

FROM PAIN TO UNCANNY MADNESS: UNGULANI BA KA KHOSA'S "THE UNEXPECTED DEATH"

Da dor à insólita loucura: "A Morte Inesperada" de Ungulani Ba Ka Khosa.

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Abstract

This article aims to deconstruct a history that has been written unilaterally in the abyssal north of the Atlantic for centuries. Through the analysis of the diegesis "The Unexpected Death", integrated in Ungulani Ba Ka Khosa's "Orgy of the Deranged", we intend to perceive the reality of a young post-colonial Mozambique shrouded in a well determined historical, social and cultural context. Through the vigorous portrait of the 1980s and 1990s that the diegesis portrays, we will examine the pain that drove the Mozambican people to madness and diagnose the cause of their mad psychic condition. Madness, which is elevated here to the utmost expression of the uncanny, exposes the urgent need to reclaim the forgotten collective unconscious of Mozambicans, who now live alongside a fragile modernity brought by the Portuguese. Finally, we will briefly attend to the systematic presence of Negritude.

Resumo

Este artigo é uma contribuição para a desconstrução de uma história que, durante séculos, foi escrita unilateralmente na abissal norte do Atlântico. Pela análise da diegese "A Morte Inesperada", integrada na obra "Orgia dos Loucos", de Ungulani Ba Ka Khosa, pretende-se adentrar na realidade de um jovem Moçambique pós-colonial envolto numa contextura histórica, social e cultural bem determinada. Através do vigoroso retrato das décadas de 80 e 90 que a diegese faculta, examinar-se-á a dor que terá levado o povo moçambicano à loucura e far-se-á um diagnóstico da causa da sua transtornada condição psíquica. A loucura, que aqui se eleva ao expoente máximo do insólito, denuncia a necessidade em recuperar o inconsciente coletivo esquecido de um povo que agora convive com uma modernidade mal gerida trazida pelos portugueses. Por último, dar-se-á breve atenção à presença sistemática da negritude.

Keywords: *Ungulani Ba Ka Khosa; Orgy of the Deranged; The Unexpected Death; colonialism; Mozambique.*

Palavras-chave: *Ungulani Ba Ka Khosa; Orgia dos Loucos; A Morte Inesperada; colonialismo; Moçambique.*

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INTRODUCTION

In 1974, while in Portugal carnations were being fired through the barrels of rifles, in Mozambique, after 10 years to the deafening sound of gunfire, the War of Independence culminates in a pejorative silence. A ceasefire in which the noise of the arsenal was replaced by the sound of hundreds of black bodies smashing into each other as they slid into mass graves. Bodies dispossessed of themselves being returned to their motherland, reddening the brownish humus with blood drained from bodies torn by the anguish of a (non-)life of oppression.

African literatures (in the Portuguese language) are born from voices that were submerged in colonial authority for years. From these voices echo pain and suffering, utopias, and even chimeras of a dehumanized and traumatized people. And, whether narrative or lyrical, the literary texts became denunciation records of the macabre oppressions inflicted by the *white men*, as well as of the *black men's* renunciation to the assimilation of a European culture.

In this post-colonial period, in which Mozambique conquers a weird freedom, the national literary discourses, which once renounced to the Portuguese ruling, now denounce the immense cultural, social, and human destruction that the imperial experience left in a land that the Portuguese took as their own. Left behind, there're wandering people who feel like strangers in their own homeland, bewildered, but not yearning to find the North, seeking to build a South, a space that is theirs and where they can recover an identity that was violently stolen.

But the newly liberated Mozambique soon learns that the greed for power doesn't come from *white* or *black* men, but from an unholy blindness of those men who incessantly seek to exercise supremacy over their fellows. Thus, in 1976, the Civil War between FRELIMO and RENAMO, two political parties that diverge ideologically, but whose desire to dominate the country converge, began. And poor Mozambique, now governed by FRELIMO, assists for more than fifteen years a new warlike spectacle of a fratricidal war that destroys everything that was thought to be no longer able to be destroyed. It is a period in which entropy is reinstated, a disorder that results in a profound aesthetic-literary production, in which, from José Craveirinha to his disciples, as was, and still is, the novelist and storyteller Ungulani Ba Ka Khosa, emerges, whether in verse or prose, the most melodic lyricisms that portray the most painful ordeals experienced by the Mozambican people.

ORGY OF THE DERANGED: a work by a socially committed author

Ungulani Ba Ka Khosa is one of the most prominent names in Contemporary Mozambican Literature. Ba Ka Khosa, Francisco Esaú Cossa's tsunga pseudonym, was born in the village of Inhaminga, in the Sofala region, in August 1957, in the diasporic Mozambique. Son of two nurses, who were assimilated by the hegemonic culture of the metropolis, he came into contact early on with a vast literature, both Portuguese and foreign.

The thematic scope of Ba Ka Khosa's aesthetic-literary productions ranges from the fictional diegetic universes that depict stories enveloped in popular beliefs and traditions to the denunciation of the fracturing problems within the Mozambican society, with which he is socially committed to intervene. This intellectual attitude of militancy follows the Sartrean precepts and manifest in the author's ability to "point the finger" at realities that appear unjust to him, to "put his finger on the wounds" of the vulnerabilities of a society striving to rebuild itself.

Ba Ka Khosa uses his literary word to develop a realistic, critical and incisive discourse. Embracing Sartre's precepts, his prose act as a manifesto to culturally, civilly and historically reconstruct an identityless nation. By taking over as a historian and ethnographer in the examination of his nation historic past, Khosa endeavors to portray the Mozambican people's setbacks and animosities through his written work, aiming to surmount the adversities and alert to the need for change so that the post-colonial society may rebirth (Texeira, 2013; Lanziero et al., 2022).

Three years after publishing his first novel *Ualalapi*, Ba Ka Khosa published, in 1990, his second work – *Orgy of the Deranged* –, edited by the Mozambican Writers Association (AEMO). The narratives in *Orgy of the Deranged* reveal a post-colonial reality that exceeds the domination and aggression experience that the country endured. This collection of nine stories, which at first glance may not seem objectively related to each other, allow us to apprehend a scenario of agony and disorder in a country that has yet to free itself from its own constraints and is unprepared to self-govern.

In an orgy in which all society takes part, the work allows us to delve into the everyday life of a sick country, where the only bond among Mozambicans is their psychic pathology – madness. It is within this wounded social context, marked by identity annihilation, in a mess society that no longer makes good use of reason, that Ba Ka Khosa

seeks to emphasize the need for evasion. Within an implicit critical pretension, the author wishes that his people would overcome the difficulties brought by war and slavery so that they could free themselves from madness and, lucid, be able to rebuild the nation, in search for their own utopia, their own Mozambique.

The Unexpected Death is an example of Ba Ka Khosa's fantastic literature. In a narrative that goes from profound pain to uncanny madness, the author constructs a hyperbolic image that resembles a Mozambique confined to colonial scars which has led it into chaos. The narrative is thus an exaggerated panoramic representation of the 1980s and the early years of the 1990s, depicting a lost country trying to find itself while coping with the wounds of a badly sutured past that is still vividly marked in its people's memory. Based on the Simbine's unusual death, this story takes us on a journey to a youthful Mozambique, politically and geographically independent from the metropolis, but still shaken by a civil war that claimed the lives of nearly a million people over more than fifteen years. This lost country now waves on the shores of the Indian Ocean and begins a turbulent journey on the high tide of scarcity of resources and poverty, in search for an identity of which only a trace remains in a mist melancholy memory. We may say that

the tone of the work announces an apocalyptic outburst, supported by an agonizing and fragmented writing, in which the hyperbolic language of catastrophe is enhanced the unusual. Alongside horror, the unusual events compose a hyperbolic symphony that bring us closer to the tones of barbarism: the lakes of viscera, the seas of blood, the decomposed bodies, the colossal floods, the streets paved in shredded organs; these are possibilities for the manifestation of trauma in language, in its enigmatic and twisted feature (Pereira, 2020, p. 234).

Being a disciple of José Craveirinha, Ba Ka Khosa prefers the narrative over the lyric, but, like the poet, he is committed to construct a new History, without leaving aside the criticism of society to which he points out its infirmities. These narratives are, therefore,

loaded with excessive desolation, suffering, grotesque contingencies that are part of lives affected by the historical processes of violence that Mozambique went through. However, other elements that connect them are the ruins, re-signified fragments of the past, which open possibilities of reconstruction (Morais, 2020, p. 232).

Paulo Freire (2005) teaches us that dehumanization is a dyad that encompasses two antithetical realities – the oppressed and the oppressor – which, nevertheless, coexist. In Mozambique, and throughout all Africa, the dehumanization of *black people* arose from the conflict, hatred, and terror instigated by the *white* tyrants, who, besides not recognizing the *others* as deserving of the same rights, loved no one but themselves. In short, it is an act enveloped in the blindness of greed that led the *white men* themselves to lose their humanity, which they perhaps never had.

The colonial dehumanization imposed by the educated *white men* on the *savage black men*, where both repudiate each other, is at minimum burlesque: if the *white Portuguese men* did not share similarities with the *black African men*, this last one, reduced to a caricature of his most nomadic and animal-like characteristics, also did not recognize the *white men* as an ideal to be followed. In the process of humanizing Mozambicans, a process that Ba Ka Khosa believes will lead them to free themselves from the historical filth left by the Portuguese, the author highlights the past carnage experienced and viscerally exposes the “horrors of a true orgy of bodies thrown into the abyss of death and dehumanization” (Pereira, 2020, p. 232).

THE UNEXPECTED DEATH: A FANTASTIC TALE

Molecular structuring

In *The Unexpected Death*, the realities of a recently independent Mozambique are exteriorized by a narrator who assumes a heterodiegetic, fixed, neutral and omniscient focalization on the states and motives of the characters' madness. The narrator explores the shallow internal density that, nevertheless, extrapolates to the outside world and allows us to comprehend the characters' psychological states.

The state of madness, the psychological circumstance that commands the entire diegesis, arises from the restrictions imposed on the characters. These constraints stem from their unusual beliefs, which have survived in their subconscious the destruction carried out by the Portuguese imperial experience as well as the poorly constructed modernity that the metropolis left behind. Among the characters, many of them merely operational, there is a misfortunate guard who was destined to never marry; an old woman who, when she was young, had her life robbed by her fading husband; and a mother whose

overwhelming scream expresses the enormous and overwhelming pain of her son's omened death. Her son, Simbine, died decapitated while peering through a glassless window into the elevator where a nicotine maniac had been trapped. However, the extraordinary slant taken in the narrative attributes his death to the omens his mother had uttered him back in his childhood as well as the polygamous relationship he maintained with three different women.

As the characters are all flat, they lack psychological density. However, they do reveal, in a discursive clarity contrary to the mental turmoil in which they live, their sick psychological state, which resulted from the constraints imposed by their unusual beliefs. These beliefs that have driven them insane, unraveling their inner world and compromising their potential happiness and well-being.

The Unexpected Death's space and time reflect the post-liberation reality of Mozambique. Here, people's traditions coexist within a city environment shaped by the *white Portuguese men*, who enforced the rural exodus and brought the *black men* from their small rural town to the Europeanly developed coastal cities. This was done with the intention of assimilating the supposedly *uncivilized black men* with the necessary knowledge or, in other cases, to make them slaves of the light-skinned colonizers.

The common dominator between the characters boils down to a state of madness that resides in legendary beliefs systematically present in their unconscious – the delirium arises from the colonial traces that the hegemonic *white culture* has left well imprinted on African lands, whose people now face a poorly managed modernity, built in favor of the *white* masses, and to which they do not identify personal action, but only the physical effort of having conceived them under the torrid hot sun and the dense Indian breeze. In fact, before Ba Ka Khosa, Craveirinha, in his poetry, had already highlighted the efforts of *black people* in the cementation of the Portuguese diaspora in Mozambique, criticizing Mozambicans' inertial receptivity and their obedience and acceptance to those who invaded and claimed the lands as their own. Then, he noticed that animals exhibited a greater sense of humanity through their gregarious and participatory involvement in favor of common good than their own people:

Man and Ant

The man	And of reinforced concrete
guided the machine at work	elevator and air conditioning
sweating and screaming on the scaffolding	for the black and white
and the ant	Indians
built without a cement mixer	mulattos and Chinese of the scaffolding
silently	with obligatory portraits
fraternally	on X-ray plates
without complexes or diplomas.	the big houses razing the clouds
	were not enough.
And while the invitaminated man built	And on the ground
large houses of cement and iron	the anthill was enough
on the ground grew the collective work	to the uncivilized ant.
of the conscientious insect.	(Craveirinha, 1963, pp. 28-29)

It is precisely in a glassless window of an “elevator” inside a “reinforced concrete” building that Simbine dies. His great and irremediable fatality, derived from the hodiernity constructed in the North abyssal of the world that does not belong to Africa, proves that even after independence the Mozambicans still suffer with the enormous vestiges left behind by the Portuguese, leading them to neurasthenic states and dense madness. And although empirically this was the cause of his death, both his mother and the guard who was called at the time of the tragedy attribute his death to a predetermined fate based on unusual beliefs.

Belief functions on a psychosocial level as a mediator between the psychological realm of our inner world and the tangible realm of the physical world. Consequently, they play a significant role in influencing decisions and codes of conduct through which individuals shape their actions and project them onto the tangible world. This implies that belief is nothing more than an individual’s stance towards a proposition that defines their relationship and behavior towards the world (Furtado, 2011).

The unusual is related to the inference of elements or entities from the intelligible world into the perceptible world, often stirring restlessness and curiosity in the characters, and even evoking fear and apprehension (Bellon, 2019). Consequently, fear leads to the fostering of ambiguity, uncertainty, and the rejection of the rational and empirical order of the world’s state of affairs. However, the unusual should not be understood *stricto sensu*, but rather from a mystical perspective. Ba Ka Khosa, influenced by his readings

of Latin American literature, discovered that these narratives depicted realities that closely mirrored the historical and social context of Mozambique. This realization eventually led him to embrace his identity as a realistic author within the realm of the fantastic.

In *The Unexpected Death*, the unusual approaches the barbaric and the ridiculous, reaching the pinnacle of delirium. The epistemic modality² is revealed in the character's legendary beliefs who, convinced of the intervention of supernatural elements, understand the world in the light of the symbology of imagens, which conditions the way they perceive reality and the conclusions they draw from their own and others' behaviors. But it is the state of madness which governs the psychotic behavior of the characters that reveals the functionality of the deontic modality³, being the actions of the diegetic personas shaped by the legendary beliefs that reside in their subconscious.

Proleptically, the narrator relives the colonial space and time, presenting two antithetical points of view that correspond to the contrasting ways of being of Simbine and his mother. For young Simbine, his place was not inside the *white men's* classroom, but in the African plains, where, comparing his behavior to that of elephants, he experienced the most libertine character of his whole black being in fullness:

I preferred to run through the endless green bushes in the mornings and afternoons, like a gazelle, freely leaping over the branches and the scattered trunks on the damp and dry ground, and penetrate in the tall green grass, breathing in the clear air and listening to the untainted sonatas of the multicolored birds twittering in the late afternoon with the red sun burning the green treetops (...) (Khosa, 2001, p. 428).

Simbine recovers the African identity from his grandfather, who believed “the black men lived for centuries without the quinine and the book,” as he longed to receive the typical education passed down from generation to generation, from grandparents to grandchildren and from parents to their children. Simbine's mother, however, had different plans for her son's future, hoping he would be more receptive towards the educational system enforced by the *white men* and embrace the knowledge they imparted. Her desire was full of concern, since the times in which they lived no longer resembled

² The epistemic modality, which is relatively static and restrictive, relates to the characters' *knowledge*, *ignorance*, and *conviction/belief*. Cf. Doležel, 1976; Chan, 1991.

³ Holding a positive force in the diegetic succession, whilst restricting the action of the characters, the deontic modality relates to *permission*, *prohibition* and, in some cases, *obligation*. This modal restriction relates to the characters' mode of action, that is, to their laws of conduct. Cf. Doležel, 1976; Chan, 1991. On narrative successiveness, cf. Reis, C. (1995). *O Conhecimento da Literatura: Introdução aos Estudos Literários*. Coimbra: Livraria Almedina.

those of her father. In order to convince him to go to school, she pointed out possible consequences of his refusal to embrace modernity and, in an act of desperation, realizing her son was not heeding her advice, she ominously predicted his own fate: "You will have a damned death, son, tells him years later when he was already an adolescent (...). – Times are different, my son." (Khosa, 2001, pp. 427-428).

Little did Simbine know how greatly he would regret renouncing to the African libertinism he insisted on keeping as a child, as he succumbed, years later, in the cemented buildings, beheaded by an elevator – a mechanical object in motion, the ultimate symbol of European modernization. His cursed death was caused due to the fact he gave up the life he once had, the abandonment of a space of fulfillment inscribed in his own identity, and the renunciation to the immense African landscapes, which bend time and make it move more slowly – a time that is unhurried, that stops and lingers.

The unintended omens of his mother, who now wishes she had never uttered them, drive her to madness. An unusual and agonizing madness that slowly consumes her, devouring her from the inside out as she expresses the harshness and cruelty of her son's death in a violent perpetual animalistic scream:

It was the beginning of a week of intense pain before the spasm and fear of the old women who left her at the end of the first day, aware that the demon she was carrying would never return. For amidst the many macabre scenes they had witnessed, they had never seen anything like it: a woman had screamed so much that she began to howl like the dogs that in the middle of the night cast evil omens on locked houses (Khosa, 2001, p. 427).

Yet, the unusual understanding of Simbine's death does not only stem from the mother's legendary beliefs. The guard who was called for assistance, despite acknowledging the APIE's⁴ responsibility for Simbine's misfortune, still believes in a fated death, caused by the fact that Simbine was a sorcerer living with three women. The guard himself had been a victim of supernatural entities when a powerful spell was cast upon him by a great-aunt whom he had once called a witch. This spell not only took his life and degraded his physical appearance, but also rendered him sexually impotent, preventing him from starting a family.

⁴ With the downfall of the Portuguese Colonial Empire, Mozambique established a company to manage state properties, which was named Administração do Parque Imobiliário do Estado (State Real Estate Administration).

Enchanted, unloved, and desperate, for over twenty years he has relied on alcohol to appease the madness in which he lives, finding solace only when his soul is intoxicated and the constant state of neurosis that consumes him subsides as he immerses himself in beer:

His eyes were red, as they had always been, since he had begun to drink excessively twenty-five years ago, driven by the misfortune of never being able to marry due to his inability to engage in sexual relations since the day he dared to insult a great-aunt, calling her a witch in public. He was a stout individual, with chubby cheeks and short, thick fingers (Khosa, 2001, p. 431).

In addition to bearing the burden of witchcraft throughout his life, he also covered his back with a damned coat which belonged to the dead husband of the old woman who had offered it to him. This woman had also been destined to a life of suffering, haunted by the ominous threat her husband had uttered her before inadvertently shooting himself while cleaning an antique gun. In his final breath, in an act of exploitation and possessiveness towards his wife, he predestined her life to seclusion:

– Mark my words, woman: the day you dare to take a man between your thighs, I will strangle you with the same ferocity with which I tear open a cockroach. You are mine and you will be mine beyond death! (Khosa, 2001, p. 424).

Years later, this woman, now “with wrinkles covering her body like maggots settling on a putrefying corpse” (Khosa, 2001, p. 424), dies on the same day she gets rid of the coat. Her action makes her the only character through which the axiological modality⁵ actively manifests itself throughout the narrative: albeit belatedly, the woman tries to regain her autonomy and reclaim the life she lost while trapped by her late husband’s ghost. The attitude of detachment from her ominousness, symbolized in the image of the coat, although built within the realm of the fantastic, serves as an allegory of what is expected of the Mozambican people: the murder of inertial silence and the search for freedom.

The elaboration of this small diegesis to the minutia of every detail gives it an unquestionable literary grandeur. The *black men's* madness is so dispersed that it has spread throughout society, and even the man who was trapped in the elevator that Simbine was impatiently waiting for is reduced to a state of compulsive madness due to his nicotine obsession:

⁵ Holding the greatest driving force in the diegesis and having a high dynamism, the axiological modality relates to *goodness*, *badness*, and *indifference*. It can be understood as the search for *value* (Cf. Doležel, 1976; Chan, 1991).

And all because of the damn cigarette he decided to buy from an acquaintance of his, after a day of work where the image of the cigarette haunted him in such a way that it entered his mouth and traveled through his lungs, bursting his rib cage and blinding his tired eyes as he scrolled through the letters that jumped and danced, like acrobats in full performance, across the pages of the obituary register (Khosa, 2001, p. 430).

This cigarette maniac, when he becomes aware that his addiction will inevitably lead him to death, implicitly reveals a potential attitude towards change.

From pain to uncanny madness

The use of madness in literature is vast, but this psychotic state, when brought into play in literary texts, seems to be no different from the madness that encompasses all those who in their daily lives live with a deranged side of themselves, which they exteriorize colossally. This is,

madness is the perpetual amorphous threat within and the extreme of the unknown in fellow human beings. In fact, recurrent literary representations of madness constitute a history of explorations of the mind in relation to itself, to other human beings, and to social and political institutions. He both reflects and influences those involved with him. He embodies and symbolically transforms the values and aspirations of his family, his tribe, and his society, even if he renounces them, as well as their delusions, cruelty, and violence, even in his inner fight (Feder, 1980, pp. 4-5).

From the howls of absurd pain to the unusual moment a man spends his last myocardial pumping absorbing his wife's life, it can be inferred that the pathological madness from which the characters suffer derives from the rational exiguity and corresponds to a psychological state that emerges from the soul's dismay and turmoil. This fierce and intense sensory experience, in which the entire universe is devoured at once, inflicts an atmosphere of confusion, sadness, and immeasurable desolation on all characters. In short, it's the explosion of an agonizing palpitating heart; it is the bleeding of an artery that pumps despair.

The narrator makes use of madness to laboriously build up two representations of Mozambique. On one hand, he develops an image of *black men* who, hallucinated by unusual legends, live in the shadow of fear: madness denounces the human suffering of all those in whom their unconscious state has overcome reason, prevailing over their consciousness.

This delirium, hyperbolically symptomatic, is visible in the dilated eyes of the guard, whose superstition robbed him the family he never had; audible in the screams of endless anguish resounding from a mother who lost her son; tangible in the lifeless bodies of Simbine, whose life was taken by modernity, and of the old woman, haunted forever by the shadow of her deceased husband, only finding peace with the arrival of her own death. The presence of madness is proof of the profound and painful bitterness from the irrational fears harbored by characters who believe in the mystic universe.

Here, suffering derives from a deep wound that was left untreated and that, in some cases, has led to the necrosis of the soul. We may say the collective pain come as a result of the dehumanization brought by slavery and by the coercion imposed to be who one is not and to have no choice but to accept the impetuous cruelty with which the *white men* transformed the *black men* into savage animals, convinced that they were doing the opposite. This pain is well represented in the corpulent suffering of the lyrical subject in Craveirinha:

My Pain

Hurts	And the black man who screamed
The very same anguish	Is the pain that was not sold
In souls	In the hour of the lost sun.
Near and far	(Craveirinha, 1963, p. 10)

On the other hand, the narrator perceives madness as a symptom of a deteriorated culture as well as of a politics that has descended into the extreme of idiotism, where blood brothers kill each other while fighting for the same land. The understanding of psychosis follows Nietzsche's (2005) perspective, to whom madness is considered a collective product which comes from groups and generational shifts, rather than being an inherent aspect of an individual's existence. Freud, too, associated psychosis with societal interactions, explaining why he considered it a secondary symptom of madness rather than a primary one.

The story depicts the expected madness of a nation once torn apart by colonialism and engulfed in the tumultuous complexities of a time and space where *black men* involuntarily became entwined with *white men* in a progressive and bilateral process of dehumanization. Within this process, the African's sense of self was held captive and eventually eroded, leaving behind, within the intricate texture of black skin, the indelible scars of oppressive lashings. This panorama of human and identity destruction, a consequence of the Portuguese colonial experience, resonates universally among all the characters in the narrative.

The systematic presence of Negritude

Finally, it is important to acknowledge the presence of Negritude. This powerful movement of subversion arises from the *black individuals'* rejection towards the Eurocentric domination and from the degrading image created around *black people*, which depicts them as slaves to their own humanity. Negritude stands as a significant force in reclaiming *black* identity and dismantling oppressive narratives. According to Paula Meneses, Negritude is

a political and cultural demand, (...) the refusal of cultural and spiritual domination, political oppression and economic exploitation – denial and oppression legitimized by the supposed superiority of the white race and the excellence of European civilization (Meneses, 2020, p. 1076).

Ba Ka Khosa seeks inspiration for his narratives, which encompass a certain lyricism, on the ground of his motherland. Narratives explore eroticism and sexuality; the distancing from the city, considering it leads individuals to an evil morality; the proximity to the suburbs, where the true identity of the African is purified; suffering; rebellion; social indignation; the need for escape and change. In *The Unexpected Death*, the narrative explicitly externalizes Negritude in the erotic passages depicting Simbine's childhood.

He would fiercely knock down the women coming from the river, fresh, with breasts like green apples stuck to their small wet blouses that barely reached their navels, swiftly removing the capulana that uncovered their naked bodies, from which exuded the ecstatic odor of the pubis (Khosa, 2001, p. 428).

CONCLUSION

All *Orgy of the Deranged* serves as a lens to a Mozambique drowned in disorder and *The Unexpected Death* story is an eloquent example of that reality: legendary traditions crystallize into empirical and ontological truths, governing the behavior and norms of characters who coexist with daily sadness.

In a post-colonial period where liberation does not lead to the implementation of a much and long-desired new order of social ideals, Mozambique, like other former colonies, wanders lost and alone in an Africa still plagued by the conflicts of the West. Ba Ka Khosa, upon realizing that Mozambique is still submissive and coerced by its past, instrumentalizes his literary word with an ideology that conveys an imperative for action.

In a discourse that centers on reflecting the present, where the past is juxtaposed with the future, literature plays a vital role as an ideological tool to safeguard against the rewriting of the country's history solely based on the past. At the core of the work, *The Unexpected Death* portrays a verbal image of a nation consumed by a psychosis which, paradoxically, leads to the revival of a cultural collective unconscious steeped in mysticism from the past, which the author harnesses in the pursuit of political and ideological affirmation for a people yearning for renewal. In conclusion, the narratives of Ba Ka Khosa

expand the boundaries between society and art, destabilizing the borders of truth, the present, and the past, in order to create a new epistemological category by questioning the past.

For this reason, Ba Ka Khosa's texts consider the past as the "prehistory" of the present, acting as mediators between yesterday and today, and above all, gathering distinct ways of understanding the current historical context of Mozambique. Without effective critical thinking, the country would inevitably become detached from its identity roots (Dutra, 2009, p. 91).

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