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# Identities at the Sleepwalking Land between Letters and Guns

# **ABSTRACT**

The research "Identities in the sleepwalking land: between letters and guns" were developed in the field of the discourse analysis and were centered in the study of the semi linguistics structure of literary text from the romance Sleepwalk Land from Mia Couto, having as a theoretical indicative the theory Semiotic and Aesthetic from A. J. Greimas and their disciples. The concern of this analytic approach is to examine with focus, in the letters and in the memories, the relationship between the literary narrative and the thematic, regarding to the identity and to the liberty, particularizing to identify their convergences and divergences, while forms of writing of the "myself". The research begins to investigate not the work construction, but what drives in the it the subject in conjunction with the world, a search of a nation's recognition and reports of liberty loss. Although it keeps with the same thematic, it searches to investigate the language used in the referencing process and its associate concordance, as well as the integrative function that they practice in the construction of the objects discourses which compound the ethos of the enunciator; analyses, in the ethos, the effects of the senses created by the language, its semantics' stability and instability, in order to recognize the construction of simulations and the use of common sense (prototypes, stereotypes and designations) which proves the argumentative competence of the discourse.

Keywords: Semiotic and Aesthetic. Letter. Memories. Identities.

"Another imperative requirement is that Africa's history (and culture) should be at least seen from the inside, not being measured by rulers of strange values... But those connections must be analysed in the terms of mutual exchanges, and multilateral influence in which somehthing is heard from the african contribution to the human specie's development". J. Ki-Zerbo, História Geral da África, vol. I, p. LII.

# Study of the Sensible Of the intelligible

The research is built through the critical studies of speaks and narratives from Mia Couto's book "sleepwalking land", writer born in Mozambique in 1955. A novel about the art of storytelling, the ways of thinking of a time, a place and a temporality in a post-independence Mozambique, layered in a devastating Civil War and common sense.

The use of "neologisms", headword disarticulations and rescue of orality are recognizable in the work. There is a notable interaction between man (me/other), his value judgment, his time and his space. The figures of speech are analyzed, situated in his constitution and organization. The active role of affection, which mobilizes the relationship between subject and object needed to narrate the present, reconstruct the past and glimpse the future.

In the novel, the subject of enunciation seems to dominate his "I" subjective saying, within a social, historical and cultural condition, relevant to countries in re(construction). Because both Angola and Mozambique, recently, conquered their independency from Portuguese colonialism. This "I" subject aims to make the other, interlocutor, able to understand the speech.

# **Discursive level Show opening**

What makes the road walk? It's the dream. While we continue to dream, the road will remain alive. That's what the paths are for, to make us relatives of the future.

(Tuahir speech)

Leafing through the book "Sleepwalking and" the reader unveils scenes of fiction or reflection – a novel. Amazed, the reader's eye starts to go through the pages, weaving and challenging the words, culturally marked by the mythical poetic narratives.

Two subjects Tuahir (an old man) and Muidinga (a 12-year-old boy who dreams of meeting his family again) became travel mates, fugitives of war's atrocities.

"In that place, the war had killed the road" (COUTO, 2007, p. 9).

This road, "that doesn't intersect with any other" is more "laid than the centuries, supporting alone all the distance" (*ibid*), signs, vestiges left from what's left from the country.

After the impact of the first impression, the reader's eye start to go through all the details. Leafing through the pages, the reader will find the scenery of two parallel narratives that tell the characters' dehumanization. The **first** one, the story about the journey of the two subjects: old Tuahir, guide protector and Muidinga, orphan boy, traumatized by the war, make attempts of giving a paternal function to Tahir. Both hid in a burnt machimbombo (an old bus) and there find a notebook/letters left by Kindzu.

An old man and a kid go walking by the road. They walk wobbly as if walking was thir only job ever since they were born. They go there from nowhere, considering the going for not gone, waiting for ahead. They escape the war, this war that will contaminate all their land. They go with the illusion of, further ahead, there is a tranquil refuge. They advance barefoot, their accourtements have the same color of the path. (COUTO, M. 2007, p. 9)

The **second**, the letters that tell the adventures of Kindzu, a young man who lives in a village. With the Civil conflict, Kindzu left his home and starts a journey, full of myths, meetings with other refugees and dreams to become a naparama warrior (a warrior that fights armed groups). The words are from Kindzu, but Muidinga makes an interpretation of the texts, fighting to rescue his own history.

You can anticipate that Muidinga is a metonymy of Mozambique:

An "I" is relocated by an "eye" (an I for an eye), urges that the circulation of part and whole, identity and difference, are understood as a double movement that follows the deridian game.

Search for presence and present: time (which has a place in) and space (which took the place of). A lost temporality, whose residues are presentified by Kindzu's notebook. MITIDIERI-PEREIRA (2008)

# **Symbolism Installation of Isotopies**

The analysis resumes to analyze the foreground of the scene of the novel, two theoretical assumptions, first, to examine their cultural values, then to see how these values organize the isotopy.

Dan Sperber (1974, pp. 9-11), in the 1970s, recommends studying the marks of tradition in symbolism, stating that "the most important cultural knowledge is tacit knowledge, that is, that which is not explicit."

First plane of the scene – examining its cultural values, verifying how these values organize isotopy, studying thematic by narrations collected in the letters found in a bus. Tuahir and Mundinga find, on a road shattered by war, the carcass of a carbonized bus, full of bloodied bodies, a mysterious suitcase beside a corpse: here is the whole landscape. There are signs that the land did not totally languished

and it still serves as refuge. Muidinga and Tuahir settle on this place, middle of a path, where there are survivors of a mourning country. Nothing moves while they don't bury their dead.

Mia Couto at the Sleepwalking Land (2007, p. 12) walks weaving like a spinner, culturally marking the beauty of the narrative's threads, an artistic work imposed by the artist's hands.

They go out burying the corpses. (...) On their way back, they find one more body. It lied along the roadside, turned over on its back. It wasn't burned. It had been shot. The shirt was blood-soaked; it did not even show the original color. Along with him there was a suitcase, closed, intact (...)

After they closed the hole, the old man pulls the suitcase inside the bus. Tuahir tries opening the find, and is not capable.

He summons Muidinga help:

- Open it, let's see what's inside.

They break the lock, hurriedly. Inside the suitcase are clothes, a box with food. On top of everything there are spread out school notebooks, scrawled with precarious writing. The old man carries the box with groceries. Muidinga examines the papers.

- Look, Tuahir. These are letters.

The sign "suitcase" remit us to the symbolic, represents various faces of rituals or rites of passage: the journey, the luggage of a creed.

For Kindzu, the suitcase receives a special connotation when he starts to understand that it represents that Kindzu has a friend. Besides, it's in the suitcase that Kindzu finds manuscripts, filled with fantastic stories, anchored in African culture, reports of the horrors of a post-war conflict.

A novel unveils, in a sensitive level and it is established a route of coming and going between sensitive and intelligible. A subject in third-person, Kindzu, and an acting narrator in first-person, *I*, are dismantled from the enunciation instance, marking two different and hierarchical time-spaces.

The subject Muidinga starts reading Kindzu's letters to the old man. The story was impressive, enfolded young Muidinga, kept his attention in the scenes in which he was. Who was Kindzu, what were his intentions, why was he relating facts? The reading opened new paths, embodied ideas, knowledge and experiences to Muidinga.

As the novel develops, we start noticing a balance between living and dead and the Kindzu's letters are the vehicle. The character Muidinga from enunciation plan penetrates statement, in the Romanesque action, participating as witness to the meeting of the characters from the letters he is reading.

- It's demanding you to write his name.

Gives him the dagger. In the trunk Muidinga carves letter by letter the old man's name. He wanted that tree as midwife to other Siqueletos, in self-fertilization. dazed, the old man ran his fingers over the tree bark. And he says:

- Now you can go away. The village will continue, already my name is the blood of the tree. (COUTO, M. 2007, p. 69).

A story full of stories, full of adventures, in which the author inserts various elements of both traditional and local culture and the history of the country. The characters go on living through all the existing conflicts, trying to survive. Within a nightmare scenario, characters of a deep humanity are moved, sometimes with a magical and mythical dimension, all wandering through the ruined earth, between the most poignant despair and a hope that refuses to die.

Indeed, the words on the letters cast roots and plant in the little Muidinga memory of a past that is lacking for him, in old Tuahir blooms his ability to dream. That's when the journey begins.

Time is magic, not always linear with events that escape logic and can't be explained through reason. Just like Kindzu receives from a soothsayer the "traveler's charm" to start his journey and heal himself "of laws, commands and excess", Muidinga and Tuahir receive the letters with fabulous words that start freeing them from the "misery of little existence".

Cultural tradition considers the "charm", a symbol of preternatural virtues of defense against disasters, maladies, spells, malignancy, as it is proven by common sense language. In Nature, this tradition configures a kind of talisman, symbolically accomplishing a magical relation between who uses it and the forces it represents. "In ancient Egypt, mummies were covered with golden or bronze charms to safeguard immortality of the soul."

It's the privilege given to the sensitive and its semantic effects that allows the reader to start recognizing figures which take him to the revealing isotopy of the theme.

In order to deepen the sense of isotopy, the Groupe d 'Entrevernes (1979, p. 123) is used to explain this: it is formed by the "permanence of the same trace, which can be renewed many times along the frástic chain", giving coherence to the set of sememes that constitute a sentence; as well as DUBOIS, Jean et al. (1970, p. 57), who assert that the "concept of isotopy allows, on the other hand, to elaborate a more general notion of rhetorical fact."

The repeating trait is value, tradition, cultural roots, ideas, beliefs and costumes. Both subjects involved get in touch with the thematic organization of the narrative (landscape, Kidsu's character feature and hero's aspect) and with its figurative coating, letting themselves go by the perception of images that form and acquire color and movement, a glimpse of the world.

Seeing is not only noticing, glimpsing objects of the world, it is simultaneously apprehending existing relationships among noticeable objects and then build meanings. "Perceptions make sense insofar as perceived objects are embedded in inferential chains that sympathize with them, as is inferred from fire from smoke." (BERTRAND, 2003, p.159)

Then he with a little scrawl in the dust of the ground: "blue." She looks at the drawing, her head bent over her shoulder. Did he also write? He found his hands almost in fear. What person was in him and was coming to him in time? Would this other like him? Was it Muidinga? Or would it have another name, these assimilated, to use in document? (...)

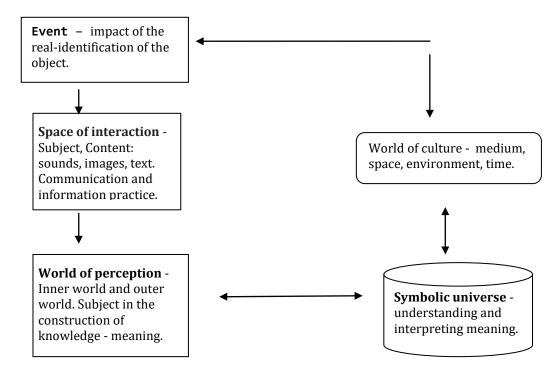
Suddenly, distant sounds come to him in time, resembling shouts of recreational play. The boy shudders: that was a first memory. So far he had not remembered the occurrence before the illness. He runs in shambles to the bus.

- Uncle, Uncle! I remembered my school! (COUTO, p. 37)

From the gradations, perceptions, memories and inferential chains the landscapes change, creates relations of meaning and only Muidinga sees these changes:

"Listen to one thing once and for all: there were never any other boys, there was never anything. Did you hear? It was me who caught you, slimy and sour, you realize you had been given birth anyway. You were born with me. I am not uncle: I am your father. (COUTO, p.37)

# **Perceptions Inferential Chains**



To see is to understand and interpret relations of meaning, so that the subject builds his world from the perception of the "outer world." It is only through the transformations carried out by our sense organs, responsible for the different sensations which we experience as seeing, hearing, feeling and smelling things, touching and feeling objects and the connection of what is perceived with the symbolic and the imaginary, is that the "outside world" can be represented. Thus, identity fills the space between the "inside" and the "outside" - between the personal world and the public world.

TODOROV, Tzevetan (1975, p. 31), in turn, states that the imaginary is equivalent to "the hesitation experienced by a being who knows only the natural

laws, in the face of an apparently supernatural event." As he walks along this fantastic stage, the reader's gaze now rests more closely on his illusion:

He says that the romantic illusion is a force that seizes the subject about to pick it up. The subject Muidinga moves away from the reality weakened by the war and is absorbed by the world of the dream illusion, that is, still to have hope.

There's a fusion of subject and object, the subject and its "desire to change". The supreme efficiency of the literary object – aesthetic – its conjunction assumed by the subject, it's not in its dissolution, in the obligatory passage through war. The efficiency is in (re) installing a past and feeding a scene, representational strategies.

It was said that that land was somnambulist. Because while the men slept, the land moved along spaces. When awakened, the population looked at the new face of the landscape and knew that, that night, they were visited by the fantasy of dream. (belief from people of Matimati)

What makes the road walk? It's the dream. While we continue to dream the road will remain alive. That's what the paths are for, to make us relatives of the future. (Tuahir speech - COUTO, 2007, p. 5)

The mist hovers, the dream is undone. In "Sleepwalking land", the load of semantics is that mist is everywhere. It's the road that walks, foggy, diluting the outlines of a rough reality, making itself fertile within for the future's harvest. Expressive and punctual, the Epigraph (first chapter, p.9) proves the dream goes on.

In that place, the war had killed the road. Along the paths, only hyenas crawled, Snooting between aches and dust. landscape mixed itself of sadness never before seen, in colors one could catch, at the mouth. It was dirty colors, so dirty they have lost all lightness, forgotten of the boldness of raising wings through blue. Here the sky had become impossible. And the living got used to the ground, in resigned learning of death.

The eye's circuit therefore, allows more easily to notice the Kindzu's stories are peopled by trees – canhoeiros (marulas), massaleiras (natal oranges), cajueiros (cashew), djambalaueiros (eucalyptus) – and the grass by the roadside thrives "in a Mozambique of greens". The kid read the pages, creates and recreates Kinzu's universe, mix reality and isotopy; the old man read the foliage, one feeds in the other the motives for being alive and connotes the need for the reader having this gift, that is, over the next pages.

Muidinga se atrapalha em totais confusões. É como se qualquer coisa, lá fundo de seu peito, se estivesse rasgando. E se apercebe que, em seu rosto, desliza o frio das lágrimas. Depois, sente a mão de seu pai lhe afagando a cabeça. Olha o seu rosto e vê que, afinal, seus olhos eram sábios. Foi como se, de repente, toda a bondade dele ficasse visível, redonda. (COUTO, 2007, p. 156)

In the parade of the specters of war, in the imprecations of the spirits, "times are set, in their gentle order, according to hopes and sufferings," and the present

time is resolved. Finally, the dead may be buried a second time, with due ceremonies. These meaning effects thus clarify the comprehensive analysis of codes and how one can profit from the interaction of reports with constructed reality.

A corpse abandoned in the open, an elephant dying in the savannah. At the Sleepwalking Land, they are variations of the same picture of a country hit by the ghost of war well after the war is over. Tuahir tells little Muidinga: "I lived in a time when love was a dangerous thing. You live in a time when love is a stupid thing."

Orphan of father and mother, Muidinga fulfills the destiny to escape of many deaths, and to be, like Kindzu, a bearer of the peace. With the sick body of "mantakassa," the poison of decayed manioc is saved from its first agony by old Tuahir when he is about to be thrown into a ditch. Its task has the weight of a race: to escape from the contaminated land and protect itself from the infirmities of the soul, which open in the invisible wounds of fear, madness, hopelessness. It is also another orphanhood, the one against which little Muidinga fights: the loss of the charm of traditions, the overthrow of a country by the empire of violence, the contempt of men for a sense of community.

In the novel, the declaration of Mozambique's Independence becomes one of its fantastic characters: Vinticinco de Junho (Twetyfifth of June), Junhito (Little June), Kindzu's little brother. In order to be spared of the death his dad sentences in one of his predictions, Junhito, starts living in a hen house, disguised with a bag of feathers and, slowly, unlearns how to talk.

Little brother stopped living in the house. My old man got him a place in the hen house. At break of dawn, he thought the boy to sing, just like the roosters. It took a while to attune. After many dawns, brother junhito already clucked with perfection, covered in a bag of feathers that my mom sewed for him. It seemed to match with those fluffs, swarmed with fleas. (COUTO: 2007, 19)

Oniric feeling takes us to a reflection about Mozambican culture, based on legends, oppression and myth, hallmarks of the somnambulism of a nation. Like Kindzu says in "Sleepwalking land": "The dream is the eye of life. We were blind."

With the crossing of bodies and souls, space and time, journeys and invented letters, figures of different polarities cross, life vs. death, present vs. future, war vs. peace, interior and exterior, inclusion vs. exclusion, real vs. imaginary, light vs. darkness, sky vs. sea, which must be faced as privileged territory of the meeting.

Tension created in the text by the polarizations isotopies, is an element recurrent of another, glimpsed in textuality. It is cleared when articulating **the tensions of "Death"**,

"Turn off the paths and tear down the bridges!", with the polarization of "yes", "a morning full of new light'. From the "present", "do thee cries for nowadays?" with the polarization of the "Future", "know that the coming days will be even worst". yet "that's why they made this war, to poison the belly of time, for the present to give birth to monsters in the place of hope". from "war",

"because this war wasn't made to get thee out of the country, but to get the country out of thee". from "peace", "you won't look for your relatives that went out to other lands in search of peace anymore."

Reading of this text "make us consider that we don't only speak and think metaphorically, but live through metaphors, a way of experimenting the world." RICOEUR, Paul (1978, p. 146)

"Now the gun is thy soul/ "The dream is the eye of life."

RICOEUR, Paul (1978, p.146) considers that the metaphorical process implies, cognition, imagination, feeling, and reports that

Aristotle, already gives us suggestions concerning what we call the semantic function of the imagination (and, consequently of feeling) in the expression of the metaphorical meaning. Aristotle speaks of lexis in general, that is to say, of diction, elocution, and style, the clarity of good metaphors results from his ability to "put before the eyes" the meaning which they set forth. What is suggested here is a kind of pictorial dimension, which can be called the pictorial function of the metaphorical meaning.

For MORAIS (2010), the gaps left by the war are filled by writing, which guarantees the presence of a voice that states. Voice personified by Kindzu:

The writing fills in the empty spaces, whether it be the war or the shadow that Kindzu is. The writing, where different times meet, that of Muidinga and that of Kindzu, rescues a non-linear time, neither homogeneous nor empty. Because the past told in the writings is more present than the present itself. It is Kindzu's dreams that make the road empty, the burned machimbombo and the desolate reality of Muidinga to leave the place. It is these same dreams that fill the void of Muidinga's past, that is, the writings return to an awareness of themselves, whether of Kindzu, Tuahir, Muidinga, or of the nation itself. (MORAIS, 2010, p.193).

There's one more isotopic polarization to be added to the previous: empty vs, homogeneous, continent vs. content. In this sense, subject Kindzu unsatisfied with living closed in his world, seek explanation understanding how is the ancestors' cult, what changed his people everyday life, a desire for interior change. A search for identity. Muidinga as well as Kindzu feel the need for changes and therefore go back to the same places traveled, however with already other eyes. The changes do not occur in the space where facts occur, but in the eye of the observing traveler by influence of contact with the other.

Theme of the narrative – dynamic search of identity and its actors, Muidinga and Kindzu, symbolizing the past and the future. Everything starts becoming different to the eye of who, in some way, suffered a transformation, an influence in the contact with the other. "The journey can be a long task destined to develop the I. [...] An I that moves, being able to reiterate or modify itself, even developing its self-consciousness; or improving its craftiness." (IANNI: 2000, p. 14).

One who travels leaves a lot of things on the road. Besides what is left on the start, it leaves on the path. As one walks, strips oneself. The more one uncovers the new, unknown, exotic or surprising, more one frees from oneself, one's past, one's way of being, habits, vices, convictions, assurance. One can open oneself increasingly to the unknown, as one dives into the unknown. (IANNI: 2000, p. 20)

In this systematics, in synthesis, it is seen that Ianni (2000) aimed at explaining a priori elements about the modification of being, so that, in order for the subject to be in harmony with nature, it is necessary to know the past so that the present presents itself. Why, against natural inclinations, we have the ability to choose the course of our actions in the name of a duty, however, we cannot deny our traditions, culture and wisdom, stored by the tradition of a people, is what presents Mia Couto at the Sleepwalking Land, the step joining the future. Is it an independent capacity or an orientation that links it to the way we see nature work? Of course there is a connection, for Kant our cognitive faculty and our freedom are self-determined.

It is recalled here that, in Sonämambula Land, Muidinga represents intelligence, cleverness, one who holds knowledge of the new. On the other hand, Tuahir establishes a harmony between the continuity of tradition and the wisdom accumulated through it.

The enunciative self (producer of language) reveals a "subject determined by externality (socio-historical context)" (Orlandi, 1988), a social subject recognized for its linguistic structures, which in turn represent cultural ideological formations. We have, then, an analytical framework: the framing of social factors; the structural-lexico-semantic analysis of discursive variation; and from this "sociolinguistic relationship," the configuration of transcultural worlds, concerning two groups of speeches.

# **Reviewing Views**

A lógica da cognição visa o sentido, construindo conhecimentos sobre o princípio da descoberta. Jacques Fontanille (1998)

The research studied in letters and memories the relationship between the literary and thematic narratives, referring to identity and liberty, specifying to identify in them their convergences and divergences, as forms of writing of the I. The creation of language strategies in use in the mobilization of want, must, know and can-do, related to the involvement and development of the characters with various linguistic expressions.

In "Sleepwalking land", Muidinga represents the intelligence, cleverness, the one which holds the knowledge of the new. On the other side, Tuahir establishes a harmony between continuity of tradition and knowledge amassed through it.

The enunciative I (language producer) reveals a "subject determined by exteriority (social-historical context)". You have then, an analytical structure: framing of social factors; structural-lexical-semantics analysis of discursive

variation; and from this "social-linguistic relationship", the configuration of transcultural worlds, concerned to two groups of talks.

Such aesthetical and symbolical investments in literature are still the most economical and simple form of euphemize human problems. It is still observed that literary texts, articulating the meaning of metaphorical words to the world representation, motivate the reader in having more conscience of the interaction existing between language and world, since, "the language is a structure formed of meaning and thinking is managing the language symbols." BENVENISTE (1974, p. 80)

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