

# Beneficial Parasite to Heroic Executioner: South Africa in the Literature of Mozambique

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This article sets out to examine the relationship between apartheid and representations of South Africa in the literature of Mozambique. The reason for choosing South Africa as a focus of interest in the literature of Mozambique is that images of South Africa arise with striking frequency. South Africa is used as a symbol, as an idea which is notable for its pervasiveness and the shape it takes. South Africa is seldom mentioned as the country with the name Africa do Sul. It is rather only ever referred to in terms of the mines of Johannesburg or as the land of death and riches. In the literature of southern Africa this is not unusual, but the object here is not to simply list the ways in which Mozambique has referred to South Africa. Through their constant references to South Africa, Mozambican writers have succeeded in creating an Other. Using the concepts of post-colonial literary theory it will be shown how Mozambique has attempted to make South Africa understandable and controllable through limiting the vocabulary with which to define the country. The title of this paper is an attempt to illustrate the contradictory nature of attitudes to South Africa and the changing nature of those attitudes over time.

Beyond simply using discourse to understand South Africa and its effect on Mozambique, the creation of a South African Other was tangent to the development of a nationalist discourse in Mozambican literature. Tangent because South Africa was not the central focus, it was merely a means by which the problems, aspirations and dynamics facing the people of southern

Mozambique could be illustrated. The South African mining economy controlled the lives of many people in Mozambique yet it remained distant, unknown and virtually invisible.

Before examining the creation of an Other in South Africa it is necessary to specify the theoretical parameters. The use of post-colonial theory to discuss relations between South Africa and Mozambique could be viewed as one of the ultimate forms of repossession. The theory of post-colonialism has been used to understand a literature not created in Europe, yet dominated by Europe. Europeans, entering the strange lands of what is understood today as the post-colonial world, found it necessary to use their language to define the new worlds they were inhabiting and dominating. In defining they created an Other of the people and lands being conquered. This pigeon-holing of the new worlds supposedly explained the Europeans' natural superiority and justified their conquering of the new worlds. An Us-Other dichotomy dominated colonial language. While South Africa is portrayed as Other the language used in this representation is not as reliant on the well-known binary oppositions as traditional colonial discourse has been. Opposites such as light/darkness, white/black, adult/childlike, rational/emotional, advanced/backward and intelligent/retarded are not found in contrasts of Mozambique with South Africa.

The use of post-colonial terminology without reference to a colonial centre must imply a substitute centre and the Rand could be seen as the economic centre of the southern African region, particularly in the period after the discovery of gold when people from throughout the region flocked to Johannesburg in search of work and money. The substitute centre of the Rand is particularly relevant to the case of southern Mozambique. The mines of Johannesburg provided work opportunities for men from southern Mozambique where the only other opportunities for employment within the colonial economy were as forced labour for the Portuguese colonial government or agriculture which was particularly badly affected by natural disasters and the drop in prices of produce in the first decades of this century. The Portuguese colonial government in Lourenço Marques also directly benefited from ensuring a steady supply of migrant labourers as the amount of rail traffic from South Africa passing through the port was directly proportional to the numbers of workers travelling in the opposite direction (Katzenellenbogen 1982:50). The Portuguese government came to benefit further in the 1920s when a percentage of Mozambican worker's wages was submitted directly to Lourenço Marques in gold (Newitt 1995:496).

South Africa has played a central role in the history of southern Mozambique since the second half of the nineteenth century. The power South Africa has exerted over Mozambique is reflected in the moving of the Mozambican capital from the northern island of Mozambique to Lourenço

Marques in 1898. The growth of the colonial backwater of Lourenço Marques was largely due to the increase in traffic and trade through this port to service the growth of the Witwatersrand. Work on the gold mines of the Rand came to be an accepted part of life for the people of southern Mozambique from the turn of the century.

These snippets of Mozambican history cannot do justice to the dynamics of migrant labour between Mozambique and South Africa, they merely sketch a necessary framework upon which the development of literature in Mozambique can be attached.

Returning to post-colonial literary theory and taking Johannesburg as the centre which dominates the Mozambican periphery it is difficult to continue further with the analogy unless it is completely subverted. South Africa had no need to limit and define Mozambique through language and ideology, that was being done by the Portuguese colonial government. The Mozambicans had no need to 'write back' to the economic centre (being the Rand) as they were more concerned with the centre in Lisbon which controlled the lives of more Mozambicans in a more immediate fashion through tools such as taxes and forced labour. The literature of Mozambique which begins the creation of an Other, of an easily definable South Africa, is a literature which began in the second decade of this century and was written by Mozambicans rather than by Portuguese colonials. Thus while the victims of Portuguese colonialism, albeit an educated elite, were creating a national identity through literature and 'writing back' to the metropole, fighting against their label of Other, they were also laying the seeds for the creation of another Other, which can be labelled *Jone*.

All the relationships between colonised other and colonial centre would seem to deny the ability of, or necessity for, Mozambicans to create an Other unrelated to their immediate political and social circumstances. Initially this was the case and the literature of Mozambique can be classified in traditional post-colonial temporal structures of assimilation and appropriation (Ashcroft et al. 1989:38). But from about the late 1940s and early 1950s references to South Africa in the literature of Mozambique written in Portuguese came to arise frequently and almost exclusively in relation to the mines of Johannesburg and the culture of migrant labour. The frequency with which the mines of South Africa came to be mentioned in Mozambican literature can be explained by the educated elite, the authors and poets, being concentrated in Lourenço Marques. Even educated Mozambicans from other parts of the country eventually gravitated to the capital because the educational institutions and employment opportunities were concentrated there.

But more than merely being in constant contact, or having grown up with the effects of migrant labour and South Africa's economic muscle on

Mozambique, writers were also expressing an aspect of life in southern Mozambique which had been in train since the second half of the nineteenth century. Fátima Mendonça (1988) divides Mozambican literature before independence into three periods: 1925 to the mid 1940s, mid 1940s to 1964 and 1964 to 1975. The first period was dominated by an *assimilado* elite. Assimilados, as the word implies, were those Africans who in effect became Portuguese in language, dress, religion and way of life (until the 1960s Africans had to carry a certificate to prove they had been assimilated). The literature until the mid 1940s was one of an affirmation of the beauty of Africa. It is only in the second stage mentioned by Mendonça that references of South Africa emerge with such clarity. This second stage is determined by the rise of a nationalist ideology within Mozambique and, significantly, the third stage corresponds to that of the armed struggle waged by Frelimo against the colonial government.

The link between the rise of nationalism in southern Mozambique and the depiction in literature of South Africa is not co-incidental. Mozambicans had been tramping to the cane fields of Natal, the diamond fields of Kimberley and the gold mines of the Rand since the 1850s. As the process of proletarianisation developed and Mozambicans came to spend longer periods in the closed compounds of the gold mines, many became literate and carried home not just consumer goods but the seeds of European education and religion (Harries 1994:217,229). Thus South Africa, or *Jone* was a part of the discourse, part of life, in southern Mozambique for about 50 years before it came to be represented in a literature written in Portuguese. This gap can be explained, as has been mentioned, in terms of the educated elite in Lourenço Marques focusing on the more immediate colonial circumstances. Then there is also the relative dearth of literature from this early period (and the corresponding lack of research).

But how exactly was South Africa represented?

José Craveirinha, in the poem 'Mamana Saquina' from the 1960s tells the story of João Tavassee who went to the mines and never came home.

#### **Mamana Saquina (José Craveirinha)**

Night and day  
the soul of Mamana Saquina swathed itself in nightmare  
and buried itself in ten hectares of flowering cotton

(And João Tavassee  
never came back to the depot)  
Belching steam the miners' train pulled out  
and in the pistons a voice sang

João-Tavasse-went-to-the-mines  
João-Tavasse-went-to-the-mines  
João-Tavasse-went-to-the-mines  
João-Tavasse-went-to-the-mines

And Mamana Saquina mourned her son  
scratched maize from the ground  
and achieved the miracle of one hundred and fifty-  
five bales of cotton (Chipasula 1985:105).

Another poem by Craveirinha in a similar vein is 'Mamparra M'gaiza'.

**Mamparra M'gaiza (José Craveirinha)**

The cattle is selected  
counted, marked  
and gets on the train, stupid cattle.

In the pen  
the females stay behind  
to breed new cattle.

The train is back from migoudini  
and they come rotten with diseases, the old cattle of Africa  
oh, and they've lost their heads, these cattle m'gaiza (Chipasula 1985:106).

The words *mamparra* and *magaiça* are from the mines, but are also particularly Mozambican. Mamparra, in contemporary usage (especially in South Africa) has come to mean 'fool', but initially meant a first-time migrant or new-comer to the mines. Magaiça is a returning migrant.

Noemia de Sousa who left Mozambique in 1951 and has not published any poetry since then, represents South Africa in the poem 'Magaiça' as follows:

**Magaiça (Noemia de Sousa)**

- Where has it left you,  
that bundle of dreams, Magaiça  
You're carrying cases full of the false glitter  
of the remnants of the false culture  
of the compound of the Rand.

And, stunned  
Magaiça lit a lamp

to search for lost illusions,  
for his youth and his health, which stay buried  
deep in the mines of Johannesburg.  
Youth and health,  
the lost illusions  
which will shine like stars  
on some Lady's neck in some City's night (Chipasula 1985:120).

Then there is Fernando Ganhão, who later became a cabinet minister in the Frelimo government who, in 'Poem', tells of the plight of the migrant worker:

**Poem (Fernando Ganhão)**

I bought my passage for twopence  
(cry of the Chope man  
who pays his way  
but cannot come back)

In the Rand the mines are dark  
and dense with bitterness (Searle 1982:58).

These poets are examining the realities confronting Mozambique. South Africa remains a distant, almost unknown place represented in terms of darkness, deceit, loss and suffering. This might seem a particularly biased view of the effects of industrialisation on the people of Mozambique but it is not unrealistic. In the first decade of this century the death toll on the gold mines due to underground accidents, pthisis, TB and pneumonia was close to 50 for every 1000 workers (Harries 1994:190). Today the mines get quite distressed if the death toll exceeds 1 per 1000 workers.

These poems quoted above must not be seen in isolation but must be considered as part of the nationalist movement. Apart from migrant labour on the mines, other dismal options facing Mozambicans were forced labour, or *chibalo*, for the Portuguese government or plantation owners, forced growing of certain cash crops, and being sent into exile by the government as forced labour. All of these are among the subjects of the poetry from this period and were part of the process of creating a national or Mozambican identity from within the borders of Portuguese colonial discourse.

But this view of South Africa in the literature of Mozambique begs the question as to whether the Mozambicans are creating an Other of South Africa or merely confronting the problems of their own country? The contradictory nature of attitudes to South Africa and the frequency with which it is mentioned point to an attempt by Mozambicans to make the

power South Africa wields understandable and controllable. Thus creation of an Other is almost inevitable.

The extent of the contradictory nature with which *Jone* is understood is evident in a short story by Calane da Silva entitled 'Xicandarinha' (1987). In this story uncle Dinasse returns from the Transvaal. He is welcomed joyously by the children as they know he usually brings presents when returning from his work on the mines. This time, a large parcel wrapped in brown paper reveals a large, shining aluminium kettle, the *xicandarinha*. It will be the last present the family is to receive from uncle Dinasse because the sickness he has in his chest is getting worse and he will not be able to work on the mines again. The *xicandarinha* is used later to provide tea for all the people who have come to his funeral.

Thus while the mines have allowed uncle Dinasse to provide gifts they have also taken his life away. But the binary nature of *Jone* goes far beyond this. Firstly there is the identity attached to the kettle through the name *xicandarinha*. The gift from *Jone* is given a particularly Mozambican identity. In the glossary Da Silva explains that the word *xicandarinha* has as its root the Gujarati word *kandari*. The nasalised suffix *-inha* is from Portuguese and the prefix *Xi-* is from Tsonga. Thus while the gift might carry with it the lives of Mozambican miners it is given an identity which is wholly Mozambican.

Beyond the process of naming, the *xicandarinha* in the story by Da Silva comes to represent a symbol of the ability of the Mozambican people to survive, to resist and develop a nationalist identity. One of the episodes in the story describes a police raid on the illegal pub, a shebeen, in the township of Minkhokwene adjacent to Lourenço Marques. In the aftermath of the raid the *xicandarinha* is found to have two bullet holes through it and could only be half-filled with water. But it continued to provide boiling water for the shebeen; it had not been destroyed. It is eventually a natural disaster, a tropical storm which razes the township, which leads to the demise of the *xicandarinha*. It disappears and is never seen again. In disappearing, but not being physically destroyed the *xicandarinha* has become a symbol of resistance:

The *xicandarinha* has neither arms nor a head to defend itself and fight. We do my children. Courage! Tomorrow we will begin a new life<sup>1</sup>.

The South African import as a symbol of a growing nationalist resistance to Portuguese colonialism has a parallel in the education migrant workers managed to acquire in the mine hostels. They often brought home a basic

<sup>1</sup> A *xicandarinha* não tinha braços nem cabeça para se defender e lutar. Nós temos meus filhos. Coragem! Amanhã começaremos nova vida (Da Silva 1987:26).

literacy and a desire for education which mission schools in Mozambique were able to fulfil, at least for the younger generation if not for the returning migrants.

South Africa is usually reflected in much simpler terms. In the novel *Portagem* (Gateway) written by Orlando Mendes and published in 1964, the workers on a coal mine in Mozambique aspire to progress to the mines of Kaniamato across the border where it is possible to end a contract with many Pounds in one's pocket (Mendes 1981:32). But together with the riches comes a sacrifice in leaving one's home. This aspect is evident in a story by Aníbal Ajeleuia called 'E Jona Sitoi foi para o Rande' (And Jona Sitoi went to the Rand) (Ajeleuia 1987:35).

Jona Sitoi is a rich and successful peasant farmer on the banks of the Limpopo river. He has adopted Christianity and is the pride of the colonial authorities who show him off as an example of the success of the civilising mission of Portuguese. He is ostracised for rejecting his heritage and is warned that he will suffer for this. The rains come and don't stop. The Limpopo comes down in flood and everything Jona Sitoi owns is destroyed.

The next day Jona left for the Rand. The prophecy of Samo Bila came true: the spirits of the ancestors had won ...<sup>2</sup>.

In both of these instances, Jona Sitoi and the land of Kaniamato, the mines of that other land across the border are a last resort, almost when all hope is lost. But at the same time they are implicitly a saviour, when the land deserts one there is always the possibility of continuing with help from the Rand.

All the examples mentioned so far are taken from the period before independence which coincides with the rise of Apartheid and its healthiest years of the 1960s and early 1970s. Taking this into consideration it is significant that the racial policies of apartheid are not an issue in Mozambican representations of South Africa. This is partially explainable by the fact that Mozambicans were faced by an equally vicious racism, albeit with a slightly different means of application. That the racism of South Africa was slightly different to that of the Portuguese is mentioned in passing in the story 'Godido' by João Dias. This story was written in the 1940s and published posthumously in 1951. Describing a railway conductor, Dias (1988:28) says he came

... from a Brazil of humanity without having lived in the North American cities or known the disorder of India or of Mister Smuts' Africa ...<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> No dia seguinte, Jona partia para o Rande. A profecia de Samo Bila realizara-se: os manes tinham vencido (Ajeleuia 1987:43).

<sup>3</sup> ... la de um Brasil de humanidade sem ter vivido nas cidades norte-americanas nem conhecido os desconcertos da Índia ou da África do senhor Smuts ... (Dias 1988:28).



This general lack of emphasis on racism in South Africa illustrates how such portrayals fit into the rise of a specifically Mozambican literature during the era of rising nationalism in that country. The Mozambicans are not trying to point a finger at South Africa, they are rather trying to understand and define their own experiences. South Africa is not acknowledged specifically as a geographically definable space. It is rather an idea into which men, and only men, disappear. They often emerge again bearing gifts, riches and diseases and ultimately death. Thus just as South Africa cannot be known or comprehensively understood by the people who remained behind while males members of families went off to work on the mines so *Jone* is represented as a place which saps the strength of Mozambique, deprives the men of the usefulness of their lives and leaves them only with trinkets, the visible wealth of South Africa.

Thus an Other is created. Out of the nationalist definition of self against the Portuguese colonial denial of black humanity and intelligence comes the depiction of Mozambican males as often willing victims of the magnet of *Jone* which swallows the wealth of Mozambique and spits out shells of men carrying trinkets.

This discourse continues into the era of Mozambican independence. Southern Mozambique continued to rely on the mines of South Africa for a significant portion of its national income. The discourse, and representations of *Jone* in Mozambican literature, now come to take on a more specifically racial tone and the beneficial aspect of work on the mines is hidden.

This transition is ideally exemplified in Da Silva's book of short stories *Xicandarinha na Lenha do Mundo* (Kettle in the World's Firewood). The kettle from South Africa as symbol of resistance and hope has been discussed. In the second half of the book is a collection of stories written after independence. The second story from which the book takes its title, 'Lenha do Mundo', is set in the period eight years after independence. The story deals with the problems and trials of life in the socialist state. Work in South Africa is mentioned as a means of escaping the hardship:

You, who are already called mister José Tiko, will agree to be called a boy once again? Realise that this story of wanting to go to South Africa like that, the end, with many others, recruited by them so you can come to kill us here? Think hard José ...<sup>4</sup>

The double-edged sword of South Africa is also mentioned in the title story

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<sup>4</sup> Tu, que ate ja te chamam senhor José Tiko, vais aguentar ser chamado outro vez de rapaz? Olha que essa historia de queres ir para a Africa do Sul assim, acabas, como muitos outros, recrutado por eles para nos vires matar aqui! Pensa bem José ... (Da Silva 1987:77).

of Suleiman Cassamo's collection of short stories *O Regresso do Morto* (The Return of the Dead One).

While still young, Moises looked with admiration at the magaiças getting off the train at Manhiça, suitcases full, eyes shining with pride. And the 'Land of the Rand' began to attract him.

- I am not going to school anymore—he decided—The teacher hits too much.
- You will become a donkey carrying sacks—sentenced his mother.
- Not a donkey, a miner. Why must I study?

South Africa and the evil it embodies are emphasised to a far greater extent in the literature of independent Mozambique at the same time as acknowledging the pervasive necessity of South Africa and its wealth in the lives of Mozambicans. In the short novel *Malungate* by Albino Magaia, published in 1987, the protagonist of the novel describes as one of the laws of life in Mozambique that a man is born, grows up, goes to South Africa, marries, gives grandchildren to his parents, ... gets old and dies (Magaia 1987:22). This is reinforced by the men who go to *Jone* with the attitude that, 'A man who does not go to the mines is not a man' (Magaia 1987:24)<sup>6</sup>. But the contrary argument is also raised; as one of the characters puts it: 'I do not want to go to South Africa. To have a leg chopped off?' (Magaia 1987:25)<sup>7</sup>.

Another example of the pervasiveness of *Jone* in independent Mozambique is Lilia Momplé's story 'O Caniço' in which a father returns from *Jone* with the expected presents but also with a well-advanced case of tuberculosis which he passes on to his daughter. Father returns to the mines and dies shortly afterwards of TB, but the daughter survives (Momplé 1988: 22). Although the story is set in colonial Mozambique it was written a decade after independence and the portrayal of South Africa fits into the mould of South Africa as invisible, destructive Other.

All these examples from post-1975 Mozambique are significant for the way in which delimitation of South Africa has become far more precise. The ambiguity of wealth versus death is presented as heavily weighted in favour of the latter. At the same time as becoming more precise the representations

<sup>5</sup> Ainda pequeno, Moises via com admiração os magaiça desembarcando no comboio da Manhiça, as malas cheias, os olhos bilhantes de orgulho. E o 'Pias do Rand' começou atraí-lo.

- Não vou mais a escola—decidiu—O professor bate muito.
- Vais ser burro de carregar sacos—sentenciava a mãe.
- Burro não, mineiro. Estudar para que (Cassamo 1989:72)?

<sup>6</sup> —Um homem que não foi às minas não é homem (Magaia 1987:24).

<sup>7</sup> —Eu não quero ir para a África do Sul. Para ir cortar a perna? (Magaia 1987:24).

of South Africa also become more diverse. This is a function of historical circumstance as the South African apartheid state was ideologically opposed to the Marxist government of Mozambique. *Jone* came to be far more than merely a place of mines, it became a place of apartheid as well. But apartheid was depicted, not as might be expected, through portrayal of the dehumanising violence of the system, but rather through heroic struggle against that system.

In the poem 'Since my friend Nelson Mandela Went to Live on Robben Island' the poet José Craveirinha subverts the roles of oppressor and oppressed with Nelson Mandela sentencing John Vorster 'to everlasting prison ... /on a tranquil island' and then deciding whether to go to the movies in Pretoria or Soweto with his wife (Mendonça & Saute 1993:205)<sup>8</sup>. Mandela continues to feature prominently, as in the poem 'No sul nada de novo' (In the south nothing is new) where 'Mandela/continues to dream with a star' and 'On Robben/ there is a non-racist militant who is dying/and the survivors chant Nkosi Sikelele' (Mendonça & Saute 1993:9)<sup>9</sup>. And his '... name flies in the rock/between the hand and the police Casspir/forming an arc of freedom' in the poem 'Mandela' by Leite de Vasconcelos (Mendonça & Saute 1993:282)<sup>10</sup>.

But the struggle against apartheid includes more than just Mandela. The poet Gulamo Khan, who died in the plane crash which killed Samora Machel in 1986, in the poem 'O Homem Riu ...' (The Man Laughed ...) tells of a black man who, on being spat on by a white man, simply '... laughed/in the heart of Pretoria (Mendonça & Saute 1993:145)<sup>11</sup>. Another frequently mentioned South African is Benjamin Moloise, an ANC guerrilla hanged by the South African government.

In prose Pedro Chissano has written an allegory entitled 'O Arco e a Bengala' (The Ark and the Walking Stick) (Chissano 1986:46) which tells

<sup>8</sup> ... prisão perpetua ...  
numa ilha tranquila (Mendonça & Saute 1993:205).

<sup>9</sup> Mandela  
continua a sonhar com uma estrela  
....  
Em Robben  
há um militante não racista que morre  
e os sobreviventes entoam Nkosi Sekelela (Mendonça & Saute 1993:9).

<sup>10</sup> ... nome voa numa pedra  
Entre a mão eo o Casspir da polícia  
desenha o arco da liberdade (Mendonça & Saute 1993:282).

<sup>11</sup> ... ria  
No coração de Pretória (Mendonça & Saute 1993:145).

the story of the southern tip of Africa which detaches itself from the continent to preserve its whiteness. A storm sinks the breakaway country and the only two who survive are the king's daughter and his slave who become lovers. They are rescued by a lone warrior who lives in the Kalahari.

What all these mentions have in common is that South Africa is identifiable, if not by name, at least by the mention of people or circumstances known to be South African. When it comes to the deeds the apartheid government committed against Mozambique the attaching of the deeds to the country is not as simple; there are no easily identifiable handles with which to grasp the complexity of the actual relationship between the two countries. This is most evident in the numerous works relating to the civil war and Renamo. That Renamo committed atrocities is well known, as is the fact that Renamo was supported by the South African government. But this is seldom even alluded to. This can be easily explained by the fact that what was most important to the Mozambicans affected by the war in their country was the war itself, not the distant power fanning the flames. But such a facile evasion of South Africa would fail to explain the ways in which South Africa is seen to intrude on the lives of the people affected by the war.

Mia Couto, in the story 'The Whales of Quissico' (Couto 1990:55), tells of a man who hears of the whales which beach themselves and spew out riches. The man goes to find these whales and while with fever and during a storm wades out into the sea and is never seen again. He leaves behind a bundle of clothes and a satchel.

There are those who claimed that those clothes and that satchel were proof of the presence of an enemy who was responsible for receiving arms. And that these arms were probably transported by submarines which, in the tales passed on by word of mouth, had been converted into the whales of Quissico (Couto 1990:62).

Where else could the arms and submarines have come from. Assuming of course that the submarines really existed. Couto in this tale is not just relating a story of people coping with war through creation of myth but he is subverting the perceived relationship between Mozambique and South Africa. The whales/submarines spew forth gifts which are not quite what they seem to be. But these gifts of death are never actually seen. And the desire to share in the wealth of the whale results in being swallowed by that whale. Thus Couto could be rehashing the familiar story of Jim, or rather João, goes to *Jone*. Only in this case the death which South Africa causes exists amongst the people and not across the border and the promise of riches fails to produce anything tangible.

This idea of South Africa as destructive and elusive, even invisible, is one that is found frequently in literature relating to the war against Renamo. The works of Lina Magaia describe in vivid detail the atrocities committed

by Renamo, yet the supportive role of South Africa is seldom explicitly acknowledged. In Ungulani Ba Ka Khosa's story 'Orgia dos Loucos' (Orgy of the Deranged) (Ba Ka Khosa 1990:53) the effects of the war on ordinary people are again described in terms of misery and carnage and madness but South Africa does not feature. Again, why should South Africa feature? In other works Pretoria is acknowledged as being behind the 'armed bandits' terrorising the people of the rural areas (Azedo 1988) and in the novel *Nyandayeyo* the leader of a group of Renamo bandits is referred to as Tino ga Djone or Teeth of South Africa.

South Africa's invisibility takes on a different dimension in the description of violence perpetrated by South Africa. In the story 'O Barigudo' (The Pot-bellied Boy) (Ramos 1990) Helder Muteia describes a raid by the South Africa air force. The boy of the title is a victim of the raid and gazes up at the planes and wonders why the exploding eggs have done this to him. This story is dedicated to the victims of the raid and so there can be no doubt as to where the destructive, unknown creatures in the sky come from but at the same time South Africa remains completely invisible.

This invisibility can be related to the depiction of South Africa as Other. Mozambique as periphery is creating an Other but it is not 'writing back'. Because there is no need to write back to the centre, or to *Jone*, there is no need to address the centre directly and thus South Africa remains invisible. This separation of Other and writing back also provides an explanation of why South Africa and its people are not invisible as heroes, as for example in the poems of Gulamo Khan. As Africans fighting the evil of apartheid, the South Africans are a kindred spirit, not an Other, thus they are visible. The struggle of the people of Mozambique and South Africa has the same goal and thus the literature of Mozambique embraces South Africans, identifies them, while at the same time attempting to manage or control the destructive element of South Africa. Mozambique, in only recognising the heroes of the struggle against apartheid, is not allowing itself to be overwhelmed by South Africa's dominance as Centre or Metropole. It has created an Other to control the imperialistic tendencies of the expansionist state.

Thus post-colonial theory has been turned on its head. The allegedly weak periphery is using literature not to justify subjugation, but rather to prevent it. This subversion has implications for an understanding of accepted notions of writing back to the centre. The centre-periphery relationship is not linear and may not even involve trans-border communication. The periphery is its own centre and, at least in the case of Mozambique, regional circumstance is as important in laying down the parameters of post-colonial discourse as is the relationship with any European country.

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