted by members of this group of opponents who promise to restore his power and the traditional structures, revealing a persuasive and markedly traditionalist speech. Although Sianga and his *compinchas*

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[352] See Casimiro (2005), pp. 74-75.

understand that both these discourses are in opposition, they perceive them as unexpectedly similar at this specific moment in the text due to the discourses' emphasis on the same issues from distinct angles.[353] This brings the confrontation between discourses down to a question of power seizure, a struggle between traditional and modern: "A linguagem dos homens é curta, imperfeita. **O secretário da aldeia e o comandante das armas dizem a mesma coisa com sentido diferente**. Só o cérebro mais do que inteligente pode entender tamanha bagunça".[354] Again, we are driven to consider the conclusions of Geffray's study, which showed that these traditional chiefs' quest for cultural dignity and social empowerment led them to an entrapment between two opposing discourses that alienated them, which explains Sianga and his friend's perception of the discourses of both the *secretário da aldeia* (Frelimo) and the *comandante das armas* (Renamo) as similar.[355] In other words, it is possible to say that Sianga and his friends were also victims. In an interview given recently, when asked about the process of construction of her characters, Chiziane made a very precise and interesting remark about the construction of Sianga:

> É isso. Então, às vezes, construo personagens que dão trabalho. Quando fiz o Ventos do Apocalipse, o Sianga. Comecei a descrevê-lo de uma forma tão feia. Comecei a descrevê-lo de uma forma muito feia e eu dormi a pensar «Será que fiz bem? Como é que vai ser? Que final é que vou dar?». Quando dormi, sonhei que o Sr. Sianga, que a pessoa que eu criei levantou-se e começámos a dialogar. Pronto, e ele me pergunta – eu ainda me lembro tão bem! – «É o Sr. Sianga?», «Sim, sou eu. Gostaria de saber porque é que a senhora me tratou tão mal, se já lhe fiz mal algum dia». Olha, acordei e disse «Meu Deus, dormi a pensar nisto e o sonho se tornou real». Então, no dia seguinte acordei e voltei a arrumar um bocadinho melhor. Melhorou um bocado a história, para aquilo que era a minha previsão. De vez em quando me acontece isto. (…) Sim, imagina, eu estou a trabalhar num texto durante uma semana, a escrever a mesma coisa, o mesmo nome, a dialogar com isto. É lógico que quando vou dormir as pessoas aparecem. Perfeitamente. Mas, nunca mais me vou esquecer do Sianga. O Sianga perguntou-me mesmo «Mas, minha senhora eu nunca lhe fiz mal nenhum. Porque é que me trata assim?».[356]

The author's realization that Sianga's demand for some more dignity in his construction and treatment as a character was valid suggests the need to look at the duality of his positioning. Interestingly, Chiziane's first impulse was to create Sianga as a very "ugly" character, which, taking into consideration her own personal formation and active

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[353] Chiziane (1999), pp. 50-51: "Existe diferença, mas pequena. Enquanto o secretário da aldeia fala dos opressores, este jovem chefe também fala de opressores. O primeiro fala de grupos obscurantistas que devem ser banidos, e este enaltece estas práticas e promete restaurá-las. (…) Falou ainda da liberdade, fraternidade, unidade, e muitas coisas iguais àquelas que diz o secretário da aldeia".
[354] Ibidem, p. 51 (my emphasis).
[355] Nordstrom (1997), p. 104.
[356] This interview was conducted by me and my colleague Ana Margarida Martins in August 2008, in Maputo, at the author's place, as part of our fieldwork activities in Mozambique.

involvement in Frelimo's socialist activities as a youngster, can be read as an unconscious manifestation of a positioning against the action of traditional chiefs. Nevertheless, her increasing reflection on the subject led her to become aware of Sianga's exile, and perhaps of his actions as a reaction to his identity alienation and subsequent need to feel reintegrated and reempowered again.

It is interesting to point out that the eloquent spokesperson who meets Sianga and his most loyal former subjects in secrecy and convinces them to betray their community in order to recuperate their positions is a very young man disguised as an elder. In this description there is the suggestion of an alluring use of a traditionalist discourse in a particularly fragile setting to achieve ends other than those revealed, i.e., to subvert the modern programme in practice: "O homem desfeito do disfarce era mais jovem que o milho tenro. (…) Disse que os régulos são os verdadeiros representantes, medianeiros entre os desejos do povo e os poderes dos espíritos. (…) Sianga, (…) Todo o mundo se ajoelhará aos seus pés, e quanto às mulheres, nem há necessidade de falar".[357] The promise of empowerment leads the former *régulo* and his associates to progressively convince the population that the present drought situation is a result of their detachment from ancient traditions and it can only be solved through a reaffirmation of their belief. As Said reminds us, the awareness of their own exile, as opposed to what they perceive to be the population's non-exile, generates feelings of resentment in the *régulo* and his associates. Those feelings compel them to somehow reverse this situation so as to be able to imagine themselves as, in Said's terms, "part of a triumphant ideology or a restored people".[358] Inevitably, they end up exiling the already exile population of Mananga.

In a context of despair, the population is led to believe that "os deuses são a esperança"[359], so they agree to empower the *régulo* once again in order to convince him to perform the *mbelele*, a ceremony to make rain in which the women have a primordial role, given that they must run naked through the village. This illusory return to the origins confirms the entrapment of the community in between two worlds without any kind of balance or negotiation: "O grosso da população, livre de compromissos ideológicos, rogava livremente a qualquer deus (…) Os deveres que não cumpriram

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[357] Chiziane (1999), pp. 50-51.
[358] Said (2001), pp. 177 and 180-181.
[359] Chiziane (1999), p. 58.

durante mais de um século, procuram realizá-los em apenas poucas luas".[360] In order to survive, they are pushed to change their beliefs according to the situation they are facing.

As the Mozambican critic and thinker Lourenço do Rosário argues in his essay on the construction and consolidation of democracy in Mozambique, "o faminto fica reduzido à condição de objecto, incapaz de se endireitar, propenso a ajoelhar-se perante seja quem for que lhe der uma esmola, seja uma peça de roupa, um pedaço de pão ou mandioca, ou uma camisa das «calamidades»".[361] However, both discourses that allegedly exist to ensure the endurance of differently-imagined communities seem to be working against the population itself. This happens due to the fact that, in the text, the groups that make up what Said calls the "rhetoric of belonging"[362]– which guarantees the binding of the collective – are fighting each other in the seizure of power. This assumption becomes clear later on, when the *mbelele* produces no results whatsoever and the desolate situation escalates.

Indeed, the population of Mananga is shown to be ideologically exiled in what Said calls the "perilous territory of not-belonging".[363] According to the theorist, successful nationalism emerges from a sense of common history that produces a "collective ethos", which in its turn gradually consolidates its 'self' as uniquely true, as opposed to the falsity of 'others'.[364] Nonetheless, the villagers are incapable of building a stable community identity because their "collective ethos" is shifting: it changes according to distinct political stances. Frelimo's modern conceptualization of the nation imposed the detachment from, and in some cases the denial of, historical, cultural and traditional coordinates, and, simultaneously, the incorporation of new practices, behaviours, values, beliefs, which constitute what Pierre Bourdieu calls "*habitus*, the coherent amalgam of practices linking habit with inhabitance".[365] While they were still struggling to conform to their modern imaging as a community, the population is induced by Renamo to believe that they should invert their identity trajectory and retrieve their traditional self-images – although, in reality, Renamo never engaged in the

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[360] Ibidem, pp. 60-61.
[361] Rosário, Lourenço do, 'Construção e Consolidação da Democracia em Moçambique' in *Singularidades II* (Maputo: Texto Editores, 2007), pp. 200-21 (p. 210).
[362] Said (2001), p. 176.
[363] Ibidem, p. 177.
[364] Ibidem, pp. 176-177.
[365] Quoted in Said (2001), p. 176.

advancement of a communal identity strategy.[366] In other words, the population continuously oscillates between opposing modern and traditionalist discourses, having no *apparent* possibility of negotiation, since both discourses force the choice of a positioning upon people. As a result, the instability of their "collective ethos" and subsequent incoherence of their habits prevent them from achieving the *habitus* which would enable their self-imagination as part of a triumphant nationalism. They are, therefore, trapped in an identity exile which is placed beyond the binomial 'us' and 'others' – a discontinuous state of being that, in such a context, leaves the people to suffer in the most complete solitude, as they realize in the aftermath of the false mbelele:

> Esse mbelele foi uma farsa vergonhosa e nojenta. Mungoni, o célebre adivinho, disse a verdade desde a primeira hora e não o quisemos escutar. Estamos a definhar, estamos a morrer, fomos aldrabados pelos capangas do Sianga, minha gente, ah, cegueira humana! Por que cerramos sempre os olhos a quem nos mostra o caminho da razão? Fomos bem enganados. Sianga é um rato, engorda à custa do nosso sangue enquanto nós lambemos as crostas da nossa sarna, minha gente![367]

When the population of Mananga becomes aware of its exile, the arrival of refugees from the village of Macuácua with news of the proximity and inevitability of war accentuates its alienation and, simultaneously, gives rise to a new attitude towards exile within the community. Due to the current panorama, the influx of refugees is generally regarded as a great burden that is imposed on the Mananga people, as they are now forced to share the already sparse food with them, to take care of <u>their</u> wounded and to deal with <u>their</u> reality of war: "Estão aglomerados como porcos no canto norte da aldeia. Bem-vindos a Mananga, diríamos nós, se boas novas nos trouxessem. (…) A recepção é hostil e as atitudes fratricidas. O nosso povo sente o desejo louco de defender o território à força de ferro mas as autoridades impõe-se, malditas autoridades. (…) Vieram apenas para roubar-nos os alimentos, a paz e o sossego com os seus problemas".[368]

From this behavioural frame it is possible to infer that Mananga does not possess a sense of extended community, i.e., an attachment with a national entity, as the

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[366] Nordstrom (1997) declares that "He [Geffray] stresses that Renamo's primary goal was to sustain itself. It had little interest in the domestic life and dispute of the people under its control, and relied on chiefs to manage these local issues" (p. 103).
[367] Chiziane (1999), pp. 108-109.
[368] Ibidem, p. 109.

refugees with whom they share the same nation-state are considered to be "foreigners", not only because they do not belong to the village but also due to their differences. In addition to this, the community's understanding of its own condition of exile leads it to become closed in upon itself by drawing a very precise, inclusive line around the Mananga villagers, that inevitably separates them from the "foreigners". In a gesture which reproduces the same attitude that Sianga and his followers previously had towards them, the population exiles another community in its attempt to change its own self-perception. Said remarks that since exile is "a jealous state", it will eventually end up producing "an exaggerated sense of group solidarity, and a passionate hostility to outsiders, even those who may in fact be in the same predicament as you".[369] And soon the people from Mananga come to understand that, in reality, they share the same exile with the refugees.

This happens when the population acknowledges that Sianga has recruited youngsters from within the community (including his own son, Manuna) to be trained and attack the village – something which had already happened previously in Macuácua. Through the destruction of the village, the dividing line is blurred, revealing the equality of exiling circumstances that surround both communities. In addition, the death of Wusheni and Manuna, who are brother and sister and end up killing each other during the attack, is particularly revealing as it materializes exile of blood, the ultimate form of exile that the whole population faces, by being destroyed from within: suddenly the fratricidal nature of the war – and, consequently, of all the behavioural characteristics that preceded it – becomes a physical reality.

In the aftermath of the attack, the absent Frelimo head of the village finally arrives, only to reaffirm the isolation and abandonment to which Mananga is left by the nation-state entity. Not only was he absent at the time of the attack, but he had also heard rumours of a conspiracy prior to the attack, rumours that he chose to ignore along with the village itself:

> O sangue sobe-lhe aos olhos, não consegue acreditar na destruição do **seu império**. Nunca antes avaliara a importância que tinha na **sua** vida aquela aldeola pobre e pacífica. Pensa em **si**. Nunca fizera nada por aquela aldeia e sempre negligenciara todos os problemas a ela referentes. Ouvira falar de uma infiltração inimiga e não ligara a devida importância. **Esperam-no** agora dificuldades e talvez desemprego.[370]

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[369] Said (2001), p. 178.
[370] Chiziane (1999), pp. 120-121 (my emphasis).

He reduces the destruction of the village and the killing of the population to his own disempowerment as a representative of political power: in the end, the people appear as mere casualties in a war for power which is alien to the vast majority. His detachment is made even more evident through his inability to take action. All he can do besides crying is smoking weed – which is lit with the fire that still consumes the huts – in a desperate attempt to escape reality. However, he manages to be empowered once again in the eyes of the survivors of the attack and bond with them for the first time by resorting to revenge, i.e., finding scapegoats on whom the population could focus its anger, thus forgetting his negligence, and allowing the people the illusion of power by letting them decide the traitors' faiths. Consequently, Sianga and his followers are sacrificed twice: for the sake of the credit of the regime in power, represented by the head of the village, and also for the sake of preserving what is left of a sense of community within the group of survivors.

As mentioned above, the character Sianga emerges as connected with a traditional structure that was wholly ridiculed and catalogued as outdated by the post-independence state: when the younger generations of the village make fun of him, they are also mocking their ancestors, their roots and their culture. Hence, Sianga is also an exile, and because of this exile, he becomes an instrument of the war for power which is being waged. After the attack on the village, the population acknowledges its own exile and feels the urge to sacrifice Sianga and his accomplices in order to diminish it, regardless of their awareness of their own responsibility and of the cruelty of this act:

> O ódio do povo acende-se como uma fogueira de sândalo. (…) Ontem este povo proclamou e coroou Sianga. Depois crucificou-o. Voltou a realizar uma coroação clandestina e agora o crucifica de novo. As ocasiões alteram o comportamento dos homens. Como as estações do ano. Como o camaleão.[371]

Although they know that Sianga is himself an exile, they feel the need to exile him further in a frantic effort to fight the discontinuity that inevitably characterizes their existence. Hence, as Said maintains, their awareness of their broken 'selves' and the urgency of gluing them back together leads them into the 'othering' of Sianga.[372] They

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[371] Ibidem, pp. 124-125.
[372] Said (2001), p. 177.

feel entitled to take justice into their own hands so as to try to re-establish some of the connections with their roots that have been damaged and might never be recovered again, because these connections will ensure that the imagined community does not cease to exist: "É preciso preservar a continuidade da tribo".[373] This continuity is negotiated, only for the people to conclude that the solution for the physical and cultural preservation of the community entails travelling to a village they have heard of, a peaceful territory where they hope to be able to reconstruct their *habitus*.[374]

Although at this point they are still not fully aware of it, the structural existence that they knew and had somehow been taken for granted had already been destroyed. It is true that the community as it was conceived by Frelimo's modern discourse and, consequently, the whole conceptualization of the Frelimo nation proved to be unstable and was easily deconstructed from within. This emphasises the threat that represents the attempt to delete an entire community's sense of historical continuity. One particular passage underlines both Frelimo's detachment from the population's reality of war and its inability to react to this reality.

When a truck is sent to Mananga to collect the wounded villagers who were incapable of travelling elsewhere and take them to a city-based area controlled by the governmental forces, there is a visible 'othering' of the population by the truck driver's gaze.[375] The spectacle of the wounded villagers makes him feel nausea. Not for a single moment does he identify or sympathize with them: in fact, he acts in completely the opposite way. Objectifying the population, he remains detached from them, merely addressing them to give orders: "Metam **os tipos** dentro, que já é demasiado tarde. Tenho que atingir a vila antes de anoitecer, rápido, lesmas. (…) Esboça um sorriso nervoso, satisfeito, as suas ordens são cumpridas a contento. (…) **Tapa os ouvidos**. Não quer ser incomodado pelos ais dos moribundos…".[376] In a clear allusion to the material dimension of the official discourse that he represents, the driver makes sure that all the wounded persons are piled up like dead bodies so as to economize on space, because "não há tempo nem combustível para fazer uma segunda viagem".[377] In this setting, the

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[373] Chiziane (1999), p. 131.
[374] Ibidem, pp. 147-154: "Cessaram os choros. O terror cedeu o lugar à passividade e o povo deixa-se conduzir como cordeiros para o último destino onde não há princípio nem fim. (…) Mas dizem que a vida é bela do lado de lá. (…) a vida é mais verdadeira do lado de lá", p. 147.
[375] Ibidem, pp. 150-154.
[376] Ibidem, p. 150 (my emphasis).
[377] Ibidem, p. 151.

image of this old truck emerges as a metaphor for the socialist government in Mozambique. Notwithstanding the fact that it is a piece of advanced machinery, the truck is so old that it will not move unless it is pushed by men. It bounces like a boat down a road full of holes, and all the noise and smoke that it produces denounce its imminent collapse. Hence, we can read it as representative of the inviability of the mechanical and technical revolution in the countryside – which is to be the basis of the socialist administration – and, thus, of the economic vulnerability of Mozambique.[378]

In addition, this truck carries half-dead people who are described as a huge mass of bodies. What binds this collective entity, in which it becomes impossible to distinguish individualities, is the experience of violence: death, loss of material and cultural dignity, loss of a sense of belonging, interruption of a sense of continuity; and constant fear of what lies ahead:

> Os que escaparem com vida viverão separados das suas famílias porque não lhe saberão do paradeiro. Os que morrerem outros sepulcros não terão senão a vala comum, e suas famílias jamais saberão se estão vivos ou mortos porque nem haverá registos.[379]

This description exposes the disintegration of these people's identity and their consequent exile. If on the one hand they are the object of Renamo's violence which, as Nordstrom reminds us, is something that unfolds into a variety of ramifications that affect all areas of the individual's human and social reality[380], on the other hand they are also stigmatized as 'others' by Frelimo, an entity whose conceptualization of the nation they fail to recognize and which, therefore, is unable actually to help them. There is an immense gap between the governmental entity and these villagers for whom they are supposedly building a nation, and in the text this becomes evident through the relationship between the wounded villagers, who represent the majority of the population living in the countryside, and the truck driver, who represents the city-based leaders who distantly rule over the nation-state. The fact is that there is no relationship between them: the driver merely instructs and conducts them, without any intention of listening to them or even looking at them. Even their views on what lies ahead (i.e., the

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[378] See, for example, Isaacman and Isaacman (1983), pp. 145-170.

[379] Chiziane (1999), pp. 151-152.

[380] See Nordstrom (1997), p. 122: "It is a violence, Mozambicans tell me, that goes far beyond the physical bloodshed to injure family stability, community sustainability, and cultural viability. The continuity of the historical present is obliterated, respected traditions are dismantled, values rendered moot. Psychological peace and emotional security are bygone memories. Tomorrow, once taken for granted, now becomes a tenuous proposition".

road that will take them all to the city) are completely opposed, although both look for familiar elements that give them a sense of continuity; the villagers desperately look for a house, a person or a friendly animal, whereas the driver is reminded of war concerns, such as bullet wounds and hiding places.

Indeed, Frelimo's ideal of the nation did not reach these people. Nevertheless, Renamo's effort to destroy any sense of community – or as Sérgio Vieira put it, "to create a *nonsociety*"[381] – was equally unsuccessful, despite having carried out a war that was to institute a culture of violence and, thus, ensure the impossibility of imagining any future. The population in the novel responds to this violence being imposed on them by engaging in practices of survival, which inevitably will lead them to rethink and rebuild their individual and collective identities. Hence, throughout the villager's twenty-two day journey, renegotiation and readjustment are forced upon them, prompting the rise of a new order from chaos – which takes us to the second section of the text. Although the community is now detached from any geographical space where it can settle, the possible re-establishment at the Aldeia do Monte opens up possibilities for the active rescripting of their habits and subsequent restructuring of their *habitus* by the population themselves.

As the sixty survivors carefully plan their journey, they feel it is necessary to recreate some kind of behavioural structure which would be familiar to the collective, and they do so by selecting a 'leader' who not only guides them, but also sets up some norms to follow. At this stage, the choice of Sixpence for the leadership is quite revealing, on account of his individual characteristics, his strong awareness of the community and his propensity for change. Firstly, as opposed to the young *comandante das armas* (Renamo) disguised as an elder who convinced Sianga to sacrifice the village of Mananga, Sixpence is a "homem jovem a quem as turbulências da vida envelheceram".[382] Due to various events on his personal journey, that are described in the text along with references to important historical events that are evocative of the experience of the nation, this character incorporates the past, the present and the future of the nation, which suggests that he is the perfect leader:

> **Conhece a aldeia do Monte** e já lá viveu. Já **esteve na guerra dos portugueses** e está familiarizado com as longas marchas e os mistérios dos caminhos. Como homem que se preza,

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[381] Quoted in Nordstrom (1997), p. 130.
[382] Chiziane (1999), p. 154.

trabalhou nas minas do Rand, condição exigida para realizar o matrimónio com a mulher ideal. Antes desta maldita guerra exercia as funções de **caçador e domina os segredos das matas**. Sixpence ficou surpreendido com a eleição. Teve vontade de dizer que não, mas não teve coragem. (…) Embora a situação lhe desagradasse, acabou dizendo o sim para cumprir um dever moral e social.[383]

The experience of working at the South African mines, which is a non-exclusively but typically southernized experience, suggests that Sixpence belongs to a southern ethnic group. However, the fact that he has fought for the independence of his country in the armed struggle and emerged victorious not only enables him to acquire a national dimension, but connotes him also with a triumphant nationalism. In addition, the fact that he knows the country very well, is used to long marches from a soldier's perspective, and is very familiar with life in the bush brings him closer to the experience of the majority of the population who live in the countryside, and makes him the ideal guide to survival. Finally, he is the only person in the group who knows the Aldeia do Monte, has already been there, and, therefore, is more capable of ensuring the success of their venture. In other words, Sixpence incorporates a sense of continuity which is highly attractive for those who are struggling to restructure their shattered common identity: his past experience makes him the most capable person to lead in the present situation and to guide the population to a possible future that awaits them at the Aldeia.

Secondly, although he dislikes the idea of having to assume the leadership of the journey, Sixpence silences his individual interests in favour of the collective's needs. By regarding his position of power as one that carries responsibility towards the people with it, he acts in a way entirely different from the preceding leaders, Sianga and Mananga's Frelimo head of the village. Finally, it is important to highlight that Sixpence is considered to be a foreigner, as he is a native of Macuácua. Interestingly, we only access this information after the group's successful arrival at the Aldeia do Monte. This suggests that the emphasis is now being placed not on what separates them, but on what brings them together: the experience of violence under Renamo and survival. As a result, in the new conceptualization of the nation whose renegotiation begins during the journey, this differentiation is not relevant anymore, because Sixpence effectively subverts it.

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[383] Ibidem, p. 154 (my emphasis).

For all the abovementioned reasons, the new leader emerges as a unifying element, the community of survivors' point of departure for rebuilding their collective ethos and, thus, their successful community in exile. He somehow becomes the image of a triumphant ideology, which, according to Said, is vital for the reconstruction of a community in exile.[384] In her reflection on nationalism, Guibernau asserts that community conscience implies the use of certain symbols and rites, which individuals can identify and relate to, that simultaneously represent their unity, leading them to highlight the collective over the individual.[385] When the author mentions 'symbols' she is actually referring to objects, signs or words. However, I believe that in this context the character of Sixpence can himself be read as a symbol, given that he invokes the history of the extended community, with episodes of his personal life intersecting with some of the nation's historical moments that the population can relate to individually, and by doing so he is able to lead the people to bond through the sharing of a common experience and, consequently, to feel a sense of community. In Guibernau's words:

> Eu diria que a nação, usando uma série particular de símbolos, mascara a diferenciação dentro de si mesma, transformando a realidade da diferença na aparência da similaridade, permitindo assim às pessoas se revestirem da «comunidade» com integridade ideológica. Isso, a meu ver, explica a capacidade do nacionalismo de reunir pessoas de níveis culturais e contextos sociais diferentes. Os símbolos mascaram a diferença e põe em relevo a comunidade, criando um sentido de grupo. As pessoas constroem a comunidade de uma forma simbólica e transformam-na como um referencial de sua identidade.[386]

This successful intersection between the individual and the collective levels which is achieved through Sixpence not only allows the dissipation of difference in equality within the community, but also inspires the population to strive for the community's continuity – a community they intend to actively rebuild in a particular context and, therefore, beyond the surveillance of any specific ideological discourses.

Accordingly, the leader's agency is determined to bring about change as he mediates the community's assimilation of new behavioural norms in order to adjust to the new circumstances. Throughout the journey, the survivors face various trials that put their renegotiation skills to test. When Doane realizes that his pregnant wife is in labour during an air raid he panics, because he understands that in that setting, the birth of one child can mean the community's annihilation. Doane's positioning suggests that there is

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[384] Said (2001), p. 177.
[385] Guibernau (1997), pp. 91-94.
[386] Ibidem, p. 92.

no space for renewal in this community: the only way to ensure its survival is by preventing it from expanding. It is trapped in a time gap that refers specifically to the present, because only the present can guarantee the survival of both past and future. At this point, the exile of the community is reaffirmed as the people suddenly become aware of the real dimension of the war that is taking place:

> O ribombar de fogo ouve-se crescente aumentando a interrogação dos homens escondidos que se perguntam da razão de ser daquela sanha. A história de Mananga eles entendem bem; foi por causa do Sianga e dos seus capangas, foi por causa da fome e da seca, mas ali? Se a terra é verde e fresca e de certeza chove, por que é que os homens se batem? A complicação da guerra é muito maior do que o entendimento do aldeão comum.[387]

This exile is accentuated by a growing sense of isolation amongst enemies. Nonetheless, the whole group survives the bombing and Doane's wife manages to give birth. As for Doane, he cannot bear the sight of such destruction, loses his mind, and ends up getting eaten by a boa constrictor. It is, therefore, possible to read Doane's fate in the text as a punishment for his behaviour towards the collective project. The community should be able to expand, regardless of the contextual restrains. The hostility that surrounds the population in the jungle *animalises* some of them: it defies their ability to be flexible, adjust and develop survival techniques. Simultaneously, it progressively reinstates the need for the villagers to invest in the cohesion of the group to maintain an identity. Ultimately, it takes their capacity to resist all the violence that they are suffering to the limits, forcing them to develop resistance strategies.[388]

In order to strengthen the people's self-confidence in this complex and discouraging situation, Sixpence teaches them self-defence techniques in a gesture that proves to be double-edged. If on the one hand it is productive in the sense that it gets the villagers involved in the improvement of the group dynamic, on the other hand it is dangerous as it generates a defensive attitude of self-assertion in them. As Said points out, the exiles' agency tends to reflect a defensive nationalism precisely because they

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[387] Chiziane (1999), p. 161.

[388] See Nordstrom (1997), p. 125. In her presentation of the multifaceted reality of violence, Nordstrom presents several accounts in which victims described the worse act of violence that was enacted towards them. One of these accounts states the following: "But you want to know what I think is the worst thing about this war, the worst violence I suffer? It is sleeping in the bush at night. (…) Forcing us to sleep out with the animals makes us no better than them – these Bandidos, they take away our humanity, our dignity, they make us like animals. My marriage bed is the centre of my family, my home, my link with the ancestors and the future. This war, these soldiers, have broken my marriage bed, and with that they try to break my spirit, break what makes me who I am. This is the worst violence you can subject someone to".

feel the need to reassure themselves as a community.[389] Accordingly, in their urge to ensure the community's stability, the population reacts immediately by once again drawing an inclusive line around its members – 'us' –, thus excluding those who might somehow threaten their survival – 'the others'. When they are confronted with a group of unknown wounded people they express the desire to just ignore them, but are given a lesson of solidarity by their leader. Not only does Sixpence remind them of the whole population's condition of exile in this war's setting, but he also alerts them to the counter-productive nature of such attitudes in the process of collective identity reconstruction: "(…) mas Sixpence defende-os. Ele diz que já que a vida tudo lhes negou, que tenham ao menos a felicidade de **morrer rodeados pelos seus semelhantes**".[390] The children found are subsequently taken along, as well as the wounded, who get treated by the villagers.

The continuous trials that beset the consolidation of the community do not stop here. For instance, after having successfully ambushed a group of enemies, they acknowledge that one of them is the son of Mani Mossi, who is herself one of the members of the group of survivors. And, once again, the population is confronted with their own condition of exile, which reverts the othering gaze they had previously directed towards the people that did not belong to the group, towards themselves, thus reaffirming their entrapment within the "territory of not-belonging", the impossibility of going back home by restoring unbroken links to their cultural identity, and the reality of their interrupted existences: "A arma do mal ergue-se e divide a família. Mas para onde foi o amor e a liberdade que nos ensinaram os nossos antepassados? Onde ficou enterrada a moral e a vergonha deste povo?".[391] It is due to the permanently vigilant attitude of Sixpence, who patiently leads them to continuously reflect on these issues as part of a structured survival project, that the villagers gradually become able to adjust to their new condition. Hence, they are able to carry on fighting, for their survival, for the renegotiation of a set of habits which would somehow be coherent in this setting, thus allowing them to maintain a sense of community, and for the non-reproduction of the violence that is being imposed on them.

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[389] Said (2001), p. 184.
[390] Chiziane (1999), p. 169 (my emphasis).
[391] Ibidem, p. 174.

At this point it is worth going back to Nordstrom's investigation, which ultimately shows us that despite all the contradictions and repressive acts that the Mozambican population had to deal with, the majority were actively engaged in rebuilding their world by strengthening the bonds of humanity amongst them:

> (…) violence is about the destruction of culture and identity in a bid to control (or crush) political will. People at the epicentres of violence demonstrated to me that resistance emerges at the first sign of oppression, and is most powerfully coded in re-creating culture and identity against the vicissitudes of violence and oppression. It is in creativity, in the fashioning of self and world, that people find their most potent weapon against war. (…) Far from finding a dog-eat-dog survival mentality in the absence of all institutional and governing supports, I found most people operating according to a strong code humane ethics.[392]

Although in the text the villagers still lack some of the means and tools to wholly reshape their worlds due to their condition as refugees, their awareness of their exile allows them to engage in the process. When pointing out the elements that enable the distinction between exile, expatriate, emigrant and refugee, Said reminds us that the last of these four has been invented by the XX century's State, thus having a political connotation. Hence, the critic continues, it suggests "large herds of innocent and bewildered people requiring urgent international assistance, whereas «exile» carries with it, I think, a touch of solitude and spirituality".[393] In other words, the consciousness and internalization of their alienation allows the villagers to move to the next step, which is to turn the space of exile into a space of renegotiation and reconstruction, rather than of what Said calls "narcissistic masochism".[394]

Therefore, on the twenty first day of journey, the group that is by then reduced to less than forty elements finally reaches the Aldeia do Monte. At that moment, Sixpence collapses, only to find out that not only was he successful as a leader for having guided the survivors there, but also the villagers actually internalized his teachings of resistance against the oppressive violence that set out to crush their cultural identity:

> Os companheiros transportam-no aos ombros, comandados dirigindo o seu comandante num gesto de máxima gratidão. (…) São todos iguais. Não há velhos nem novos, a turbulência da vida nivelou-lhes as idades. Não se distingue o homem da mulher pelos contornos do corpo. (…) A

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[392] Nordstrom (1997), pp. 4; 12-15.
[393] Said (2001), p. 181.
[394] Ibidem, p. 183. According to Said, "there is the sheer fact of isolation and displacement, which produces the kind of narcissistic masochism that resists all efforts at amelioration, acculturation, and community. At this extreme, the exile can make a fetish of exile, a practice that distances him or her from all connections and commitments".

fidelidade aos defuntos, as leis da tribo, o orgulho do homem, as normas mais elementares da vida humana, tudo quebraram.[395]

Indeed, the success of this venture provides the population with the necessary strength to begin a reconstruction project that will allow them to imagine themselves as a "restored people"[396], which takes us to the third section of the text. Having rethought and renegotiated a new set of habits throughout the journey, which can now be territorialized, the community feels sufficiently stable and willing to re-establish its *habitus* actively. Having been warmly welcomed by the people from the Aldeia, who receive them as equals, they feel prepared, as Said claims, to start rethinking a new world and refashioning new identities with a view to compensating for the loss they had experienced.[397] Yet, the awareness of this loss makes them eager to build a new world which is somehow similar to the one they knew before and that can never be retrieved again. Although hope seems to lead the population to engage in a collective effort to get beyond the conditions of extreme poverty, expand the population, and rebuild a sense of community that is managed mainly by solidarity, the population also somehow feels that they can recreate the world that they knew before in this new territory: "Como ovelhas perdidas, encontraremos pão e paz neste rebanho alheio, neste solo que não é o dos nossos antepassados".[398]

As a result, at this point of the narrative, the community is confronted with situations in which its ability to be flexible and incorporate new practices is put on trial. The first occurrence refers to Sixpence and Mara, who get together to form a subversive couple in the most unlikely context. She is a young girl from the Aldeia who is determined to take care of a moribund Sixpence and bring him back to life. Despite being engaged and 'lobolada', she ends up falling in love with him, which leads her to reject her predefined identity as a woman and to impose her will and choice.[399] It is impossible not to create a parallel here between the agency of the couples formed by Mara and Sixpence and Wusheni and Dambuza, given that both of them defy the

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[395] Chiziane (1999), pp. 183-184.
[396] Said (2001),p. 177.
[397] Ibidem, p. 181.
[398] Chiziane (1999), pp. 201-202.
[399] Ibidem, p. 196: "Negligencia a enxada e o pilão. Esquece os ciúmes do noivo e as birras da mãe, que o milho espere e o noivo desespere, que a fogueira fique por acender, porque agora ela é mãe do filho que nasceu da morte. Tapa os ouvidos para as palavras que a repreendem, sente que está a viver o maior sonho do mundo".

establishment for the sake of their own desires and will. Hence, this reunion not only accentuates the potential of a balance between past, present and future – a future marked by solidarity, tolerance and acceptance – but it also reopens the debate about the place of women within the new emerging community. It is worth pointing out that nobody, apart from Mara's fiancé, for obvious reasons, opposes the formation of this couple. This is a fact which in the first instance might suggest women's prominence in this society. Nonetheless, it might also be related to Sixpence's status of "hero" within the community, which would exempt him from any sanctions.

The second occurrence takes place when a new natural catastrophe comes to disturb the fragile structures of this newly constructed society. This time, ironically, rain and floods destroy the majority of shelters which had been so carefully built, thus forcing the population into a new process of reconstruction. Once again, the community's cohesion and solidarity are trialled in adversity. The death of José Nuvunga, who dies during the storm while sleeping in his hut, prompts the revelation of certain aspects which demonstrate a relapse into some of the behaviours which brought about the dismantling of a sense of community in the past. His description suggests that he lived on the margins of this society and has somehow chosen to give up fighting for survival.[400] Hence, the whole population is disgusted with the sight of the dead body and feels eager to bury it. They prepare everything to do it as fast as possible, but when the head of the village arrives he decides that the deceased should not be buried with his clothes, given that they were good clothes which could still be used, since Nuvunga had not died of any contagious disease. Again, we are confronted with a disjuncture between the population's and the governmental entity's conceptualization of the community's identity. Although the people want to give Nuvunga a traditional burial in which the deceased is respectfully treated and mourned, the head of the village ignores their perspective and dictates an order that envisions him as a mere useless casualty. He completely dehumanizes Nuvunga, depriving him of his identity even in death. He becomes an object of no use because he cannot contribute to the collective: "José Nuvunga desce à terra mais nu do que no momento em que viu a primeira luz no mundo dos tormentos".[401] In fact, he becomes more useful when he dies, since his clothes can be worn by someone else. In addition, the head of the village selects and keeps the best

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[400] Ibidem, pp. 214-215.
[401] Ibidem, p. 216.

pieces of clothing for himself, ignoring Nuvunga's nephew's claims of an entitlement to the 'inheritance' and, thus, highlighting both the gap between the governmental entity and the population it claims to represent, and the materialistic nature of the modern nation's discourse – particularly of some of its representatives to whom, in the end, it is all a matter of power control. It is important to point out that although the population is shocked at the head of the village's demands and disapproves of them, they accept them, so, they connive at their own entrapment in exile: "A ordem é uma selvajaria, vandalismo puro. O chefe da aldeia faz ouvidos de mercador e ordena. E o povo cumpre, palavra de rei não volta atrás".[402]

Hence, this episode is of particular relevance as it reveals two very significant aspects that allow a better understanding of the Aldeia's dynamics up to this point and its subsequent annihilation. The first is connected with the gap between a stationary conceptualization of community imposed by an elitist governmental entity and the day to day experience and renegotiation of this conceptualization, which is performed by the population. According to Nordstrom's observation of people on the frontlines of war and violence in Mozambique, many of the most creative solutions proposed to readjust to these complex and permanently shifting settings were actually advanced by average citizens, meaning that "Society and culture were sculpted from the ground up".[403] Up to this point of the narrative it is clear that the population is, indeed, actively engaged in reshaping a sense of community which is not necessarily synchronized with the government's ideal of it. The second issue refers to how this process of what Nordstrom calls "worldbuilding" is conducted.[404] The researcher claims that this is a central issue to focus on, given that "if people rebuild their lives and worlds as they are, they will simply be open to re-attack. Survival, then, involves crafting a new universe of meaning and action. (…) Truly to create is to bring in a wholly new world – to **add something that has not been before**".[405] Although they do intend to reconstruct a sense of community and adjust it to their present reality, which is in permanent mutation, it is impossible to say that the population of the Aldeia reaches this state of identity development. Their eagerness to rebuild their *habitus* leads them to recuperate some of the habits they used to have before in a gesture that inevitably launches them to reiterate

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[402] Ibidem, p. 216.
[403] Nordstrom (1997), p. 13.
[404] Ibidem, p. 13.
[405] Ibidem, pp. 13 and 15 (my emphasis).

certain counterproductive behaviours. These gestures lead us once again towards Said's claim that exiles need to rebuild, as soon as possible, a new world which is somehow similar to the old one that is lost for ever, in an attempt to compensate themselves for their loss.[406] Caught in this negotiation, the population of the Aldeia neglects to update some of the structures that will later come to expose its frailties, and ultimately bring about its destruction.

Far from being an innocent coincidence, the Aldeia's destruction due to the betrayal of a woman is a particularly revealing aspect in the story. It prompts a new reading of the events from a different perspective, forcing further analysis of the discussion of gender issues throughout the diverse stories that intersect. From early on in the text we understand that gender is hardly ever an openly discussed issue, and when it is (in social environments such as the one that preceded the Mbelele ceremony), the established structures which might be questioned remain undisturbed. Despite the well-aimed and successful attacks that are performed by individual characters such as Wusheni and Mara, they are isolated positions which demonstrate that the role of women inside the community is still to be debated and renegotiated. It is worth pointing out that, eventually, both of them end up being filled with the same silence that keeps Minosse and Emelina alienated, and leads the latter to inform the enemy of the Aldeia's exact location. Hence, gender emerges in the text as a very precise type of exile, different from those that have been explored so far.

In his theorization on exile, Said omits to focus on gender. By defining exile as "a discontinuous state of being" and intersecting it with nationalism, the theorist assumes that exile is a disruptive state that follows a continuous one, i.e., the condition of belonging precedes that of being in the "perilous territory of not-belonging".[407] Hence, despite recognizing that exile is not experienced in the same way by all the refugees and dislocated people, when he argues that "nationalism is an assertion of belonging in and to a place, a people, a heritage", Said somehow assumes that nationalism is generally experienced in the same way, regardless of factors such as gender.[408] However, where do we place those who did not feel the sense of belonging in the first place within the national conceptualization which was supposed to be

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[406] Said (2001), p. 181.
[407] Ibidem, p. 177.
[408] Ibidem, p. 176.

continuous and stable to them? Such displacement will forcefully change their experience of exile in a community rebuilt a posteriori – one that sets out to erect a new world based on the one they knew before. It is a trajectory of uninterrupted exiles that overlap and emerge condensed in *Ventos* in a space of silence, absence and alienation. This space, which is sporadically disrupted by individual voices that speak up, is occupied by all the women throughout the various stories, as the characters Minosse and Emelina demonstrate.

As we have already acknowledged, Minosse is a "traditional" wife, according to patrilineal culture. After the death of all her family members, she ceases to exist as a woman, as she is unable to fit the only female definition she knows. Sianga's death "liberates" her from his tyranny, but she simultaneously feels that there is no longer a place for her in the world, since she cannot be any of the things she used to be anymore – a wife, a mother and a grandmother. Consequently, throughout the journey to the Aldeia do Monte, Minosse appears to be completely absent from the survival project: not only because she feels self-alienated, but also because there is no room for difference or individuality in this project. The urge to stay alive and rebuild a community identity that keeps it cohesively together prevails over all other needs, including that of considering gender difference.[409] Throughout this period we see the occurrence of some episodes which highlight precisely this need to address gender difference in its specificity, such as the one in which Doane feels like killing his wife because she is in labor[410]; the one in which a 'capulana' is removed from the dead body of a woman, exposing the deceased's genitals, because it was in perfect conditions to be reused[411]; or the one in which children who are found in the forest are handed to women in the group who had lost their own children[412]. As mentioned before, by the time the population reaches the Aldeia they were "todos iguais": a huge mass of bodies impossible to distinguish in any sense.[413] Therefore, despite surviving the journey, Minosse remains completely detached from her own body and alienated from the community: she does not eat, does not sleep, nor does she talk to anyone. She spends her days staring at birds flying through the sky, remembering Sianga and daydreaming

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[409] Casimiro (2005), p. 75.
[410] Chiziane (1999), pp. 157-160.
[411] Ibidem, pp. 169-170.
[412] Ibidem, p. 170.
[413] Ibidem, p. 184.

of all the things Wusheni was unable to experience.[414] Her total displacement in the new setting is reflected in this constant reminiscing movement that keeps her trapped in the past, which is the only reality she knows.

Just when she is sure of the insurmountable nature of this incompatibility, she comes across a little boy who is ostracized by the entire community. Minosse realizes that he is openly neglected because no one wants to be responsible for an extra mouth to feed in times of scarcity: like a cycle, that repeats itself endlessly, the population replicates the same violence which is performed against them.[415] She recognizes her mirrored image in this child, both as a woman and as an elder and, thus, decides to subvert the violence by taking him into her care. This humanitarian gesture enables her to rebuild a sense of community in which she has an active voice: "A velha não está disposta a perder a batalha. Esgota a língua, esgota as carícias que não são correspondidas".[416] This is a turning point in the evolution of this character, as she is able to step up and act in accordance with her own independent beliefs for the first time. The awareness of her exile as a woman enables her to engage in the reformulation of her identity by taking on the roles of mother and grandmother to children that are somehow exile by the exile community itself – which is also the case of Sara and her brothers, who had been enslaved by a female villager.[417] By doing this, Minosse is simultaneously proceeding to the reconstruction of the family concept, which is built upon solidarity, love and bonding between older and younger generations in the modern world:

> Nunca antes imaginara encontrar no desterro a família sepultada nas areias de Mananga. (…) Os meninos órfãos confiam nela. Vivem sob a sua protecção. Semeiam os campos orientados por ela. Ensina-lhes as manhas da terra, os segredos da semente, as voltas da água e os movimentos do vento.[418]

Notwithstanding the fact that her agency builds an alternative sense of community within her new family, Minosse is quite aware of the fact that hers is no more than an isolated act – like Wusheni's and Mara's – that, in itself, will not affect the conceptualization of the extended community, as long as it refuses to debate gender

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[414] Ibidem, pp. 207-211.
[415] Ibidem, pp. 219-221.
[416] Ibidem, p. 221.
[417] Ibidem, pp. 229-231.
[418] Ibidem, pp. 231-232.

difference and allow bridging between past and present so as to provide itself with a sense of continuity – as we shall see later on. As she reflects on life as she knows it, she fears for her children's faith – Sara's in particular –, because she realizes that the one thing that remains immutable, regardless of all the other contextual changes that occur, is the fixed roles assigned to Mozambican men and women within society. While looking back on her own life, she is now able to understand men always emerge as active, the ones who lead, decide and experience pleasure, whereas women are never allowed to intervene beyond passively observing those same decisions and pleasures, constantly being alienated from their bodies and themselves:

> E pensa no homem masculino, aquele que dirige os destinos da vida, que, Segundo se diz, foi criado à semelhança de Deus. Para ela o homem é mesmo Deus, porque ele faz vir um filho ao mundo e diz: é meu. (…) os desejos da mulher não podem existir e nem são permitidos. Durante toda a minha vida satisfiz os desejos dos homens. Primeiro do meu pai e depois do meu marido. (…) O Sianga comprou-me com lobolo, que é uma cerimónia solene, mas um negócio porque se faz com valores e dinheiro vivo.[419]

Hence, women's continuous gender exile within the exiled community itself will inevitably keep them in positions of vulnerability and dependency, in a repetitive chain that, in Minosse's point of view, appears to be unbreakable. It is worth mentioning at this point that this idea of repetitiveness is reinforced by the description that is made of the harvest season at the Aldeia. When it starts, women are called upon to cook for and serve men, who are seating and chatting under a tree.[420] This scenery evokes the ceremony of Mbelele that took place at Mananga, for while the women selected were performing the ritual, those remaining were serving men, who, for their part, were playing 'ntchuva', while eating and drinking under the trees.[421] So, in both situations, each of them evocative of a modern and a traditional scenario respectively, the elements that refer to the definition of gender roles remain invariable: men are associated with the public, progressive, and active space, whereas women emerge related to the private, stagnant and somehow retrograde sphere.

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[419] Ibidem, p. 257.
[420] Ibidem, p. 263: "Todas as mulheres casadas vão em procissão e levam comida e mais comida para os seus senhores e estes não cabem em si de contentamento porque as suas esposas são as melhores cozinheiras do mundo". The use of the expression "os seus senhores" is also quite revealing, as it creates an immediate association between men and colonizers – in this case, men emerge as colonizers of women's bodies.
[421] Ibidem, pp. 100-101.

In her reading of Stuart Hall's definition of cultural identity, Herrera underlines the need to articulate both the collective cultural identity and the various identities that emerge within it according to gender, class, sex, and age factors in order to faithfully account for the multiple experiences of exile.[422] Despite agreeing with Hall that cultural identity is influenced by history, culture, and power, and agreeing on its fluidity and dynamism throughout history, Herrera makes a very interesting point in adding that "one cannot ignore the role that desire plays in the conscious construction or acquisition of cultural identity".[423] In other words, Herrera is hereby emphasizing the active role of individuals, who are not passive in the entire process, and also their responsibility. Following this line of thought, it is possible to state that in the text the community "chooses" not to renegotiate gender roles in the Aldeia because the reproduction of their past existence gives them the illusion of a safe continuity. Furthermore, the maintenance of a patriarchal society would be much more convenient for a male-dominated community such as the one in question here.

According to Casimiro, despite the emphasis put on women's emancipation and gender equality, theorization on this subject was non-existent within the modern conceptualization of the nation, which led to the re-enacting of old stereotypes. In addition, by immediately reading the private sphere as retrograde, marginalizing it, and focusing solely on the public one, which was dominated by men, not only did the modern conceptualization of the nation neglect to debate the sexual labour division within the household, but it also forced women to accumulate contradictory roles: they were to be actively engaged in the public sphere like their male peers, but should simultaneously be silent and obedient housewives, mothers, and wives within the private sphere.[424] Hence, these women never really had a voice, nor the opportunity to decide on their destinies. As Casimiro reminds us referring to the specific type of citizenship women were entitled to in the Mozambican nation according to the 1975 Constitution, theirs was a "cidadania restrita, como se elas continuassem seres inferiores e incapazes de decidir sobre as suas vidas".[425]

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[422] Herrera (2001), pp. xxvi-xxviii.
[423] Ibidem, xxvii.
[424] Casimiro (2005), pp. 67-68.
[425] Ibidem, p. 70.

Nevertheless, Emelina's agency brings this structure into the open, exposing it as one which will ultimately provoke the annihilation of the Aldeia community. Taking into consideration the trajectory of all the characters in *Ventos*, it is possible to say that Emelina is the most exiled character, as she concentrates in herself the three types of exile that we have explored so far: she is exiled for her gender, for being a refugee and for being rejected within the Aldeia's community. Emelina lives on the margins of the community with her baby girl, whom she never parts with. Due to her silence, isolation and detachment from inclusive social habits (such as bathing, for example), she is regarded as crazy and completely ostracized by the community.[426] Yet, when the nurse Danila comes to the village and invites her into a conversation, Emelina immediately accepts and is willing to tell all of her story, showing that the only reason why she does not talk is that no one is willing to listen to her: "Emelina não é louca nem tonta, ó gente, sente necessidade de ouvidos que a escutem e de palavras que a consolem. (…) Tem sede de afecto, de consolo, de uma voz amiga, uma voz irmã. Precisa de um Deus confessor para desabafar".[427] We learn that in the past, Emelina killed her three children in order to become free for the powerful man she was in love with. However, when she asked him to return this demonstration of love by killing his other two wives, he abandoned her pregnant. After that, she was captured by the Renamo enemies and lived with them for over a year, subsequently returning to the community which did not forgive her for what she had done.

Clearly, Emelina is far from fitting the traditional female profile that was expected from her, which prompts her marginalization by the whole community – other women in particular. Nevertheless, the community ends up by acting in a contradictory way towards her, because despite recognizing that she symbolizes a disruption in the traditional conceptualization of women, they are unable to imagine her outside that frame, i.e., they cannot see her as active and even able to reproduce violence because she is a woman. Hence, the fact that her open bitterness towards those who refuse to forgive her and reintegrate her into society is never regarded as threatening, becomes an advantage for Emelina in her pursuit of revenge: "Os poetas cantam a mulher como símbolo de paz e pureza. Os povos veneram a mulher como símbolo do amor universal.

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[426] Chiziane (1999), pp. 228 and 244.
[427] Ibidem, pp. 246 and 247.

Porque ela é uma flor que **dá** prazer e **dá** calor. (…) O que os poetas esqueceram é que, para além do símbolo do amor, a mulher é também parceira da serpente".[428]

Refusing to remain trapped in an outmoded passive identity, Emelina shows the villagers that as a woman she is able to **give** and also to **take**, i.e., to be both passive and active. Simultaneously, we observe that her need to reproduce violence is a direct consequence of marginalization by people who had been kept under the enemy's influence for long periods of time. According to Nordstrom, this was a strategy very frequently used by Renamo: sending women and even children to villages in order to get information for later attacks[429], which brings us back to the researcher's claim that "if they [Mozambicans] refashion their lives as they knew them, they create conditions as vulnerable to attack as existed previously".[430] So, Renamo's knowledge of this stagnant conceptualization of women within Mozambican national discourse allowed them to use it against Mozambicans themselves. This does not mean that Renamo itself viewed women in a different way, as we are aware that not only was the group's view of women highly traditionalist, but also Renamo did not have an alternative socio-cultural programme. Renamo was, however, able to understand that Mozambican society's patriarchal nature could be a weak spot to be used in the terrorist group's favour. In addition to this, the community's inability to deal with the violence that surrounds Emelina dehumanizes her. Throughout her analysis of the creative worldbuilding techniques applied by Mozambicans to build cultures of resistance, Nordstrom points out, precisely, that the processes of unmaking violence were one of its main underpinnings. Given that Mozambicans were aware that violence can only generate violence, they paid particular attention to the healing of all victims of violence, as a community effort, especially those who had been kidnapped by Renamo.[431] In the end, it is paradoxically Emelina, in a gesture of profound individuality and deeply internalized violence that forces the community to face its own flaws, which bring about its destruction.

These flaws are, of course, connected with the ideal of community identity that emerges at the Aldeia in this context of war. As we have already acknowledged, the population was trapped between two opposing discourses that prevented it from

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[428] Ibidem, p. 249 (my emphasis).
[429] Nordstrom (1997), p. 51.
[430] Ibidem, p. 190.
[431] Ibidem, pp. 209-211.

attaining a stable identity. Yet, throughout its efforts to imagine itself as a restored community it did come to understand the need to rethink itself and look for a balance between tradition and modernity – to bridge past and present in order to build the future – because acting otherwise would deprive it of a sense of continuity and make it vulnerable to manipulation, by both internal and external forces.

Focusing primarily on the external forces, these emerge in the aftermath of the heavy rains and floods that devastate the Aldeia. Due to the government's inability to respond to the desperate situation that several areas of the country are going through, international help is called upon. Despite the youngsters' enthusiasm towards this "mão desinteressada"[432], the elders regard it as suspicious and similar to a colonial gesture, because they understand that this act inevitably places them once again in a position of dependency towards other nations. International help comes from all over the world in the shape of all sorts of items, but, in reality, it ends up by othering the population and providing conditions for the rise of structures that profited from the war. The instability of the community's identity is exposed when the population recognizes itself in this othering gaze that is launched upon them. The villagers 'forget' their traditional behavioural habits and also their history of colonization, as if they had no past. Simultaneously, the visibility given to what Nordstrom calls the "international war-related industries [that] make war possible in any location in the world"[433] place the country in a vulnerable position within the networks of power that operate on a worldwide scale:

> Todos comem até saciar e esquecem o trabalho da machamba, para quê trabalhar se os homens bons nos dão tudo? (…) O povo não exerce os seus deveres, as suas tradições, e espera pela esmola, nova forma de colonização mental. (…) Alguns indivíduos neste grupo de boa gente com o pretexto de ajudar, ajudam-se. (…) Os desonestos enriquecem. Os pobres depauperam.[434]

Hence, following these events, the population is led once again to reflect upon its own group identity as a way to guarantee its endurance. At this point it is important

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[432] Chiziane (1999), p. 238.
[433] Nordstrom (1997), p. 5. As Nordstrom points out: "Everything from development dollars to human rights organizations, from covert operations specialists to illegal industries that gain from conflict, builds on the linkages of these networks that shape war and peace as we know it today. And in all this a powerful set of cultural prescriptions develops around the concept and conduct of war. It is at once international and localized (…) This global flux of information, tactics, weapons, money, and personnel brokers tremendous power throughout the warzones of the world", p. 5.
[434] Chiziane (1999), p. 238.

to highlight the fact that this debate is proposed primarily by Minosse and Mungoni. These two characters are present in the three distinct sections of the narrative, so they accompany the evolution of the community's identity in its various stages. Both these elder characters who are somehow connected to a traditional conception of the community (Minosse as the *régulo*'s last wife and Mungoni as soothsayer who predicts Managa's destruction) are transposed into a modern context, having survived all the challenges that the population is continuously confronted with. For this reason, they represent not only the impossibility of erasing past, but also the need to respect and integrate it into the reconceptualization of identity that occurs in the present, so as to open the possibilities for its stabilization in the future. They are, for that reason, cultural mediators in the renegotiation of the community's identity.

As mentioned before, Minosse is one of the characters who acknowledges the need to renegotiate the community's identity in a much more active and independent way. While pondering her children's future, she realizes that the population's general passivity regarding its own conception as a community will generate a much more disturbing exile for the generations to come, as the rupture between past and present will imprison them in an identity limbo that deprives them of a sense of continuity and belonging and, subsequently, makes them socio-culturally vulnerable.[435] Notwithstanding her hope in a more dynamic governmental agency towards youngsters, she envisages her own children as part of a "lost generation" who will inevitably remain prisoners of this vicious circle.[436] In the same line of thought, Mungoni defends the view that the only way to offer resistance is for the population to take the matter of its identity renegotiation into their own hands and to attempt a balance between past and present – traditional and modern – in order to make possible its projection into the future:

> Falar dos antepassados é falar da história deste povo, da tradição e não do fanatismo cego, desmedido. Não há novo sem velho. (…) É verdade que muito se perdeu, mas nós ainda existimos. Deve-se procurar melhor a vida tendo como base o que há de bom na nossa cultura. A mudança rápida de hábitos provoca decadência e a instabilidade será o preço. (…) que deixem as pessoas viver de acordo com as marcas da sua identidade. Que saibam harmonizar o velho e o novo.[437]

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[435] Ibidem, pp. 258-259.
[436] See Nordstrom (1997), p. 40. According to the researcher, "the physical harm, plus the severe psychological, socio-cultural, and interpersonal traumas provoked by the war, have prompted many Mozambicans to refer to the children born during the post-independence war years as the "lost-generation".
[437] Chiziane (1999), pp. 265-268.

By defying the community to develop its own strategies of cultural survival Mungoni seeks to detach it from any constitutive political discourses and, thus, stop the dehumanizing violence that exiles it and prevents it from expressing its own will. According to Nordstrom, it was this same creativity that ultimately enabled Mozambicans to deconstruct the signifying systems that instituted violence as a "fixed entity".[438] Their redefinition of violence is representative of their own future political will: hence, in the researcher's words, "in de-legitimizing violence, people reconstruct a new political culture, one that delegitimizes the politics of force. Such political reconstructions are a serious threat, for they simultaneously delegitimize the political systems that rely on force to maintain power".[439]

Despite their efforts to imagine themselves as a restored community, the population fails to redefine itself culturally outside the political positions that ultimately reduce this war down to a struggle for power. In the final episode, a priest goes to the Aldeia to perform a mass and the population is attacked during the ceremony. Inevitably, we are led to draw a parallel between this mass and the Mbelele ceremony, which was performed at Mananga and ultimately brought about the destruction of the village. Again, the community is shown to be trapped between two discourses. If in Mananga the ceremony was sponsored by the enemy forces so as to discredit the government, in the Aldeia the mass was supported by the government so as to reaffirm its conceptualization of the nation and its dominance over the rural areas. In both situations the community was incapable of rethinking itself outside the constraints of the prevailing discourses, which not only reaffirms its exile, but also its incapacity to turn it into a privileged place of worldbuilding. The community's identity emerges irremediably fragmented.

A clear reflection of this fragmentation and discontinuity can be found in the peculiar structure of the literary work. Firstly, with regard to the narrative's formal structure, it is important to highlight the presence of elements that refer to the oral tradition in it. As a result, the destabilization of the novel form as a western model takes place, as the self-legitimation of the oral element undermines, disrupts and inevitably enhances the novel's closed format in the western literary tradition's point of view.

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[438] Nordstrom (1997), p. 143.
[439] Ibidem, pp. 143-144.

Silvio Renato Jorge describes this movement as follows: "somos convocados a vislumbrar traços de formas tradicionais do narrar que se inserem na matéria romanesca para desestabilizar as condições de isolamento próprias da produção textual como a compreendemos hoje, reagenciando sentidos e perspectivas".[440] In addition, orality, as an element which emerges immediately related to tradition, disturbs, intersects and ultimately fuses with writing, an element which is immediately related to modernity. In this sense, we can read this interaction as a confirmation not only of the impossibility of deleting history, but also, as Jorge states, of humankind's need to recognize history so as to evolve as human beings.[441] It is, therefore, possible to affirm that in its structure, on the one hand, the narrative advances the proposal of a balanced articulation of both elements, which are imbued with cultural connotations. In other words, the narrative suggests that cultural *mestiçagem* should be the basis of *Moçambicanidade*. On the other hand, if we take into account the fact that Owen reads Chiziane's appropriation of oral and traditional forms to voice women's experience as a gesture that "contranarra o exotismo antropológico"[442], we can interpret the narrative's structure as evoking the need to dismantle women's representation in both traditional and modern discourses, and the binary itself. We can also read it as suggestive of the urge to legitimize a new representation for women, one that emerges from the intersection in which gender roles are articulated and equality rewritten.

Hence, a new format is presented to reflect the Mozambican identity experience in a much wider sense. In this sense, the disruptions that can be observed in the narrative's structure can be understood as part of a meditation on the discontinuities of *Moçambicanidade*, its renegotiations, and its mutable nature. *Ventos'*s three part configuration suggests that each section of the book refers to the community's renegotiation of a discontinuous identity in specific moments in time, i.e. past, present and future. Section one or the prologue conveys immediately an introduction to the story, but it simultaneously focuses on a state that historically precedes the developments which will follow. In other words, by invoking a particular *habitus* that refers to the Mozambican identity and to the imagined community that materializes it,

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[440] Jorge, Sílvio Renato, "Entre Guerras e Narrativas: Percursos da Escrita de Paulina Chiziane e Lília Momplé" in Margarida Calafate Ribeiro and Paula Meneses (ed.), *Moçambique: das palavras escritas* (Porto: Afrontamento, 2008), pp. 177-186 (p. 182).
[441] Ibidem, p. 177.
[442] Owen, Hilary, "A Língua da Serpente – A auto-etnografia no feminino em Balada de amor ao vento de Paulina Chiziane" in Margarida Calafate Ribeiro and Paula Meneses (ed.), *Moçambique: das palavras escritas* (Porto: Afrontamento, 2008), pp. 161-175 (p. 164).

Chiziane emphasises the need to focus on what precedes Frelimo's imposition of an ideal of modernization: hence the reference made to storytelling around the fire and intergenerational knowledge transference. History and the stories which make it up emerge as the main cultural component of a community. They are the unifying element within a community because they provide it with a sense of continuity. That continuity is reinforced by intergenerational sharing.

Section two, however, reveals a rupture with the preceding section, thus suggesting the present's alienation from the past. The repetition of the stories of self-destruction, which were previously presented, puts forward the population's general detachment from a historical past. Furthermore, the community is shown to be trapped between two discourses which are imposed on it. This identity exile reveals the population's incapacity to build a stable and continuous identity in this present setting.

Finally, section three explores the community's attempt to attain balance between past and present in order to build the future in a scenario of physical and identity survival. In their attempt to recapture a sense of continuity to ensure the survival of the community's identity, the population is tested several times with regard to their beliefs and ability to adjust to a new context. They are also confronted with the need to be more active in the recreation of their identity. Eventually, they succeed in maintaining a sense of community, and they do so by attempting to rebuild a world which is similar to the one they had before. Yet, this is a world which is lost forever and the attempt to recapture it in its essence leads the population to relapse into the same mistakes that contributed to their collapse in the past. By failing to recognize the relevance of the struggle for gender equality, the community brings about its own destruction.

Hence, the repetition of the stories portrayed in section one in both segments that follow it, discloses that forgetting one's historical past leads to the repetition of this same history, in a movement which becomes particularly dangerous when this history is abundant in stories of exile. The fact that all three stories are stories of women (each of them referring to a specific role traditionally performed by women, as wives, mothers and lovers) uncovers the ininterrupted exile that they have lived in throughout history. Gender exile exists in the past, in the present and, consequently, in the future. Therefore, it traverses and conditions all other exiles, and in the text, it ultimately

proves its insurmountable influence by exposing that a patriarchal community is a fragile one as well.

Indeed, in *Ventos*, Chiziane accentuates the importance of renegotiating gender exile and simultaneously exposes Said's omission of gender as an element that not only refutes the homogeneity of the experience of exile, but also unfolds into myriad exiles when analysed along with other factors, such as race and class. Building upon the premise that women do not experience gender exile equally, in her novel *Niketche*, Chiziane proceeds to the deconstruction of gender exiles in their specificity, especially regarding ethnicity, race, and colour. In other words, the author explores the extent to which these categories influence and condition the experiences of womanhood within the feminine gender, simultaneously examining how they interact in a problematic coexistence that produces various forms of exile. The emphasis is placed, therefore, as much on women's exile within a patriarchal framework as on women's exile by other women within a female power structure which, in its turn is informed by social constructions such as race, colour, class and ethnicity.

The story, which is set in the post-independence and post-internal conflict democratic era, introduces us to Rami, a woman who at the end of twenty years of marriage, finds out that her husband Tony has got another four unofficial families. From this point, the journey of self-discovery and exposition of the four wives' marginality that the character engages in, reveals the politics of gender differentiation at work in the national discourse, simultaneously discussing gender's different cultural conceptions within the nation-state and proposing new identities for both women and men in the intersection of tradition and modernity.

At this point it is important to refer back to Owen's work on the debate over gender difference which is put forward through *Niketche*. Focusing on the role played by gender in the management of regional and ethnic differences within the official unity discourse of the Mozambican nation, Owen demonstrates that the process of "southernization" and subsequent masculinization of Mozambique was achieved through the female body.[443] On reading Chiziane's depiction and subversion of Frelimo's discourse of national unity, Owen highlights a characteristic of this discourse which will be very relevant for the present analysis: its reproduction of the Lusotropical

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[443] Owen (2007), pp. 186-199.

ideology of harmonious racial *mestiçagem* and cultural reciprocity among the different black ethnic groups of wives in *Niketche*. Building upon the premise that "*Niketche* reveals how a Lusotropical legacy of sexualized racial fusion lived on in Frelimo's attempts to unify a state of many «nations» from the Rovuma to the Maputo"[444], Owen moves to dismantle the disempowered role of women in this process of unification and, simultaneously, the active strategies advanced by Chiziane so as to propose a "third space"[445] where women's empowerment enables them to recreate cultural and ethnic exchange as a space of difference. Considering Owen's discussion of ethnicity in terms of a very specific gender exile, the present study will focus on race as a social construct that also represents a particular type of gender exile. Hence, this analysis will attempt to prove that in *Niketche*, Chiziane <u>initiates</u> a debate on the specific intersectionality between race and gender – given that in the novel the main emphasis is placed on the dynamics between ethnicity and gender – which will be further analysed in *Alegre Canto*. Through the analysis of the female characters and their relationships with the polygamous husband that bonds them, the study intends to provide a multidimensional perspective in which race emerges at the core of the intersection of social categories such as class, ethnicity and colour, that co-exist within gender exile.

According to the Mozambican sociologist Carlos Serra, the modern conception of race has less to do with the individual's particular biological characteristics than with his/her social status and the nature of his/her social relationships.[446] In this conceptualization, race emerges inextricably linked to power and elitist social relations, meaning that in a competitive environment, racial connotations will differ according to the level of access to resources. Serra states that "a raça torna-se fenómeno sociológico quando, em situações de confrontação e de tensão social e de luta por recursos, componentes fenotípicas são rapidamente, «instintivamente» e estrategicamente invocados, manipulados e sujeitos a um tratamento estigmatório".[447] Therefore, and as Michel Wieviorka reminds us, racial constructions are dangerously disruptive in the sense that they imply social practices of inclusion towards those who fit the profile of

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[444] Ibidem, p. 187.
[445] Ibidem, p. 194.
[446] Serra, Carlos, *Combates pela Mentalidade Sociológica* (Maputo: Universidade Eduardo Mondlane, 1997), pp. 110-111.
[447] Ibidem, p. 111.

acceptance and also of exclusion towards those whose inadequacy might be interpreted as threatening.[448]

As a young nation-state with a solid pre-colonial tradition, a long colonial past and a post-independence socialist history, Mozambique's society is highly complex in many respects, particularly as concerns racial matters. According to Anna Maria Gentili, the consolidation of the colonial state, which only occurred at the end of the first quarter of the twentieth century, was achieved through the reshaping of the political and social structures so as to centralize power and secure its maintenance in Portugal and its allies', internal and external, hands.[449] In this context of domination, this centralizing move obviously implied that power was a privilege for a minority, who maintained its power and differentiation through the creation of racist ideologies and practices, and a strict legislation that supported them. Nevertheless, this colonial discourse suffered many adjustments throughout history, according to different contextual circumstances, as Cláudia Castelo points out. In her book entitled *O Modo Português de Estar no Mundo: O Lusotropicalismo e a Ideologia Colonial Portuguesa (1933-1961)* Castelo provides an excellent analysis of the political stances and imperial discourses created by Portugal, the Lusotropical in particular, so as to justify the maintenance of the African colonies both internally and externally, especially in the second half of the twentieth century, in which the majority of African countries were already engaged in decolonization processes.[450]

The rise of Salazar to power from 1926 onwards and the subsequent creation of the Estado Novo in 1933 through the approval of the new Constitution was, indeed, a very significant turning point in terms of colonial policy. Castelo moves on to identify three specific historical moments in the evolution of this colonial policy which emerge related to distinct social practices.[451] During the "anos da *mística imperial*", the Portuguese colonial administration was highly centralizing, unitarian and imperial, through the implementation of the 'Acto Colonial' in 1930, a political project that reaffirmed Portugal's vocation for colonization, concentrated all the Portuguese

[448] Wieviorka, Michel, 'A Nova Era do Racismo' in Carlos Serra (ed.), *Racismo, Etnicidade e Poder: um Estudo em Cinco Cidades de Moçambique* (Maputo: Universidade Eduardo Mondlane, 2000), pp. 169-208.
[449] Gentili, Anna Maria, *O Leão e o Caçador: Uma História da África Sub-Saariana* (Maputo: Arquivo Histórico de Moçambique, 1998), pp. 285-293.
[450] Castelo, Cláudia, *O Modo Português de Estar no Mundo: O Lusotropicalismo e a Ideologia Colonial Portuguesa (1933-1961)* (Porto: Edições Afrontamento, 1998).
[451] Ibidem, pp. 45-67.

domains under the aegis of the 'Império Colonial Português' and asserted the general belief in the inferiority of the indigenous populations, according to Darwinist social theories. Although they were considered to be Portuguese subjects, they were not part of the nation.[452] In his work *The Struggle for Mozambique*, the father of the Mozambican revolution, Eduardo Mondlane, explains that it was during this period, so from 1930 on, that the colonial state instituted the *regime do indigenato*, which basically divided the population into two distinct groups: the *indígenas*, Africans who had no citizenship, for whom it was mandatory to carry an identity card (*caderneta do indígena*) at all times, and who were subject to very strict labour obligations and social rules; and the *não-indígenas*, who had full Portuguese citizenship and were entitled to all the privileges that were attached to it.[453]

However, by the end of World War II the experience of German Nazism and the Holocaust had changed world politics, and the creation of the UN reflected that in practical terms.[454] Through the application of measures that reinstated the right to autonomy to all peoples in the world, a very strong anti-colonialist movement emerged and all colonial powers were compelled to engage in the processes of recognition of the colonies' autonomy. Faced with the prospect of losing its colonies, the Portuguese government initiated the second historical moment in the evolution of its colonial policy by effectively carrying out a revision of the 'Acto Colonial' in 1951, that basically proposed the replacement of imperial terminology and the implementation of assimilationist practices so as to generate an image of "unity" that would satisfy international opinion. In addition, the colonial regime mounted a very efficient campaign that argued that there was a unique relationship between Portugal and her African territories that were attached to it through the *adaptation* of the Lusotropical theory of the Brazilian sociologist Gilberto Freyre.[455]

Freyre argues for the specificity of the Portuguese social relations with the peoples that they have encountered in the tropics, which led ultimately to the emergence of a lusotropical civilization. This civilization is characterized by the harmonious symbioses of cultures, ethnicities and races in a perfect *mestiça* unity. So, the *mestiço*

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[452] Ibidem, pp. 45-48.
[453] Mondlane, Eduardo, *The Struggle for Mozambique* (London: Zed Press, 1983), pp. 40-41.
[454] Castelo (1998), p. 48.
[455] Ibidem, pp. 48-61.

emerges as the symbol of perfection.[456] For obvious reasons, this theory was highly attractive and useful for Portugal in terms of its foreign policy – at least the part of it that did not jeopardize the sovereignty of the Portuguese nation. Hence, in order to reinforce this assimilationist tendency and demonstrate the non-racist nature of the Portuguese people, the 'Estatuto do Indigenato' was abolished in 1961. In legislative terms, this measure is the most important one taken in the third moment of the colonial policy's evolution, as identified by Castelo, which coincided with the period of decolonization and independence for the majority of British, French and Belgian former colonies. It meant that the individuals who had the conditions to do so could stop being *indígenas*, acquire the Portuguese identity and assimilate to Portuguese culture. According to Castelo, the conditions were the following:

> ter mais de 18 anos; falar correctamente a língua portuguesa, exercer profissão, arte ou ofício de que aufira rendimento necessário para o sustento próprio e das pessoas de família a seu cargo, ou possuir bens suficientes para o mesmo fim; ter bom comportamento e ter adquirido a ilustração e os hábitos pressupostos para a integral aplicação do direito público e privado dos cidadãos portugueses; não ter sido notado como refractário ao serviço militar nem dado como desertor.[457]

As Gentili points out, these privileges were aimed at a minoritarian bourgeoisie from the colonies that would ensure the maintenance of Portugal's power. Nevertheless, the application of these laws based on Lusotropicalism, which was intended to attenuate racial tensions, actually worked in the opposite way, as it revalidated the immediate association between access to power and colour of skin.[458] In other words, these were official juridical mechanisms that transformed the category of race into class. Based on official data from the *Junta de Investigação do Ultramar* published in 1964, Mondlane shows that the composition of Mozambican society had three layers.[459] The highest layer was occupied by a minority population, which represented approximately 2.5% of the total population and was composed of "European whites, Asians, Mulattos and a few Africans concentrated in the urban areas and in the agricultural and mineral developments".[460] This was a westernized and urbanized elite which was connected to the modern sector of the society. The second social layer comprised a numerical minority of approximately 3.5% of the total

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[456] Ibidem, pp. 35-43.
[457] Ibidem, p. 60.
[458] Gentili (1998), p. 275.
[459] Mondlane (1983), pp. 38-39.
[460] Ibidem, p. 38.

population which was "composed of elements of various races but above all of Africans".[461] According to Mondlane, given that they had rural origins, concentrated in the peripheral areas of the most expanded population agglomerates and generally turned into a salaried, they represented the proletariat.[462] Finally, the last and widest social layer, representing about 94% of the total population, was composed of what Mondlane calls Africans and we assume this to be black Africans, the majority of them peasants and/or migrant workers living "under a regimen of subsistence economy" in tribal areas.[463] Although it is important to bear in mind that ultimately Mondlane's analysis is more concerned with the category of class and with economics, rather than with race and colour related-issues (which is visible through his lack of precision in the definition of the various racial groups that are involved in the social hierarchization), this data enables us to view the new legislation as a simple means of camouflaging the real discriminatory nature of the social dynamics in the African territories.

Mondlane moves on to analyse how this discrimination is visible in economic terms, i.e., how the socio-economic scenario is prepared so as to ensure the crystallization of social positioning and situations. Indeed, the unassimilated African is highly regulated so as not to be able to escape his/her economic inferiority, so that he/she reproduces the social stratification. According to Mondlane, not only are commercial activities vetoed to him, but he is also unable to have a profession due to his limited or non-existent education.[464] Furthermore, the author presents data that shows that wages were paid according to a racial spectrum, so that the white population earned the best wages and the African population the worst, which reinforces the idea that race goes hand in hand with access to resources and simultaneously exposes the mythical and utopian nature of Lusotropicalism.[465] Taking into consideration the fact that Mondlane's analysis gives emphasis to social occurrences in the public sphere, it is important to point out that the absence of the gender and sex categories in his data examination suggests the crystallization of the place of women within the private

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461 Ibidem, p. 38.
462 Ibidem, p. 38.
463 Ibidem, pp.38-39.
464 Ibidem, p. 43.
465 Ibidem, pp. 43-44. Mondlane states that agricultural annual wages were the following (in escudos): whites – 47,723.00; coloured – 23, 269.10; assimilated Africans – 5,478.00; unassimilated Africans – 1,404.00. In terms of industrial daily wages, they were as follows: whites (unqualified) – 100.00 minimum; coloured (unqualified) – 70.00 maximum; Africans (semi-skilled) – 30.00 maximum; Africans (unskilled) – 5.00 maximum.

sphere. This reading is reinforced by the fact that Mondlane only seems to acknowledge the central role of women as regards miscegenation.

Indeed, Mondlane's demystification of Lusotropicalism is also achieved through his problematization of social phenomena such as assimilation and miscegenation in the particular context of Mozambique. Regarding assimilation, he emphasizes the fact that an *assimilado(a)* is completely stripped of his/her previous African identity in order to embrace Portuguese citizenship: "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".[466] However, this citizenship was a limited one, as the *assimilado* was meant to identify with whites, but was never treated as one. With respect to miscegenation, Mondlane highlights its exaggerated use by the colonial discourse as representative of Freyre's Lusotropical community, given that this mulatto minority, which was much more representative in qualitative terms, rather than in quantitative terms, represented only 0.5% of the Mozambican population.[467] He adds that notwithstanding the fact that miscegenation was a constant practice since the first contacts between Portuguese and Mozambicans, this did not mean that the mulatto community and the white community were considered to be equals.[468] Few mulattos did possess Portuguese citizenship, access Portuguese education, and achieve better work positions than the *assimilados*, but they were kept under close surveillance by colonial social mechanisms and by the colonial community itself being protective of its own power, so as not to achieve what was meant to be for the white Portuguese only.[469] Furthermore, Mondlane continues, they were still representative of a transgression, given that "it is miscegenation not intermarriage which is accepted".[470] In other words, this highly celebrated miscegenation was achieved through the unofficial possession of the African woman's body.[471] Although she was central to the process, she remained in

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[466] Ibidem, p. 50.

[467] When mentioning these numbers, the author does not specify the year in which the data was collected. Hence, we assume that the percentage refers to the year in which the book was first written, so in 1969.

[468] Ibidem, pp. 50-54.

[469] It is important to highlight that despite not being institutionalized, the social mechanisms of racial distinction which run parallel to the institutionalized ones such as assimilation, were equally effective. Community surveillance, for example, which was carried out by the colonists regarding the colonized, is a move that replicates an intragroup exile, in the sense that it requires that the members of one same group – the colonists – keep an eye on each other so as to prevent infractions that will result in social exclusion.

[470] Ibidem, p. 51.

[471] Ibidem, p. 50: Mondlane reminds us that relationships between Portuguese women and African men were unacceptable, which underlines the patriarchal nature of the colonial policy.

marginality – always a mistress and/or a servant –, as the opposite would represent a subversion of the established social structure. In addition, the fact that the African mother was associated with an inferior class meant that she was forbidden to her mulatto child. The mulatto was therefore trapped in an identity gap, given that he/she was never fully accepted by either the white or the black African communities.[472]

In 1974, after a liberation struggle that would last for a decade, Portugal finally recognized Mozambique's sovereignty and independence through the signing of the Lusaka Agreement, which established the beginning of the transfer of power that culminated in the country's independence on the 25th of June 1975. The Frelimo government was finally able to implement its programme in the new nation-state, using strategies and structures which had already been put in motion in the liberated zones, during the armed conflict. Notwithstanding the fact that this new political programme set out to achieve a radical break with the colonial machine at all levels, that proved to be more difficult to achieve than Frelimo expected, as the new government inherited an extremely complex structure to manage. As Gentili points out, not only did they inherit a centralized, hierarchical and selective political structure, but they also acquired all the regional, territorial and racial asymmetries of colonialism. Most importantly, they inherited the colonial conceptualization of political management and the social representations that ensured the maintenance of the colonial power structures.[473] Finally, as mentioned before, the official adherence to socialism and centralism led the independent state to deny all forms of intracultural differences – based on racial, ethnic, sexual and class differences – in favour of a unitarian national stance, a gesture that *dehistoricized* the society, thus in this sense reproducing the same ideology that had characterized the colonial stance throughout history.[474]

At this point, it is worth mentioning Boaventura de Sousa Santos and Teresa Cruz e Silva's view in this respect. In their reading of the Mozambican state, they qualify it as a heterogeneous state at many levels.[475] Referring specifically to the political and juridical culture, they state that

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[472] Ibidem, p. 52.
[473] Gentili (1998), p. 314.
[474] Ibidem, p. 314.
[475] Santos, Boaventura de Sousa and Silva, Teresa Cruz e (ed.), 'Moçambique e a Reivenção da Emancipação Social' in *Moçambique e a Reivenção da Emancipação Social* (Maputo: Centro de Formação Jurídica e Judiciária, 2004), pp. 19-47.

> A cultura politico-jurídica colonial, apesar de rejeitada da maneira mais incondicional – como demonstram paradigmaticamente as ideias do «escangalhamento do Estado» durante o período revolucionário – acabou por prevalecer até hoje, não só sob as formas mais óbvias da legislação colonial que continuou em vigor, ou da organização administrativa, mas sobretudo em hábitos e mentalidades, estilos de actuação, representações do outro, etc. .[476]

In other words, the independent state builds its new representations largely upon the colonial state's representations. As such, some of these representations, which survive through culture, will also outlive both the colonial state and the socialist experiment, making their way through to contemporary society.

Hence, considering the abovementioned historic framework, it is important to analyse how racial representations are conceptualized within the Mozambican setting in the democratic era. In 2000 a team of social researchers led by the Mozambican sociologist Carlos Serra published the results of a study made in five Mozambican cities in order to analyse the people's perceptions of racism and ethnicity, and to verify tendential opinions and behaviours towards these two phenomena in urban settings.[477] According to Serra, it is the combination of three specific phenomena – social interaction, dispute for power resources and education – that produces racism and ethnicism. It is at that intersection that people make sense of the social, thus creating their social references, structuring their social categorization and naturalizing what in reality is socially constructed.[478] Both racism and ethnicism advocate the belief in the natural superiority of given groups whose characteristics make them the most eligible to access specific power resources or tools. Hence, in Serrra's words,

> É racista quem defende a superioridade genética de um grupo; é étnico quem defende a superioridade da sua comunidade imaginada de origem. Em ambos os casos se monopoliza os recursos de poder em função de marcadores, pigmentação num caso, comunidade **imaginada** de origem no outro. Racismo e etnicidade são exercícios sociais de inclusão/exclusão sociais que, interiorizados e assumidos, funcionam como os semáforos (o verde para os *nossos*, o vermelho para os *outros*).[479]

Because the distribution of power is asymmetrical, processes of *othering* take place and stereotypes are created to support them. In this sense, the relationship between those

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[476] Ibidem, p. 34.

[477] Serra, Carlos (ed.), *Racismo, Etnicidade e Poder: um Estudo em Cinco Cidades de Moçambique* (Maputo: Universidade Eduardo Mondlane, 2000), pp. 14-166. This is was the first study ever done on the subject in Mozambique.

[478] Ibidem, pp. 20-21.

[479] Ibidem, pp. 2-22.

who maintain power – the *estabelecidos*, to use Serra's denomination – and those who are peripheral to it – the *intrusos* – is always very tense.[480] The former will always struggle to preserve their positions and, consequently, envision the latter as threatening, whereas the latter will regard the former resentfully and will always attempt to question their status. It is, therefore, possible to affirm that both phenomena are strategically constructed in relation to access to power.[481]

Considering the main hypothesis that Serra's social study puts forward, both Serra and the remaining group of researchers structure it on three levels, which are the following:

1. Racismo e etnicidade são duas variações identitárias (com o seu corpo de reacções de inclusão e de exclusão) de um mesmo fenómeno: desigual distribuição de recursos de poder;
2. Os seus potenciais estão em relação directa com o apego à tradição;
3. Percepções sobre racismo são urbanas, percepções sobre etnicidade são rurais.[482]

Their study was conducted across the whole country, in Lichinga (North), Beira (Centre), Tete (Centre), Inhambane (South) and Maputo (South), and the methodologies applied were direct observation, questionnaires and research at archives. The analysis of the results achieved through that study led the researchers to believe that in general terms, there is a debate amongst Mozambicans over the distribution of and access to power in which perceptions of racism and perceptions of that distribution emerge as interconnected.[483] In other words, for the majority of those who participated in the study, racism is far less a question that refers back to colour than it is one that is related to education, social class and wealth. As for the specific levels defined within the main hypothesis previously advanced, results showed that only the first level was proven. In the end, regardless of the limitations of the study (for example, the chosen methods for data collection or the fact that the study only refers to five Mozambican cities), it successfully showed the "«pensamento médio» das cidades moçambicanas" regarding racism and ethnicism.[484]

It is, therefore, very important to rely on this study as our main reference point as it reflects a very specific, situated reality, which is the Mozambican experience. At

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[480] Ibidem, pp. 23-24.
[481] Ibidem, p. 26.
[482] Ibidem, p. 27.
[483] Ibidem, pp. 79-83.
[484] Ibidem, p. 100.

the same time, reading this information through the lens of gender, which is largely absent from Serra's view, will allow us to access another very particular set of social relations that unfolds into a variety of gendered experiences of the nation that change according to different variants, such as race, class and ethnicity.[485] Hence, taking into consideration the analysis of Said's theorization of exile as a "discontinuous state of being"[486], as well as Said's failure to focus on gender, the present study aims at articulating both Said's considerations on exile and Serra's perspective on racism and ethnicism – which also lacks a view on gender. The aim of this is to reveal how in both *Niketche* and *Alegre Canto*, the junction of the abovementioned variants, – gender, class, colour, race, ethnicity – which inevitably influence and change each other, permits the emergence of the various forms of what I will call gender exile, that are represented by the different female characters. In these literary works, all the female characters share a similar place of exile in relation to the patriarchal institution represented by the male characters. Nevertheless, this unique place unfolds into a variety of experiences when, for example, the race, colour, class or ethnic grouping of the different women is taken into consideration. Acknowledging this permits the exposure of the internal forms of exile that might arise from the friction between these distinct situational contexts: in other words, because women do not experience gender exile uniformly, they might be led to exile other exiled women like themselves in a gesture which is protective of their own imagination as stable in identity terms. Hence, the analysis of these dynamics in the light of Said's and Serra's works proves to be extremely productive, thus highlighting the advantages of a multidimensional approach to the subject of gender.

According to Sonia Nhantumbo and Maria Paula Meneses's *Inventário das Actividades com Abordagem de Género em Cursos Realizados na UEM nos últimos 25 Anos*, this intersectional research perspective is fairly recent in Mozambique.[487] Having analysed a range of activities related to the research on women and gender which was carried out at Universidade Eduardo Mondlane between 1975 and 2000, the researchers were able to distribute the activities into three main periods, according to the theoretical

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[485] In this respect, see, for example, Casimiro, Isabel Maria and Andrade, Ximena, 'Investigação Sobre Mulher e Género no Centro de Estudos Africanos' in *Estudos Moçambicanos Número 21*(Maputo: Centro de Estudos Africanos da UEM, 2005), pp. 7-27; Owen (2007), pp. 169-213.

[486] Said (2000), p. 177.

[487] Nhantumbo, Sonia and Meneses, Maria Paula, *Inventário das Actividades com abordagem de Género em Cursos Realizados na UEM nos últimos 25 Anos* in *Estudos Moçambicanos Número 21*(Maputo: Centro de Estudos Africanos da UEM, 2005), pp. 105-129.

frameworks used and the methodologies applied. These three periods were the following: 1975 to 1982, the post-independence period that corresponds to the socialist experience; 1982 to 1990/92, which refers to the introduction of neo-liberal policies and the PRE (Programa de Reajustamento Estrutural); and, finally, 1993/94 to 2000, corresponding to the post-war period, in which the national reconstruction was in motion.[488]

The analysis of the works developed in each period shows that indeed it was not until the second period identified by Nhantumbo and Meneses – so from 1982 to 1990/2 – that they began to present multidisciplinary approaches to the themes of women and gender. Not only did the approaches developed throughout this second period enable the deconstruction of the standardized Socialist New Woman representation that was so strongly advertised during the first period identified, but they also prompted the exploration of what Casimiro and Andrade define as "Feminismo Situado".[489] This positioning is shown to have enhanced the quality of the works developed in the last and most recent period, as these works reveal in depth theorization and reflection.

Taking into consideration the state of research conducted in Mozambique on the subject, it is possible to state that Chiziane's work affords a literary reflection on it, due to her snapshots of women's multiple lived experiences of gender through the intersection of various social categories. Indeed, as this study will attempt to demonstrate later on, in *Alegre Canto* Chiziane constructs a genealogy for Mozambican women by advocating the genderisation of memory, simultaneously problematizing the impact of the race variable on women's experience, a discussion that can be traced back to *Niketche*. As mentioned before, in *Niketche* Chiziane initiates a debate over gender and race, which is performed by the five wives and the two mistresses of Tony, who eventually becomes the polygamous husband of the novel. The first character to be introduced to us in this literary work is Rami, and it is from her perspective that we first access the facts of the story. Through her first self-depictions we acknowledge that she is a southern Shangaan woman living in Maputo, a traditional wife who is married to a police commander named Tony (António Tomás) and the mother of his children. These initial revelations show that she has been most unhappy since her husband was promoted to that position due to his various affairs with other women, who kept him

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[488] Ibidem, pp. 106-107.
[489] Casimiro and Andrade (2005), p. 20.

away from home for long periods of time. Having presented her dilemma, Rami decides to engage in an identity search that will take her through a journey in which she will face her fears, know herself, acknowledge and parody her husband's multiple lives.

This is how she ends up learning about the existence of his four unofficial wives and families and is forced to deal with all the tensions that emerge from this revelation. The analysis of Tony's five wives – official and unofficial –, the social dynamics amongst them and their evolution facilitates the identification of two distinct moments in the narrative in which the experience of womanhood is shown to be heterogeneous, varying according to the impact of other elements in its intersection with gender, namely ethnicism and race. Taking into consideration Serra's conceptualization of the phenomena of both racism and ethnicism as being informed by the struggle for the access to power resources, we can affirm that in each of the two distinct moments identified, there is the occurrence of a relationship between the *established* and the *intruders*, as the characters that occupy these positions change according to the logics of inclusion and exclusion at work within the elements in question.[490]

Hence, early in the text Rami appears as the "established" wife, at the centre of the power relations, as opposed to the "marginal intruding" wives whose apparent intention was to disrupt her establishment and, thus, her entitlement to power. Although they have no means of legally disrupting the power Rami has as the official wife, they subvert it in a parallel unofficial of everyday existence by resorting to witchcraft, for example, in their attempt to keep Tony away from Rami, which escapes the scope of the official legal marriage. At this point, and as Owen proves, the conflict is ethnicly informed, since the tension between ethnic groups appears at the core of the problematization of the multiple feminine experiences in Mozambique, along with the struggle for resources within the feminine gender.[491] Following this line of thought, there is an emergence of several cultural elements that derive from the specific context of the city of Maputo as a space which is markedly influenced by southern patterns, to confirm Rami's position. Leading a life embedded in it – with all its patrilineal and patriarchal tradition, its catholic tradition and its Marxist influence –, she is an official black African wife in a Christian monogamous marriage. The fact that she is black becomes very relevant when we acknowledge that the remaining four unofficial wives

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[490] Serra (2000), p. 23-25.
[491] Owen (2007), pp. 192-199.

are also black. That generates a horizontality amongst them, mediated by Rami, that will ultimately allow them to imagine themselves as equal. This imagination of levelled equality is possible only because they are all black, as the introduction of the *mulata* character Eva will subsequently prove.

Considering herself to be a perfect wife, Rami is an obedient housewife who depends emotionally and economically on her husband, and has a privileged life, due to her husband's social position. She does belong to an elitist bourgeoisie, having easy access to the world through her husband. Therefore, her power cannot be quantified against or in comparison to his, because it only exists through him, which demonstrates her subalternity in relation to Tony. Aware of this reality and also of her inability to reverse this situation, Rami is left with only one solution in order to preserve her power: to affirm it before the "intruders".

In the first instance, Rami's decision to look for the unofficial wives and get to know them is aimed at asserting her own entitlement to Tony by legitimizing their positioning as intruders, as opposed to her own. Hence, she acknowledges that Julieta, *a enganada*, is a southerner, just like herself, whereas Luísa, *a desejada*, Saly, *a apetecida* and Mauá Sualé, *a amada*, are northerners. Having been fooled by Tony in the past, Julieta, from Inhambane, was the mother of six of his children. This housewife, who depends on him economically and emotionally, still believes all of his promises and waits for the day he will divorce Rami to marry her. Interestingly, Rami finds her very familiar, which suggests that Ju might somehow reflect the kind of woman that Rami had not used to be, and yet became: "Sofro com ela. Coitada, ela é mais uma vítima do que uma rival. Foi caçada e traída como eu".[492] The three wives from the Centre and the North, however, are different women with a very distinct position complying with the matrilineal tradition in which they were educated. Coming from a place where men are shared because they are so few, the Zambezian and Makua Lu is totally aware of her gender disempowerment and, thus, openly shows that she looked for a man who could maintain her. She is the mother of two of Tony's children and depends on him economically, but not emotionally. Indeed, when he does not assist her, she takes matters into her own hands, even having a lover. When she first meets Lu, Rami feels immediately attracted to her, as Lu reminds her of something that she was, but is not

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[492] Niketche (2002), p. 26.

anymore.[493] The Makonde <u>Saly</u>, from Cabo Delgado, who has got two of Tony's children, openly states "eu sou pobre. Sem pai, nem emprego, nem dinheiro, nem marido. Se não tivesse roubado o teu marido, não teria nem filhos, nem existência", which implies that her choice was made according to what Tony could offer to her.[494] Finally, the Makua <u>Mauá Sualé</u>, from Nampula, was the most recently acquired wife and the youngest in the group, being only nineteen years old.

In Rami's point of view, as Tony's unofficial wives, they emerge as "intruders", as marginal to the institution represented by the monogamous Catholic marriage. Due to their deliberate denial of this institution, and consequently of the whole Catholic colonially-inherited cultural structure that supports it, they fail to recognize her power as first and legitimate wife, thus questioning her rights. Furthermore, as their access to the world is achieved through the mediation of Tony, at least in economic terms, though not in social terms, they are able to aspire to Rami's positioning, although not consistently: "A minha casa é dos lugares mais agradáveis deste mundo. (…) Mas esta casa é melhor ainda. Foi construída com o dinheiro do meu marido, por isso é minha. Esta mulher imita-me e tenta ser mais perfeita do que eu".[495] Finally, Rami understands that none of the unofficial wives has a job: their income source is their relationship with Tony.

It is at this moment that Rami realizes that what brings her close to these women is much more than what separates her from them, as they all share the same condition of exile in relation to the promiscuous husband. Despite coming from distinct cultural backgrounds, the women are united by their experience of womanhood in relation to Tony and the patriarchal society that he represents, an experience which is marked by alienation and silence. Hence, recuperating Said's definition of exile as "the perilous territory of not-belonging"[496], the unofficial wives appear as exiles in the sense that they are prevented from entering the community due to their unofficial status. Furthermore, Rami just like the remaining unofficial women, is unable to access the material world without Tony's mediation. They all appear to be entrapped in an official, openly masculinised, cultural discourse and some very specific practices that materialize

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[493] Ibidem, p. 60: "Muita coisa nela reflecte a imagem daquilo que fui e já não sou. Ela tem todos os encantos que eu perdi".
[494] Ibidem, p. 68.
[495] Ibidem, p. 21.
[496] Said (2001), p. 177.

Tony's manipulation of cultural systems, which serve him in the propagation of his wives' subalternity.[497] On the one hand, as southern Shangaan women, both Rami and Ju are immersed in this *habitus* that keeps them in a highly controlled position of inferiority towards the patriarch. By stating that, "Na terra do meu marido sou estrangeira. Na terra dos meus pais sou passageira. Não sou de lugar nenhum. Não tenho registo, no mapa da vida não tenho nome. Uso este nome de casada que me pode ser retirado a qualquer momento. Por empréstimo. (…) A minha alma é a minha morada. Mas onde vive a minha alma?"[498], Rami emphasizes women's total incapacity to access ownership of both land and their own bodies, as those are relationships that are necessarily intermediated by men.

On the other hand, the three unofficial wives from the Centre and the North, Lu, Saly and Mauá are forced to leave their habits behind, eliding their identity difference so as to conform to the local *habitus*, which does not recognize it. This non-recognition translates into the incorporation of these women into the southern social, sexual and economical dynamics. Therefore, in choosing to recuperate patrilinear polygyny and extending the benefits that she was entitled to as official wife to the unofficial ones and respective families, Rami prompts a process of social levelling between the wives whose consequences will be verifiable in terms of their access to power as opposed to Tony's. On being officially recognized as members of a polygamous family, the wives proceed to the rewriting of polygamy by filtering it through a feminine interpretation, one that allows the recuperation of polygamy as a very specific structure of traditional power, which will ultimately allow them to fight the hegemonic masculinised forces of modernity in this urban setting. In their text on 'Moçambique e a Reinvenção da Emancipação Social', Sousa Santos and Cruz e Silva shed light on this tendency of reworking tradition as a way of proposing an alternative modernity, which is revealed by African societies as a strategy to resist the forces of globalization. According to these two social scientists, this feature puts forward a rewriting of tradition in modernity with a view to presenting an alternative paradigm in the democratic era:

> Uma das áreas onde esta reapropriação e resignificação tem vindo precisamente a ocorrer é na área do poder tradicional. Nesta medida, o tradicional é recuperado como uma estratégia moderna de resistência contra uma modernidade global excludente. Recuperação do tradicional hoje em dia em África é, em geral, um exercício bem moderno. Longe de ser uma alternativa à

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[497] See Owen (2007), p. 189.
[498] Chiziane (2002), p. 92.

modernidade, é expressão da reivindicação de uma modernidade alternativa. É uma forma de globalização que se apresenta como resistência à globalização.[499]

As such, the women take three very important steps that lead to the legitimization of their power as established: firstly, they force the officialization of the polygamous marriage; then, they successfully achieve economic independence through inter-loan and *xitique*;[500] finally, they manage to get their *lobolos* paid for. According to Said, "much of the exile's life is taken up with compensating for disorienting loss by creating a new world to rule".[501] Therefore, and considering that the wives use their differences to become stronger as a group, we can say that they successfully manage to create a new space for themselves in the intersection of both matrilinear and patrilinear cultures, and by doing so, they ascend, as a group, to the position of "the established", in opposition to the patriarch, Tony, who becomes here the "intruder" who constantly tries to disrupt their empowerment. Tony's realization of his own disempowerment before the increasingly established wives, as representatives of polygyny as an institution, makes him attempt to reverse this tendency.

As such, in a subsequent passage of the text, the introduction of the female character Eva comes to destabilize and question this recently consolidated establishment due to two important features: she is an infertile *mulata*. In the aftermath of the polygamous family's officialization, Tony is forced to adjust to the new rules that impose a strict schedule and ritualistic share between the wives: "Poligamia é isto mesmo. (...) Passar o homem de umas mãos para outras mãos com a delicadeza de quem segura um ovo".[502] However, when he starts failing to accomplish his sexual obligations, the wives soon come to realize that he has found a new way to escape the monitoring control exerted by the new family structure, by getting himself another woman. Due to the new status of the wives, this new woman appears as a lover, an intruder who comes to question the authority of the official wives and to disrupt their power, as she allows Tony's escape from the constraints of the polygamous marriage. For this reason, at this point the wives' focus of interest is the husband's attempt to reappropriate and shift the power structures. Nonetheless, they react in a completely

[499] Santos and Silva (2004), p. 29.
[500] With regard to the reinscription of this traditional savings scheme in modern economy by women, see Owen (2007), pp. 190-191.
[501] Said (2000), p. 181.
[502] Chiziane (2002), p. 128.

different way when they acknowledge that Eva is a *mulata*, demonstrating that the debate over gender will be racially informed from that moment on, as opposed to culturally and ethnicly, as it had been previously. It confirms simultaneously the existence of a racial hierarchy within the category of gender, which in its turn is informed by and informs economic status: "O entusiasmo desaparece. Uma mulata é uma rival a sério. Os homens negros são obcecados pelas peles claras, como os brancos são obcecados pelas cabeças loiras".[503]

As they try to make sense of this woman, they gather some information about her that will enable them to represent her as an "intruder" in these power relations, as opposed to their establishment. As Said reminds us, exile is a jealous condition in the sense that

> What you achieve is precisely what you have no wish to share, and it is in the drawing of lines around you and your compatriots that the least attractive aspects of being in exile emerge: an exaggerated sense of group solidarity, and a passionate hostility to outsiders, even those who may in fact be in the same predicament as you.[504]

In other words, it is the wives' eagerness to affirm the stability of their identity that leads them to exile Eva, without even realizing that she might be like them an exile before the patriarch. As they attempt to find out more about her, they acknowledge that she is a wealthy divorced woman who has her own car and was rejected in the past by her husband for being sterile. Due to her ability to access the material world directly, without the mediation of a man, in the wives' imagination, Eva's representation as a woman emerges as a racial and colour one. Firstly, she emerges as an oversexualized, and deterritorialized woman. As the embodiment of hybridity, the *mulata*'s body acquires many connotations that change throughout times, inevitably going back to Portuguese colonial policies. As the anthropologist Miguel Vale de Almeida points out in a study on hybridity and miscegenation in colonial and postcolonial Portugal, *mestiçagem* was always connoted negatively in the sense that it materialized the

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[503] Ibidem, p. 133.
[504] Said (2000), p. 178.

excessive sexual extrapolation of the established hierarchical racial order, regardless of its ideological uses in the various imperial discourses.[505]

Furthermore, the *mulato* is conceptualized as being able to navigate between and, thus extract the best from, two distinct worlds, which is not necessarily true if we take into account the unequal power relations that feed the idea of *mestiçagem*, and consequently the "hierarchical discourse on whitening" that is at the basis of the Lusotropicalist discourse.[506] In spite of these facts, the mulattos are regarded as socially privileged, given that they can access certain power resources which are denied to or are at least much more difficult to achieve by other 'races'. In that sense, the economic distinction between Eva and the polygamous wives becomes even clearer, as we learn that not only she is educated and has been married to a politician, but she also has a very high position at work: "Tem dinheiro, essa mulher, manda chuva. Tem estatuto. No emprego dela, é chefe. Manda nos homens. Conduz um carro que é um paraíso".[507] Hence, being representative of the best of both worlds, she appears as the vehicle for the polygamous husband to engage in a socioeconomic whitening process and, subsequently achieve a status that will enable him to exceed the ethnic and ultimately the geographical and cultural limits of the nation.

When the five wives confront Tony asking him to justify his relationship with Eva, under the protection of the polygamy laws, he uses a highly racist and colonial expression to simply state that he felt "vontade de variar, meninas. Desejo de tocar numa pele mais clara. Vocês são todas uma cambada de pretas".[508] Regardless of his attempt to turn the issue into a simple matter of pigmentation, is not so much the colour of the women that is at stake here, as the power that emerges attached to it. Although his wives and children ironically allow him to perceive himself as the perfect patriarch who 'embraces' the entire country, thus turning into the national husband who makes perfect use of his own body as an instrument of power, the proximity to Eva lends him a different but related form of power, resting on his class ascendency. By possessing Eva, Tony goes through a whitening process which will ultimately allow the patriarch's

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[505] Almeida, Miguel Vale de, '"Longing for Oneself": Hybridism and Miscegenation in Colonial and Postcolonial Portugal' in *An Earth-Colored Sea:'Race', Culture and the Politics of Identity in the Post-Colonial Portuguese-Speaking World* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2004), pp. 65-82.
[506] Ibidem, p. 71.
[507] Chiziane (2002), p. 137.
[508] Ibidem, p. 140.

internationalization, as he is able to go to Paris with another woman – Gaby – for some short holidays due to Eva's help. He, thus, becomes the ultimate lusotropical male.

Eva's origins in the intersection of two different cultural worlds also reinforce her appearance as an "intruder" in the eyes of the official wives due to her theoretical deterritorialization. From their point of view, Eva is incapable of respecting their status as official wives because she does not follow the cultural rules that apply to that context: they are foreign to her. In addition, as a person who is able to extract the positive aspects of two realities according to her needs, she might jeopardize the wives' positioning. In this representation, her space of enunciation appears to be accultural and deterritorialized, and for that reason, she is interpreted as dangerous and threatening to a pre-established order. In this respect, Serra points out that the results of the study on racism, ethnicity and power in Mozambique confirmed that the mulattos were a social group whose stigmatized conceptualization dissociated them from a homeland, a "pátria". In the words of one of the interviewees from Tete, "eu sou mulato, nós somos uma mistura e apanhamos dos dois lados, não temos inserção nos dois lados, os próprios chefes desprezam-nos porque o mulato não tem bandeira, não tem pátria (…)".[509] Therefore, Eva appears in the eyes of the wives as someone who is not to be trusted due to her *mestiça* origin. Her colour leads her to be immediately associated with race and class betrayal, as she threatens the national borders of the national husband.

Nevertheless, this character comes to be repositioned in a position equivalent to that of the polygamous wives in the second instance of their analysis of the threat that Eva represents. On acknowledging that she is a divorcee whose abandonment by her husband was due to her infertility, they sympathize with Eva.[510] Indeed, as the Mozambican anthropologist Ana Maria Loforte points out, because the female body is associated with reproduction in this particular setting, it acquires a special connotation that gives women a certain status: so, women are only considered to be women if they can give birth.[511] This means that as an infertile woman, Eva is disempowered, both in the extended male-dominated social arena and within the private circle composed of the official wives, a fact that not only reveals the dynamics of gender domination, but also

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[509] Quoted in Serra (2000), p. 52.
[510] Chiziane (2002), p. 136: "Assolou-nos um momento de piedade. Mulher estéril é um ser condenado à solidão, à amargura. Qual a vida da mulher estéril? Marginalidade, ausência".
[511] Loforte, Ana Maria, 'Género e Direitos Reprodutivos' in Loforte, Ana Maria and Arthur, Maria José (ed.), *Relações de Género em Moçambique: Educação, Trabalho e Saúde* (Maputo: Imprensa Universitária, 1998), pp. 55-63.

reveals the important role that women play in the propagation of their own subalternity. In her reflections on social and sexual identities, Conceição Osório claims that in Mozambique sexuality and power are interconnected, as the correspondence between sexuality and reproduction presupposes the total control over women's bodies, thus highlighting their importance as sites of domination, but also of counter-domination. In the Mozambican anthropologist's point of view,

> No caso de Moçambique, a fertilidade/infertilidade são critérios que classificam uma situação não apenas de ordem biológica mas constituem um elemento fundamental do modo como o poder se exerce. Em torno deste binómio (fertilidade/infertilidade) produz-se um discurso de sanções e de permissões (…) reveladores de uma representação em que se nega às mulheres, fora do contexto permitido pelo modelo cultural, o exercício da sexualidade.[512]

Hence, the fact that Eva is marginalized by the whole of society for being incapable of performing one of the major roles that defines Mozambican womanhood diminishes the sexual excess that is associated with her as a *mestiça*, thus emptying her representation and bringing her down to a level at which it is possible for her to be absorbed by the polygamous family. In other words, her racial demystification permits a modification of the rules of exclusion and she is allowed into the national family to a certain extent, as we shall soon see. When Tony fakes his own death, Eva appears on the scene for the first time, telling her side of the story. We acknowledge that she is a Makonde from Palma, in the far north of the country, who was fooled twice by Tony: firstly, when he told her that the only wife he had was Mauá, and later on, when she arranged everything for them to travel to Paris together and he ended up taking another woman named Gaby along. Apart from the obvious empathy between Eva and Rami, it is important to focus on the fact that despite not being officially part of the polygamous family, Eva is forced by the remaining wives to participate in the mourning procedures, which she does by offering to pay for the coffin and also for the food expenses for the reception of all the people who attend the ceremony. She is, therefore, offered a temporary position inside the polygamous family, which is much more than we can say about Gaby.

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[512] Osório, Conceição, 'Identidades Sociais/Identidades Sexuais: uma Análise de Género' in Arthur, Maria José (ed.), *Memórias do Activismo pelos Direitos Humanos das Mulheres* (Maputo: WLSA, 2007), pp. 327-339.

Both the characters and the readers get to know very little about this female character. However, her name suggests that she might be a foreign woman. In addition, considering Tony's escalating trajectory in the racial spectrum, which runs parallel to economic power, we may speculate that Gaby is a white woman who ends up serving Tony in his intentions to become what Owen calls a "multi-national husband".[513] I would add that he also intended to become the ultimate multi-racial husband, in a movement that clearly replicates the Lusotropicalist ideology of a pluriracial and multicultural society, and a pluricontinental nation – in this specific case, husband – built on unequal power relations. Indeed, he accumulates women of different ethnic groups, races and colours (the five black wives, the *mulata* and possibly the white woman), bringing them all together under the big patriarchal umbrella, which elides the specificities of their various feminine experiences and consequently reproduces the politics of Southern gender domination.

Although the patriarch is unsuccessful in creating his own Lusotropical family, due to the wives' active engagement in their own empowerment and increasing direct access to the economic world, without his mediation, it is impossible not to focus on the specific case of Eva in relation to them. As mentioned before, she is offered a partial position in the polygamous family, but is never formally incorporated in it, thus retaining connotations of exclusion. After Tony's fake death and burial, he returns to the city only to find out that he now has to deal with the repercussions of his acts. Having shown his wives that he is willing to do everything to make it up to them for the situation he caused, he is confronted with Rami's suggestion of incorporating both Eva and Gaby into the family. Although he refuses to accept this change, the wives insist on Eva's integration, given that they are now able to see her as equal. Yet, he shows that he believes that Eva would never accept joining this family, suggesting that she would not do it precisely because of a racial tension:

> - Ela te usou. Era justo que ele assumisse a perda. Por isso achamos que ela tem que ser a tua nova mulher.
> - Nunca. Mesmo que eu tente, ela nem iria aceitar.
> - Já lhe fizeste a proposta?
> - Não.
> - Porquê?
> - Não tenho coragem.[514]

[513] Owen (2007), p. 195.
[514] Chiziane (2002), pp. 244-245.

It is important to notice that despite the wives' visible inflexibility towards the resolution of incorporating Eva into the family in this context, we never get to know what happens, because the story is dropped.

We continue to accompany the development of the five wives' stories, but we do not have any kind of access to Eva anymore. At this point, there are two very important aspects that we need to highlight. Firstly, the polygamous husband is intimidated by Eva's power. He is fully aware that she does not need him as a mediator to access the world, due to her economic condition, which might suggest that the only reason why he existed in her life was that she was rejected by other men for being infertile. Hence, this shows Eva's potential as a disruptive female character because she successfully dissociates women's sexuality from reproduction. In this line of thought, she represents a threat to the stability of the patriarch inside the polygamous family, because she does not contribute to his empowerment or his progeny – on the contrary. Tony's acquisition of a woman unable to ensure the continuity of the group would represent his self-annihilation as a patriarch. Secondly, the *mulata* is once again described as someone who is external to that and any other world described in the novel. The fact that both Tony and his wives did not believe that Eva would agree to join the polygamous family suggests that they are reading her in terms of both her race and colour. As Osório reminds us, the social relations which are built inside the family are relations of power.[515] This means that if she accepted being the most recent wife of the polygamous husband, she would have to respond to a very specific hierarchical order in which her racial superiority as a *mestiça* would be elided. Furthermore, it suggests that although Eva alters the wives' self-perceptions as women as they realize that Eva's inferiority for being infertile is a social construction, they never actually dismantle it. This leads us to wonder if, indeed, there is any kind of redemption in the book for this character.

As the story unravels, we realize that the world changes for every character. As each wife affirms her individuality, the polygamous family starts to collapse progressively, having as its point of departure, Lu's decision to abandon the family in order to build her own monogamous one with Victor, her lover. At their wedding celebration, there is the occurrence of a symbolic movement which reflects that the

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[515] Osório, Conceição, 'Escola e Família: Diferenças e Complementaridades' in Loforte, Ana Maria and Arthur, Maria José (ed.), *Relações de Género em Moçambique: Educação, Trabalho e Saúde* (Maputo: Imprensa Universitária, 1998), pp. 65-74.

women have successfully built a "third space" for themselves, where they renegotiate their sexual and cultural identities as women, and consequently their condition as "gender" exiles. While dancing the niketche, a dance which is characteristic of northern culture and marks sexual initiation for women, and singing to liberate Vuyazi, the protagonist of a southern tale who had been punished for her insurrection against women's traditional role, they celebrate the construction of a modern conceptualization of culture that emerges from the fusion of north and south. Simultaneously, they celebrate the construction of a new postcolonial space, one that rewrites the unity of post-independence by proposing a cartographic reconfiguration which decentralizes the south as the unique representative of the national space and includes the peripheral areas of the geopolitical space in the national map through the recuperation of the women's alternative cultural backgrounds. As a consequence, the process of national decentralization coincides with the repudiation of the lusotropical patriarchal nation.

However, Eva is excluded from this manifestation, so from the new national cultural mapping. As all the wives progressively abandon Tony to engage in relationships with other men whom they have chosen, their liberation does not extend to Eva, who remains trapped in her representations as hypo-feminized and deterritorialized. Although she is no longer seen as an "intruder", she remains a stranger in this setting, a fact that echoes the *mulata's* problematic positioning. On the one hand, one could argue that Eva's positioning is reversed, as she successfully brings about Tony's disempowerment by acting as a boundary to his intentions as a lusotropical national husband, and also as she changes the wives' self-perceptions as sexual beings. On the other hand, one could argue that her positioning remains undisturbed, given that her exclusion from the new cartography of the nation, a space which is mediated, reconfigured, and brought into modernity by black women, raises the question of the racial mapping which is being proposed by this literary work. Hence, the *mulata*'s absence from the racial mapping represents the rejection of a colonial, lusotropical and miscegenated nation, unified by sex. Nonetheless, not only does it bring about her deterritorialization, but it suggests as well that the cartographic reconfiguration of the nation should be exclusively black. In other words, there is an underlying attitude that invokes an ideology of Negritude, in which the exultation of the black women's values leaves no room for any non-black women, thus reproducing the same essentialism that found it hard to represent *mestiços* as anything other than threatening. Therefore, a

168

problematic and non-conciliatory reading of the novel arises, as in the urge to escape the essentialist representation of women in the gendered power structure, a new essentialism is produced when the *mulata* Eva's representation by the five black wives reproduces in its turn an essentialist racial and colour ideology. Again, the "third space" created by the wives emerges as a highly problematic one in the sense that the reversal of their exile is built upon the exile of Eva.

The novel's inability to provide redemption for the *mulata* Eva, along with the remaining black wives, sheds light on the complex power structures that operate in the intersection of gender and race, thus suggesting the need to explore further the dynamics that support the miscegenation that characterized the composition of what has now been the Mozambican social fabric for centuries, before the institution of the colonial state. These issues find a special space for reflection in Chiziane's most recent novel entitled *O Alegre Canto da Perdiz*, that puts forward a reflection on the cultural nation which emphasises the dialogic relationship between Mozambique and Portugal (so, the colonial and not the pre-colonial contact), to the detriment of other relationships.[516] Placed in the setting of the northern province of Zambezia, in the cities of Gurué and Quelimane, the story unravels "exiles" throughout time, across three distinct historical moments, focusing particularly on the intersection of the questions of race, colour, ethnicity and gender and their relevance in the constitution of both men's and women's identities. In a clear allusion to matrilineality as the socio-cultural system which is normally attributed to the societies of the centre and north of the country, the main story emerges from the stories of three generations of Zambezian women – Serafina, Delfina, Maria das Dores and Maria Jacinta – that inevitably traverse, interact with, reflect and dialogue with the official history of the province and the country, in a gesture that not only discloses the potential for marginal and counter-narrations of the nation, but accentuates also the need to regard the act of remembering as a mental act which is markedly gendered.

According to John Neubauer and Helga Geyer-Ryan, in their introduction to a volume on "Literature as Cultural Memory" entitled *Gendered Memories*, "even if we agree that remembering is not biologically determined, we can assume that memory is influenced by the particular social, cultural, and historical conditions in which

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[516] Such as the relationships developed by Mozambique within the Indic course, for example.

individuals find themselves. And since men and women generally assume different social and cultural roles, their ways of remembering should also differ".[517] Indeed, taking into consideration that the official history of what is now the Mozambican nation was always written and maintained by intellectual and political elites – both colonial and post-colonial – which were primarily made up of men, it is possible to affirm that *Alegre Canto* is a novel that demonstrates how the experience of gender determines practices of memorisation, simultaneously recapturing hidden or forgotten memories which, although repressed in certain male-dominated contexts in the past, are still a relevant part of the collective memory and, therefore, need to be recognized. In other words, the novel proceeds to the repositioning of an unbalanced cultural system by recovering what was marginalised for a long period of time: the female experience of the nation.

Anne Pitcher and Scott Kloeck-Jenson corroborate and demonstrate the applicability of Neubauer and Geyer-Ryan's assertion in the specific Zambezian context in a text entitled "Homens, Mulheres, Memória e Direitos aos Recursos Naturais na Província da Zambézia".[518] By interviewing twenty-two people, eleven women and eleven men, the researchers came to realize that the interviewees' memory was gendered in the sense that when confronted with the need to evoke images of a specific moment in the past, such as the internal conflict between Frelimo and Renamo forces, both women and men would remember different things and aspects of it: men tended to express their grief towards the loss of certain objects and/or belongings, as well as how that loss led to their present condition; whereas women tended to regret the loss of knowledge and information, the intergenerational transference of which was brutally interrupted throughout the conflict, inevitably conditioning the maintenance of their identity.[519] The researchers' conclusions highlight the need to recognize the memories of both men and women so as to bring back a more inclusive and reliable portrayal of

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[517] Neubauer, John and Helga Geyer-Ryan, 'Introduction – Gender, Memory, Literature' in Neubauer, John and Helga Geyer-Ryan (ed.), *Gendered Memories* (Amsterdam: Editions Rodopi, 2000), pp. 5-8.

[518] Pitcher, Anne and Scott Kloeck-Jenson, 'Homens, Mulheres, Memória e Direitos aos Recursos Naturais na Província da Zambézia' in Waterhouse, Rachel and Carin Vijfhuizen (ed.), *Estratégias das Mulheres, Proveito dos Homens: Género, Terra e Recursos Naturais em Diferentes Contextos Rurais em Moçambique* (Maputo: Imprensa Universitária, 2001), pp. 147-179.

[519] Ibidem, p. 163.

the past and the present,[520] which again takes us back to the aim of the *Alegre Canto* and to Chiziane's attempt to bring back *other* memories.

Nevertheless, as Neubauer and Geyer-Ryan point out, the act of remembering is not solely conditioned by the gender factor, since circumstances such as class and race influence it as well[521]: given that they alter each other when they come into contact, as they shape people's identities, these are important features to take into account when analysing those identities. Again, we are led to make use of a multidimensional framework, by recuperating Said's theorization of exile and Serra's work on racism and ethnicism in Mozambique, which opens up considerably the possibilities for analysis of the novel. The deployment of this multidisciplinary approach unveils the complexity of memorization, a process which, in its turn, finds an echo in the construction of the distinct female characters in *Alegre Canto*. In the literary work's Postcript, written by Nataniel Ngomane, the author identifies two highly complex female "characters" in the novel – "a mulher zambeziana" and "a Zambézia" –, highlighting the fact that the former character is formed by multiple experiences of womanhood in the *mestiça* province of Zambezia.[522]

At this point, it is imperative to focus on three very important and interrelated aspects that the close proximity and overlap between these two characters reveals. The first aspect concerns the relevance of women in the history of Zambezia; the second aspect refers to the impact of that same history in the construction of the feminine; and, finally, the third aspect alludes to the reality of *mestiçagem* in Zambezia, or in Ngomane's words, to the fact that "a província da Zambézia é apelidada de Brasil de Moçambique".[523] Therefore, in this sense, it becomes possible to affirm that these two "characters" – "a mulher zambeziana" and "a Zambézia" – relate to each other reflexively, as historically the colonial formation of Zambezia was achieved through the

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[520] Ibidem, p. 175.

[521] Neubauer, John and Helga Geyer-Ryan (2000), p. 6.

[522] Ngomane, Nataniel, 'Posfácio' in Chiziane, Paulina, *O Alegre Canto da Perdiz* (Lisboa: Caminho, 2008), pp. 339-342: "Tendo-nos habituado a personagens femininas como a Sarnau da *Balada de Amor ao Vento* (1990), Minosse e Wusheni do *Ventos do Apocalipse* (1995), Vera de *O Sétimo Juramento* (2000) e Rami do *Niketche* (2002), apresenta-nos agora – em simultâneo com a construção de Maria das Dores, Maria Jacinta, Delfina e Serafina – duas novas personagens femininas, mais complexas na sua concepção e, talvez por isso, desempenhando papéis igualmente complexos e cruciais para a compreensão da trama narrativa: de um lado, a mulher zambeziana, resultante da projecção metonímica e metafórica em que se vão desdobrando Maria das Dores, Jacinta, Delfina e Serafina, cada uma com as suas ambições e conflitos e, de outro, a Zambézia, província moçambicana do centro-norte, onde a autora viveu durante anos e que, por sinal, se configura agora como uma das personagens principais deste livro", pp. 340-341.

[523] Ibidem, p. 342.

control and usage of the bodies of women for different ends, according to the demands of particular historical moments (for instance, the construction of the great Afro-Portuguese households through reproduction, from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries, which would ensure the survival of the community).[524] Both of them highlight how the economic development and the socio-cultural *mestiçagem* in Zambezia could only be achieved through women; how women appear disempowered in a matrilineal system, i.e., in a context in which their power is theoretically irrefutable; and how despite the recognition of women's vital role in Zambezian society, these various experiences of womanhood have been absent from the official history of the province. This open effort to disclose the feminine face of Zambezia might, in addition, suggest a parallel between the marginality of women's genealogy in Mozambique and the marginality of the history of Zambezia (or, perhaps other provinces, as opposed to the southern ones, which are generally more well known because the South is politically more powerful) in the delineation of official contemporary historiographic discourses of the nation. Nevertheless, it is important to underline that the immediate association of the Zambezian women with the Zambezian land is highly problematic, as it reproduces the same essentialist feminization of the land that characterized the imperial discourses of the nation, as McClintock reminds us.[525]

Simultaneously, the fact that the Zambezian province is compared to Brazil links the experience of racial *mestiçagem* in both contexts. As mentioned before, the Brazilian anthropologist Gilberto Freyre was the main theorist to be associated with the spread of both the conception of Brazil as a "racial democracy" and the representation of Portugal's former colonies as examples of positive because "mixed" racial experiences. Nevertheless, as the Brazilian social scientist Marcos Chor Maio proves in a text on the role of the UNESCO's 1950s project on the process of institutionalization of the social sciences and race studies on Brazil, the real situation was much more complex than that.[526] Basing his work on numerous studies which were carried out since the 50's, the researcher shows that those studies produced by sociologists, who were engaged on the project, proved that racial prejudice did indeed exist: only it had "more

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[524] See, for example, Newitt, Malyn*, A History of Mozambique* (London: Hurst & Company, 1995), pp. 127-385.

[525] McClintock (1995), pp. 21-74.

[526] Maio, Marcos Chor, 'The UNESCO Project: Social Sciences and Race Studies in Brazil in the 1950s' in Portuguese Literary & Cultural Studies 4/5 Spring/Fall 2000, *Brazil 2001: A Revisionary History of Brazilian Literature and Culture* (University of Massachussetts Darmouth, 2001), pp. 51-63.

subtle manners of manifesting itself".[527] This realization required the development of research strategies to understand the nature of this prejudice and, ultimately, combat it. Hence, the comparability of Zambezia and Brazil might also suggest that the debate over the composition of Mozambican social and racial fabric needs to take place in an appropriate setting, at an official level, given that only this discussion will allow the understanding and ultimately the resolution of some of the social problems identified by the afore-mentioned study on racism, ethnicism and power which was coordinated by Carlos Serra in 2000.

In accordance with the above, the present study sets out to analyse *Alegre Canto*'s deployment of racial exile in Zambezia across time – in the colonial and post-colonial eras –, within a matriarchal tradition and through the recuperation of a female genealogy, which is achieved by way of gendering the communal memory. Hence, in this process the remapping of the nation will be achieved in the intersection of the black women's experiences, the *mulata*'s territorialisation, and the cartographic reconfiguration of feminine memory, given that the recuperation of Zambezian history through the recovery of a female genealogy is also the retrieval of the memory of miscegenation, which is hereby territorialized and problematized. As is typical in Chiziane's works, the first chapter of the novel reveals the thematic framework to be approached, as well as the tone of the narrative. Hence, the first character we encounter is Maria das Dores in the form of a naked woman bathing on the banks of the Licungo river, a spot which is reserved exclusively for men. This behaviour obviously provokes a reaction from the local female population, whose feeling of threat leads them to attempt to somehow make sense of, and reason with, her.

But Maria das Dores is shown to be different from all the other women, external to their rules, a fact which immediately directs us both to her transgressive nature as a character and to the multiplicity of exiles within gender. Although as a woman she experiences the same gender exile as the remaining women within a male-dominated community, there is the occurrence of a further parallel form of exile experienced by Maria das Dores in relation to the women. She is not considered to be one of them because she does not conform to the same social rules, which means that she needs to be *otherised* and made aware of that marginalization so as to internalize it and, ultimately,

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[527] Ibidem, p. 58.

conform to the collective social rules. The women's urgent need to identify Maria das Dores and exile her is intrinsically linked with their need to feel secure within the limits of their imagination as women. As a woman, Maria das Dores comes to defy their cultural representation as women, which is a profoundly threatening gesture in the sense that, as Said reminds us, exiles feel the urge to imagine themselves as part of a triumphant ideology.[528] Hence, they can only be comfortable with their womanhood if they exile Maria das Dores for having gone beyond the limits of female representation.[529]

Indeed, when we learn about her name, some further directions of the novel are revealed to us:

> 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.[530]

In fact, her name points towards two distinct realities that are carefully positioned in opposition on the racial spectrum: although she bears a name that refers directly to the reality of the privileged white Portuguese population, its meaning alludes to the lived experience of the underprivileged population, namely women and black. There is a clear suggestion that she is somehow caught between these two worlds. In addition, the association between women and black people constitutes a reference to the intersection of two exiles, which is to be explored throughout the novel. Gender and race emerge at this point as factors of social discrimination, since women and black people occupy the lowest positions within the power hierarchy, thus implying that Maria das Dores brings together both forms of exile. This produces a very specific type of exile, which emerges at the intersection of the two variants that inevitably shape and alter each other. If as woman, Maria das Dores lives in gender exile in a male dominated context, as a black woman she will also occupy a less privileged place within the racial spectrum (that is, compared to women of different colours), which will predictably have an impact in terms of her social positioning in the class hierarchy.

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[528] Said (2000), p. 177.

[529] Chiziane (2008), p. 14: "Mulher, não tens vergonha na cara? Onde vendeste a tua vergonha? Não tens pena das nossas crianças que vão cegar com a tua nudez? Não tens medo dos homens? Não sabes que te podem usar e abusar? Oh, mulher, veste lá a tua roupa que a tua nudez mata e cega!".

[530] Ibidem, p. 16.

When the women of the village understand that they cannot make Maria das Dores abide by their socio-cultural rules, they look for the support of the régulo's wife so as to convince the former not to defy society. Yet, the elder alerts the women to the fact that they are exiling the foreign woman, and proposes a new perspective on her. In order to support her argument, the elder tells all the other women one of the many myths that traverse the novel. All of these invoke the historical matriarchal tradition and maintain that at the beginning of everything, the world was ruled by visionary and forward-thinking women who, at some point, ended up having their power stolen by men:

> Os homens invadiram o nosso mundo – dizia ela –, roubaram-nos o fogo e o milho, e colocaram-nos num lugar de submissão. (…) Ó gente, ela veio de um reino antigo para resgatar o nosso poder usurpado. Trazia de novo o sonho da liberdade.[531]

The recuperation and rediscovery of these myths forces the women to confront their own gender exile, their discontinuous female identity and the need for them to engage in the rewriting of their own *habitus*.[532] Furthermore, it overlaps with both a retrieval of Zambezian history and its simultaneous revision. According to Newitt, the historical interweaving of different peoples in Zambezia led to the installation of a patriarchal tradition there, which in its turn caused the corruption of the matriarchal and matrilinear ties that had always been a local institution.[533] Hence, the novel proposes a retrospective look at the history of Zambezia as a cultural community so as to prove that it was built through the bodies of women. It simultaneously advances the analysis of women's role in the mediation of race relations, and in the maintenance of the institutionalized racial spectrum throughout different historic and cultural moments in time, an investigation that must necessarily take the black woman as its point of departure.[534] The examination of these important mechanisms will permit an untangling of what lies beneath racism and the techniques it uses to reproduce itself, ultimately leading to the disclosure of the

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[531] Ibidem, p. 22.
[532] Said (2000), p. 176.
[533] Newitt (1995), pp. 217-242.
[534] Chiziane (2008), pp. 23-25: "As mulheres violadas choravam as dores do infortúnio com sementes no ventre, e deram à luz uma nova nação. Os invasores destruíram os nossos templos, nossos deuses, nossa língua. Mas com eles construímos uma nova língua, uma nova raça. Essa raça somos nós. (…) Lembrem-se de que somos todos filhos do longe, como essa Maria que viram nas mrgens do rio. Lembrem-se sempre de que a nudez é expressão de pureza, imagem da antiga aurora. Fomos todos esculpidos com o barro do Namuli. Barro negro com sangue vermelho".

conditions that ensure the paralysing of certain social contexts and prevent social change from taking place.

Taking the afore-mentioned into consideration, it is important not to forget the role of literature in the portrayal of this situation. The literary critic Pires Laranjeira asserts, with reference to the novel *Alegre Canto*, that the author has moved on from writing a novel to creating something that he calls *ficção ensaística*:

> Vendo esse livro, atrevo-me a dizer que a autora, de facto, deixou de escrever um «romance» e passou àquilo a que chamarei *ficção ensaística*. Não que ela queira demonstrar, em ficção, uma tese, que entre pela demonstração, como na velha narrativa naturalista, mas porque se trata de uma pungente expedição aos recessos da memória das mulheres do povo moçambicano, em forma de grande alegoria imaginativa sobre a mestiçagem, a hierarquia das raças, a vileza humana, o colonialismo, a manipulação de adultos e crianças, a mentira, o assassínio institucional sem culpa individual, a traição política e conjugal. Uma tragédia em força de exorcismo veemente. Nua e crua, sem romantismos ou ademanes cultistas, tão próprios de alguma literatura bem-comportada.[535]

Indeed, Pires Laranjeira's assertion is partly correct, as the novel does have a very clear and straightforward ambition. Nevertheless, it is incorrect to affirm that Chiziane does not produce a literary work in her decision to focus completely on a very specific socio-cultural problematization. This assertion deliberately ignores other parallel occurrences that take place in Chiziane's literary production, given that the literary dimension of any literary work emerges from the junction of various components, such as the linguistic and the ideological. For instance, it is important to highlight the author's writing of orality as a literary proposal, in the sense that it recuperates peripheral paradigms (of Bantu origin) and integrates them in the western symbolic representation codes of the novel. Furthermore, the transnational thematic framework chosen and its approach are also relevant, because, as Ana Mafalda Leite reminds us, "A grandeza de uma obra literária está na sua capacidade de ser simultaneamente local e global".[536] Hence, Pires Laranjeira's reduction of the novels' reading to its historic and social dimensions reproduces the legitimation of a stereotypical approach to Chiziane's work, given that the author's work has proven to be a literary work that simultaneously questions, as well as represents reality. As the author herself put it, "contar uma história significa levar as

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[535] Laranjeira, Pires, 'Paulina Chiziane: Ficção Ensaística', Literaturas Africanas, Jornal de Letras, 8, 21-10-2008, p. 25 in http://macua.blogs.com/moambique_para_todos/2008/10/paulina-chiziane-fic%C3%A7%C3%A3o-ensa%C3%ADstica.html (02/02/09).

[536] Oral communication given at the VIVA of Elena Brugioni at Universidade do Minho, on the 4th of June 2009.

mentes no voo da imaginação e trazê-las de volta ao mundo da reflexão"[537]. Similarly, in the words that Neubauer and Geyer-Ryan chose to define the contributions to the *Gendered Memories* volume, "remembering via literature becomes (...) a quasi-Freudian archaeology, a reworking of the past that aims at reshaping identity in the present".[538]

It is, therefore, important to focus on the way the act of memorization is conducted throughout the novel. As mentioned above, given that each of the four main female characters in the novel is immediately related to a specific historical moment and, thus, the evolution of their development can be read diachronically, the present study will analyse each of them as representative of an exile placed in the intersection between the exiles of gender and race throughout time. Hence, although Maria das Dores is the first female character that we access, Serafina, her grandmother, is the first character that we need to look at within the genealogy. Serafina emerges as a female character who is representative of a very long period in which Zambezia was violently disturbed by the experience of slavery, that took all the native black men away, leaving women with the responsibility for producing this work force, and providing all the conditions for foreigners to come and engage in all sorts of business (the main ones being the trade of slaves, ivory and gold) in that region. In this particular context, the racial question emerges inevitably connected with class and gender issues for several reasons. Firstly, and as Newitt clearly points out, for many centuries Zambezia was controlled by Afro-Portuguese and India-originated wealthy families who would also seek intermarriage with the local African wives.[539] This meant that only a very specific part of the population would be enslaved, first, and contracted for labour later (either inside or outside the geographical limits of Mozambique): the *indígena* black population, which was the poorest as well.[540] Furthermore, women were considered to play a vital part in all contexts of expansion, as they were the main providers of the labour force, ensuring the maintenance of the slave trade, first, and the labour recruitment later on, for both the South African mines and the Rhodesian farms. Therefore, they were historically seen as very valuable, even becoming slaves and objects of trade between the traders.[541] In spite of their relevance, black women were

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[537] Chiziane (2008), pp. 21-22.
[538] Neubauer, John and Helga Geyer-Ryan (2000), pp. 6-7.
[539] Newitt (1995), pp. 298-316.
[540] Ibidem, p. 384. In the words used in a 1898 report regarding labour legislation, "the black and only the black can fertilize Africa".
[541] Ibidem, p. 285.

still poor and had to struggle for their survival. This means that the idea of "improving their race" would be a very appealing one in the setting of the "anos da *mística imperial*" in which the "império-nação" divided the population into two different racial groups: the *indígenas* and the *não-indígenas*. Particularly after the Portuguese imperialist state took full charge of Mozambican affairs, a measure of Estado Novo, improving their race meant accessing better economic and life conditions, given that the lighter one became in the racial spectrum, the higher one climbed the social ladder.[542]

Regarding the character Serafina, she is markedly representative of this belief in racial improvement through a whitening process. It is important to begin by saying that her evolution is not a constant one, as she evolves, thus changing her way of thinking according to shifting perceptions of her own exile. As a black woman who knows little beyond this particular condition and all its implications (belonging to the lowest social layer, due to both her underprivileged race and her disadvantaged gender), she is completely involved in the colonial economy – which, again, is the only one she knows –, being forced to give up her three male offspring for slavery and her only daughter for prostitution in order to survive and conform to the demands of colonial practices. The living experience of slavery as a mother who saw her children being kidnapped and taken to other countries without any hopes of ever returning to their home made Serafina fully aware of her condition's limitations, which could only be surpassed temporarily through the rental of her daughter's body to white men. Although this gesture revealed her scorn for her own race, it also shows that she does not accept her condition silently, as she struggles to access the white people's world, even if temporarily, in order to achieve some kind of illusion of freedom which would enable her to bypass the unilateral character of the colonial economy's laws. It is this urge to escape the inevitability of race that makes Serafina deny her consent to Delfina and the black man José do Monte's wedding, in favour of miscegenation. In this highly stratified society, both the *mulato* and the white people have predefined places within the core of the imagined community, whereas the black population is immediately sent to the margins,[543] and can only renegotiate that position through processes of literal physical, cultural and social whitening such as miscegenation or assimilation. Having

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[542] On racial purity and the legacy of colonialism in the conceptualization of race, see, for example, Matos, Patrícia Ferraz de, *As Côres do Império: Representações Raciais no Império Colonial Português* (Lisboa: Imprensa de Ciências Sociais, 2006), pp. 148-159.

[543] Chiziane (2008), p. 82. "Ser negra é doloroso. Negro não tem deus nem pátria".

the child by a white man would, therefore, represent simultaneously an escape from the black people's destiny and an access to the white world in the long run:

> Vamos, arranja um branco e faz filhos mestiços. Eles nunca são presos nem maltratados, são livres, andam à solta. Um dia também serão patrões e irão ocupar o lugar dos pais e a tua vida será salva, Delfina. Felizes as mulheres que geram filhos de peles claras porque jamais serão deportados.[544]

This strategy, exclusive to women, provided the guarantee of a more dignified life, even if that implied the child's rejection of the black mother in the future, and it simultaneously demonstrates the social relevance of the *mestiços* in this setting, at least compared to the black community. Hence, in the position of an "exile" who is jealous of the white and *mulato*'s stable social situation, Serafina feels the need to exile the black community in order to be able to imagine herself as socially ascendant and, thus, somehow established. It was not until she became aware of the conditions under which the engagement between Delfina and José do Monte was going to take place that she had a change of heart. Her acceptance of the wedding arises, on the one hand, from the fact that the ceremony would be carried out according to Portuguese religious tradition, which would enable a display of status before the black community: this performance of mimicry would allow an approximation to the white people's world through an assimilative gesture that would immediately be recognized and interpreted by the black community as distinctive. On the other hand, marriage as an official institution, and particularly with a black man would erase the stigma of the black woman as the white man's sexual slave that hung over Delfina's body.

As she starts reflecting on Delfina's choice, Serafina recognizes her own lack of knowledge of the white community, as well as her fear of them: all that she knows about them concerns to the material factors that emerge interconnected with their race, i.e., what they own and what they allow the black population to access, according to the networks of interests created. There is, for that reason, a turning point in her behaviour at this stage, as she acknowledges the gap that exists between her own reality as a black woman, the white population's reality and even the dilemmas the *mulatos* face in their everyday lives. The fact that the white population emerges as established and empowered makes them threatening in the eyes of Serafina, leading her to distrust other

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[544] Ibidem, p. 97.

realities and value her own: "Genro negro, netos negros, harmonia da família. Do futuro, só Deus sabe. Será que esses netos mulatos que tanto sonho, será que me iriam amar? Não me iriam desprezar? Talvez me ignorem por representar as raízes que se pretendem eliminadas. Foi melhor assim".[545] This protectionist attitude towards her own race becomes Serafina's first step towards her imagination at the centre of the community as a black woman, through her descent and as opposed to the white population, which is something that she had never had the opportunity or the means to do before.

She finally learns not to hate her own race, and that becomes even clearer for this character in the aftermath of Delfina and José do Monte's official assimilation of Portuguese cultural identity. Through this process, the latter are forced to let go of their former identities as members of the black population and, thus, to break the link to their past, their former generations and their lived and cultural experiences as black. Serafina's awareness of the new situation's implications leads her to start dreaming of racial purity as the only means of achieving freedom from colonial power. In other words, the Portuguese dream of racial purity, which never gets to be fulfilled, ends up generating the black dream of racial purity, which would be at the origins of the liberation movement.[546] Yet, this moment of revelation coincides with Delfina's disruption of the intergenerational transference, which means that she is unable to absorb Serafina's new teachings, and by doing so, she inevitably prevents both Maria das Dores and Maria Jacinta, her daughters, from accessing them in the future.

The complexity of this character, Delfina, arises from the fact that she provides the debate over the intersection of the categories of race, gender and class with a whole new dimension. She provides the *leitmotiv* for the greatest developments in the plot and in the lives of the other main characters. Having learnt from a very early stage about the impact of racial distinction and the construction of social roles according to race in everyday life, Delfina inherits from Serafina a fascination for the lives of the white population. Being born into a family whose patriarch refuses to become assimilated, which would facilitate her integration into the whitening process, she dreams about becoming white herself through marriage and miscegenation:

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[545] Ibidem, p. 106.
[546] Ibidem, pp. 145-148.

No seu sonho é senhora e habita uma cidade de pedra. Com vestidos de renda. Criados tão pretos como ela que tratará como escravos. Um marido branco e filhas mulatas a quem irá pentear os cabelos lisos e amarrar com fitinhas de seda. Terá a grandeza das sinhás e das donas, apesar de ser negra, ela sente. Receberá favores do regime. As mulheres negras que casam com brancos sobem na vida. Comem bacalhau e azeitonas, tomam chá com açúcar, comem pão com manteiga e marmelada.[547]

Delfina's dreams about becoming white are intimately related with her need to access material goods and privileges which are denied to the black population. Hence, she begins an escalating trajectory, with the help of three men, which in her imagination will ultimately allow her to achieve her total racial redemption. Having had her virginity sold to a old white man in exchange for a glass of wine, Delfina becomes a prostitute, thus accepting the condition of sexual object in order to escape the irredeemable poverty of black women. At this point in the text, the description of her body is imbued with motifs that make clear reference to the Zambezian land, which, once again, redirects us to the proximity and fusion between both histories, as they overlap and mutually constitute each other:

Numa luta desigual, vale mais a pena a rendição que a resistência. (…) Prefiro oferecer as doçuras do meu corpo aos marinheiros e ganhar moedas para alimentar a ilusão de cada dia. A natureza deu-me um celeiro no fundo do meu corpo. Uma mina de ouro. Para explorá-la com trabalho duro, pensam que não trabalho?[548]

It is in these conditions that she meets and falls in love with José do Monte, a poor black condemned man who works on a palm tree plantation and apparently has nothing to offer her. As mentioned before, given that this is a westernized celebration, this marriage appears in the eyes of the black population as the primary marker of Delfina and José do Monte's social detachment from the black margins. However, in the eyes of the white female local population there is the re-establishment of both the power hierarchy amongst women and the racial equilibrium that had been disturbed and jeopardized before, when Delfina was a prostitute who could freely have relations with their white husbands.[549] As for the character Soares, who represents the white male population in this particular setting, we acknowledge that he has had a relationship with

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[547] Ibidem, pp. 77-78.
[548] Ibidem, p. 81.
[549] On the role of white women on colonial racial control see Castelo, Cláudia, *Passagens para África: o povoamento de Angola e Moçambique com Naturais da Metrópole (1920-1974)*, (Porto: Edições Afrontamento, 2007), pp. 283-330.

Delfina in the past and is the one who, along with his wife, organizes and pays for the whole wedding celebration. This is quite a telling aspect if we take into consideration the fact that Soares will be the father of two of Delfina's children in the future. If, on the one hand, it suggests that Soares never intended to really give up seeing Delfina, on the other hand, it unveils an action, premeditated and calculated by Delfina, regarding the management of racial relations. Despite being in love with José, she confesses that she wants to get married in order to organize her own life, an organization that involves different stages.[550]

Hence, José becomes the first stage of the process, as he turns out to be Delfina's ticket out of marginal blackness when he agrees to become assimilated, his only available means to engage in a whitening process. At this particular moment, only assimilation would enable them to acquire a higher social status. Therefore, José is compelled by Delfina to reject all his previous lived experience as an African so as to embrace Portuguese culture and identity, become a *sipaio* and earn much more money than he would as a hired employee. Naturally, Delfina was not worried about José's moral issues regarding turning his back on others like himself: all she cares about are the goods that she will be able to access as she ascends socially. Although he finds it difficult to adjust to his new condition at the beginning, José ends up realizing that that is the only way to ensure their survival and the maintenance of his wife, who completely embraces their new identity. He, thus, ends up following her example and goes through a process of transformation:

> Dos olhos do casal escorre o despertar dos assimilados. Caminhar de cabeça erguida e olhar o mundo do alto, mergulhando no prelúdio da História e tentando abortar o amanhã de liberdade. E José descobre que as folhas das palmeiras têm um verde-vivo e o voo das andorinhas é de plena liberdade. Delfina experimentou a sua saia longa, de seda, com entretela e forro. Gosta da sua nova imagem. Da imagem do seu José.[551]

Although José faces a constant inner struggle throughout the adjustment to their new social reality, one that emerges from the fact that he must prey on his own race, to conform to the demands of the colonial enterprise, the same does not happen with Delfina. Completely alienated from José's reality as a sipaio, she keeps on demanding more and more from him, always asking for valuable goods from him, even when he

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[550] Ibidem, p. 110.
[551] Ibidem, p. 120.

departs to go to war. When Maria das Dores is born to Delfina and José, an official intergenerational rupture occurs between Delfina and Serafina, as the former refuses to take part in any manifestation of a non-Portuguese culture demanded by the latter. Assimilation emerges, therefore, as the most disruptive form of identity subversion and alienation, even able to break the matriarchal lineage, which evidences Delfina's, and consequently her children's exile from their own roots.[552] It also makes proof of their entrapment in an in-between place that prevents them from ever having a stable identity, as they are constantly faced with the limitations imposed by the colonial entity.

As they both evolve, the characters of José and Delfina engage in increasing searches for white power: he destroys everything and everyone who stands in his way to become the ultimate black whitened hero, whereas she does the same in order to overcome all racial and colour barriers. Hence, as he kills Moyo, his spiritual guide, she engages in a relationship with the white man Soares and gives birth to Maria Jacinta. Both seem to completely destroy the deepest marks of their black identification as they engage in social experiences that take them further and further away from their black origins. Delfina's calculated choice of acquiring a white lover and having his *mulato* child is actually a very interesting act in the novel, because at some point we realize that the encounter has been fed by different motivations. We do know that she aimed to use miscegenation as the means to overcome socio-racial boundaries and escape the colonial control instituted to ensure the white supremacy of the metropolis. As Cláudia Castelo reminds us, *mestiçagem* was only common in Mozambique until the 1920s/1930s, because from that period on white women were sent to the colony as a strategy to ensure colonial control and continuity.[553] As a result, "a presença das mulheres brancas justificava que a comunidade dos colonos cerrasse ainda mais as suas fileiras, não tanto para precavê-las dos indígenas, mas para impedir que os homens brancos pusessem em causa a sua supremacia sexual e doméstica (vd, Stoler, 1989, p. 138 e 148), isto é, de reprodução biológica e social".[554] Nevertheless, the colonial state was unsuccessful in its attempt to end mixed race relationships and, thus, ensure the eradication of *mestiçagem* as a threat to the stability of colonial power. It is, therefore, in the battle against Soares's white Portuguese wife that Delfina is able to affirm the

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[552] Ibidem, p. 151: "A vida entre as gerações transformou-se nisto. Sempre discutindo ideias, vivências. Sem consenso. Pisando areia movediça na viagem ao desconhecido".
[553] Castelo (2007), pp. 289-290.
[554] Ibidem, p. 290.

supremacy of the subversive bio-social reproduction that she represents – thus anticipating the impossibility of perpetuation through racial segregation for the colonial regime –, subsequently attaining a new identity through her *mulata* daughter. This new identity allows her to imagine herself and her family at the centre of the community, as in practice, the birth of the *mulata* would also rescue her black children from the *indigenato*.[555]

If on the one hand we recognize that Delfina successfully subverts colonial power, on the other hand we acknowledge that the encounter between Delfina and Soares is provoked by José's superiors in the army. We understand that José becomes so good at performing his tasks as a *sipaio* that he actually turns into a threat to the social hierarchy. That is the reason why his sergeant decides that the only means to restrain his rising trajectory is to remind him of his inferiority, something which can only be achieved through the domestication of his ego. Indeed, Delfina proves to be the easiest and most efficient way to attack José. When he sees the *mulata* baby child, José is confronted with the reality of his wife's betrayal with his white boss. He is, thus, doubly attacked, in both his gender and race, and after considering suicide, he vanishes only to reappear at the end of the novel as the mute cook who rescues Delfina from her solitude. In this setting, the subversive power of mixed-race relations and, of course, the reproduction of the uneven racial powers at work within them are being used by the official colonial entity in order to ensure the maintenance of colonial domination. In the eyes of the black man, miscegenation appears as the most irrefutable proof of his disempowerment before the white man, whose power is reassured; the black wife, who herself goes through a whitening process that revokes his reproductive power; and the *mulata* child, to whom he will never be more than a subordinate, according to the racial spectrum. Nevertheless, it is important to add that regardless of being a solution that in the short-term served the purposes of the regime, miscegenation was precisely what would help to bring an end to it, as the impossibility of its eradication in the long-term represented the unfeasibility of the colonial dream of uniformization.[556] Due to their positioning in the socio-racial hierarchy, which entailed both privileges and limitations,

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[555] Chiziane (2008), p. 184: "Por isso a mulher negra buscará um filho mulato. Para aliviar o negro da sua pele como quem alivia as roupas de luto".
[556] Castelo (2007), p. 290.

the mestiço middle classes ended up becoming some of the earliest anti-colonialist and nationalist thinkers, who formed an active opposition to the colonial regime.[557]

With the help of Simba, who was a sorcerer and her former pimp, Delfina is able to scare Soares's white wife away back to Portugal and occupies her place in the household, the ultimate step to climb on the whitening ladder. In Delfina's imagination, her and her own family are now at the core of what she believed to be the imagined community. This movement, which implies access to the world where the white population lives and to the kind of lifestyle it has, leads her to perceive herself as being white, regardless of her true colour:

> Minha preta, negrinha. Uma expressão ofensiva, humilhante, redutora. Porque já tinha ultrapassado as fronteiras de uma negra. Ela já tinha um homem branco e filhos mulatos. Ela já falava bom português e tinha a pele clareada pelos cremes e cabeleira postiça. **Sou preta, sim, mas só na pele**. Já sou mais do que uma preta, casei com um branco![558]

It is the access to the material aspect of whiteness that leads her to affirm herself to be white, regardless of Soares's constant reminders of her racial origins, which we shall return to later. Hence, the entry into the white world causes the reproduction of the white world's principles, which means that from that moment on, the racial structure imposed by the white colonial regime is reproduced within the domestic sphere of Delfina's household. Thus, the public racial conflict becomes private and familial as well. Having had two black children (Maria das Dores and Zezinho) with José and another two with Soares (Maria Jacinta and Luisinho), Delfina proceeds to the reorganization of the domestic space by diminishing the importance of her black children and praising her mulatto ones. Thus, due to her lower racial status, Maria das Dores, the eldest daughter, becomes the housekeeper.[559] From this moment on, her life begins to mirror her mother's, as a constant reminder to Delfina that she cannot escape her race, which might also explain her mother's urge to sacrifice her whenever it is necessary.

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[557] Gentili (1999), p. 276.
[558] Chiziane (2008), p. 225 (my emphasis).
[559] Ibidem, p. 228:
"- Maria das Dores, esfrega-me os calcanhares e corta-me as unhas dos pés.
- Sim, mãe.
- Agora traz os meu chinelos, a minha toalha, a vaselina, traz o pente, traz o creme.
- Estão aqui, mãe.
- Vê se a mesa está posta, vê se a Jacinta comeu, se o Luisinho dormiu.
- Sim, mãe".

It is at this point that Delfina's life as an imagined white woman reaches its peak, subsequently starting to collapse. This collapse begins when Soares decides to abandon her and return to his former white family, in Portugal. We understand that since he assumed a relationship with Delfina, Soares has had to deal with all sorts of charges from a regime that regarded miscegenation and "cafrealization" as highly disruptive and worthy of condemnation. He proves able to face all of these difficulties, except his own image mirrored in Delfina. His need to constantly reaffirm Delfina's blackness rose out of the need to freeze an image that was reassuring to him as a white colonial subject. However, the confrontation with everything that he represented within his own household and in Delfina's mimicry of his whiteness causes an insurmountable estrangement in Soares. As Delfina's mental state of detachment towards her predefined identity – or, in other words, her "insílio" – deepens, Soares's exile widens.[560] Suddenly, he is fully aware of himself as a foreigner and starts feeling nostalgic about his white ex-wife: "Somos ambos emigrantes, Delfina. Eu, da Europa para esta Zambézia. E tu saindo de ti para parte nenhuma. Nenhum de nós tem poiso seguro.".[561] He, therefore, decides to go back to Portugal, leaving his mixed race family behind, in a gesture that predicts the inevitable disintegration of the colonial regime. The consequences of Soares's choice for Delfina are major, because in the absence of the white husband, the black whitened woman becomes disempowered, left within her blackness once again. This means that she is once again unable to attain all the commodities of the white world, given that she has no job, and no husband to provide for her. Nor does she have any inheritance, as Soares has left it only for the four children to access on their emancipation. Delfina, thus, becomes part of the assets that the white population leaves behind on their departure, which is to be fought for and redistributed amongst those that remain in the land. For this reason, in the aftermath of Soares departure, a *sipaio* who has been paid to avenge Delfina and Soares's defiance of the colonial society's rules, invades Delfina's household and reclaims it as his own:

> Já não tens dono, Delfina, o teu branco foi-se embora, não volta mais. O teu dono sou eu a partir de hoje. Temos que dividir o dinheiro do branco. Queres segurança? Protejo-te. Queres briga? Esmurro-te. Queres um confronto? Mato-te.[562]

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[560] Herrera (2001), p. xxii.
[561] Chiziane (2008), p. 228.
[562] Ibidem, p. 237.

As the representative of a very successful whitening process, that involved the rejection of the black marginality and the reclaiming of commodities that should only be available to white people, Delfina had to be sacrificed for the sake of the continuity of the colonial society's dream. Nevertheless, she ends up poisoning this *sipaio* and turning to her friend Simba for assistance once again, in order to attempt to bring Soares back from Portugal.

Delfina's "insílio" prevents her from being able to have a stable identity, as she is trapped between two worlds to which she does not want or cannot belong anymore. As a result, she struggles not to let go of what is left of the white world in order not to be forced to go back to the black margins. Indeed, it is the fear of recognizing herself in Maria das Dores that leads her to sell her daughter's virginity to Simba in exchange for a spell that can bring Soares back, or in other words, in exchange for the temporary illusion of power. Delfina ends up reproducing the same colonial economy through which her mother had sold her virginity in the past, in a final attempt to maintain her social status, which did not correspond to her race:

> Na sua terra a mulher é peça que se compra e se vende. Selo de contrato. Moeda de troca. Hipoteca. Multa. Sobrevivência. Ela também foi usada pela própria mãe, na infância distante. Entregue aos brancos das lojas a troco de comida.[563]

With his mind set on Maria das Dores's inheritance, Simba tricks Delfina and kidnaps her daughter after deflowering her. Delfina's loss of Maria das Dores is also the loss of herself, all her other children, her servant and the access to Maria das Dores's inheritance: it is the dismembering of the family as well of Delfina's dream of whitening. Simultaneously, it represents another intergenerational rupture in the matriarchal lineage, as the link between the mother and the eldest daughter is destroyed, only to be recuperated twenty five years later. From this moment on, Delfina engages in the mediation between the black and the white worlds by exploiting the gender economy. To do this, she builds a brothel where she sells the virginity of young black girls to white men, under the aegis of the myth of racial improvement. In other words, Delfina proceeds to the creation of her own "miscegenation machine". Oddly enough, her open investment in miscegenation backfires when Maria Jacinta turns her back on her, rejecting her for what she has done to Maria das Dores, her much beloved sister, for

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[563] Ibidem, p. 243.

everything that she represents and for all the lessons of racial stratification she has taught to her children. The *mulata* child's rejection of the black mother is another intergenerational disruption, one that in the novel cannot be revoked.

Indeed, the analysis of this third generation of women reveals new dynamics in the intersection of gender and race. Looking at the interesting trajectory of the character Maria das Dores, we have access to the metaphorization of a very specific black female life experience in Zambezia. As mentioned above, when we first meet Maria das Dores she is naked, bathing on the margins of the Licungo River, ignorant of the social rules that prevent women from doing this in a space which is reserved for men only. This ignorance of behavioural norms and of her own body as a cultural subject arises from her loss of memory, or incapacity to remember events diachronically. Although she can remember certain aspects of her own life, they appear discontinuously as if fragmented in her head. They are reminiscences of what her identity might be, according to the social roles she used to perform as a daughter, as a mother, as a sister and as a wife – never as a whole woman. It is possible to affirm, indeed, that she is ignorant of what a notion of feminine identity might be. Appearing, at this point, in the eyes of the community as a mentally ill woman due to her transgressive behaviour, Maria das Dores shows that her liberty exposes the remaining women's reclusion in a predefined gender identity, which is the reason why they want her to masquerade as woman in order to eliminate her difference:

> -   Maria, tens que te vestir.
> -   Para quê?
> -   Para te protegeres e seres igual às outras mulheres.
> A nudez de Maria era o regresso ao estado de pureza. Da transparência. As mulheres ficam escandalizadas porque o nu de uma se reflecte no corpo da outra.[564]

Hence, when she engages in this journey in which she attempts to return to her mother's womb, she is, by analogy, attempting to recover a gender identity that is, in the beginning, strange for her, due to her amnesia. Simultaneously, she is proceeding to a cartography of female memory through the recuperation of a female genealogy within the matrilinear Zambezian context, with all the racial inheritance this implies.

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[564] Ibidem, p. 33.

The first records of Maria das Dores's life come to us in the form of fragments that she remembers, but we only acknowledge the most significant parts of her past through her family history, so through the voices of the narrator and remaining characters. She, therefore, rarely intervenes in the telling of her own history, one that reaches us through a collective memory in this first instance. It is also important to point out that the marks on her body – which are equivalent to the slaves' tattoos – also speak for her: "No corpo desenhando-se o mapa da terra. Da aldeia. Da linhagem. Em cada traço uma mensagem. Árvore genealógica".[565] The reading of these tattoos not only unveils the identities of a female genealogy, but it also reveals the geographic, political, and identity map of the community as it appears printed on women's bodies. Born in 1953 to a family of assimilated, Maria das Dores is Delfina and José's firstborn child. Raised by both of them in the reality of assimilation, she has access to all the commodities that were made available to this social group by the colonial state (the fact that she was born at a hospital for white people, for example, is indicative of that) and is unaware of any social hierarchies. It is not until José abandons the family, to be replaced by Soares, the white father who raises her, that Maria das Dores becomes aware of the reality of racial differentiation. Actually, when she describes her memories of both houses, that is the house of the black father and the house of the white father, the former appears surrounded by fantasy and pleasure, in an environment of unfinished projects, whereas the latter is imbued with feelings of sadness and solitude that suggest a harsh reality, despite being a wealthier and more beautiful house:

> Recorda a casa do pai preto. De forma cónica, como um cogumelo dos contos da Alice no País das Maravilhas. Árvores frondosas e um verde muito verde. Mosquitos. Comida com fartura. Risos e sonhos. Felicidade pura. A casa do pai branco, muito bela. No bairro dos brancos. Com janelas largas e vidro fosco. E jardim com muitas flores. Electricidade. Mobílias mais altas que as pessoas, que à noite se confundiam com os fantasmas. Comida boa, e muita tristeza.[566]

The description of the house of the black father is rendered in a somehow essentialist fashion, associating it with a state of purity that precedes the arrival of the white father and, thus, of the conflict. His arrival is described in materialistic terms, as the emphasis is put on all the goods that the family could suddenly access. Furthermore, it has negative connotations, from Maria das Dores's point of view, because from that moment on, her mother institutes a hierarchy according to race within the household,

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[565] Ibidem, p. 31
[566] Ibidem, p. 49.

which was something that Maria had never experienced before. In the urge to delete her own blackness through an economic and social makeover, Delfina sets out to act as the white population would so as to eliminate her own difference. In order to do this, she transposes the public racial conflict into the household, where the black father's children must be sacrificed. Indeed, Maria das Dores is exiled between two worlds: one that she knew before and will never be able to return to, where she was central; and a second one, that is highly exclusive, to which she is marginal. In this world where she is raised, Maria is the reflection of everything that Delfina wishes to delete in herself and, therefore, she becomes her mother's main target. She becomes threatening to Delfina because she does not allow her to imagine herself as being successful in her whitening process. Hence, Delfina does not bring her daughter with her in this social ascent: rather she prefers to exile Maria because to do so will reinforce her own identity. Maria thus acquires both forms of exile, given that it is due to her race and her gender that she occupies the lowest position in the hierarchy. In addition, since labour tasks are defined in the public sphere according to race, besides studying she must take on the additional activity of servant within the household, taking care of everything and everyone as a true housekeeper.

The black mother's selection of the mulatto children to the detriment of the black ones is merely a strategic choice, as in her imagination, the former will mediate her entrance and guarantee her permanency in the white population's world. In order to reach this goal, Delfina will sacrifice Maria das Dores, ending up by reproducing Serafina's act of selling her daughter's virginity in exchange for a temporary illusion of empowerment. Interestingly, this time around the business is conducted with a black man, the sorcerer Simba, who, despite his cruel behaviour towards Maria, earns a place in the dysfunctional family that emerges at the end of the novel, as we shall see later on. Pretending to be willing to help Delfina in her quest, he steals from her one of the most obvious means to access the economic privileges of the white world, given that he is the one who will now manage Maria's inheritance. Delfina is, thus, progressively buried in the inevitability of her blackness, from which she cannot escape anymore. Using Maria to get his revenge on Delfina, Simba kidnaps her at the age of thirteen and forces her to become his wife. Hence, Maria is forced to transfer from her mother's house to Simba's household, in a trajectory that reinstitutes the economy of gender that places women in a fragile place of inferiority. Furthermore, she is forced to deal with a tyrannical husband

and his two wives in a polygamous marriage framework, in which, again, she is in a subjected position as the youngest and most recent wife. After years of torture, Maria is able to finally escape Simba's household, bringing with her her three children, Benedito, Fernando and Rosinha. Although they all survive the difficult journey, they are taken to a hospital for treatment and, in a moment of mental alienation, Maria das Dores ends up losing her children. Due to this loss, she spends years trying to find them.

The more we learn about Maria das Dores, the stronger and more individualized her voice becomes, and the less fragmented and more consistent her story becomes. Finally, she starts verbalizing her own story, as the narrative evolves, proposing an individualized stance, as opposed to the collective one that was more frequent before, in a gesture which is characteristic of Chiziane's work. Interestingly, Maria's memory returns with the mediation of her children Benedito and Fernando: they assume responsibility for recuperating a memory which is also a genealogy. This retrieval of the past by the last generation of the family is very significant if we take into account the message of the novel, which clearly emphasizes the need for the younger generations to question, scrutinize and acknowledge a past that inevitably conditions the place occupied in the present. Hence, when the dysfunctional family reunites at the end of the novel – Delfina, José do Monte, Simba, Maria das Dores, Benedito, and Fernando –, there are two important aspects to highlight. The first aspect concerns a genealogical recovery and reestablishment of the matriarchal lineage. The intergenerational connection which was interrupted when Delfina exiled Maria das Dores is once again restored when the former reattributes her inheritance to the latter, one which proceeds from the money that Delfina gathered, from the day that Maria left her mother's house, and not from the white father's assets. There is, therefore, not only a return to an essentialist state of purity in the sense that the white man does not interfere in the patrimonial transference, but also the recovery of the matriarchal and matrilinear lineage, through a power transference from mother to eldest daughter.

At this point it is worth mentioning as well that it is not until Delfina and Maria das Dores come to terms with each other that the latter is called solely *Maria* for the first time in the novel, thus assuming a new identity which is exclusive of *das Dores*. By doing so, she is embracing her black womanhood and detaching herself from the condition of entrapment between two realities. Simultaneously, the fact that Maria's two sons, and not her daughter, are the ones who mediate their mother's process of memory

recovery indicates that there is, in parallel, the establishment of a lineage which despite invoking a disrupted patrilinear tradition, combines harmoniously with the matrilinear lineage, which, in its turn, calls upon a Zambezian tradition of cultural miscegenation.

The second aspect to highlight regarding the dysfunctional family that emerges at the end of the novel, with prospects of continuity, refers to the absence of the *mulata*.[567] Indeed, this absence, although it is justified in the novel, provides the constitution of the new family emerging in 'the post period' (postcolonial, post-independence and post civil-war) with a certain essentialism. Hence, there is, again, the suggestion that in spite of accepting and making peace with its history of miscegenation, harmonizing coexistence within the new family cannot be inclusive of it. In other words, harmonization is only possible at an intergenerational level, but not at an interracial one, which leads us to the analysis of Maria Jacinta, the *mulata* daughter. Ever since the day she was born – or we could even say ever since the day she was projected to be born –, Maria Jacinta is defined solely by her race: "Do interior da casa de José, o choro de uma recém-nascida rasga espaços como salvas de canhão. Os soluços dela têm a sonoridade de comando, característica das crianças que nascem para governar o mundo".[568] As a *mulata*, she has a consistent connection with both the white and the black worlds, although those might be limited connections. Those connections allow her to have direct access to a lifestyle that escapes the constraints of both the white and the black world, due to its position in a grey zone of power. It is precisely due to her positioning on this intermediary platform that the *mulata* becomes the materialization of the conflict between two opposed worlds: that which is praise-worthy miscegenation (or racial improvement) for the black population becomes contemptible "cafrealization" (or racial disfigurement) for the white population. She is permanently exiled in between two worlds, condemned to be perceived according to the amount of power that she has in each one of them and to exist on a platform which is neither margin, nor centre, and, therefore, cannot be territorialized:

> 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 chmavam-lhe nomes feios. Um dilema que crescia na sua cabecinha: afinal de contas, qual é o meu lugar? Porque é que eu tenho de me ficar entre as duas

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[567] Ibidem, p. 330: "Queremos agora celebrar a reunificação da família. (…) Esqueçam as lutas antigas e enfrentem as novas. Selemos agora o pacto de coabitação. Construímos o novo mundo, vamos fortificá-lo".

[568] Ibidem, p. 181.

raças? Será que tenho que criar um mundo meu, diferente, marginal, só com indivíduos da minha raça?[569]

Due to this experience, Maria Jacinta learns from an early age that the concept of race corresponds to differentiation and stratification, and she suffers because that conceptualization entraps her in a racial limbo. She, therefore, hates both her white father and her black mother for having transgressed the instituted behavioural norms and created a human being who, apparently, cannot be culturally defined.

In the aftermath of the white father and Maria das Dores's departure, Maria Jacinta rebels against the black mother. As the materialization of Delfina's successful process of whitening, Jacinta comes back to haunt her for all the things that she did in order to achieve this temporary whiteness. Interestingly, when Maria Jacinta affirms that she suffers due to Maria das Dores's absence, in her head the latter is not just the beloved sister who used to take care of her. She is also the openly needed and much missed servant, who ensures the maintenance of the household. Therefore, in the eyes of Jacinta, Maria das Dores is always a black woman, who performs certain service tasks due to her race. The way she looks at the members of her family is inevitably conditioned by the way she is taught to envision the world. Thus, when she abandons Delfina's household, taking her two brothers Luisinho and Zezinho with her, she leaves the black margins decisively behind in order to integrate into the white world as deeply as possible, which suggests that although she was trapped between two worlds, she could, to a certain extent, choose which world she wanted to live in. In this context, her choice might be read as strategic.

When, at the age of nineteen, Jacinta gets married to a white man, she completely fulfils her mother's dream of whitening through her daughter. Yet, at the moment of its accomplishment, the dream loses its utopian aspect and backfires on Delfina. At the altar, Jacinta repeats all the discourses of differentiation that Delfina had taught her in the past, leading the latter to confront her own blackness, which returns to haunt her in the shape of Jacinta's whitened reflection. Finally, although the novel successfully portrays the territorialisation of miscegenation, thus recuperating Maria Jacinta and, by extension, Eva in *Niketche* as well from both the racial and cultural

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[569] Ibidem, p. 247.

limbo in which they were trapped as *mulatas*[570], the notion of community in both novels that emerges by the end of the novel in the shape of the dysfunctional family does not incorporate the *mulata*. As such, in *Alegre Canto* there is, therefore, a repetition of the essentialist ending that characterizes *Niketche*, suggesting that despite being part of the nation and having an irrefutable place in it, the *mulato* is not incorporated in the ideal post-independence, post-internal conflict and post-Marxist community, which is black.

The analysis of Chiziane's literary works *Ventos do Apocalipse*, *Niketche: Uma História de Poligamia* and *O Alegre Canto da Perdiz* demonstrates that the author proposes portrayals of the post-independence ideal of Mozambican imagined community, from a female point of view, in order to deconstruct it and expose its limitations, therefore reopening the debate on *Moçambicanidade* in the post-Marxist era. In the novels, communal discourses appear as utopian, as the author demonstrates their propensity for exile through the recuperation of voices and experiences that have no place in them. In other words, Chiziane focuses on their utopian nature by revealing and analysing the dystopias they generate throughout their processes of legitimization and survival. The study of these literary works through the lens of Said's theorization on exile, as well as Herrera's proposal of internal exile has enabled us to expose myriad experiences of exile within the geographical limits of the Mozambican nation, according to Chiziane's perception. Furthermore, the application of these theories to the specific Mozambican context and Chiziane's particular project allowed to see the limitations presented by those theories, as their problematization opened up various possibilities.

In *Ventos*, the emphasis is placed on exile as an internal condition, a mental state of detachment towards a predefined communal imaginary that occurs within the geographical limits of the nation, as Chiziane portrays the precarious living conditions of the rural population throughout the internal conflict in the country. If on the one hand this portrayal demonstrates that exile can be a potential site for the renegotiation of identity, on the other hand it reveals that exile, like nationhood, is not uniformly experienced by all members of the imagined community. This perception unveils one of the limitations of Said's theorization as regards its application to the particular contexts under analysis: its failure to focus on gender as a form of exile. Hence, Chiziane's

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[570] Ibidem, p. 323: "Sou de todos e de ninguém. Sou diferente e igual. Amai-me e odiai-me, à altura da vossa paixão e da vossa raiva, mas atenção: sou vossa, eu vos pertenço! Esta é a minha terra. Aqui é o meu céu e este o chão dos meus antepassados!".

reflection not only sheds light on women's continuous exile within both patriarchal experiences of nationalism and exile, but also illuminates the fact that gender as a form of exile is experienced differently, according to variants such as race, colour, class and ethnicity. The complexity of these layers within gender exile exposes other power structures in operation within it, which ultimately come to impose hierarchies and define identity representations amongst women.

In both *Niketche* and *Alegre Canto*, the focus on women's marginality in male-oriented conceptualizations of the nation runs parallel to the observation of the power dynamics occurring within the experience of gender exile, in a continuous effort to dismantle these structures and propose new conceptions of identity in/and collectivity. In *Niketche*, notwithstanding the differences in terms of ethnicity, culture, origin and even age between the official wife and the unofficial ones, they manage to find equilibrium amongst themselves, which emerges from their common race, as well as their common experience and subsequent condition of exile in relation to the patriarchal polygamous husband. Nonetheless, the insertion of the *mulata* character Eva in this context comes to disrupt that fragile equilibrium, thus demonstrating the existence of a racial power structure (which corresponds to a class structure as well) within gender and, simultaneously, allowing miscegenation to arise as a problematic place in the negotiation of the cultural imagination of the nation. Eva's exclusion from the polygamous family, the women's escape from patriarchal surveillance and their subsequent celebration of their successful redefinition of the national map (through the affirmation of their cultural differences) demonstrates that the *mulata*'s representation is not updated. Her female peers' celebration of womanhood in its difference is exclusively black, therefore not allowing the *mulata* to be rescued from exile.

This problematization of miscegenation, as well as racial divides within gender, is analysed in depth by Chiziane in *Alegre Canto*. Through the recovery of a generational lineage of Zambezian women, the author not only recaptures women's memories into the macro-history of the nation, but also forces that macro-history to reconfigure itself by incorporating other experiences of the nation that go beyond the limits of the politically dominant southern history. Considering the historical and cultural specificities of the Zambezian context, miscegenation emerges in Chiziane's perception as a story that is inscribed in women's bodies – therefore, it is told through the recovery of diachronically organized female memories. On the one hand, as

195

women's continuous exile in relation to men (in colonial and post-colonial contexts) unravels, the voicing of these silenced memories gradually leads to the female characters' redemption. On the other hand, as the intrincacies of the dynamics between gender and race (and, of course, class) are untangled, in their specific historical context, we come to realize that that redemption only extends to black women (and black men as well), as again the *mulata* character, Maria Jacinta, is excluded from the new national family which is proposed by Chiziane at the end of the novel. Again, we are led to believe that although Chiziane's portrayal suggests the need for the macro-history of the nation to come to terms with its history of miscegenation, ultimately the "national family" which emerges from the identity negotiation is black. Hence, gender exile, as well as women's refusal of it, are not, indeed, uniformly experienced in Chiziane's perception, as the *mulata* is still to be rescued from the margins.

Women in the contact zone in Rosária da Silva's *Totonya*

Of the three authors under analysis in the present study, the Angolan writer Rosária da Silva is the one who has published the smallest amount of literary works, as the novel *Totonya*[572] is the only one that Da Silva has made available to the public to date. Having completed a degree in Linguistics, Da Silva has dedicated herself to teaching Portuguese Language and writing in various genres (essays, short-stories, poetry, plays), in different supports. The literary work *Totonya*, which was first published in 1997, not only marked her debut as the first women novelist of independent Angola, but also won her a "menção honrosa" in the 1996 literary competition named after the Angolan poet António Jacinto, which was promoted by the INALD (Instituto Nacional do Livro e do Disco). Having been released in a decade in which the most horrific civil wars (the first from 1992 to 1994 and the second one from 1998 to 2002) were taking place in Angola, the novel was published by the Brigada Jovem da Literatura de Angola, a literary movement created in 1981, of which Da Silva was a founding member, that intended to give visibility to a new generation of writers who, in their turn, were aiming at creating a new voice in the immediate post-independence Angolan literary arena. As a consequence, at this stage the literary productions of the writers who were engaged in this movement were markedly ideological, openly assuming their political affiliation to the MPLA (Movimento para a Libertação de Angola), the overtly Marxist-Leninist ruling party at the time. It this, therefore, not surprising that, for instance, the printing and publishing of *Totonya*'s first edition was sponsored by the National Bank of Angola, the Eduardo dos Santos

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[571] Portuguese translation of a Cabinda Proverb quoted in Tavares, Ana Paula, *A Cabeça de Salomé* (Lisboa: Caminho, 2004), p. 49.

[572] Silva, Rosária da, Totonya (Luanda: Brigada Jovem de Literatura de Angola, 2005) [2nd Edition; the first one dates from 1997].

Foundation, the Port of Luanda and the Ministry of Fishing – all of them entities which, as we will see later on, are connected to the MPLA government.[573]

Although at first glance *Totonya* seems to suggest an affiliation to the dominant ideology, the present analysis will argue that the use of this Marxist-Leninist ideological discourse undermines itself, exposing its limitations, internal paradoxes and inconsistencies. By revealing the strategies of exclusion in this discourse, which are set in motion in order to consolidate its position of power and, thus, perpetuate it in time, the novel focuses specifically on cultural, ethnic and gender marginalization. Cultural and ethnic marginalization, emerge in the delimitation of two *Angolas* that are in direct confrontation, materialized in the twin cities of Luanda and Benguela. Taking into consideration the specificities of Angolan history, in general, and of the formation of the Angolan society, in particular, this confrontation becomes an ethnic one in the novel. As for gender marginalization, this arises from the representations of femininity and masculinity in both the Angolan contexts under exploration, revealing a structure of power in operation that clearly positions women in a subordinate place, as opposed to men's dominance.

Hence, this reading of Da Silva's novel will be informed by an intellectual framework composed of two main theoretical concerns that will allow a better understanding of the process through which *Totonya* analyses, appropriates, subverts and recreates the post-independence discourses of the nation. Firstly, and expanding on the research developed by Phyllis Peres on the works of contemporary Angolan fiction writers, it will be informed by Mary Louise Pratt's theorization of contact zones, autoethnography and transculturation.[574] In *Transculturation and Resistance in Lusophone African Narrative*, Peres focuses specifically on the narrative works of Luandino Vieira, Pepetela, Uanhenga Xitu and Manuel Rui as narratives of resistance that textualize and problematize Angolan national identities and communities. According to Peres, the analysis of these narratives through the lens of Pratt's understanding of transculturation enables a thorough appreciation of the work

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[573] See Hamilton, Russel, 'Uma Reconfiguração Pós-Colonial de Realidades e Ficções: *Totonya*, o Primeiro Romance Angolano Escrito por uma Mulher', *Ellipsis. Diverse Encounters/Encontros Diversos* 2, 2000, pp. 60-70 [p. 62].

[574] Peres, Phyllis, *Transculturation and Resistance in Lusophone African Narrative* (Gainsville: University Press of Florida, 1997); Pratt, Mary Louise, 'Arts of the Contact Zone' in *Profession 91*. New York: MLA, 1991. 33-40 [www.class.uidaho.edu/thomas/English.../Arts_of_the_Contact_Zone.pdf] (16/10/2009).

developed by these authors with a view to complexifying the acculturation imposed by the Portuguese dominant culture. They do so through the appropriation and adaptation of this discourse to specific Angolan realities and, simultaneously, they problematize the complex construction of an Angolan national identity: one that emerges from the continuous negotiation of unquestionably relevant socio-cultural elements such as race, gender, class, generation, ethnicity, region and tribe.[575] Building upon the work developed by Peres, this analysis sets out to take the exploration of sex and gender issues much further. Hence, considering *Totonya*'s focus of interest, perspective and intellectual proposal, Pratt's theorization becomes extremely useful in the present reading as well, as we will soon be able to confirm.

In an essay entitled "Arts of the Contact Zone", Pratt uses the term 'contact zone' "to refer to social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today".[576] She moves on to analyse positive examples of contact zone – such as a classroom of students from different backgrounds in which their cultures are juxtaposed and a space of interaction, dialogue and knowledge exchange can be created – and negative examples as well – such as colonialism, in which a power structure operates, clearly imposing a dominant culture over a subordinate *other*. Hence, according to Pratt, through the occurrence of specific phenomena, these contact zones enable the questioning of instituted models of community. In the specific case of negative contact zones (for instance, in colonial environments), she continues, autoethnographic texts have an important role in the deconstruction of predefined representations, as they "are representations that the so-defined others construct *in response to* or in dialogue with those texts [ethnographic texts]".[577] This dialogue is materialized in transculturation, another phenomenon that occurs in the contact zone. Pratt reminds us that this term, which was created by the Cuban sociologist Fernando Ortiz, refers to the active role of marginal groups in selecting and appropriating certain features of the dominant culture.[578] This gesture will forcefully refute the homogenization of the "imagined

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[575] Peres (1997), pp. 10-15.
[576] Pratt (1991), p. 1.
[577] Ibidem, p. 2.
[578] Ibidem, p. 2.

community" and, thus, prompt the imagination of new representations within the changing community.

In this sense, *Totonya* will be read as a novel that deconstructs representations of culture and gender in the discourse of the dominant ideology, ultimately exposing, through autoethnography, the limitations of postcolonial assimilation. Considering that the novel can be read as a strategic autoethnography of the female experience in postcolonial Angola, it becomes relevant to simultaneously focus on Graham Huggan's study of the Post-Colonial Exotic.[579] In the first chapter of the book, in which he focuses specifically on 'African literature and the anthropological exotic', Huggan explores the reception of African literature by western audiences and its treatment by the publishers, thus revealing the occurrence of a phenomenon that he describes as "the anthropological exotic"[580], which stands for a form of representation and advertising of Africa as a more familiar and homogeneous context for consumption by western readers.[581] He, then, moves on to analyse three examples of what he calls "ethnographic counter-discourse" in contemporary African literary production.[582] The first example, which builds upon the literary work *Things Fall Apart*, by the Nigerian author Chinua Achebe, proposes the strategies of "ethnographic parody" and "celebratory autoethnography"; the second example, focusing on the *Le devoir de violence*, by the Malian author Yambo Ouologuem, presents "ethnographic satire"; finally, the third example is based on the South African writer Bessie Head' work, which attempts to generate a dialogue between anthropology and oral literature. It is, therefore, made clear that in Huggan's perception, both the anthropological exotic and the ethnographic counter-discourse are strategies that emerge as representative of the opposition between colonized and colonizer, within colonial versus anti or post-colonial contexts. Despite the emphasis on cultural perceptions and representations, the focus on the aforementioned binary opposition implies the centralization of one single power structure, to the detriment of all others in operation within both strategies under discussion. Considering the scope of the present

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[579] Huggan, Graham, 'African Literature and the Anthropological Exotic' in *The Post-Colonial Exotic: Marketing the Margins* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), pp. 34-57.
[580] Ibidem, p. 37.
[581] Ibidem, p. 37: "Thus, the perceptual framework of the anthropological exotic allows for a reading of African literature as the more or less transparent window onto a richly detailed and culturally specific, but still somehow homogenous – and of course readily marketable – African world. Anthropology is the watchword here, not for empirical documentation, but for the elaboration of a world of difference that conforms to often crudely stereotypical Western exoticist paradigms and myths ('primitive culture', 'unbounded nature', 'magical practices', 'noble savagery', and so on)".
[582] Ibidem, p. 40.

reading I, thus, intend to take Huggan's theorization a step further by focusing on the emergence of ethnographic counter-discourses within a post-independence and post-colonial scenario, in which sex and gender power structures are to be placed at the core of the analysis.[583] In other words, the emphasis is not so much on having the colonized African writing his *self* back to the Western colonizer, as it is on Angolan women writing their *selves* back to Angolan men within a post-colonial Angola that is itself negotiating the construction of its national identity.[584]

Taking into consideration the particularities of *Totonya*, the present study will focus specifically on the strategy of "celebratory autoethnography", which, according to Huggan, "(…) turning the language of Western evolutionist anthropology against itself, enables an allegedly 'subordinate' culture to regain its dignity; and to reclaim its place, not within the imagined hierarchy of civilization, but as one civilization among others – and a sophisticated one at that".[585] Hence, this study will argue that by directing the anthropological gaze back toward the identity construction of the nation imposed by the male-oriented dominant ideology, the novel not only critiques, but also resists the cultural and gender representations proposed by that same imagination of the nation.

Hence, considering its emphasis on the construction of what Peres calls "Angolanness", with all of its complexity, in a very particular moment of the Angolan nation's history, *Totonya* is a novel that needs to be understood in a historical and contextual framework, as a brief analysis of its graphic design makes clear.[586] According to the founding scholar of Lusophone African Literatures Russel Hamilton, *Totonya* was first published in 1998 by the Brigada Jovem da Literatura de Angola and sponsored by governmental entities and a private foundation which belongs to the President of MPLA and of Angola, José Eduardo dos Santos, as we have already mentioned.[587] The book's cover, Hamilton continues, illustrates a "chokwe" mask and a "chokwe" wooden sculpture, of a set of three statues, against a red background in which there is a picture of part of a female face. This illustration, which was created by José

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[583] On the strategic use of gender and sexual difference to deconstruct structures of exoticism, see the PhD thesis by Ana Margarida Dias Martins entitled *The "Post-Colonial Exotic" in the work of Paulina Chiziane and Lídia Jorge* (University of Manchester, 2009).
[584] On the importance of gender for the understanding of national identity and nationalism see, for example, Mama, Amina, 'Challenging Subjects: Gender and Power in African Contexts' in *African Sociological Review*, 5 (2), 2001, pp. 63-73.
[585] Huggan (2001), p. 43.
[586] Peres (1997), p. 12.
[587] Hamilton (2000), pp. 61-62.

Mendes Fernandes, is interpreted by Hamilton as being suggestive of a discussion over the Angolan indigenous societies through the eyes of the female character who gives her name to the literary work, Totonya.[588] I would add that the juxtaposition of the red background, the "chokwe" cultural items and the female face is highly suggestive in the sense that it might indicate a confrontation between two distinct conceptions of the nation – a modern and markedly socialist one against a traditional and pre-colonial one – in which women and, therefore, female representations appear in the intersection of both worlds.

In addition, and focusing specifically on the presence of the "chokwe" mask, its reading can point us in two directions. On the one hand, on a more general level, the mask can be taken to indicate precisely the need to analyse the hidden layers of the official discourse. In the words of Ana Mafalda Leite to refer to some of the literature produced in post-independence Angola,

> This was the moment when authors started to take a step back and gain perspective on their country, casting a critical look at some of the new national myths. A new phase in Angolan literature began in which the tautologies of an invented unity were replaced by the masks and mirrors of diversity. The mask denounces duplicity, ambiguity and contradiction. It does so by means of deconstructive irony.[589]

On the other hand, on a more specific level, this "chokwe" mask may invoke the "Mwana Pwo", which, according to Manuel Jordán's account on "Chokwe" masquerades and ceremonial celebrations, is one of the most important *makishi* (spiritual guides) masks, given that it symbolizes feminine identity as culturally conceived by the ethnic group.[590] "Mwana Pwo" is a masquerade character who emerges in the specific context of the *mukanda* boys' initiation rites and whose performance is devoted to the entertainment of women and the homage to motherhood. What is interesting to note about this character is that, despite representing an ideal of femininity, it is created by men. Hence, notwithstanding the fact that, as Jordán points out, women may reject this male conceptualization of the feminine identity if they feel somehow dishonoured by it, they are only allowed to intervene directly in the ceremony

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[588] Ibidem, p. 64.

[589] Leite, Ana Mafalda, 'Angola' in Chabal, Patrick et al (eds.), *The Post-Colonial Literature of Lusophone Africa* (London: Hurst & Company, 1996), pp. 103-164 (pp. 123-124).

[590] Jordán, Manuel, 'Engaging the ancestors: *Makishi* Masquerades and the Transmission of Knowledge Among Chokwe and Related People' in Jordán, Manuel et al (eds.), *Chokwe!: Art and Initiation Among Chokwe and Related Peoples* (Munich; London; New York: Prestel, 1998), pp. 67-75.

and even to manifest through "Mwana Pwo", who "speaks on behalf of all women in the community".[591] Considering that "*Makishi* often serve to sanction and validate social and political institutions, which are generally perceived as the domain of men", women's ability to renegotiate their identity appears constrained by a masculine imagery represented by this gender-ambiguous character.[592] Hence, reading the combination of the "chokwe" mask and the female figure on the novel's cover may suggest an incitement to women's empowerment through the performance of their own initiation: they should impose themselves as agents, as their own spiritual guides – subjects and objects of their own representation in the ongoing renegotiation of the nation.[593] This gesture reinforces the importance of the female autoethnographic journey as the means to analyse the dynamics of gender relations in everyday life, to expose women's self conceptualizations within historically male-oriented imagined communities, and, simultaneously, to resist and overcome them, through women's active involvement in the transculturation process.

What is interesting to note about the second edition of the novel is precisely the changes that occurred, namely the illustration on the cover and the sponsorship. In the 2005 edition that emerged in a completely different historical context, the front cover illustration, for which José Mendes Fernandes is once again responsible, presents only the drawing of a female face. The references to "chokwe" culture disappear, as well as the red background, thus highlighting the question of female representations over the others previously identified. Furthermore, although the publisher remains the same, the sponsorship changes, as no governmental entity is now supporting the second edition. This time it is Gemac Lda, a private national enterprise with investments in tourism and entertainment, which sponsors the 2005 edition. It is made clear that different moments in history dictate distinct priorities in the agenda of the dominant ideology: if in the 90's the MPLA government's fragile condition led it to give in under international and internal pressure and make political concessions, its comfortable position in the world economy in 2005 explained its lack of interest in supporting the work of the first female

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[591] Ibidem, pp. 68-69.

[592] Ibidem, p. 67.

[593] See Ganho, Ana Sofia, 'Sex in the Shadows of the Nation: Angola in the Voices of Lopito Feijó and Paula Tavares' in *Sexual/Textual Empires: Gender and Marginality in Lusophone African Literature*, Lusophone Studies 2 (Bristol: University of Bristol, October 2004), pp. 155-175. Ganho provides a discussion of gender, sexuality and ethnicity within the rewriting of Angolan nation and imagery, as depicted in the works of the Angolan poets Lopito Feijó and Ana Paula Tavares.

novelist of independent Angola.[594] Therefore, the emergence of the first edition in the particular context of the year 1998 needs to be understood in its specificity. To this end, some historical considerations will be examined for a better comprehension of the literary work, its emergence, and its deconstruction of cultural identity and representations at a time in which the conceptualization of the nation, the notion of nationhood and the imagination of the community as horizontal were at the core of contemporary debates.

The examination of such issues implies a review of key moments in the Angolan nation's history, that need to be brought to light in order to allow a greater understanding of the themes and their subsequent development as they are explored in *Totonya*. One of the biggest and wealthiest Portuguese former colonies, the young nation-state of Angola, which achieved its independence in 1975, has many particularities that make it unique within the universe of Portugal's former African colonies, not only in terms of a common Portuguese colonial experience, but also through the perspective of a post-colonial conceptualization of the nation. In the introduction to the study entitled *Angola: The Weight of History*, which he co-edits along with the Angolan researcher Nuno Vidal, Patrick Chabal affirms that three sets of factors are usually highlighted in the attempt to understand the complexity of the Angolan present day reality.[595] The first set of factors concerns the pre-colonial and colonial structures of social and political power, in which it is necessary to highlight the very important and influential role of the Luanda Creole community. Angola, along with Mozambique, was a white settlement colony in which there was a very important and influential Creole community that, despite having lost most of their privileges

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[594] For a discussion of the role of the World Bank in the (counterproductive) definition of "the woman question" as one of the priorities of the 1990's development plan for African countries that underwent structural adjustment so as to access its funding, see Scott, Catherine, 'Gender and the World Bank: Modernization Theory in Practice' in *Gender and Development: Rethinking Modernization and Dependency Theory* (Boulder; London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1995), pp. 69-86. See also Vidal, Nuno, 'The Angolan Regime and the Move to Multiparty Politics' in Patrick Chabal and Nuno Vidal (eds.) *Angola: The Weight of History* (London: Hurst & Company, 2007), pp. 124-174. On the expectations of the parties that opposed MPLA in the multiparty, democratic and post-civil war era, Vidal states that: "A particular disappointment for the parliamentary opposition was directed at the international community, in particular the World Bank and the IMF, for reducing the pressure that was being exerted on the government in terms of accountability and transparency in the management of public funds and respect for human rights. This was likely due to the increased demand for oil that came from the new Asian partners of the Angolan government – China, India and possibly South Korea – oil that the West also desired". (p. 154)
[595] Chabal, Patrick, 'Introduction – *E Pluribus Unum*: Transitions in Angola' in Patrick Chabal and Nuno Vidal (eds.) *Angola: The Weight of History* (London: Hurst & Company, 2007), pp. 1-18.

throughout the period of white settlement (mostly from the 30's to the 70's[596]), had a determining role in the formation of a pro-liberation front – the MPLA (Movimento para a Libertação de Angola) – that would eventually come to constitute the post-independence government of the newborn nation. According to the historian Malyn Newitt, this community dates back to the end of the fifteenth century.[597] The history of these Afro-Portuguese, who established themselves as a separate and economically powerful ethnic group, is strongly connected with the slave trade. Hence, they were responsible for the creation of the two important Angolan Atlantic cities of Luanda and Benguela. Due to their origins, their development and their location, these cities acquired what Newitt calls

> A distinct identity, which was deeply rooted in the history of the people of the coast and at the same time shared in the creole cultures of the Atlantic world. The late nineteenth century was to see the attempt by the peoples of the coast to conquer and colonise the interior. The civil wars, which occurred after the withdrawal of the Portuguese in 1975 also assumed the character of a conflict between the old Afro-Portuguese coastal states and the inland people.[598]

Although it is incorrect to affirm that the neo-patrimonial governance which the MPLA would instate in post-independence Angola is Creole-dominated, Chabal argues, this Portuguese-speaking elite does, indeed, enjoy a privileged position within the spheres of power, as it is best positioned to access power in the network created by the political party and its President, José Eduardo dos Santos.

The second set of factors regards the specific type of colonial rule developed by the Portuguese in the territory that would later become the Angolan nation-state, which would decisively influence the postcolonial conceptualization of the nation. At this point, Chabal starts by emphasizing the racial, ethnic and regional tensions fomented by the colonial entity through the nature of its economy. These tensions would ultimately be incorporated into nationalist competition between the pro-liberation fronts, not only in the context of the anti-colonial conflict, but also in the post-independence setting, in the form of a civil war that would last for twenty seven years. As Newitt demonstrates, in the aftermath of the Berlin Conference, Portugal began to make serious attempts to

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[596] See, for example, Castelo, Cláudia, Passagens para África: *O Povoamento de Angola e Moçambique com Naturais da Metrópole (1920-1974)* (Lisboa: Afrontamento, 2007).

[597] For a discussion on the historical development of this Creole community, see, for example, Newitt, Malyn, 'Angola in Historical Context' in Patrick Chabal and Nuno Vidal (eds.) *Angola: The Weight of History* (London: Hurst & Company, 2007), pp. 19-92.

[598] Ibidem, p. 36.

demonstrate effective control over its colonies through strategies such as the pacification wars (which implied the use of traditional ethnic rivalries to strengthen the colonial government), the revitalization of the Catholic missions and the incorporation of a settlement policy.[599] Hence, this change in colonial ideology, based on the strengthening of racial boundaries, led to a gradual decrease of influence for the Afro-Portuguese community. The New State colonial regime's reinforcement of these boundaries occurred through the introduction of the assimilation policy in 1954 and their subsequent stipulation of the social status of *indígena* and *não indígena*[600] led to the development of social distinctions that would outlive the colonial government and, thus, have a major ongoing impact on the post-colonial conceptualization of the nation.[601]

Consequently, there were tensions generated not only between the white and the black populations, but also amongst different ethnic groups, of which the most visible example would be the dichotomy between the Portuguese-speaking, Catholic, urban based and socially privileged Creole elite and the mission-influenced (Protestant or Catholic) and socially-marginalised Africans from the interior. These tensions would echo in the formation of the distinct nationalist movements, on the basis of different colonial experiences, that would engage in the post-independence civil war.[602] Chabal goes on, pointing out that if the struggle for domination of Angola ended in 1976, from that moment on the conflict assumed the characteristics of a "struggle for power", which had distinct phases and was less of an ideological confrontation than a struggle for the domination of the nation state and its resources.[603] Chabal also underlines the bureaucratic nature of the colonial administration, which the postcolonial socialist government created by the MPLA would inherit. In addition, as Newitt highlights, "the government of independent Angola inherited an economy in which the state had a very large stake. The temptation to use the state owned enterprises as sources of revenue and

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[599] Ibidem, pp. 42-50.
[600] The *indígenas* were a group composed by the majority of native Africans, whereas the *não indígenas* were an elite composed by the great majority of Afro-Portuguese and native Africans who had been educated in the Portuguese Catholic missions and, therefore, would later be in a better position to develop the consciousness that would come to materialize in the formation of the nationalist movements.
[601] Ibidem, pp. 52-53.
[602] Ibidem, p. 64.
[603] Chabal (2007), p. 6.

patronage was not resisted, with the result that a once strong and diverse economy was reduced to ruin in only two or three years".[604]

Finally, Chabal turns his attention to the violent and repressive nature of the Portuguese regime, which would leave a deep mark on post-independence and post-colonial forms of political expression. Suffice it to say that the MPLA, which had "always been construed, and used, as the crucible for a national, supra-ethnic, political 'machine'" became profoundly authoritarian and intolerant after the 1977 attempted coup led by Nito Alves.[605] As for the political organisation UNITA (União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola), which was designed and created by Jonas Savimbi, it rapidly developed into a "war machine".[606]

The third set of factors is related to the uniqueness of Angola as a former colony. Although the country is very often regarded as having been more Portuguese than other Portuguese former colonies (mostly due to the existence and historical development of the Luanda Creole community), Chabal continues, it is important to contextualize Angola locally, i.e., within the African continent. Similarly to other African oil-producing countries, Angola suffers from the strong impact of its mineral resources. However, as Chabal highlights, three main factors make up the specificity of Angolan economic power: the fact that the oil is offshore and, therefore, can be protected; the fact that the oil revenues are entirely controlled by Sonangol, which in its turn is dominated by the President, who uses them outside the constraints of the governmental structure; and finally, the fact that the government has maintained financial deals outside the supervision of the state, i.e., which depend on the regime rather than the state.[607]

Chabal adds that a particularly relevant issue to be taken into consideration in the understanding of the contemporary Angolan situation, is what he calls the "foreign actor involvement", notably visible throughout the Cold War period and responsible for the intensification of social symptoms such as internal rivalries and intolerance that would ensure the perpetuation of the civil war.[608]

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[604] Newitt (2007), p. 63.
[605] Chabal (2007), p. 5.
[606] Ibidem, p. 7.
[607] Ibidem, p. 8.
[608] Ibidem, p. 4.

Bearing all the abovementioned factors in mind, it is important to explore further the nature of the post-independence government of Angola, as well as its different configurations across diverse moments of history. One of the main distinctions between the trajectories of the nationalist movements that emerged in Angola and in the two other countries under analysis in the present study – so, Cape Verde and Mozambique – is precisely that in the former the three movements that were created (MPLA, FNLA and UNITA) were never able to reach any understanding and, therefore, form a single movement or united front, whereas in the latter both PAIGC and FRELIMO did successfully manage to generate united fronts in their respective areas of action, at least in the context of the anti-colonial struggle. As mentioned before, one of the first nationalist movements to come to life amongst Angolans was generated by members of the educated and urbanised *não-indígena* elite. The MPLA was created in 1958 by Angolans who were studying in Lisbon and Paris. According to Newitt, their proximity to the Portuguese Communist party and the fact that they did not have a political base inside what was to become the Angolan territory led them to look for the international support of Marxist states, a choice that would inevitably have major social and political repercussions in the post-independence period:

> Most of them were Marxist inclined – and it has been pointed out that the mestizos, whites and *assimilados* who formed the MPLA, needed a class-based ideology to deflect the accusations that they were not really African at all. The lack of any organization or even any firm constituency of support within Angola was to force the MPLA to rely on its international friends, initially among the members of the non-aligned bloc, but later the Soviets and Cubans. This was to be a major factor dictating the patterns of the civil wars that followed independence.[609]

Much closer to Angola, in the Belgian Congo, another nationalist movement was born in 1956: the FNLA (which was firstly called UPNA - União das Populações do Norte de Angola – and later UPA – União dos Povos de Angola –, before finally becoming the Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola). This movement, which defended an openly Africanist nationalism, was responsible for the first armed attacks on the Portuguese colonial government, that occurred in 1961. Finally, UNITA (União para a Libertação Total de Angola), the third Angolan nationalist movement, was born in 1966 from a group of FNLA dissidents. Regarding the impossibility of these movements creating a united front (in the image of PAIGC and FRELIMO), Newitt argues that there were two main reasons. The first one is that the three movements were

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[609] Newitt (2007), pp. 73-74.

being supported by distinct newly-independent African states, which had no interest in prompting the creation of a united movement.[610] The second reason, as defended by Newitt, refers to the three movements' different positioning in respect of the major powers involved in the Cold War, URSS and USA: "The MPLA was fairly consistently supported by the URSS after 1964 while the US lent support to UPA and intermittently to UNITA. Yet, it is fairly clear that the ideological positions of UPA and UNITA were as much the result of the split with the MPLA as the cause of it".[611] Hence, Newitt continues, although the ethnic and racial rivalries were to play a very important role in the definition of the basis for the three-way opposition between the three movements in the long run, this was not something cultivated from the beginning, whilst their authoritarian and totalitarian nature was.[612]

The liberation war that lasted from 1961 to 1975 placed the Portuguese government and the nationalist movements in opposition within the international political arena. On the one hand, the former struggled to convince international opinion of its entitlement to the colonies, simultaneously taking action to undermine any possible unification between the three nationalist movements. On the other hand, these three nationalist movements pursued their strategies in direct opposition to each other, as they struggled to strengthen their international credibility and their military force, and to create links with the major world powers involved in the Cold War. It is, therefore, not surprising that in the immediate aftermath of the collapse of the New State regime in Portugal, on the 25th of April 1974, a civil war erupted in Angola. This was the real struggle that all three movements had been preparing for.

As Newitt argues, it was not until 1963 that the MPLA, under the leadership of Agostinho Neto, became an openly Marxist movement, thus creating a political programme in accordance, aligning itself with both PAIGC and FRELIMO, and projecting a convincing image of a modernizing party:

> It presented itself as a modernising party, opposed to tribalism and racism, which planned to create a new socialist society based on scientific principles, where there would be equality between men and women and in which traditional authorities, traditional religion and practices like polygamy would have no place. In contrast, it branded the FNLA as a tribal party, identified with outdated and backward looking Africanist values. Like Frelimo and the PAIGC, the MPLA

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[610] Ibidem, p. 75: "The MPLA came to depend on Congo-Brazaville, which was bitterly hostile to Zaire whose government patronized the UPA/FNLA. Later Tanzania was to support the MPLA while Zambia offered qualified support to UNITA".
[611] Ibidem, p. 76.
[612] Ibidem, pp. 76-77.

claimed to have begun to create the new society in the areas it controlled by setting up modern health and educational services and a newly structured peasant economy.[613]

The reality, however, was completely different, as it would impose its ideology on the population by force in the areas which it controlled through an effective "policy of terror" characterized by executions of those who might somehow oppose the MPLA's ideology.[614] Growing dissatisfaction towards the MPLA's stance amongst some of the movement's supporters is meant to be at the basis of the creation of UNITA. Jonas Savimbi, its leader, had formerly been connected with Holden Roberto's FNLA. Yet, this movement's growing weakness might also have been behind Savimbi's decision to create his own movement. According to Newitt, Savimbi's ideological discourse was largely built on racial and ethnic factors, as he attacked MPLA's mestizo leadership and both MPLA and FNLA's ethnic exclusivity and military incapacity.[615] Yet, UNITA's discourse shifted according to the movement's solidarities. Furthermore, although it projected an image of a modernising anti-socialist movement, it looked to the support of the traditional authorities and, in the image of the MPLA, it persecuted those who did not align themselves with UNITA's ideals.

Hence, after the fall of the New State in Portugal and the signing of the Alvor Accord in January 1975, the Civil War erupted in Angola. Due to the foreign intervention of its Cuban and Soviet allies, to its influence amongst the Luanda population, and to its advantageous connections with Portugal, in the figure of its governor Admiral Rosa Coutinho, the MPLA was able to impose itself as the dominant party in the Angolan post-independence setting – although the Civil War would last for twenty seven years.[616] Once it reached this position of power, the party set a programme in motion to consolidate a socialist political system, which Chabal describes as follows:

> (...) the regime rapidly put in place a singularly 'Stalinist' or 'orthodox' one-party state. The main features of such a system were: the concentration of power in the hands of a very small group at the apex (the party's central committee and political bureau run with an iron hand by the president); the absolute dominance of the party over the organs of the government (including the prime minister and his ministerial colleagues); the supremacy of the party within all essential state, administrative, military and economic institutions; the reliance on ideology as a weapon of political control; the re-shaping of the economy according to the rigid principles of nationalisation and 'primitive socialist accumulation'; and, finally, the attempt to exert total

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[613] Ibidem, p. 83.
[614] Ibidem, p. 84.
[615] Ibidem, p. 84.
[616] Ibidem, pp. 86-87.

(party) political control over the principal (religious, social, academic and cultural) institutions of civil society.[617]

This system opened space for corruption and major socio-economic disparities. Nevertheless, Chabal continues, the MPLA was confronted with many difficulties in the consolidation and legitimization of such an ambitious socio-political programme. Firstly, its alignment with the Soviets prevented its recognition by the Western bloc. Secondly, UNITA's armed opposition prevented the consolidation of MPLA's power across the country. Finally, the party faced opposition from among its own supporters. As a consequence, the party's administration was very much city-based, proving ineffective outside the main urban areas.[618]

In a text entitled *The Mutation of Hegemonic Domination: Multiparty Politics Without Democracy*, Christine Messiant argues that the distinctiveness of Angola's Socialism rests on its oil wealth and on the internationalized character of the civil war which was taking place, given that only these two factors would justify on the one hand MPLA's support by a strongly representative part of the society (who would not dare to oppose the regime) and, on the other hand, the regime's policy of repression and exclusion (to maintain its power and ensure that the economic and political gains would rest in the hands of a few).[619] This means that, although the regime's policies proved ineffectual for the majority of the population, the single party structure only grew stronger and became more powerful. Messiant moves on to identify a change in the political system from 1985, as follows: "From that period onwards, a transition occurred to what I would call 'savage socialism', combining the dictatorship of the single party, the 'dollarisation' of the economy – in effect, the sanctioning of illegal practices – and the transition to a political economy of clientelism".[620] Yet, the changes that were occurring inside and outside the country (such as the end of the Cold War, the end of the Apartheid, the increasing international pressure for a peaceful resolution to the internal conflict and UNITA's military victories) dictated the regime's change of

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[617] Chabal, Patrick, 'Lusophone Africa in Historical and Comparative Perspective' in Patrick Chabal et al (eds.), *A History of Postcolonial Lusophone Africa* (London: Hurst & Company, 2002), pp. 3-134. (p. 66).
[618] Ibidem, p. 101.
[619] Messiant, Christine, 'The Mutation of Hegemonic Domination: Multiparty Politics Without Democracy' in Patrick Chabal and Nuno Vidal (eds.) *Angola: The Weight of History* (London: Hurst & Company, 2007), pp. 93-123. (p. 96)
[620] Ibidem, p. 97.

strategy. Not only did it move on to generate policies protective of the single party, but it also attempted to reach an understanding with UNITA with regards to democratisation. As Messiant put it, "This entailed negotiation without recognition but with co-optation, the best way of incorporating individuals from the other side without jeopardising single-party rule".[621]

In 1991 the two opposing parties signed the Bicesse Peace Accord, which would pave the way for the first elections to take place in the following year. Following MPLA's victory and the subsequent legitimisation of the single-party regime both internally and externally, Savimbi's refusal to accept the results led to the reactivation of the armed struggle. Yet, on this occasion the MPLA had the support of international opinion, as Savimbi had refused to demilitarise UNITA, on the grounds of the Lusaka Accord[622]. It is in this context that José Eduardo dos Santos, started to take measures with a view to ensuring the protection of his own positioning, as well as to eliminating any form of defiance toward the regime. He, therefore, kept civil society organizations under tight control and even moved to build his own civil society, materialized in the José Eduardo dos Santos Foundation:

> He sought to neutralise Angola's autonomous civil society – the activities of which by implication have exposed government failures – with an ambitious scheme to create his own 'civil society'. To that end, he set up the José Eduardo dos Santos Foundation, whose main aim was to ensure that support for social, health and educational activities would be credited to him, not to the extensive independent NGO sector, which was financed by donors.[623]

Having reaffirmed the legitimacy of its power before the international community and ensured its maintenance internally through ideological surveillance and social control, the MPLA was perfectly positioned to seek UNITA's destruction not only as a military opponent, but also as a political threat. In order to do this, it intensified the military campaigns against UNITA and, simultaneously, it proceeded to the recognition of the UNITA-Renovada, a new party which the elected representatives of UNITA were forced to form. This recognition not only allowed the government to bring UNITA's

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[621] Ibidem, p. 98.

[622] Ibidem, pp. 102-103: Signed in 1994 between the MPLA and the UNITA representatives, the Lusaka Accord proposed the formation of a coalition government (GURN, Governo de Unidade e Reconciliação Nacional) in which power would be shared by the two parties. Nevertheless, this coalition would only be made possible on the condition that UNITA would disarm and its military forces would be integrated into the national army, which, of course, was controlled by the MPLA government. Given that none of the parties demonstrated the will to respect the conditions imposed, the accord was unsuccessful.

[623] Ibidem, p. 104.

political arm under surveillance, but also, as Messiant reminds us, it enabled the MPLA to reinforce the illusory image of their dedication to the construction of a democratic society.[624]

Messiant moves on to explain how the defeat of UNITA by the MPLA in 2002 did not mean that any changes would actually occur in terms of the economic and political democratisation process, as the transition to a post-war politics was entirely fashioned by the regime, according to its own interest.[625] Although, generally speaking, the life conditions of the population improved with the end of the civil conflict, social inequalities remain and are still being fomented by the regime. These facts show that, as Vidal asserts, the existence of a multiparty structure in Angola's politics does not necessarily translate into a democracy.[626]

In this sense, it is important to focus on the emphasis placed by the MPLA regime on the construction of a civil society since independence. In his text on *Social Neglect and the Emergence of Civil Society in Angola*, Vidal concludes that, despite the emphasis placed in the first years after the independence, so during the socialist period, on the design and development of specific programmes that would ultimately lead to the enhancement of the social sector (education, housing, health, community services and social security), they had a very short existence.[627] Hence, social services within a government-devised plan of actions, particularly throughout the years of the civil war, were practically nonexistent in Angola, which led to the increasing marginalization of the great majority of the population. In other words, throughout both the socialist period and the Dos Santos administration, the governmental entity felt comfortable enough to

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[624] Ibidem, p. 105.
[625] Ibidem, p. 107.
[626] Vidal, Nuno, 'The Angolan Regime and the Move to Multiparty Politics' in Patrick Chabal and Nuno Vidal (eds.) *Angola: The Weight of History* (London: Hurst & Company, 2007), pp. 124-174. P. 172: "Despite the new multiparty framework, the Angolan political system retains its basic characteristics as constructed after independence and throughout the eighties. The President and the top party echelons are still in control of the state and its resources – especially the revenues from the oil and diamond sectors, which are still used to maintain the political and economic hegemony of the mainly urban elite in power according to a patrimonial logic. Juxtaposition of presidential, party, state and governmental structures continues, as does the blurring between the private and the public spheres. Political power is still concentrated and the administrative system still centralised, presided over by an overstaffed bureaucracy inherited from the colonial period and from the Marxist model of state organization – and still operating according to the so-called democratic centralism. There is still a deep interpenetration between the judicial, legislative and executive systems, with tight control over the judiciary. The state security apparatus remain effective, under close presidential and party guidance. The lack of political participation by the majority of the population persists, with a remarkable distance between rulers and ruled".
[627] Vidal, Nuno, 'Social Neglect and the Emergence of Civil Society in Angola' in Patrick Chabal and Nuno Vidal (eds.) *Angola: The Weight of History* (London: Hurst & Company, 2007), pp. 200-235.

neglect its responsibilities towards the population – urban and rural –, as it was feeling increasingly secure both in economic and political terms.[628] The transition to the multiparty system, Vidal continues, enabled the emergence of internationally-funded Civil Society Organisations which came to perform the tasks and assume the roles normally attributed to the state.[629] The regime's inability to assert effective control over all these organizations and their demands led it to develop another strategy: the creation of "government friendly CSO's", such as the already mentioned José Eduardo dos Santos Foundation (1996) and the Lwini Social Solidarity Fund (which was set up by Dos Santos wife, Ana Paula dos Santos), which are organizations created entirely as vehicles for Presidential propaganda, as he not only appears separate from the State, but also works to provide services for which the State should be responsible.[630] According to Vidal, despite the decrease in international funding for humanitarian aid, the Angolan regime continues to neglect the social sector and refuses to invest in social infrastructures.

The social structure imposed by the MPLA government since independence is, therefore, one that is based on a hierarchical network which places a select elite at the centre of access to the nation and to determination of the concept of nationhood, leaving the great majority of the population in the peripheral and passive areas of the performance of the community, as dictated from above. According to Vidal, "this inhibited the appearance of an alternative social logic based upon notions of citizenship or class (where people place themselves horizontally in relation to the state) and therefore hampered the emergence of civil society as understood in the West".[631] Hence, this neo-patrimonial logic is sustained by a general refusal of equity, which becomes visible at all the levels that compose the social arena: political, cultural, racial, ethnic, economic, and gender. As mentioned before, the MPLA's alignment with Marxism from an early stage led it to develop gender-oriented policies that would ensure the construction of a society based on ostensible gender equality. Indeed, ever since the first programmes of the pro-liberation movements, they have incorporated the struggle for equality between genders – focusing specifically on the emancipation of women – in

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[628] Ibidem, p.205-218.

[629] Ibidem, p. 204.

[630] Ibidem, p. 225. On the nature of the Eduardo dos Santos Foundation (FESA) and the specific context of its emergence in the year 1996, as part of a strategic plan devised by both the president and the MPLA to minimize popular discontent, see Messiant, Christine, 'The Eduardo dos Santos Foundation: or How Angola's Regime is Taking Over Civil Society' in *African Affairs* (2001), 100, pp. 287-309.

[631] Vidal (2007), p. 203.

their causes through the creation of particular women's organisations which, according to a logic of modernisation, were to play a very important role in the struggle for liberation.

According to Henda Ducados, the OMA (Organização da Mulher Angolana) was born in 1962 as an extension of the MPLA that was meant to work towards the incorporation of women into the liberation war.[632] Although the leadership of OMA was composed of educated women who were somehow connected with the leadership of the MPLA, the truth is that the organisation was very successful in reaching all types of women, from different socio-cultural and ethnic backgrounds, and actively incorporating them into the struggle. As Ducados points out, their role was decisive mainly in the support (in terms of education, health, nourishment and arms transportation) of the guerrilla movement, but many women also actually fought on the battle fronts. Running parallel to OMA within the UNITA movement, there was another feminine organization, which was created in 1973: the LIMA (Liga Independente de Mulheres Angolanas). Contrary to OMA, LIMA's leadership had no familial connections to the UNITA's leadership, which, according to Ducados, was "due to fear of repercussions against men if women failed in their endeavours".[633] Having an agenda similar to OMA's, LIMA's members were also very active in the political engagement of the population, a characteristic that the organization maintained even throughout the post-independence conflict.

The MPLA's rise to power provided OMA with the opportunity to actively propose measures towards the construction of a more gender-equal civil society. Indeed, Ducados defends that in the 80's the organisation successfully achieved many victories, such as the introduction of the Family Code, the provision of free family planning to women, and the creation of a space for debate over issues which were normally considered to be part of the private sphere and, therefore, were taboo.[634] Nevertheless, as David Birmingham points out, these achievements did not materialize into a real equity between genders, as the governmental structure itself and society in general remained very much male-oriented:

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[632] Ducados, Henda, 'Angolan women in the aftermath of conflict' in *Accord 2004*. [http://www.c-r.org/our-work/accord/angola/women-conflict.php] (29/11/09)

[633] Ibidem.

[634] Ibidem. See also OAW – Organization of Angolan Women (Translated by Marga Holness), *Angolan Women Building the Future: From National Liberation to Women's Emancipation* (London: Zed Books, 1984).

> Women sympathetic to the MPLA were able to hold such relatively prestigious posts as that of university rector or national librarian. Even UNITA had a woman as one of its economic advisers. In the government, tokenism led to the appointment of some women as junior ministers though none played a role in the running of the oil sector or the management of the army. The party's organization for women appeared to put women on a pedestal while effectively removing them from any real access to power. High-profile women were more likely to play a role in the dynastic politics of the Luanda families than in any real power struggles, and women with authority were commonly deemed to be an offence to African male pride (…)[635]

Furthermore, in the civil war context the government proved ineffectual both in the protection of the population (of which women, children and elders were the most affected) and in the formulation of policies that were socially and economically protective of women. Indeed, women were specifically victimized by the civil war in many senses.[636] Many of them died throughout the conflict; others were raped and kidnapped; some others were injured by landmines; others lost their children and/or husbands to the war, becoming solely responsible for their households. Hence, as Ducados highlights, their workload increased, as they had to combine their husbands' tasks with their own and ensure the survival of their families.[637] In addition, the war had a major impact on gender power structures within the family, as the shortage of men led polygamy to become a socially-accepted practice – one that left women and children in a vulnerable position.

Another major consequence of the war was migration. Instability and the urge to survive forced many women to move into the cities on the coast (particularly Luanda) in search of protection and employment. Given that the great majority were illiterate, they ended up being absorbed by the informal market, which, as Aline Pereira noted, offered no economic protections or guarantees to these women.[638] Focusing specifically on the question of literacy, it is important to point out that regardless of the valid efforts of the post-independence government to develop educational policies and actions, the fact that there was a civil war in progress (as well as all the socio-political instability it caused) heavily conditioned the execution of those plans. According to Pereira, women were particularly affected in this conjuncture: in a context of deprivation, they were never

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[635] Birmingham, David, 'Angola' in Patrick Chabal et al (eds.), *A History of Postcolonial Lusophone Africa* (London: Hurst & Company, 2002), pp. 137-184. (p. 161)
[636] Ibidem, pp. 158-162.
[637] Ducados (2004).
[638] Pereira, Aline, 'Desenvolvimento de políticas públicas para a inserção da mulher angolana no mercado de trabalho', *Codesria 11th General Assembly 2005*, pp. 1-17 [http://www.codesria.org/Links/conferences/general_assembly11/papers/pereira.pdf] (07/12/09).

seen as priority. As such, boys were sent to study and girls were kept in the domestic sphere, reproducing the same gender stereotypes which were meant to be resisted.[639]

After the transition to multipartidarism, OMA stopped being connected with the government to become a mere branch of the MPLA, which inevitably led to a decrease of its influence and the decline of its credibility. The governmental institution that came to replace OMA in 1991 was the SEPMD (Secretaria de Estado para a Promoção e Desenvolvimento da Mulher), transformed in 1997 into the MINFAMU (Ministério da Família e Promoção da Mulher). As Pereira argues, the existence of this ministry does not translate into a greater concern of the government for gender equality issues or women's rights: what happens is exactly the opposite. The MINFAMU is one of the least-funded governmental ministries and its actions are limited, not having any real impact on the lives of Angolan women.[640] Hence, Pereira continues, despite having signed the CEDIW (Convenção sobre a Eliminação de Todas as Formas de Discriminação Contra as Mulheres) agreement and the SADC (Southern African Development Community) Declaration on Gender and Development, the Angolan government does not regard women's participation in society at all levels as a priority.[641]

The contextual characteristics of the Angolan historical process pre and post independence, which I have taken the time to describe above at length, will shed an important light on the reading of *Totonya*, the main story of which develops throughout the first half of the eighties. The first few lines of the literary work direct us to a precise date – October 1981 – and to a specific location – Benguela's airport. At this point, we are immediately led to recall some of the determining facts of Angolan history throughout this period. Following what was to be called "The Second Liberation War", the 1977 attempted coup d'état led by Nito Alves and the death of Agostinho Neto in 1979, this period was a time in which the Angolan MPLA government adopted an openly Marxist-Leninist centralizing and dictatorial stance in ideological, political and economic terms, under the guidance of its president José Eduardo dos Santos.[642] This was also a time during which the civil war was ongoing, now polarized between the

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[639] Ibidem, pp. 11-12.
[640] Ibidem, pp. 9-10.
[641] Ibidem, p. 10.
[642] Wheeler, Douglas and Pélissier, René, *História de Angola* (Lisboa: Tinta da China, 2009), pp. 362-363.

MPLA and the UNITA forces, which, in their turn, reflected the opposition of the political and ideological powers involved in the Cold War. The former were being supported by the Soviet Union and Cuba, whereas the latter had the USA and South Africa as their main sponsors. Hence, given the Dos Santos administration's inability to respond to all the social and economic requirements of the population, while having to deal simultaneously with the destabilizing actions of the UNITA front, dissatisfaction towards the government grew intensely, not only in the urban areas, amongst those who were external to the Luanda elite, but also, indeed, mostly in the countryside, which was seriously neglected. As Birmingham reminds us, the strong efforts made by the MPLA to guarantee the maintenance of Luanda, and consequent centralization in the capital city, generated the widening of the gap between the rural and the urban worlds.[643]

These are very important facts to consider when we go back to *Totonya* and acknowledge that in October 1981, Maria Antónia Paixão Jerónimo, an educated woman from Luanda who was also known as Totonya (her nickname), was travelling with her three children from the capital city to Benguela, to meet her husband. At this point, there are two main aspects to focus on regarding this trip. The first refers to the decentralizing movement itself. At a time in which Luanda was increasingly consolidating itself as the centre of Angola in political, economic, social and cultural terms, this flight to Benguela suggests a decentralization not only in the sense of acknowledging the existence of the peripheral ethnic areas of Angola, but also in terms of testing the limits of the MPLA nation outside the confines of the capital city. In addition, the flight itself recalls the ethnographic journeys, so frequent during the colonial times, in which the narratives built by Portuguese explorers created representations of the Angolan *others* under analysis.[644] Hence, there is the clear suggestion of the occurrence of an autoethnographic journey, as the community imagined by the government entity for the whole of Angolan territory is about to be analysed and deconstructed by one of its members. The second aspect refers to the fact that a woman is the one who is undertaking this autoethnographic journey, which obviously means that women's day to day life will be at the core of this experience. The

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[643] Birmingham (2002), p. 171: "The antagonism between the town and the countryside had paved the way for the war of the 1980's to spread like bush fire from neglected province to neglected province. Regional distrust remained a dreadful burden as the nation sought a sustainable peace for the 1990's".

[644] See Wheeler and Pélissier (2009), pp. 99-101, in which references are made to the Portuguese expeditions in Angola, following the creation of the Sociedade de Geografia de Lisboa, in 1875 and prior to the Berlin Conference, in 1884-85.

fact that she is travelling by plane highlights her socially privileged position. Furthermore, she travels without her husband's knowledge (as she wishes to surprise him), which is in itself an indicator of modernity, as she is able to determine her own choice and mobility. Nevertheless, as we will acknowledge later, this apparent liberation is only achieved through her husband, a fact which will ultimately determine the occurrences in Totonya's life.

As mentioned before, the story begins at Benguela's airport, when Totonya arrives with her children to join her husband, Joaquim Mendes, also known as Quim, who is a veterinary technician. Having been transferred from Luanda (his hometown) to Lobito-Benguela, Quim had lived there for four years before the couple decided that they should not be apart anymore and, thus, Totonya would request her transfer to the Instituto de Mecânica de Benguela (as she was still studying) and move there with their children. The gathering of the family was a happy and reassuring moment, and it was shortly about to expand, as Totonya was pregnant. Nevertheless, she would give birth to a seven month old child, who would die a few days later, and this event would mark the turning point of Quim's behaviour, and subsequently the disintegration of the family. As Quim progressively detached himself from his family in an attempt to embark on an unofficial polygamous relationship with both Totonya and Joana, he alienated and disempowered Totonya and their three children, focusing solely on his second family. Furthermore, he started beating Totonya up frequently in order to convince her to accept his polygamous behaviour. Throughout this process, a whole new world was revealed to Totonya, who thought that Benguela would be an extension of Luanda in all aspects of her existence. Hence, she was forced to struggle in it in several ways in order to survive: not only did she become fully responsible for the survival of her family, but she also attempted to fight for her husband by consulting sorcerers. Although at some points she was able to convince Quim to come back home and leave Joana, his decision never lasted more than a few days, after which he would return to his previous behaviour. Not even when Totonya decided to inform her own and Quim's families back in Luanda of the occurrences in order to seek their intervention was she able to find help, as she discovered that other men from Quim's family displayed the same behaviour, whereas the women covered for them. Finally, even the OMA, the party representatives and the judicial system's agents were unable to help Totonya, so ultimately Quim expelled her from their previous home, handed their children to her and abandoned her. Left with no

other option, Totonya decided to move away from both Benguela and Luanda to restart her life all over again alone with her children.

From the beginning of the story, we understand that the narrative sets out to deconstruct hierarchies of cultural power and power relations within gender. Therefore, although the factual civil war, which was historically taking place throughout the context represented, is never named, it becomes materialized through the delimitation of two Angolas – Luanda and Benguela – which confront each other, as well as through the analysis of both female and male representations within the two scenarios. Hence, as Totonya's autoethnographic journey unravels, we can identify three distinct perceptions of the relationship between the two communities involved, which, in their turn, imply different insights into gender relations. When Totonya begins her journey from Luanda to Benguela, she perceives both communities to be equal, so that that the latter would be an extension of the former. At this point, a sense of continuity is emphasized by the indication of familiarity, as the similarities between the two contexts are denoted. An example would be the first person who Totonya contacts with on her arrival at Benguela: a nameless *mestiço* gentleman who kindly helps her and her children to sort themselves out at the airport and to get in touch with Quim. Indeed, Totonya notes the uniqueness of his surprising behaviour as a man, although she does not do so in opposition to Quim's. Yet, the fact that he is a *mestiço* who remains anonymous directs us to the historic perception of Luanda and Benguela as the twin cities, both of which were constituted by the Afro-Portuguese community and, therefore should share the same creole culture.

Another example would be the privileged house that Quim set up for his family: "A casa era realmente linda. Uma espécie de mansão de dois pisos à beira mar, rodeada de cedros e girassóis fora do vulgar".[645] This is a house that Quim is entitled to through his professional connections with the party – he had been transferred from the Ministry of Agriculture in Luanda –, which obviously showed this family to belong to the elite in both cities. Hence, Totonya would be able to maintain her lifestyle and social status in the new setting. A final example would be the maintenance of their gender representations, as well as the expectations attached to them. Quim, the male provider for the family, has his gender identity reassured in the eyes of the community through

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[645] Da Silva (2005), p. 22.

the arrival of his family from Luanda.[646] As for Totonya, she is also meeting the expectations of her gender identity through her performance of the correct roles as a devoted wife – "O marido era tudo p'ra ela e os filhos"[647] – and mother, who enabled the expansion of the family with a new pregnancy. From her point of view, up to the point at which Quim's behavior towards her and their children changed, there were no differences between Luanda and Benguela, as her expectations as a member of the dominant culture and ideology were being met. In other words, she assumed everything to be the same, as supposedly the cultural community was one and the same for everyone – at least in the areas that the MPLA controlled, as was the case for both cities –, according to the government's ideological impositions. However, she would soon be confronted with the limitations of this univocal community as it had been imagined and determined by the government, with disregard for the contextual specificities of each geocultural area and for gender equality.

Interestingly, it is the death of the premature child that triggers the changes which occurred both within this family and in Totonya's perceptions of the surrounding cultural space and, subsequently, of the relationship between the Luanda and the Benguela communities. As such, a disturbance in the private sphere shows the public sphere in a whole new perspective. The death of the child seems to represent a strong blow to Quim's conception of manhood, as it disrupts his imaging of himself as national reproducer. When he gets himself a lover, Joana, thus embracing unofficial polygamy, everything changes in Totonya's life. She is confronted with a set of behaviours and habits which are unfamiliar to her and imply a deviation in her autoethnographic journey, as she suddenly encounters a reality that is marginal to that advocated by the discourse of the dominant ideology, that both she and her husband are meant to represent. Hence, at this point both communities begin to diverge, as the emphasis is put on what distinguishes them, opposing them in a hierarchy of power which is obviously conditioned by Totonya's own perceptions and cultural background. Although Quim has the same cultural background and is directly connected with the party and, thus, should be following its guidelines, he is aware of the fact that his gender allows him to circulate freely between the two imagined communities without ever risking his social

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[646] Ibidem, p. 22: "- Vizinha… olha, a minha esposa e os meus filhos vieram…
Pouco depois, a vizinha, o marido, os filhos todos vinham e eram apresentados aos recém-chegados. Um sorriso de escárnio e triunfo desenhou-se no rosto de Quim. Totonya estudou o perfil másculo, enquanto ele continuava entusiasmado a fazer as apresentações".
[647] Ibidem, p. 23.

position of power, just as long as he is able to ensure the maintenance of his private life in the private sphere – to prevent it from having an impact on the public one.[648] Therefore, in order to force Totonya to assimilate to a different set of behaviours within the new cultural setting, which will ultimately allow him to maintain his own mobility, he engages in the progressive emptying out of her gender identity as she knew it before.

In order to do this, he eliminates what constitutes her as a woman, so as to leave her with no option but to accept his distinction between private and public life and, thus, embrace unofficial polygamy on his terms. Firstly, he prevents her from having a sexual life, which not only elides her female desire, but also suspends Totonya's ability to give birth again. Secondly, he disempowers her as the official wife. When he gets transferred to work for a year at a place called Dombe, he leaves his family behind and takes Joana along. Thirdly, through continuous violence, he exerts his control over her body, simultaneously asserting the structure of gender power before Totonya and all the community, and this is a situation that repeats itself for three years. Finally, he completely alienates the entire family, forcing Totonya to become responsible for the whole household, in every sense, thus entirely annulling her own individuality. Throughout this process, she gives up her studies and is forced to struggle hard in order to feed her children.

Indeed, Totonya's "expedition" to Benguela leads her to understand that despite the effort of the centralizing governmental entity to promote an image of national unity and continuity, there is no single community model or cultural discourse of the nation, because the experience of the imagined community varies according to the extent of their assimilation to the dominant culture. In other words, she starts conceptualizing Benguela not as an extension of modern Luanda, nor as representative of the traditional "backward" countryside: Benguela emerges as a contact zone, and a very negative one at that. As such, this community offers a social arena in which two different cultures interact within a power structure that defines the dominant, official and imposed order, as opposed to the dominated, unofficial and subjected order. The same binary opposition of the pre-independence Angolan contact zone, which placed colonizer and colonized in direct confrontation, is reproduced in Benguela, this time opposing the dominant culture to all the other cultures considered to be comparatively marginal. The

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[648] Ibidem, p. 33: "Sabias que se isso fôr ao conhecimento do partido ainda posso cair?".

intransigent nature of the dominant ideology manifests itself through the attempt at post-colonial cultural assimilation, which is unsuccessful due to its inability to completely erase and substitute dominated cultures. Hence, awareness of the occurrence of the contact zone as a cultural phenomenon not only exposes the limitations of the unifying imagination of the nation, but also underlines the significance of Totonya's autoethnographic trajectory as the means to demystify the representations which are built within that same imagined community. By focusing on the materialization of the dialogue between dominant and dominated culture, the autoethnographic journey emphasizes the active role of marginal groups in the performance of transculturation, a process that, ultimately, translates into a cultural negotiation in which the dominated culture selects and incorporates specific features of the dominant culture.

As we learn more about the Benguela community, we come to realize that it puts forward a cultural paradigm that enables the population to access a feeling of belonging towards the national community without sacrificing the cultural model that preceded it. However, the balance of this negotiation depends on the maintenance of the opposition between private and public spheres, given that in the former the community is able to maintain cultural behaviours considered to be obsolete by the dominant discourse, whereas in the latter the performance of this dominant ideology takes place. As Catherine Scott reminds us in her important study on gender and development theories, the revolutionary discourse of the MPLA, according to its Marxist-Leninist influences, envisioned modernity (and women's liberation within it) as a revolutionary process that could occur only within the public space, which implied the immediate association of the private sphere with obsolete and oppressive traditional structures and practices, and, therefore, the deliberate disregard of the household as representative of that same marginal space.[649] Obviously, the preservation of this opposition is particularly oppressive to women, given that the household – the place to which they have been historically bound – is clearly sacrificed for the sake of the survival, consolidation and assimilation of the official male-oriented public discourse of the nation:

> OMA, presumably as a result of the pressures from the male-dominated MPLA, has avoided open opposition to bride-price because it would evoke hostility from "traditionalists" (Wolfers and Bergerol 1983: 126). In addition, bride-price and other practices such as polygamy are characterized as "feudal practices" by both parties [MPLA and Frelimo], which has the effect of

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[649] Scott (1995), pp. 105-119.

equating such practices with dehistoricized "tradition" rather than inextricably bound up with social organization and the relations of production.[650]

Hence, in *Totonya* this immediately implies the continuity of gendered power structures: in the public sphere women emerge as emancipated (having mobility, jobs, being able to study and to make their own choices), but in the private sphere they are subjugated (adding domestic tasks to their professional ones, being completely responsible for their offspring, being forced to accept unofficial polygamy, and not having the means to make themselves heard in a male-oriented society). They appear to have no place in the contact zone, which makes the autoethnographic journey twice as relevant: not only does it dignify an "allegedly 'subordinate' culture"[651], thus demonstrating the potential of a positive contact zone, but it also claims a place for women within a new imagination of the nation, by denouncing the male-oriented character of all the communities imagined until that point.

Predictably, Totonya's first reaction to the acknowledgement of the contact zone and, subsequently, of the non-hegemonic position of the dominant discourse, is to assimilate the new cultural paradigm postulated in Benguela. When she realizes that her Luanda Catholic God is powerless in Benguela, she does not abandon him, but she does 'conceal' both him and her religious practices in the private sphere. It is, actually, very interesting to observe here that as a representative of the official socialist discourse of the nation, she is so obviously related with the hidden practice of Catholicism, a fact that immediately suggests two different lines of reading. The first refers to the limitations applying an orthodox Marxist-Leninist ideology to the specific context of Angola, in which religion, and particularly the Catholic Church, had such a major cultural impact historically. According to Birmingham, many members of the Luanda political elite maintained their religious connections and practices throughout this socialist period, albeit at a private and secret level.[652] The detection of such behavioural characteristics in Totonya reveals a certain duplicity in the performance of the official discourse of the nation which, as we will be able to observe later on, exposes its instability. The second line of reading directs us to the importance of Totonya's open affiliation to Catholicism (regardless of the contradiction it entailed in ideological

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[650] Ibidem, p. 113.
[651] Huggan (2001), p. 43.
[652] Birmingham (2002), pp. 174-75.

terms) in the eyes of a reader in 1997. By the end of the Cold War period and after the signing of the Bicesse Peace Accord in 1991, the government changed its attitude towards religion, coming to officially reactivate its connections with the Catholic Church. Birmingham points out that the Luanda elite had a central role in the making of this decision, as it was eager to "re-build the country's traditions of power and subordination" through the reactivation of "the Catholic church's authoritarian hierarchy".[653] In other words: the stronger the association with the Catholic Church, the greater the access to power. Given that the government aimed at using the Catholic Church's support, while simultaneously restraining its power, particularly in the period that followed the signing of the Lusaka Accord in 1994, this reference to Totonya's religious faith is, by no means, innocent. Our reading of this faith by the end of the 1990's does provide a primary illusion of uninterrupted continuity, as if in its essence, the MPLA government – and, by extension, the Luanda elite and the whole of Angola – had always been religion-friendly. Yet, by portraying religion in a very specific historical moment to an audience which is sixteen years distant from that same moment, in a supposedly distinct ideological regime, the novel simultaneously incites the reader to create a parallel and, thus, question the role of religion as one of the ideological instruments of the governmental entity.[654]

Although she feels torn and disempowered as a cultural agent, the struggle for survival in the new cultural setting compels Totonya to publicly embrace the new power structure by agreeing to look for help from sorcerers:

> Não vou passar toda a minha vida a cometer pecados. Já fui uma vez e basta. Será que vou passar toda a minha vida a andar em Kimbandas por causa do marido? Eu nasci e cresci na religião Ciló. Sou baptizada e fiz a comunhão e crisma, como é que agora vou-me meter em ciwiyawiyas?[655]

Notwithstanding her reluctance, Totonya ends up visiting various sorcerers over the years, and spending all her money on them, although they continuously prove ineffectual. All of the sorcerers tell her the exact same thing: that Quim is not to be

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[653] Ibidem, p. 175.

[654] Messiant (2007), p. 103: "During this post-Lusaka period, the regime consolidated the domination gained by military means. It ensured that UNITA failed to get a toehold, either in politics or within society, which might have been threatening to the MPLA. It also made sure that no political opposition was allowed to surface and that civil society remained unable to challenge the prevailing predation, destitution, injustice and impunity".

[655] Da Silva (2005), p. 45.

blamed at all for the situation given that Joana has bewitched him. Hence, Quim emerges completely discharged of any responsibility for his actions: although he does not *want* to be a polygamous husband, he is obliged to be one by forces that command him, which are ultimately controlled by Joana. The public tension between both genders arises disguised as a private domestic strife between women, a portrayal in which the position of men clearly remains unquestioned. At this point, and given the emphasis that is put on the very specific use of the discourse on witchcraft, it is impossible not to see a parallel with the historic witch-hunt that the MPLA (as well as the UNITA) carried out against those who positioned themselves against the party's stance at various times.[656] In order to consolidate its power as incontestable, the party persecuted and killed many of its opponents under accusations of witchcraft and sorcery, practices which, allegedly, were contrary to the regime's ideology and conceptualization of the modern nation. In other words, the discourse on witchcraft was used to create scapegoats, who in their turn, would be sacrificed to ensure the MPLA's hold on power.[657]

Furthermore, it is important not to forget the fact that, as an "obscure" and "backward" practice, witchcraft is represented in revolutionary discourse as being part of the traditional world, the realm inhabited by women. In the words of Samora Machel with reference to Mozambique, as quoted by Scott, "all superstitions and religions find their most fertile soil among women, because they are immersed in the greatest ignorance and obscurantism".[658] In *Totonya*, specifically in the Benguela context under analysis, men's conduct towards those who are peripheral to power, and therefore threatening – namely women –, is analogous to that of the Marxist regime as a whole. They also make use of the discourse on witchcraft to exempt themselves from any behavioural responsibility, thus maintaining the gender power structures intact. For years, Totonya is persuaded to believe that the person who is responsible for her own

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[656] See, for example, Newitt (2007), pp. 82-85; Birmingham (2002), p. 183; Messiant (2007), pp. 103-106.

[657] In this context, the reasons for the support given by FESA to the publication of the novel *Totonya* become even clearer, especially if we take into account the specific context of 1996, in which the MPLA government was facing vast popular discontent and, thus, conducted a clever racial campaign that would enable the people to release some of their frustration, without losing their support to the UNITA (which, at the time, was also preparing for war). See Messiant (2001), pp. 307-308: "The President himself, through police and legal measures and aided by the media, directs the process of suggesting certain recognizable groups as targets or scapegoats, on which popular anger may be vented. This serves the common interests of the regime and the nomenklatura and can also be used to manipulate internal divisions and contradictions. Designated scapegoats are as far as possible external to the regime but may even, when necessary, include internal segments of the power elite as well. Examples of designated scapegoats include so-called 'foreign speculators', Ovimbundus, mulattoes and whites".

[658] Machel (1981), p. 24, quoted in Scott (1995), p. 111.

and her family's situation is not Quim, but Joana, in a clear recollection of the ancient colonial rule of "Divide et Impera".[659] Again, women are shown not to have a voice within the contact zone, as here too the process of transculturation is being manoeuvred by men.

Hence, all of Totonya's energy is spent on trying to win Quim back. Compelled to live in unofficial polygamy, she becomes a constant victim of Quim's rage attacks and accepts them without questioning them, as she believes that he is not to be made responsible for them:

> A surra passou a ser o pão de cada dia. Surrar Totonya, para Quim deixa de ser um hábito para se tornar um vício. Assim era a vida de Totonya, vida essa que aguenta cerca de três anos. Não podia sair. Ainda tinha esperanças que Quim voltaria p'ra ela. Porque as pessoas que conheciam o tradicionalismo assim o diziam. Diziam que a amante lhe dera drogas, que fazem os imbanda e que adormecem totalmente o passado, para dedicar-se sòmente à quem lhe deu a droga. Mas diziam também que esta droga, mas diziam que mais tarde ou mais cedo acabaria e ele voltaria para casa. Por isso Totonya se encontrava ali. Para receber o marido de braços abertos, quando ele voltasse, para que os filhos desamparados e tristes como estavam, voltassem a ser felizes".[660]

She completely eliminates herself so as to adjust to the new order in the contact zone. Due to Quim's total alienation from the family, she is forced to assume all manner of responsibilities within the household. In addition, the fact that she was constantly injured prevented her from attending her classes and, thus, carrying on with her studies. Yet, she continues to consult different sorcerers, who are recommended to her by other women, as they provide her with the temporary illusion of having power to change Quim. It is, thus, made clear that in this setting, women can only exert any sort of action through the intervention of men, whereas they manipulate these small fragments of illusory power which are given to women to consolidate the male network. As persons who are perceived as having the power to change people's destinies, the sorcerers have a major influence on the way people conduct their lives. By leading women to believe that other women and not men are to be made responsible for polygamy, not only do they divert women away from the reality of gender power structures in operation, but they also manipulate them to reinforce it and ensure its proliferation. Although Quim's behaviour keeps Totonya imprisoned in the passive private sphere, the whole of society

[659] See Gentili, Anna Maria, 'Introdução: O Leão e o Caçador' in *O Leão e o Caçador: Uma História da África Sub-Saariana* (Maputo: Arquivo Histórico de Moçambique, 1998), pp. 7-36.
[660] Da Silva (2005), pp. 39-40.

expects her to contribute to the maintenance of the imagined community in the public arena.

Another very important aspect to focus on is the evolution and subsequent elision of Totonya's desire, which is something that begins when Quim decides to get another wife, in the aftermath of the newborn child's death, and is never fully revoked in the entire novel. Interestingly, when Totonya first arrives at Benguela and meets the mestiço man who helps her, she expresses desire for him, which demonstrates her awareness of her own body and pleasures.[661] Notwithstanding, she does this only in her thoughts, and always in a very self-censored manner, thus adopting a behaviour that is indicative of both a conservative Catholic and a classic Marxist stance. From the moment in which Quim prevents her from having a sexual life, Totonya gradually loses control over her body, which becomes exclusively the passive receptacle of Quim's violence: colonial desire thus becomes post-colonial desire, as the white male colonizer is replaced, in the post-independence setting, by the native socialist "new man". Given that the markedly masculine process of modernizing the new nation-state depends on women's cultural sacrifices to succeed, female desire is elided for the sake of maintaining male hegemonic authority within the household – and, consequently, in the outside world as well. It is, therefore, not surprising that the sorcerers use their status to reinstate the colonization of the female body. As soon as they become aware of the fact that Totonya has not had any sexual activity since Quim found himself a new lover, most sorcerers whom she meets offer to replace him in that area of her life. Hence, despite shedding some light on the total elision of female desire and sexuality, they do so with a view to replacing the hegemonic male with another hegemonic male, thus allowing the sexual economy to remain undisturbed. Nevertheless, Totonya's refusal to have sex with the sorcerers either to voice her sexual desire or to guarantee Quim's return to the household can, thus, be read as a gesture towards the recapturing of the female body in the sense that it represents her choice of actively disrupting the propagation of the sexual economy. As a consequence, the autoethnographic journey becomes celebratory, as it exposes women's sexual representation as passive items of exchange in a male-dominated sexual circuit, simultaneously subverting this same

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[661] Ibidem, p. 20: "Totonya achou-o interessante.
- Que bacana! – pensou – como é que eu não o tinha reparado antes? Ai se eu fosse solteira… juro que esse tipo não me escapava… - e sorriu por dentro ao imaginar o que diria Quim, se lhe dissesse o que estava acontecendo com ela naquele momento".

representation through Totonya's choice to place herself in a position of decision-making as regards her own body, sexuality and desire.

Quim's constant gestures of violence towards Totonya also represent a strategy for enclosing her sexuality and ensuring that she is kept in the household, the official non-existence of which, within the official discourse of the nation, guarantees men's mobility and uncontested power. In the aftermath of another beating, Totonya ends up being taken to hospital by some female neighbours, who do not mention the truth about her injuries to the doctors for fear of retaliation. When questioned by the doctors and nurses, Totonya lies: despite knowing that she could put an end to her misery by bringing the private into the public, she chooses not to do so because she still excuses Quim's behaviour.[662] Throughout this process of assimilation to the new cultural setting, Totonya loses her female cultural identity: she does not know who she is anymore, nor does she know how she is meant to behave. Her self-alienation reaches a point at which she harms herself, while praying to her Luanda God.[663] In fact, in moments of despair, Luanda is immediately called upon, in clear opposition to Benguela: it emerges at this point as the place of salvation. Apart from Totonya's obvious connection with Luanda, the city is the place where her family (who can supposedly do something to help her) lives; the place where her children want to escape to; the place that connotes modernity. Hence, Luanda appears as her safety net, the place where there is a positive and stable order, as opposed to the complex and obscure reality of Benguela.

This takes us to the third moment in Totonya's autoethnographic journey, in which the perceptions of the relationship between Luanda and Benguela change once more. Tired of waiting for something to change in her condition, she decides to travel to Luanda in order to inform both her own and Quim's family of the situation the couple are going through and request their assistance. Totonya's return to Luanda implies a deviation in the autoethnographic journey which, in its turn, materializes her response to her own identity construction within the Benguela contact zone. In an effort to confront and ultimately deconstruct her *other* gender identity in the *other* community, she attempts to recuperate her former *self* identity as she knew it before entering the contact zone. Given that, in Totonya's perception, the Luanda-instituted model of community

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[662] Ibidem, pp. 60-62.
[663] Ibidem, p. 84.

has always seemed horizontal, the reaffirmation of its universal validity appears to be the only way to claim a space for women in the contact zone and, thus, oppose the male-dominated transculturation process that takes place in Benguela.

In Luanda, once Totonya's family acknowledges her situation, they decide to call Quim's family so that, together, both families can think of the most appropriate way to solve the situation. Despite demonstrating shock and shame towards the state of affairs, Quim's family direct their frustration at the women's behaviour: firstly, at Quim's mother's behaviour, as regardless of being aware of the whole situation, the older woman asked Totonya not to tell anyone about it, because she would bring shame on the family; and secondly, at Southern women's behaviour, generally associating them with witchcraft. In the end, both families decide that one member of each family should be sent to Benguela, along with Totonya, to force Joana to undo the spell, make sure that Quim is treated and that normality, according to their terms, is restored. Nevertheless, it is not until Quim's uncle, Francisco Alfredo Dudas, fails to join the other members of the party on the scheduled date that the hidden multiple layers of Luanda men's behaviours begin to be exposed before Totonya's eyes. Soon she finds out that Dudas also practices unofficial polygamy, as he has four wives. By hiding in a different house every day, he escapes Totonya's family, thus refusing to make his contribution to dismantling a structure that he also benefits from. Totonya's family ends up getting tired of looking and waiting for him and decides that the best thing to do is not to send anyone at all. Totonya would have to be patient and accept her situation:

> A Totonya vai ter paciência. Desta vez vai ainda sòzinha. Depois, nós aqui vamos ver se conseguimos mais convocar a família do tale marido. Depois agente telefona pra Totonya pra dizer como é que foi. Ouviu mana? Deve ser tua karma já, vamos fazé mais como? Não fica zangada, nós vamo resolver.[664]

This episode at Luanda represents a very important stage in the autoethnographic journey. It is at this point that the proximity between Luanda and Benguela appears, once again, irrefutable, the continuity between the two distinct communities being achieved this time through the efforts made to ensure the continuation of the gender power structures. The connivance of Totonya's familial structure with preserving the separation between the private and the public spheres demonstrates the limitations of the nation's official revolutionary discourse of nationhood for women's emancipation. It

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[664] Ibidem, p. 147.

reveals, in addition, an awareness of the need to sacrifice women to ensure the success of the transculturation process in operation: they are meant to silently accept their contradictory positioning within the negotiated identity of the community as "karma", as a destiny not open to being changed. Hence, Luanda, just like Benguela, emerges as a negative contact zone, in which the post-colonial conceptualization of the nation responds to the colonial one, by attempting to overcome it and, yet, is also simultaneously aware of the impossibility of (completely) erasing the previously-instituted model of community. As Scott points out, the political elite responsible for the revolutionary discourse were aware that maintaining their hold on power would entail negotiation with other social elites. The discourse of unity would, thus, be achieved through the sacrifice of women, as the class and economic liberation of women so emphasized during the pro-liberation war would have to be deprioritized in the post-independence setting. As Scott puts it, "in this sense, both governments [the MPLA and Frelimo] have attempted to maintain political support by conceding the terrain of the household to male authority".[665] It is, therefore, made clear for Totonya that in the Luanda contact zone the prevalence of the dominant ideology also depends on this discourse keeping silent on women's positioning, as well as on the preservation of a patriarchal hierarchy within the family structure. Again, her autoethnographic journey allows her to comprehend that, indeed, there is no place for women in this contact zone either, as the transculturation process is, once more, produced by and for men.

Powerless, Totonya returns to Benguela only to find a very well-behaved Quim expecting her at their place. Eventually, she comes to realize that he is taking this position because he is afraid of the consequences of Totonya's trip to Luanda: he is scared that his freedom might be jeopardized if the private becomes public. Obviously, a month later, when he is sure that no member of his family is coming to "punish" him, he feels comfortable enough not just to adopt the same behaviours he did previously, but also to start delineating a plan to completely disempower Totonya in the public sphere as well, so as to prevent her from ever becoming threatening to him and to what he symbolizes as a male representative of socialist ideology, who is openly subverting it. It becomes clear at this point that Quim acts consciously and opportunistically towards the preservation of a gender power structure which cuts across all community discourses. Nevertheless, Totonya is incapable of any reaction. She seeks for the advice

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[665] Scott (1995), p. 110.

of OMA, but when its secretaries suggest calling Quim for a conversation, she refuses to allow them to interfere. She knows that Quim's public image, as the prototype of the socialist, revolutionary and modern new man, depends on his control of the private sphere. Therefore, she sacrifices her own identity in order to maintain his projected masculinity intact, and, following the advice of a friend who, curiously enough worked at the Municipal Committee of the MPLA, she carries on consulting kimbandas in the attempt to undo Joana's bewitchment and, thus, bring Quim back to their home. Having been completely deprived of any identity in both the Luanda and the Benguela settings, Totonya is willing to fully assimilate to the new cultural setting to safeguard some sense of continuity, as she is still unable to recreate her identity outside any imagination that defines her *self* in relation to her husband. His leaving their household represents, in her perception, her complete loss of identity:

> Não sei porquê a Joana fez isso comigo. Não devia fazer essa partida pra… pra mim. Devia vir só e ficávamos as duas. Não é… não é proibido um homem ter duas mulheres. Ago… agora por cima do que é meu, va… vai ficar com ele as… assim. Vai enfei… feitiçar o meu marido pra ficar só… só dela, de cor… de corpo e alma? Oh! Não. Não Lúcia, é muito pra mim. Que mal é que fiz nesse mundo, pra merecer tanto castigo?[666]

Aware that Totonya still has the power to destroy his public image, by exposing his treatment of her in the private sphere, Quim proceeds to her ultimate disempowerment by reversing the situation: taking advantage of the fact that Totonya travelled to Luanda without his knowledge, he proceeds to destroy her public image by questioning her behaviour in the private sphere. He, thus, spreads the rumour that Totonya was unfaithful to him in order to discredit her publicly and, subsequently, as a motive to expel her from the household, or even to kill her if she refuses to leave.[667] Totonya's refusal to disempower Quim ends up providing him with the tools to disempower her. Left with no other option, she ends up escaping the household and even considering suicide: the image of her abandoned children is what prevents her from doing it. Dona Andresa, Totonya's devoted friend, is the one who gives shelter both to her and her children as a week later Quim stops by to drop off their kids, as if they were not his anymore.

It is in this new setting that Totonya makes direct contact with different conceptions of femininity for the first time, as she learns more about D. Andresa's six

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[666] Da Silva (2005), p. 156.
[667] Ibidem, pp. 171-173.

daughters. D. Andresa, who was widowed at the age of twenty seven, had struggled all her life to provide her daughters with the best education they could get. Hence, her first daughter, Carla, who is twenty seven years old, is studying Economics in London and is single. Dora, the second daughter, is a twenty-six year old final year student of Medicine in Uambo, who is also single. The third daughter, Lala, is a divorcee who had been sent to study in Switzerland straight after her divorce, and is now working in Luanda, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. She has one daughter, who is living with D. Andresa. Mima, the fourth daughter, is twenty one years old and has two children. Having studied in Cuba, she was unable to complete her course due to her pregnancy. She is now living in Benguela with her soon-to-be husband Walter, with whom she is very happy, and both resumed their studies. Isa, the fifth daughter, is a twenty year old dance student in Portugal. And, finally, Maria José is eighteen years old and studies in Luanda. D. Andresa's preoccupations regarding her daughters only concerns the older ones, who refuse to get married, and consequently, achieve the social status provided by marriage to women, and also Mima, who, in her mother's point of view, did not fully take the opportunity of studying abroad and, now, has to share a home with her mother-in-law and her sisters-in-law.

In the novel, these women incorporate experiences of femininity which are very distinct from all the others that Totonya comes into contact with throughout her autoethnographic journey. All of D. Andresa's daughters seem to be very aware of the limitations of revolutionary ideology for women. Therefore, from within their (class and economic) public liberation, they subvert the patriarchal communal imagery of the nation through their refusal to reproduce the male sexual economy of women's exchange[668] and through their imposition of their own individualities above the collective need of 'normalization'. Hence, there are, at this point, three important aspects that the novel focuses on regarding the female identity. Firstly, there is a clear reference being made to education as the means to allow women to rewrite their identities, which somehow echoes the socialist ideals of women's emancipation in the public sphere for their engagement in the revolution. Secondly, education also emerges as the means for women to attain freedom: not only in terms of physical and socio-cultural mobility, but also in terms of personal and individual choice. Finally, the

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[668] The absence of the patriarchal male in this female-dominated household can be read as predicting the disturbance of the male sexual economy. Decision-making is taken by women who, in that position, are able to bring forward challenging female identities, which are highly disruptive of convention.

majority of female subjectivities here proposed emerge as detached from men, as if suggesting that women's rewriting of their own identities is something that they have to undertake on their own. Although women are analysed here within a markedly masculine context, feminine identities never really get to be renegotiated alongside masculine identities. Hence, the description of the six daughters' diverging paths adds to Totonya's autoethnographic journey in the sense that it reveals alternative female subjectivities that respond to and dialogue with predefined representations, thus actively engaging in the renegotiation of the transculturation process in operation in the imagination of the community.

In fact, it is not until Totonya starts feeling part of this family that some changes begin to emerge in her behaviour. Firstly, she gets the courage to present a formal complaint to the Police. Nevertheless, the Police prove to be completely useless, as five days later they lose the official documents of Totonya's denunciation. And even when Totonya looks for the help of the party, she is confronted with the same inefficiency:

> - Não sei quais foram os problemas que fizeram com que ele te pusesse na rua – disse – de qualquer forma, acho que, pra um homem agir assim tem que ter motivos fortes. Vou ver o que ele vai dizer. Vou tentar ajudar. Mas fica já a saber, que não posso obrigar um homem a viver com uma mulher que não quer.[669]

Again, the household emerges as a blind spot that is beyond the limits of influence of official discourse where male hegemony is not to be contested. Furthermore, the fact that both the policeman and the party assistant are men suggests men conniving among themselves to maintain this order. If according to the official discourse of the nation women's identity within the private sphere is immutable, then they do not have the official means to challenge that identity publicly.

Secondly, and in the aftermath of the frustrating encounters with the representatives of the official nation-state, Totonya engages in what is to become her last visit to a kimbanda. After begging the old sorcerer to help her get her husband back, he tries to force her to have sex with him, but she manages to escape. Although she can only conceive of her sexuality within her marriage, which is over, by refusing to sleep with the kimbanda she resists the circuit of the male sexual economy. Thirdly, when Quim looks her up to tell her that she is not threatening to him anymore because the

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[669]Da Silva (2005), p. 183.

party would not force him to accept her back, Totonya finally gives up on him and starts focusing solely on her own and her children's survival. Fourthly, Totonya's disconnection from Quim materializes in the restoration of her desire, when for the first time she feels attracted to another man, Lino, D. Andresa's eldest nephew. Finally, when she discovers that Quim has ruined her reputation across the entire town, she decides to request transfer at work and move away with her children to a non-identified place within the Angolan nation-state: she chooses neither Luanda, nor Benguela, but herself and her children. The last few lines of the novel suggest that Totonya rebuilds her identity, but never again is she able to fall in love, as she is scared that another man may steal her identity from her, which, again reinforces the idea of the emergence of an alternative female identity being conditioned by women's disconnection from men.

According to Scott, "Class relations and subordinate relations between centre and periphery in the world capitalist economy thus take precedence in dependence theory; other locations of struggle, contradiction, and conflict are given less attention".[670] Reinforcing Scott's view, the novel *Totonya* proposes the analysis of the household as an*other* location of gender struggle, in a very specific historic moment in which the renegotiation of national identity was occurring. In this continuous renegotiation, balance depends on the stabilization of the male identity as somehow continuous (in a permanently and rapidly changing world) in the private sphere. This means that the stabilization of the male identity is achieved through the sacrifice of the female identity, which becomes contradictory. Women become simultaneously representatives of the modern world (in that they leave the "backward" traditional world to occupy a space in and, thus, validate the male designed – and oriented – revolutionary public space) and of the traditional world (in that it is the maintenance of their identity in the private sphere that provides the male identity with a sense of continuity). Hence, it is women that bear all the responsibility for maintaining a continuous and stable communal identity, which is meant to be simultaneously malleable and modern. This perception gives a whole new dimension to the revisiting of this particular socialist and revolutionary context in 1998, especially if we take into consideration the fact that in this period the Angolan government was attempting to correspond to the international directives of the World Bank and the IMF. As Scott reminds us, although from 1989 on the World Bank targeted women specifically in their

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[670] Scott (1995), 9.

development policies, their directives came to put more pressure on women, given that "women continue to be defined in terms of procreative, childrearing, and 'household economy' functions, but they are also made the new 'targets' of government policies and the recipients of greater bureaucratic discipline and control".[671]

The novel, thus, seems to ask "when will Angolan women have a place in the ethnography of the nation?". This autoethnographic journey of Totonya somehow sets out to fill in this gap or make this blind spot visible in the continuous imagination of Angolan nationhood in a clear deconstructive gesture of "celebratory autoethnography"[672] which claims a place for women in the Angolan nation through the historicization of women's experience. Furthermore, it exposes the limits of the dominant national discourse, simultaneously unveiling the Luanda and Benguela communities as negative contact zones which are maintained through male dominance of the household. It also reveals how the transculturation processes which occur in both settings are recreations of a masculine modernity that limits female's options within national identity. And, finally, it attempts to resist preconceived female representations by proposing new forms of female subjectivity able to engage in their own reinscription in the active renegotiation of the nation as an imagined community. Although Da Silva is less optimistic than Chiziane, for example, in the proposal of new female representations, the novel does open the way for some alternatives (D. Andresa's daughters and even Totonya, by the end of the book), which might suggest a process of transculturation which is inclusive of women who, alongside men, should proceed to the definition of "Angolanness" and Angolan nationhood.

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[671] Ibidem, p. 18. See also Mama (2001), pp. 63-73, in which the author focuses on the examples of Zaire and Zimbabwe to show how the authoritarian Mobutu and Mugabe governments, respectively, made use of international gender discourses to secure external funds and, simultaneously, reinforce their hold on power.
[672] Huggan (2001), p. 43.

Concluding Remarks: Whose imagined community? Rethinking national identity through gender

> *Identity is all about power and resistance, subjection and citizenship, action and reaction. I would suggest that* rather than simply passing over identity in order to rethink power, we need to profoundly *rethink* identity if we are to begin to comprehend the meaning of power.
> Amina Mama, *Challenging Subjects*[673]

The present study aimed primarily to promote the critical analysis of literary works written in Portuguese by African women writers in an attempt to enlarge the field of literary research inside the Portuguese-speaking world and to formulate a new and timely approach to the marginalized female voice that is emerging from within the Lusophone postcolonial African countries. As such, by focusing specifically on the literary production of the female authors Dina Salústio (1941), Paulina Chiziane (1955) and Rosária da Silva (1959), this study sought to analyse comparatively a corpus from Cape Verde, Mozambique and Angola with a view to furthering an understanding of how the authors build their postcolonial nations culturally from a female-focalized point of view and how they represent the women of these nations interacting with the transcultural contexts that pertain to each country.

In order to think nationalism and national identity through literature in the three recent nation-states mentioned above, the study departed from the approaches of specific postcolonial theorists whose works analyse and deconstruct hegemonic discourses of identity. The point of departure was Benedict Anderson's understanding of the nation as an "imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign", which not only highlights the invented nature of any unitary conceptualization – and, thus, its openness and flexibility –, but also unveils the potential for communion of marginal discourses.[674] This perspective was taken up again and developed in Homi Bhabha's theorization of the dynamics of national discourse, the instability of which comes from its pedagogical dimension being constantly disturbed

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[673] Mama, Amina, 'Challenging Subjects: Gender and Power in African Contexts' in *African Sociological Review*, 5 (2), 2001, pp. 63-73.

[674] Anderson, Benedict, *Imagined communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991), p. 6.

and subverted by the performative one.[675] Again, marginality emerged as an empowered site of renegotiation and reconstruction, which took us to Edward Said's reflections on exile. According to Said, the condition of exile represents an irrecoverable displacement of the human being as regards her/his own homeland which makes her/him struggle constantly in order to build strategies and mechanisms that will enable her/him to attempt to somehow recapture that sense of continuity in relation to the origins.[676] This experience, which normally entails a geographical displacement, acquires a whole new dimension when observed within the geographical limits of the nation. Andrea O'Reilly Herrera uses the term *insílio* to refer to this specific condition, claiming that it is a psychological and emotional state that precedes the actual physical exile, manifesting itself through feelings of alienation.[677]

Reflections on the awareness and subsequent active involvement of the displaced in the discussion of the discourses of nationhood were also at the core of Mary Louise Pratt's theorization of contact zones, autoethnography and transculturation.[678] Advancing the term 'contact zone' with reference "to social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today"[679], Pratt points out that regardless of being positive or negative, they always disrupt the continuity of instituted models of community. Hence, Pratt defends that autoethnographic texts have an unquestionably relevant role in the literary production of negative contact zones (such as colonial environments) due to their ability to propose alternative representations in dialogue with established ethnographic texts.[680] This dialogue results in a phenomenon that the Cuban sociologist Fernando Ortiz called transculturation, which stands for the capacity that marginal groups demonstrate of selecting and appropriating certain features of the dominant culture, (and vice versa) thus continuously renegotiating the conceptualization

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[675] Bhabha, Homi K. (ed.), 'Dissemination: time, narrative, and the margins of the modern nation' in *Nation and Narration* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990).
[676] Said, Edward, *Reflections on Exile and Other Literary and Cultural Essays* (London: Granta Books, 2001), pp. 173-186.
[677] Herrera, Andrea O'Reilly, *Remembering Cuba: Legacy of a Diaspora* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001), pp. xvii-xxxiii.
[678] Pratt, Mary Louise, 'Arts of the Contact Zone' in *Profession 91*. New York: MLA, 1991. 33-40 [www.class.uidaho.edu/thomas/English.../Arts_of_the_Contact_Zone.pdf] (16/10/2009)
[679] Ibidem, p. 1.
[680] Ibidem, p. 2.

of the community.[681] This emphasis on the disruptive potential of autoethnography was recaptured in Graham Huggan's study of the Post-Colonial Exotic, as he observed the possibilities that emerge from what he called "celebratory autoethnography".[682] Huggan advances the term "the anthropological exotic"[683] to refer to a phenomenon that reflects a general tendency to make Africa and African literature more attractive for western audiences, simultaneously highlighting the emergence of "ethnographic counter-discourse[s]" in contemporary African literary production that responds to that phenomenon.[684] "Celebratory autoethnography" is, therefore, one of these strategies of resistance that keeps dismantling predefined representations, as well as reopening and adding to the debate on nationhood.[685]

However, considering that these approaches largely exclude gender perspectives, the present study interrogated their premises further by incorporating postcolonial feminist theories as well as feminist theories from sociology. Anne McClintock and Nira Yuval-Davis, two of the most important theorists of nationalism and gender, advocate that all nations are based on gender difference, meaning that all discourses of nationhood are built upon defined conceptualizations of womanhood and manhood which spring from specific historical, geographical and socio-cultural contexts (being those colonial, anti-colonial or post-colonial).[686] Given that, as McClintock points out, women have historically been connoted as the "symbolic bearers of the nation", despite not having any real access to national agency, the analysis of nationalism through the lens of a theory of gender power would give access to various experiences of the nation (which change according to gender, class, ethnic group, race, generation, etc.), simultaneously enabling the rethinking of national identities.[687] Amina Mama reinforces this position by defending that the analysis of identity through gender enables a greater understanding of the intricacies of power structures in operation and, thus, of the best tools to dismantle them with a view to constructing more inclusive and democratic ways

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[681] Ibidem, p. 2.
[682] Huggan, Graham, 'African Literature and the Anthropological Exotic' in *The Post-Colonial Exotic: Marketing the Margins* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), pp. 34-57.
[683] Ibidem, p. 37.
[684] Ibidem, p. 40.
[685] Ibidem, p. 43.
[686] McClintock, Anne, *Imperial leather: race, gender and sexuality in the colonial contest* (London; New York: Routledge, 1995); Yuval-Davis, Nira, *Gender and Nation* (London: Sage, 1997).
[687] McClintock (1995), pp. 354-360.

of experiencing selfhood and/in nationhood.[688] Hence, localized examinations of women's representations within national discourses and the contextualized strategies they put forward to force the renegotiation of their identities emerge as empowering sites of resistance and change.[689]

Considering that the three nation-states under analysis had one-party socialist regimes immediately after independence, Catherine Scott's study on gender and development theories comes to complement the afore-mentioned theorizations on situated analysis of gender, as it demonstrates that Marxist Leninist-influenced revolutionary discourses conceived modernity (and women's emancipation) as a revolutionary process that could occur only within the public space, thus associating the private sphere – and the household along with it – with obsolete traditionalism and obscurantism.[690] This elision of a space which was historically bound to women and, to a certain extent, to a female historicity is not innocent, as it reveals that the modern socialist conceptualizations of nationhood over stabilised and fixed too firmly the female identities as images of the nation that suited men.[691] Focusing particularly on the cases of Mozambique and Angola, Scott states that in the years that followed independence, both the Frelimo and the MPLA governments negotiated their hold on power with other social elites by allowing male authority to remain uncontested within the household.[692] As the "symbolic bearers of the nation"[693], women became simultaneous markers of modernity and tradition, and the female body turned into the site of power struggle where the limits of the nation were defined. It is, therefore, not surprising that in these contexts the household setting and its consequent politicization emerged as women's site of resistance.

The works developed by the three authors mentioned above not only demonstrate the importance of thinking nationalism and national identity through gender, the basis on which these cultural constructions are built, but they also highlight the potential of suitably located and contextualized gender analysis for understanding the power networks that maintain hegemonic discourses, the various intersecting

[688] Mama, Amina, 'Challenging Subjects: Gender and Power in African Contexts' in *African Sociological Review*, 5 (2), 2001, pp. 63-73
[689] Ibidem, p. 67.
[690] Scott, Catherine, *Gender and Development: Rethinking Modernization and Dependency Theory* (Boulder; London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1995), pp. 105-119.
[691] Ibidem, p. 113.
[692] Ibidem, p. 110.
[693] McClintock (1995), p. 354.

marginal subjectivities that emerge from these discourses, and consequently the practices of resistance put forward to oppose them. The present study, therefore, aimed to propose a series of readings which draw on this theoretical framework and intended to demonstrate how the building of the post-independence nations under analysis is structured through gender differentiation. This outlook, therefore, enabled an assessment of the feasibility and limitation of the application of such theories to the gender-related issues in the specific context of postcolonial lusophone Africa, through detailed exploration of the ways in which each author represented, narrated and mediated the social, linguistic, cultural and anthropological coordinates of those internally differentiated spaces that constitute the three lusophone African countries. In addition, it allowed me to explore the possible existence of commonalities that link these women's experiences of Portuguese colonialism and the socialist experiment – i.e. to posit some common "lusophone postcolonial" spaces that reproduce African women's experiences.

As three young nation-states bound by some specific commonalities as well as differences in terms of the Portuguese colonial inheritance and the experience of a pro-liberation war, Cape Verde, Mozambique and Angola present distinct pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial histories, which, consequently, determine the development of the discussion on national identity that followed independence. Although this discussion took place in relation to various areas of public life, it found a special place in literary production, thus providing writers with the responsibility of creating national literary canons which were able to reflect the cultural uniqueness of their new-born nations. As such, in the representations of the three contexts, identity is portrayed as a work in progress, an open process which is conceptualized within specific power structures that emerge from particular historical, geographical, and circumstantial frameworks. Hence, literature becomes a privileged place for thinking national identity and questioning the processes of identity building, as Inocência Mata points out.[694]

Despite their different nationalities, backgrounds and ages, Dina Salústio, Paulina Chiziane and Rosária da Silva each share the common achievement of being the first female novel writer to emerge in the context of their own independent countries of

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[694] See, for example, Mata, Inocência, 'Laços de Memória: *a escrita-testemunho como terapêutica na literatura africana – os casos de Angola e da Costa do Marfim*' in *Laços de Memória & Outros Ensaios sobre Literatura Angolana* (Luanda: UEA, 2006), pp. 17-31.

origin. As women of their time, all three of them were connected with the three pro-liberation movements that took control of the governments at independence (PAIGC, Frelimo and MPLA, respectively). Hence, they made use of the space created for women in the public realm by the socialist governments in order to enter their male-dominated literary circles and engage in forms of writing that set out to shed light on a blind spot in the nation's imaginary: they set out to think the national identity project, in the post-independence period, through women's experience. More than simply putting women on the national map, their exposition of female experience (which had been marginalized up to that point) reveals the complex multiple layers that make up the construction of identity, as well as the power structures in operation at the moment of this production. Taking these facts into consideration, this study was divided into three sections, each devoted to the analysis of works by each author. This structure enabled a greater understanding of the specificities that particularize each of the distinct contexts under observation and, consequently, the literary production that emerges from them, thus facilitating a contextualized and situated gender analysis. Simultaneously, this individualized reading allowed a set of commonalities to emerge that traverses the works of the three authors, therefore broadly confirming the existence of a "lusophone postcolonial" space that reproduces African women's experience with some modifications.

The three authors' points of departure for thinking national identity through gender correspond to what Mama calls "the politicization of personal experience"[695], which examines how gender identity and subjectivities come to be constructed and maintained by hegemonic ideological discourses. Considering the dialectical relationship between text and context in African literatures[696], it is possible to observe that the three authors set out to portray scenes of female life experience within specific geographical, historical and political contexts in order to analyse how the stability that underpins the imagining of the community depends on strict gender representations which, very often imply a subjugation of feminine subjectivities. Hence, this observation of female individualities and experiences within the collective imaginary exposes the flaws in the discourses of communal cohesion experienced throughout the history of these young nation-states (the hegemonic colonial discourse; the unifying

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[695] Ibidem, p. 67.
[696] Mata (2006), pp. 17-31.

ideal of the socialist nation; the discourse of survival throughout the internal conflict and civil war, in the specific cases of Mozambique and Angola, respectively; the democratic ideal of the modern nation, mediated by powerful international entities such as the WB and the IMF), unveiling their patriarchal nature, not only due to their unitary and authoritarian character, but also because of their dependence on the exercise of control over the female body.

At an early stage, this revelation brings to light the uneven nature of the social relationship between women and men. Subsequently, it exposes a set of experiences of the nation that have been continuously marginalized in favour of the unifying identity of the nation and are, therefore, destined to maintain the continuity of the processes of "othering". In other words, the process of gender marginalization is the point of departure for rethinking the complexities of the formation of an "imagined community" which is able to recognize and incorporate its margins, through historical revision. I begin by enabling the historicization of female experience through the recovery of a genealogical memory. This historicization will, in turn, allow access to multiple experiences of womanhood that emerge through the intersection of variants such as race, class, ethnicity, and place of origin. Through the recuperation of these female genealogical memories it becomes possible to recover marginal experiences of the nation, which force the decentralization of the hegemonic discourses of nationhood by requiring the nation to confront its own mirrored image of multiplicity, and bring about cartographic and other reconfigurations in the delineation of the imagined community. Hence, by demonstrating that the imagination of the nation is not a shared conceptualization, these female subjectivities question that cultural construction, forcing the national discourse to review and rewrite itself. It is, therefore, by rethinking gender identity that these authors set out to rethink the whole conceptualization of identity, in general, and national identity, specifically, while simultaneously proposing alternatives. These alternative configurations of gender identity assert the limitations of conventional gender identities and, consequently, destabilize the patriarchal, elitist and exclusivist imagined communities which are based upon them. Through their affirmation, these subversive, challenging identities will ultimately put forward new, decentralized and more inclusive ways of imagining the collectivity.

Notwithstanding the existence of this common "lusophone postcolonial" space made up of shared female preoccupations and strategies, there are also certain

243

specificities that differentiate and particularize the experiences of each context. Dina Salústio's proposal of debating nationhood and national identity through gender emphasizes the colonial continuities which are still visible in a Cape Verdean post-independence context. Her revision of the cultural material that composes the national identity and defines the national community reveals the historical alienation of women through the advocation and maintenance of a patriarchal social structure which, in its turn, feeds upon static gender conceptualizations that keep women in subalternity. Hence, Salústio's interventionist attempt to denounce the inconsistencies of the modern discourse of nationhood from a gender perspective exposes the ongoing practice of colonial sexual ideals and practices of fertility. In addition, by simultaneously observing the various intersecting power relations that sustain that discourse, Salústio reflects on how gender, class, race and colour interact with a view to maintaining colonial conceptualizations of social dynamics in postcoloniality. These choices made by the author so as to promote the debate on nationalism and gender become more comprehensible in light of the country's historical trajectory. Cape Verde suffered a very particular type of colonization under Portuguese rule, which enabled its inhabitants to imagine themselves as part of a consolidated and "relatively homogenous Creole culture".[697] Considering that the country did not suffer the impact of an actual anti-colonial war occurring within the geographical limits of its territory; that after independence PAIGC/PAICV ruled the country's politics uncontested for fifteen years (having been replaced by MpD in 1990, after the first multiparty elections took place at the archipelago); and that Socialism acquired a much less orthodox character in this setting, not only due to the social, economic and cultural characteristics of the archipelago, but also due to the fact that the country was historically subject to continuous external influence and dependency (mostly through the action of emigrants), it is possible to affirm that that imagination of a stable, solid and – above all, dare I say – uninterrupted Creole culture was praised and maintained in order to remain undisturbed as the basis for a unifying discourse of nationhood. In other words, tradition as representative of a solid cultural identity – along with its intrinsic power structures – was recuperated and recycled so as to serve the purposes of the modern nation, whose success in the long term depended on the impact and assimilation of the imagination of community. Although PAIGC/PAICV's one-party political regime in Cape Verde did

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[697] Andrade, Elisa Silva, 'Cape Verde' in Patrick Chabal et al., *A History of Postcolonial Lusophone Africa* (London: Hurst & Company, 2002), p. 265.

not have the impact that Frelimo's or MPLA's had in Mozambique and Angola, respectively, the modern Cape Verdean nation was built upon patriarchal structures of power that expose colonial continuities. The author's emphasis on the ongoing nature of these interrelationships seems to indicate the need to actively engage in the decolonization of minds, habits, and customs – the culture which is taken for granted –, thus openly defying the stagnant nature of that Creole culture and demonstrating that identity, national identity and nationhood are a work in progress.

Given their similar colonial inheritance, orthodox socialist experience and problematic internal negotiation of the nation in the immediate post-independence period, it is possible to generate some important parallels between the Mozambican and the Angolan cases that do not apply to the Cape Verdean one. This is something that became quite visible throughout the analysis of both Chiziane and Da Silva's depictions of their respective countries of origins, stances and treatments of the questions of nationalism and gender. If it is true that the three authors under analysis set out to indicate new and more challenging ways of undertaking gender struggle in the future by deconstructing past and present conceptualizations of it in communal discourses of identity, it is very clear that Chiziane and Da Silva do so from within a Marxist-Leninist framework, which was, considering their proximity in generational terms, the ideological system they were formed in as young adults – in contrast to Salústio. Another aspect which is very relevant for the delineation of this parallel is the fact that both Chiziane and Da Silva regard not only their gender, but also their race as highly determinant factors to consider with reference to their emergence as novel writers. For these authors, it is a major affirmation to be the first black female novel writers in the specific context of their newly independent countries. If, on the one hand it represents a disruption of the male-orientedness of the literary canon, on the other hand it demonstrates a disturbance of the colonial social tendency to limit people's access to the nation according to their race and colour – which, to a certain extent, legitimizes the success of the socialist project.

Focusing on the specific case of Mozambique, Chiziane's proposal presents a critique of Frelimo's socialist conceptualization of the modern nation and national identity from a female point of view, thus unveiling throughout the process its limitations not only as regards women and gender struggle, but also as regards other identities and communal projects that exceed the boundaries of its discourse. As such,

rethinking nationalism through gender in various layers is the author's strategy for exposing, dismantling and renegotiating the power structures beneath the socialist modern nation in various historical contexts. Firstly, it enabled Chiziane to focus on the authoritarian and discriminatory nature of a markedly southern cultural conception of nationhood that did not acknowledge other ethnicities or races and expected to be fully recognized by a multi-ethnic and racial society such as that of Mozambique. Secondly, it provided the author with the tools to demonstrate that that conception of nationhood was markedly male-oriented, as the socialist revolution envisioned women's emancipation primarily in economic terms, thus permitting the propagation of gender inequalities within the private sphere, which was beyond the field of revolutionary action. Thirdly, it gave Chiziane the means to reflect on how gender struggle was sacrificed in order to ensure Frelimo's hold on power, by showing that the survival of the modern nation was negotiated across race, colour, ethnicity, and class over and through the female body, by means of the strategic disregard of the domestic sphere – the space to which women were historically bound – as a site to be discussed and brought into the revolutionary modernity. The author's deconstruction of the southern male-oriented socialist conceptualization of the nation is achieved through a process of historicizing female genealogies from different ethnic, racial, colour and class backgrounds. This recovery of female micro-histories not only enables an observation of the colonial continuities which are strategically kept alive in the post-colonial era, but also allows the emergence of new and more democratic ways to envision gender struggle in a post-Marxist-Leninist future.

Nonetheless, Chiziane's questioning of the socialist macro-history of the nation from within proves to be a revisionist work, something that becomes visible, for example, when the author highlights the problematic areas of socialist thinking and shows how dangerous they can be when strategically used (by a group such as RENAMO, for example). In *Ventos*, the author emphasises how in its eagerness to consolidate its hold on power, Frelimo ended up alienating those who were marginal to its socialist, markedly southern, tendentiously urban and hegemonic conceptualization of the nation – namely villagers and traditional power representatives –, simultaneously resorting to the affirmation of conventional gender identities. Aware of these dynamics, RENAMO used them against Frelimo, by recruiting new members amongst those who were unsatisfied with Frelimo's policies and using women to infiltrate in the areas under

Frelimo's protection so that they could make the recognition of the spaces and provide them with the necessary information in order to attack the villages. The strategies that Chiziane puts forward with a view to building a more inclusive and democratic society are, therefore, still very much in consonance with a socialist conceptualization of community.

Notwithstanding the particularities that individualize each literary project, some of Chiziane's concerns find echoes in Da Silva's problematization of Angolan national identities and communities. Much like her peer Chiziane, Da Silva's proposal aims at criticizing MPLA's Marxist-Leninist univocal discourse of nationhood from within its limits, simultaneously questioning the grounds on which its legitimization was achieved. Aware of the existence of more than one discourse of nationhood in the Angolan geographical area, Da Silva moves on to test the limits of MPLA's socialist nation within two distinct territories that the party governed, only to demonstrate the imposing and assimilative nature of its discourse. Furthermore, the examination of the cultural dynamics in Luanda and Benguela from a female-focalized point of view leads Da Silva to disclose the masculine nature of the modern nation, in the discourse of which the private sphere emerges as a blind spot. Just like Chiziane, Da Silva demonstrates that the power tension between traditional and modern that occurred in the cultural arena was balanced through the definition of areas of influence, so that the modern discourse of nationhood emerged empowered within the public sphere, whereas the influence of the traditional sphere was able to remain undisturbed within the private domain. By these means, the author proved that the modern nation that arose out of this negotiation was designed by and for men, as the negotiations' main preoccupation was to maintain a stable and continuous image of revolutionary and successful masculinity, which in its turn was achieved at the expense of female identity. In other words, both Chiziane and Da Silva defended the view that the successful cohesion of the socialist revolutionary nation was achieved through the maintenance of gender roles in the private sphere, a blind spot which was strategically left outside the boundaries of the modern discourse of nationhood. Both authors claimed that the feasibility of the male revolution as a whole depended on the maintenance of the female identity as paradoxical, in the sense that women, as "symbolic bearers of the nation", emerged as simultaneous representatives of a successful male modern nation and of a solid and

continuous male cultural tradition.[698] As such, this masculinised vicious circle always prevented women from having real access to the nation, a tendency which, according to both Chiziane and Da Silva, could only be fought through women's self-awareness and active engagement in the renegotiation of the terms of gender struggle in Mozambique and Angola, which would ultimately enable them to reopen, and become empowered, in the debate on Mozambican and Angolan national identities.

Taking into consideration the commonalities and the differences between the works of Dina Salústio, Paulina Chiziane, and Rosária da Silva framed within the scope of the present study, I believe that it is possible to affirm that the three authors make History out of stories of everyday life, i.e., the micro-histories of women's everyday lives, emerging from the problematic and forgotten domestic space (the arena which they are constructed to represent), disturb the macro-histories of the nations by exposing their hidden layers of power structures, thus forcing them to rethink themselves in their full complexity. If the microcosms of the family and the household emerge as a metonymy for the official post-independence state and its national discourse, its collapse, as is suggested in the works of the three authors foretells the rise of a new conception of community and, subsequently, a new conception of women within it. The emphasis that is placed on the recuperation of female genealogies not only sheds light upon the historical silencing of women's stories, but also demonstrates their alienation from a memory of continuity. Hence, the effort to proceed to that recuperation suggests the recovery of a diachronic trajectory able to promote dialogue between present and past in order to give the future a whole new perspective. In the works of the three authors under analysis power, power relations, hegemonies and women's condition are themes that go beyond both a feminist perspective and a local contextualization, therefore acquiring in these female-focalized stories a universal and global dimension. In the end, Salústio, Chiziane and Da Silva's literary projects of freedom depart from these localized specificities with a view to promoting a debate over the human condition and, perhaps, delineating some strategies for conceptualizing a better, fairer and more democratic existence.

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[698] McClintock (1995), pp. 354.

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