

of the President, to engage in the field of 'black empowerment' in the boardroom battles to construct corporate pyramids which provide the illusion of participation in the economy for the black majority, is the general trend of the Rainbow politics of the elite. This Rainbow opportunity displaces entirely the question of nationalisation and opens the door to privatisation through the enrichment of a black elite. While many politicians have sought the soft seats of corporations, none have turned to mobilise the working class to ensure delivery of jobs, houses, and decent wages. The espousing of transcendental national goals with enrichment on the basis of ethnic mobilisation is a confirmation of the process outlined in the last chapter. The winding up of the RDP as a coherent package of reform is another.

Rainbowism is predominantly a discourse to displace the concerns of the African majority from the centre stage of politics in the interests of wider unity between the races. As disappointment mounts with the lack of transformation of the conditions for this majority it may dissolve into Africanism or class discourse. *Arise* is a voice for a return to class politics.

Short Stories From Mozambique

Short Stories from Mozambique

edited by Richard Bartlett

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This is a collection of short stories by Mozambican writers, representing in a general way, different moments in the development of fiction in Mozambique.

Sixteen authors make their appearance and one may question the basis on which some were selected: Leite de Vasconcelos is better known as a poet and Helder Muteia as a poet and author of tales with a socio-cultural character, while Lina Magaias' texts are reportage rather than fiction.

The reader is also rather left in the dark with regard to the criteria used for placing the stories in their present order. One is left with the vague

feeling that it was all rather left to chance. Even though it is true that a purely chronological sequence can prove somewhat tedious for the reader, I feel that the editor should have shown more concern for establishing some sort of relationship between the texts. In this way, the reader could have understood better what separated the life and writings of Joao Dias (whose texts remain unfinished) from those of Mia Couto or Ungulani ba ka Khossa.

One aspect that I found distinctly pleasing, however, was the editor's decision to choose a wide range of writers, independently of their degree of aesthetic accomplishment. Not only 'the best' were selected, or those with the greatest international recognition (such as Mia Couto, who has been widely translated, or Suleimane Cassamo, recently published in France). I feel that this approach is not only permissible, but offers the best way of introducing literature which has only recently detached itself from its colonial context. The range, spread and unevenness tell the story of the stories, as much as their actual content.

This collection includes the pioneers of Mozambican fiction, such as Joao Dias, whose premature death in 1949 interrupted what could have been a major aesthetic development; without him, Luis Bernardo Honwana, also represented, and also one of the pioneers, would not have come on the scene.

Similarly, other authors from different cultural and historical contexts appear. Orlando Mendes and more recently Carneiro Goncalves are there, as well as a more recent generation of writers who emerged from the movement associated with the journal *Charrua (Plough)*, such as Marcelo Panguana or Ungulani ba ka Khossa. The anthology also contains writers who, although always under the umbrella of AEMO (The Association of Mozambican Writers), came more independently on to the literary scene, like Mia Couto, Calane de Silva or Lilia Momphe.

It is precisely this diversity of phases and authors which is not sufficiently acknowledged in an otherwise well-articulated introduction by Albie Sachs.

Albie Sachs focuses almost exclusively on the epic times at the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1990s, when a new generation of writers emerged. (I refer to the Charrua group—Marcelo Panguane, Pedro Chissano, Helder Muteia and the writers who were drawn towards the AEMO after its foundation.) The Mozambican revolutionary process ruptured every aspect of pre-existing normality, and reached into every sphere, not only economic, but also social, cultural and, in this particular case, literary. This was a time when we all took part enthusiastically and intensely in different aspects of public and cultural life. As a result of this focus, understandable in the light of this total immersion in our emerging culture, Albie Sachs' introduction fails to bring out the fact that important forms of literary life existed well

before the Independence. Thus, in this collection there are writings of authors who had already succeeded in autonomising themselves from their initial progenitor, namely Portuguese literature. This they managed to do in a phase that not only long preceded independence, but both foreshadowed and promoted it.

Thus, authors such as Joao Dias, Orlando Mendes, Anibal Aleluia, Carneiro Goncalves or even Luis Bernardo Honwana are far from being orphans of the Revolution, as Albie Sachs describes the writers in this collection. The description is indeed an apt one in relation to recent generations, but hardly appropriate for those writers, who should better be referred to as the parents of the Revolution.

In fact, in Mozambique the literary and cultural movement preceded the political movement and the creation of the national liberation movement, and was not its product, although, as Albie Sachs correctly notes, they have never dissociated, not even to this day. It suffices to refer to *The Struggle for Mozambique* by Eduardo Mondlane, the founder of FRELIMO, written in those distant years of the 1960s, to see how poetry influenced his perception of Mozambican reality. Many nationalist ideas were in fact presented in the form of poetry by Noemia de Sousa and Jose Craveirinha in the 1950s.

I have one further bone to pick with Albie Sachs. It relates to an argument between us which dates back to his years of exile in Mozambique. He contended then, and still insists, that in the period after independence, literature did not flourish in Mozambique. I disagreed with him then and continue to disagree with him now. He is right in extolling the notable way in which the plastic arts, such as painting and sculpture flourished in that period. I also concur with his reference to the near absence of narrative fiction between 1975 and 1984. Yet, in the dozen years after Independence there was an extraordinary outpouring of poetry, to which he makes no reference at all. Even in an introduction to narrative fiction, he should, for the sake of giving a balanced picture to the reader, have brought out the role that poetry was playing at the time; the critical word was, indeed, well represented, if not by fiction, then by poetry.

Much though I enjoyed reading and being provoked by Albie Sachs' introduction, I feel that the editor of this anthology was called upon to provide something more. In order to enable the reader better to understand the texts, a complementary set of notes should have been provided, more academic in format, to complement the general scene-setting. This could have taken the form of a preface with an academic format, detailing relevant information of literary-historical value. Alternatively, explanatory notes could have been attached to the stories or the biographies.

My main reservations, however, relate to aspects of such limited editorial assistance as was in fact offered, more especially in relation to the bio-

graphical information and the glossary. Even though these details might not be essential for the ordinary reader, they are important for students of literature and for all South African researchers (and others) not familiar with the Portuguese language. For persons such as these, this collection is precious material indeed. It is, as the publishers point out, the first anthology of Mozambican fiction available in English. One would have expected from the editor, therefore, greater attention to verifying factual information, more especially since he was in a position to do this checking *in loco*. Had he been more exact, he would have avoided placing the amiable and pacific Marcelo Panguana in the armed struggle. Similarly, he would not have 'transferred' the venerable Dr. Orlando Mendes (specialist in medicinal plants) from the Ministry of Health to the Ministry of Agriculture, nor transformed him into a meteorologist!

These errors are, fortunately, not numerous, but they reveal a lack of rigour and care in the preparation of the book that is out of keeping with its general importance. The fact that Richard Bartlett is not the first (and, unfortunately, certainly will not be the last) to succumb to this 'neglect', is no mitigation. On the contrary, it increases one's concern over the causal way certain researchers treat primary sources, not only in Mozambique, but also in other countries of the so-called Third World.

With regard to the glossary, it would have been convenient to distinguish between words from Portuguese and Ronga or Shangaan vocabularies, respectively. Similarly, there are references which should have been contextualised. To tell a South African reader that Ngungunhane was the 'leader of a kingdom in the South of Mozambique' is to ignore the whole of shared historical experience in this region. At the very least, the Nguni origin of Ngungunhane should have been referred to, so as to locate the Gaza Kingdom within origins meaningful to South Africans.

Similarly, to define a 'coperante' as a 'person forced to work on cooperative farms' shows a quite unacceptable ignorance of the importance of the phenomenon of 'coperantes' as it appeared in Mozambique. The arrival in Mozambique shortly after Independence of expatriates (called 'coperantes') with various specialities (medicine, education, military, etc.), with different political perspectives (socialist, capitalist) and hailing from innumerable countries (Cuba, Italy, Soviet Union, Guinea, South Africa, Chile) gave rise to a variety of opinions (favourable and unfavourable). The Cooperante thus became a kind of national institution, with all the positive and negative connotations implied thereby.

Having made these reservations, I would like to hail the initiative of Richard Bartlett and of COSAW, in once more concretising co-operation with AEMO. This anthology breaches the barrier of language and opens up to the South African imagination, vistas of a *sui generis* universe.

Mozambique is gradually ceasing to be (as in the past) only a paradise of prawns and Polana, or (as at present) a devastating zone of war and illegal emigrants. By showing the existence of the strong and creative literature of a country with which South Africa shares frontiers, languages and cultures, this collection contributes, far more than political discourses do, towards the idea of southern Africa.

Accordingly, one must express gratitude to COSAW and the Camoes Institute of Portugal for helping Richard Bartlett's work come to fruition. Despite the deficiencies referred to, the result is a praiseworthy one. Further initiatives would be equally welcome, particularly an anthology along similar lines, devoted to poetry. We have reason to hope that people will no longer find it necessary—to adapt the words of Albie Sachs—to ask the question of whether it was advantageous to have been colonised by the British or the Portuguese, but rather will feel more proud of being themselves, Mozambican and South African together, as Samora (still an important point of reference) once said.

Frontline Nationalism

Frontline Nationalism in Angola and Mozambique

by David Birmingham

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The temptation to compare Mozambique and Angola often appears to make sense because of their shared heritage of Portuguese imperialism and armed struggle against it. The almost simultaneous independence in 1975 and civil wars which followed would tend to emphasise the similarities. It is these similarities which allow Birmingham to draw the two countries together in a study of front-line nationalism. But the emphasis of Birmingham's work is on nation building rather than nationalism.