




LITERATURE AND SOCIETY: THE AFRICAN LITERARY MACROSYSTEM
LITERATURA E SOCIEDADE: O MACROSSISTEMA LITERÁRIO AFRICANO
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ABSTRACT

How is the contemporary African literary macrosystem composed? In light of this research question, this paper aims to explain the concept of literary system and its limitations in its application to African countries. Using the comparative literature method, 25 fictional works from Angola, Mozambique, Nigeria, Kenya, Algeria, Rwanda and South Africa are approached as a corpus for investigative analysis. The argumentation cores indicate that a) conceiving African literature from the conceptual perspective of macrosystem seems more appropriate to us than independent national literary systems, even if this may hinder the understanding of the process of national identity construction; b) postcolonial literature feeds back into this artistic macrosystem, to the extent that the decolonial strategy is configured as the main modernist discursive mechanism of the African novel throughout the 20th and 21st centuries; c) sharing the same European language for disseminating the African novel seems to be insufficient to think about literary systems and macrosystems.

Keywords: Literary System. Africa. Macrosystem. Fiction.

RESUMO

Como se compõe o macrossistema literário africano contemporâneo? Diante dessa questão de pesquisa, este trabalho visa explicar a concepção de sistema literário e suas limitações na aplicação aos países africanos. A partir do método de literatura comparada, abordam-se 25 obras ficcionais de Angola, Moçambique, Nigéria, Quênia, Argélia, Ruanda e África do Sul como corpus de análise investigativa. Os núcleos de argumentação apontam que a) conceber a literatura africana pela perspectiva conceitual de macrossistema nos parece mais adequado do que sistemas literários nacionais independentes, mesmo que isso possa prejudicar a compreensão sobre o processo de construção identitária nacional; b) a literatura pós-colonial retroalimenta esse macrossistema artístico, na medida em que a estratégia decolonial se configura como o principal mecanismo discursivo modernista do romance africano ao longo dos séculos XX e XXI; c) o compartilhamento da mesma língua europeia de divulgação do romance africano parece ser insuficiente para se pensar sistemas e macrossistemas literários.

Palavras-chave: Sistema Literário. África. Macrossistema. Ficção.

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RESUMEN

¿Cómo está compuesto el macrosistema literario africano contemporáneo? En vista de esta pregunta de investigación, este trabajo tiene como objetivo explicar la concepción del sistema literario y sus limitaciones en su aplicación a los países africanos. Utilizando el método de literatura comparada, se abordan 25 obras de ficción de Angola, Mozambique, Nigeria, Kenia, Argelia, Ruanda y Sudáfrica como corpus para el análisis investigativo. Los núcleos argumentales señalan que a) concebir la literatura africana desde la perspectiva conceptual de un macrosistema nos parece más apropiado que la de los sistemas literarios nacionales independientes, aunque esto pueda perjudicar la comprensión del proceso de construcción de la identidad nacional; b) la literatura poscolonial retroalimenta este macrosistema artístico, en la medida en que la estrategia decolonial se configura como el principal mecanismo discursivo modernista de la novela africana a lo largo de los siglos XX y XXI; c) Compartir una misma lengua europea para la difusión de la novela africana parece insuficiente para pensar en sistemas y macrosistemas literarios.

Palabras clave: Sistema Literario. África. Macrosistema. Ficción.



1 INTRODUCTION

After the increase in publications of post-colonial African literature, there was the consolidation of an integrated and autonomous literary system that can be conceived as its own macrosystem, with structural, thematic and representative particularities, with the aim of breaking with the historical silencing produced by European colonialism. Thus, the need arose to show the world their anxieties and anguish in relation to the colonial period. In this context, Brazilian and African literature share a common past of colonization, resistance and discursive reformulation.

The shared heritage has been marked by political and cultural processes of erasure of movements of cultural affirmation. Based on this understanding, the article proposes a reflection, through the comparative method, on the concepts of literary system and macrosystem to verify their capacity for adaptation to African literature. With the expansion of the spaces for colonized individuals to express themselves politically and artistically, this discussion about the way in which African literary models manifest themselves emerges as a relevant point that must be given due importance, due to the imperative need to understand the side of the peoples who were oppressed during the writing of history. By pluralizing narratives and breaking with the idea of a subaltern narrative, a discourse is constructed that moves away from the Eurocentric view and opens up space to discuss how systemic oppressions were rejected or incorporated in the formation of post-colonial narratives.

Thus, understanding the processes of transformation generated by the dynamics between hegemonic and subaltern cultures allows us to observe significant impacts on the society of these countries, reflected in various forms of art, especially in literature. However, the analysis of the article is based on the assumption that, structurally, the relationship between colonized countries is strengthened by similar historical processes, and by the asymmetrical development of national literary systems on the African continent, which often lack a significant readership, which gives rise to a new form of literary system, in which works can be received mainly outside the country of origin.

With the strengthening of postcolonial narratives, Western modernism acquires a new perspective. From this change, it becomes essential to reevaluate the strategies of African modernism, as it reveals the emergence of a complex literary movement with its own characteristics of confrontation with the Eurocentric view of narrative. Given this context, global modernism is similar to African modernism in that both propose structural



and thematic innovations, while seeking to represent collective processes of construction of national identities historically disregarded by colonialism.

African literature, in its modernist and contemporary conception, is undergoing radical changes that, in themselves, outline a panorama of relevant discussions in the political and artistic fields. Initially, the text addresses the concepts of literary system as a set of works linked by common denominators. In the African case, colonialism, struggles for colonial liberation and civil wars support the conflicts between tradition and modernity, with strong contemporary tendencies towards discussions on gender, violence and racism. The text then problematizes the concept of literary macrosystem in order to consider the current status of African literature, highlighting the structural similarities in which postcolonial criticism contributes to the formation of common denominators between the art and literature of the continent.

2 LITERARY SYSTEMS AND MACROSYSTEMS

Studies on literary systems in Brazil and Portuguese-speaking Africa focus on discussions about literary manifestations and the process of formation of national literatures (Candido, 2010; Abdala Junior, 2007; Chaves, 2005; Moraes, 2010). These are edifying reflections for thinking about the maturation of cultural production in several countries that went through the colonial experience and allow for intercultural dialogue.

The reference framework focused on Portuguese-language literatures can serve as a basis for constructing theoretical approaches to discuss contemporary African literatures, since the principle of solidarity between colonial phenomena in Brazil and Africa becomes very significant when fictional productions from Angola, Mozambique, Nigeria, Algeria, Rwanda and South Africa begin to share a historical and cultural intertext that allows the use of methodological and critical procedures to interact with the literary aesthetics of the African continent.

Postcolonial criticism must be understood as a set of theoretical and analytical currents that prioritize the unequal relations between the North and the South in explaining and understanding the contemporary world. The tools for mastering and conquering epistemic discourse allow for the structural production of thoughts based on the common experience of colonialismo (Santos, 2010). In this way, the organization of decolonial thought is confronted with the historical model of knowledge-regulation, marked by the trajectory and antagonistic perspective of chaos and order, the first for

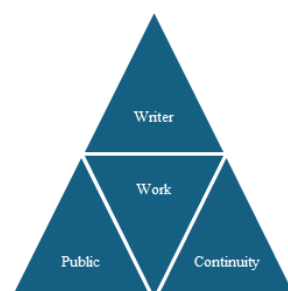
characterizing all the cultural and intellectual material of colonized peoples and the second as an element of ordering world thought and strongly Eurocentric rationality.

While knowledge-emancipation, of the postcolonial type, understands this trajectory through the parallel of ignorance conceived as colonialism and the knowledge produced by these territories as solidarity, since colonialist nations refuse to recognize and validate the knowledge of the other, the colonized. Therefore, postcolonial criticism from the global South can serve as a supportive praxis to conceive approximations in theoretical approaches when dealing with intercultural historical phenomena of the same nature, that is, the production of knowledge-emancipation, of which African literatures express themselves in contemporary times.

In the work *“Formação da Literatura Brasileira”* (1965), Antonio Candido investigated the main transformations in the consolidation of artistic-literary production in Brazil, using the term literature as a definition, as a “system of works linked by common denominators, which allow us to recognize the dominant notes of a phase” (Candido, 1965, p.25), to the detriment of literary manifestations. For Moraes (2010), issues related to the common denominators that constitute a literary system can in fact be articulated from internal elements, such as language, themes and images shared and/or collectively imagined, and also from external elements that are fundamental to the materialization of this articulation, such as: a) a group of producers more or less aware of their role; b) a group of receivers of the works; c) the transmission mechanism, understood as a language that can be shaped by cultural and period styles, in addition to the fourth element d) the continuity of the process. “Literature itself” will require political, market and cultural forces to maintain and provide feedback to the system, allowing the emergence of economic consolidation marks of the process.

Figure 1

Literary System



Source: Candido (2010)



The trade issue goes unnoticed in Antonio Candido's theorizing, but it should be considered a structuring element for cultural producers to consolidate themselves in their countries and abroad, and it also becomes a fundamental element for conceiving African literature, since, in certain contexts, the formation of the national literary system occurs in cultural solidarity with other linguistically close countries. The case of Mozambican literature can be exemplary in this discussion, its writers regularly produce works targeting the Brazilian and Portuguese markets, simultaneously with the national public.

Thus, all the creative mechanisms of its authors go through the principle of reception and solidarity with other markets that share the same language of publication. This phenomenon may also occur in Francophone and Anglophone countries on the African continent, since literary production in other native languages may not be commercially viable for writers. From this perspective, art and literature, “as a symbolic system through which the deepest desires of the individual are transformed into elements of contact between people and of interpretation of the different spheres of reality” (Candido, 1965, p.25), are constructed through these “elements of contact” that, in the African case, are evident in the colonial experience, making “the system of inter-human communication” structured by the transnational dimension also resulting from the mutual use of language or from the historical proximity of colonialism, but always intercultural.

Antonio Candido theorized about the transition from a period marked by literary manifestations to a truly Brazilian literature, as an “autonomous system”. Therefore, it was only in the 19th century that Brazil began to have an organic, coherent literature based on the construction of national identity (Moraes, 2010), that is, the national consciousness in its set of producers and receivers is brought together in a fixed, continuous and coherent project, thus characterized as a system.

When undertaking a preliminary conceptualization of the literatures of Angola and Mozambique, Chaves (2005) proposes a less complex exercise to conceive of national literatures in Africa, rescuing the very recent character of the continent and its need to counter colonial literature. Therefore, the African literary system was guided by the commitment to deconstruct the colonial discourse still predominant in European artistic productions, since novels, films and documentaries are still constantly produced about African countries based on a colonial aesthetic in search of exoticism, tribalism and silencing of the local experiences of the colonized. In the words of the author, “colonialism left a succession of gaps in the history of these lands and many writers, speaking from



different places and from different perspectives, seem to take on the role of filling this void with their knowledge” (Chaves, 2005, p.45).

In this way, the ethical and aesthetic project of African writers has been to construct narratives with mastery of discourse to speak from the African experience of colonialism and no longer from the perspective of European colonizers. In 2009, Nigerian writer Chimamanda Adichie had already drawn the attention of global society when she gave a lecture entitled “The Dangers of a Single Story”, in an attempt to summarize the postcolonial approach of her fictional writing and the African project of producing art and literature in the second half of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century. The forms of representation of black people, the understanding of African cultural and religious traditions and local landscapes began to be produced fictionally in order to distance themselves from the exoticism and stereotypes of colonial ideology (Moraes, 2010).

Santos (2010) pointed out the need to carry out this review of history and tradition, as necessary steps in the complex exercise of intercultural translation, called “diatopic hermeneutics” (Santos, 2010, p.452). This is a work of intercultural collaboration in the production of knowledge, in a collective, interactive and intersubjective way, therefore, literature must be taken as an interknowledge based on cognitive and affective exchanges. Therefore, postcolonial literature has at its origin the need to produce autochthonous knowledge, using the rereading and rewriting of local histories to overcome the hegemonic colonial discourse, even after the decolonization processes of African countries.

Thus, literature has actively participated in the construction of national identities, a fundamental element in the fight against colonialism (Moraes, 2010). This would be the main premise of the constitution of African literary systems, the immediate adoption of post-colonial discursive tools, sometimes reconstituting local and national elements, other times revealing cultural Africanness. This brings literature from Algeria, Nigeria and Angola, for example, closer together. The narrative concern is often oriented towards describing what it is to be African from a continental perspective, rather than simply characterizing indigenous peoples or independent nation projects.

The construction of imagined nations is balanced on proposals to rewrite the histories of colonization in each country, in its strategy, violence and methodology. In short, if we follow Antonio Candido's principles to define a literary system, perhaps few African countries can be classified under this conception. Nigeria and South Africa have



a group of writers and readers who are aware of national literary production, as long as they are fluent in English. However, the number of readers and works continually produced are deeply linked to the global English-speaking audiences, but the variety of ethnicities and national languages, and literacy rates in each country may make it impossible to define a literary system.

For Moraes (2010), to characterize the national systems of African literature, the term "articulated set of works" is accepted, a term coined by Rita Chaves (1999) to describe the set of literary productions from Angola, since the works articulated the guiding theme, that is, the question of the nation and its history. As a feedback process, when discussions were produced around the construction of national identities, at the same time the interaction between producers and receivers was organized, a phenomenon in which the strengthening of the national character was configured as an unfolding of the emergence of works and readers.

The triad author-work-public was constructed simultaneously with the construction of national feelings of adjective characterization of the indigenous people(s). Being Angolan, Mozambican, Algerian or Nigerian was an identity attitude that interacted with local politics and history, in a post-colonial strategy of speaking about oneself and deconstructing what colonial discourse said about them. This was the political-cultural scheme that shaped the construction of African nation states, with their fissures and ethnic conflicts of the past and present, and consequently, it also nourished national literatures as articulated systems of works.

We must accept the transformations in the nature of the system, given the persistence of the colonial presence in African countries - decolonization only in the second half of the 20th century - the process of forming a sense of nationhood took place amid the establishment of military dictatorships, ethnic conflicts and policies of racial segregation. Territories of civil, ethnic and ideological disputes, considering the global geopolitics of the Cold War that began in the post-war period. Therefore, in addition to dealing with their colonial past, the newly independent states also suffered from capitalist and socialist pressure from the United States and the then Soviet Union. Thus, as Rita Chaves suggested, the formation of postcolonial literature instantly configured multicultural and diatopic literary systems, with structural and thematic similarities between the various African countries. Therefore, in African literature, before the solid



formation of groups of writers, there was the political affirmation of nationalities and the creation of fictional writing strategies in this direction (Moraes, 2010).

In his work *“Literatura, História e Política”* (2007), Benjamin Abdala Junior addresses the way in which bonds of solidarity are established between writers who speak the same language, in this case Portuguese, as an element of rapprochement between the different literary systems of Brazil, Portugal, Angola and Mozambique, in favor of the conception of a literary macrosystem. In this way, the macrosystem can be defined through ideological modes of articulation, by allowing the discussion of the artistic character of engagement, the power of language underlying the text, the communicative circuit and the articulations of the intellectual field in our countries. In this way, the ideological interconnection between countries that share the same language helps in the formation of a literary macrosystem or a cultural ecosystem.

The postcolonial literary production that emerged in the countries of the African continent can be seen as having the intention of distancing itself from the ideological and political influence of the colonizer. These African literatures propose to distance themselves from the culture of the colonizer in favor of a cultural status that is capable of demonstrating elements of differentiation in relation to the hegemonic centers of the colonial apparatus, since an internal/external dialectic must occur between the national systems “and the macrosystem that relates them. For the engaged writer, this tension seems to be correlated with the particular/general tension of the processes of knowledge.” (Abdala Junior, 2003, p. 113).

In this sense, the Cultural Ecosystem, a concept established in the book, proposes a dialogue between different countries in their cultural construction, marked by mutual influences and constant mixtures, allowing the emergence of new hybrid cultural forms. It is based on the understanding that culture is neither fixed nor pure, that is, no construction of society is completely centered on itself, being always the result of multiple historical and political influences. In the author's words, “by ecosystem we understand a productive contradictory coexistence of pieces of different cultures, in continuous processes of tensions, interactions and blending” (Abdala Junior, 2007, p.20). The proposal highlights how there is a mutual influence in the formation of identities, especially between countries that share the same language and similar historical processes, such as colonization and decolonization. In view of this, the devaluation of certain cultures to the detriment of others becomes evident. From this asymmetry arises the need to



strengthen connections between countries with historical familiarity, precisely because they share similar colonial and post-colonial experiences.

However, the issue becomes more complex when considering intertextuality and solidarity between the literary productions of a macrosystem along the lines of Abdala Junior. What would be the limits of the reach of this ecosystem of interactions and blending between countries and their works? Does intertextual fusion occur solely through the common language between literary systems? The argumentative hypothesis of this work is established precisely on the premise that, in the African context, the colonial experience and the political process of decolonization built ideological, structural and aesthetic bonds much stronger than the cultural interaction between countries with the same colonization language.

Postcolonial literature consolidated sets of works, authors and recipients that often interact more between nations than necessarily in isolated national centers. Abdala Junior reflected on the comparative methodology between Portuguese-speaking countries to conceive of a productive ecosystem or a literary macrosystem, since the literary production of Angola and Mozambique may be more focused on the Portuguese-Brazilian market than on the local populations of these countries.

The author mainly thought about the cultural dialectic between Brazil, Portugal, Angola and Mozambique, since taking the isolated literature of Mozambique, for example, to compose an isolated description of a national literary system following the precepts of Antonio Candido to establish the common denominators of a literary system, that is, work, author and audience, could make it impossible to apply the concept to nations still under construction at the beginning of the 21st century. For Moraes (2010), Abdala Junior does not immediately associate the notion of literary system with the idea of national literature. Precisely because of this difficulty in conceiving the triad of work, author and audience in countries that still have a predominantly oral culture, such as some African countries. Hence the need to think of a macrosystem of engaged literature in the Portuguese language to understand the aesthetic project of post-colonial literature. In this way, the ideological articulation of these fictional productions allowed literature to be taken as an instrument of social transformation, moving away from the need to actually create a national consciousness, as Antonio Candido thought when theorizing about Brazilian literature.



Thus, the political-ideological positioning of engaged post-colonial literature from Africa would make more practical sense than thinking of isolated nationalisms in Portuguese-speaking countries, or even in other African territories. From this perspective, the literary engagement of postcolonial writers in Africa produced a scenario of political-aesthetic solidarity between their countries with more depth than with other nations that also experienced the European colonial enterprise at some point in their history.

Hypothetically, if we leave aside Portuguese-language African literatures with certain cultural intertexts with Brazil and consider the Anglophone literatures of Nigeria, Kenya and South Africa, would it be possible to think of a literary macrosystem between these countries and Canada, Australia and the United States, also former British colonies? Would the common language and colonial experience alone be enough to consolidate a macrosystem of English-language literatures? These are questions that arise more intensely when comparing the literary productions of countries such as Nigeria, Kenya, South Africa, Algeria, Rwanda, Angola and Mozambique, since they have elements of political approximation that are more significant than simply sharing national languages. The postcolonial aesthetic project of engaged writing becomes the most important structural marker for thinking about the literary macrosystem.

The African novel has a fundamental principle of seeking to reconstruct local histories in order to distance itself from the Eurocentric constructs of the colonial past. Works such as "The World Falls Apart" by Chinua Achebe, "A Grain of Wheat" by Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, "Generation of Utopia" by Pepetela, "Half of a Yellow Sun" by Chimamanda Adichie, "Sleepwalking Earth" by Mia Couto, "The Fishermen" by Chigozie Obiama, "Aké" by Wole Soyinka, "The House Gun" by Nadine Gordimer, "The Promise" by Damon Galgut, "Cockroaches" by Scholastique Mukasonga, share the same aesthetic and political project that characterize post-colonial literature, therefore, they make up a macrosystem that is more integrally consolidated than by the languages of market propagation and their isolated experiences of reception in each country that produces these novels. Themes such as colonial rapprochement, wars of liberation, the rise of guerrilla groups, civil and military conflicts, ethnic conflicts, the clash of cultures and traditions, political and religious history, racism and colonial violence make up the majority of post-colonial African literature, with small narrative spaces for the emergence of the female voice, as in "Purple Hibiscus" by Chimanda Adichie, "Niketche: a story of



polygamy" by Paulina Chiziane, "The joys of motherhood" by Buchi Emecheta and "Stay With Me" by Ayobami Adebayo.

As Abdala Junior (2007) pointed out, the conceptualization of this macrosystem of Lusophone literatures was yet another political strategy to join cultural forces in order to foster literary productions in the Portuguese language in the global market. And what is proposed in this text is the expansion of the concept of macrosystem and the due updating of the term to address the post-colonial novel in Africa.

3 THE FORMATION OF THE POSTCOLONIAL MACROSYSTEM: THE SPACE OF MODERNIST IDEAS

Postcolonial criticism has transformed our understanding of the past and the present. Narratives characterized as modernist in the Western world can be conceived from a regionalized Eurocentric construct, but taken as global modernism, however, it is fragmented in non-metropolitan regions. However, a structural reassessment of the historiography of modernism remains active and ongoing, as it is not just a matter of including non-Western works in the global canon, but of rethinking the mechanisms of origin, dissemination and interaction of modernist ideas among global literary systems (Prakash et al., 2021).

In the African case, global modernist ideas align with the local historical urgencies of deconstructing colonial discourse in the novel and attempts to strengthen nationalist elements that could group symbols, languages and ethnicities within the same project of national literature and culture. African postcolonial literature, as an aesthetic project and not just a historiographical landmark, has been consolidating itself more intensively since the mid-20th century, as the political developments of the continent's decolonization took place. This is one of the main transformations of global literary art, structurally allied to the feminist movements, civil rights of black populations and the LGBT community of the 1960s, the postcolonial narrative is constructed amid trends of innovation and modernization of the literary text.

For Gikandi (2015), the African novel has used consecrated modernist strategies such as the stream of consciousness, multiple or fractional chronologies, in addition to subverting the presence of irony to draw attention to the colonial discourse that also colonized the cultural framework of African peoples. In countless African novels, the narrative development occurs through discursive antagonism, a clash between what



“they”, the colonizers used to say, and what “we”, the postcolonial writers, say. Since the entire colonial system was based on racism, that is, on the dehumanization of indigenous peoples, whether Arabs from the Maghreb region or black people from sub-Saharan Africa, race relations were the fuel for nationalist political revolts and innovative cultural projects (Barbosa, 2020). This narrative strategy of global modernism is also present in works written by women or black authors, and also in contemporary Queer novels that are common in the publishing market, as they also seek to give a narrative voice to characters who used to be objectified and silenced by canonical literature. Therefore, African postcolonial literature can be considered a political-artistic macrosystem, to the extent that the elements of fictional composition (structures and themes) and the strategies of narration and subversion of colonial discourse become common to the different nations of the continent. It can be said that African modernism and postcolonial literature are transitively linked, since literary innovations were aimed at rejecting colonial literature and the Eurocentric discourse that marked a large part of the novels and other literary manifestations of the time. Therefore, the reinterpretation of African history, the deconstruction of colonial stereotypes and the contestation of Eurocentric narratives were fundamental strategies for the fictional composition of African nations and consequently, of their literary macrosystem.

Table 1

African Macrosystem: Themes and Novels

Themes	Work	Author	Country
Colonial Approach	Things fall apart	Chinua Achebe	Nigeria
	Waiting for the barbarians	J.M. Coetzee	South Africa
	Glorious Family	Pepetela	Angola
	Homegoing	Yaa Gyasi	Ghana
Liberation Wars	Mayombe	Pepetela	Angola
	Generation of Utopia	Pepetela	Angola
	What the day owes to the night	Yasmina Khadra	Algeria



Civil Wars	Half of a Yellow Sun	Chimamanda Adichie	Nigeria
	Beasts of no nation	Uzodinma Iweala	Nigeria
	Sleepwalking Land	Mia Couto	Mozambique
Rise of Guerrillas	A grain of Wheat	Ngugi Wa Thing'o	Kenya
	Mzungo	Meja Mwangi	Kenya
	Mayombe	Pepetela	Angola
Ethnic Conflicts	Murambi: the book of bones	Boubacar Boris Diop	Senegal/Rwanda
	Cockroaches	Scholastique Mukasonga	Rwanda
	Small country	Gael Faye	Burundi/Rwanda
Tradition and Modernity	A river called Time	Mia Couto	Mozambique
	The fishermen	Chigozie Obioma	Nigeria
	The joys of motherhood	Buchi Emecheta	Nigeria
Racism and Violence	The house gun	Nadime Gordimer	South Africa
	Americanah	Chimamanda Adichie	Nigeria
	The promise	Damon Galgut	South Africa
	Disgrace	J.M. Coetzee	South Africa
Gender	Nikette: a story of polygamy	Paulina Chiziane	Mozambique
	Stay with me	Ayobami Adebayo	Nigeria
	Purple Hibiscus	Chimamanda Adichie	Nigeria

The previous table reveals a thematic and structural connection between African novels from different parts of the continent, even considering the ethnic diversity of the territory and the different processes of decolonization and nationalisms, it can be said that the narrative elements resemble and approach each other in a substantive way, which allows the formation of a literary macrosystem in which the post-colonial strategy



connects them. If we take, for example, novels set in Algeria such as Albert Camus's "The Stranger" or Yasmina Khadra's "What the Day Owes to the Night", racial prejudice against Arabs is also reproduced in fictional productions from Sub-Saharan Africa, only being replaced by black people, but the colonizer's contempt for the colonized Africans has been narrated in a very similar way, whether by Ondjaki in Angola, Yaa Gyasi in Ghana or J.M. Coetzee in South Africa.

From this perspective, throughout the 20th and 21st centuries, this literary macrosystem has strengthened post-colonial strategies for narrating nations and rewriting the continent's political and cultural history. Writers such as Chinua Achebe (Nigeria), J.M. Coetzee (South Africa) and Pepetela (Angola) contributed to the production of works that problematize the cultural clash between the European colonizer and the African peoples (Arabs and blacks). Yasmina Khadra (Algeria), Mia Couto (Mozambique), Chimamanda Adichie (Nigeria), Ngugi Wa Thing'o (Kenya), Uzodinma Iweala (Nigeria), Meja Mwangi (Kenya), among others, addressed the violent processes of wars of national liberation and also of the civil wars that followed decolonization.

Faced with political contexts in constant crisis, during the process of decolonization in Africa, numerous insurgent groups that fought against colonial rule later confronted national armies for administrative control of the countries. The MPLA in Angola, the Mau Mau in Kenya or the National Liberation Front (FLN) in Algeria are historical examples of the war groups that dominated the post-colonial scenario, with the arms support of international nations such as Russia, China and the United States.

Next, we can mention Scholastique Mukasonga (Rwanda), Boubacar Boris Diop (Senegal) and Gael Faye (Burundi) who explored the great genocide in Rwanda in 1994 in order to describe one of the most impactful ethnic conflicts in recent African history. Although the racial issue has been widely described in much of postcolonial literature, the colonizer/colonized confrontation has often gained centrality in the narratives. Thus, South African authors such as Nadine Gordimer, Damon Galgut and J.M. Coetzee have explored apartheid more insistently, as a model of racial segregation practiced in the country for decades, to discuss the contemporary consequences of racism and institutionalized discrimination. Finally, the dilemmas between the traditional practices of African peoples in conflict with the transformations of modernity, mainly in terms of religiosity and gender violence, shape contemporary literature more broadly. Buchi Emecheta, Chimamanda Adichie, Chigozie Obioma, Chigozie Obioma and Ayobami



Adebayo from Nigeria; Paulina Chiziane and Mia Couto from Mozambique, have attracted the attention of the international market by discussing the role of women in African societies, with narrative outlines that embody the debates between cultural tradition and modernization.

The critical defense of a postcolonial macrosystem to think about African literature is based on a theoretical position that can be understood, from its generalist and homogenizing nature, by disregarding the particular history of each African nation in isolation. However, it intentionally refers to a comparative approach that has analyzed African fictional production through aesthetic and structural units that are consistent in a stable symmetry corresponding to a macrosystem. Therefore, by equating the term literary system with the literary production of a country, an infertile isolation can be produced for proposals to strengthen and expand African literature. But conceiving it as a macrosystem of post-colonial fiction from Africa could generate a set of works that are extremely dialogic with each other and effective in narrative and aesthetic terms.

4 CONCLUSION

Transposing concepts to different aesthetic spaces can cause some discomfort to theorists of literature and other arts, precisely because of the contextual nature of theoretical elaboration. In the case of African literature, the use of the term "literary system" to refer to individual countries has been positively received by literary critics, without much fanfare. However, when delving deeper into the definitions of literary system proposed by Antonio Candido to describe the national scenario of formation and consolidation of Brazilian literature, relatively problematic issues arise, especially when we think about the reception of works and the consumer public. In the experience of Portuguese-language African literature, the reception of fictional production from Angola, Mozambique, Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau is more by partner countries such as Brazil and Portugal than by the local market itself.

Thus, Antonio Candido's triad disintegrates if we consider each item as indispensable to consolidate a country's literary system. Abdala Junior then reinforces his concept of cultural ecology to think about the literatures of Angola and Mozambique, based on a principle of solidarity based on the language of literary writing to strengthen a macrosystem of interaction between Brazil, Portugal and the Portuguese-speaking countries of Africa. And again, the concept of a macrosystem becomes insufficient to



conceive of African literature in its geopolitical complexity, since Nigeria, the birthplace of the Yoruba population, has much stronger cultural ties with Brazil in ethnic, linguistic and religious terms than Mozambique, for example, and almost no relationship with English-speaking countries such as Canada or Australia, except for the colonial experience characterized by different objectives of occupation and/or exploitation.

Only the Portuguese, French or English languages as the guiding thread of interactions seems to be an unfair position, due to the economic history of colonialism and the enslavement of African peoples. Therefore, it seems more appropriate to us to observe African literature from the perspective of its more generic historical features that contribute to the constitution of a macrosystem, since the strategy of constructing postcolonial literary discourse allowed the juxtaposition of social groups that find themselves in different conditions in terms of production, dissemination and consumption of fictional works. The historical conditions of wars and dictatorships, literacy levels, school proficiency in European languages and the economic development of African countries have made the differences in conditions too significant to consider the literary market on the continent in isolation.

Therefore, the analytical conception of a macrosystem to understand African literature is more appropriate, especially when we observe that the main modernist strategy in the 20th century, in Africa, was the adoption of postcolonial narrative mechanisms, that is, the strengthening of the African vision of its own history, politics and society through the deconstruction of the colonial apparatus in the culture of its peoples. The common denominators that characterize a system can be perceived globally in the absolutely consolidated African macrosystem. Furthermore, it must be acknowledged that postcolonial literature feeds back into this aesthetic macrosystem, since the decolonial strategy has become the most powerful mechanism of African modernism and contemporary literature.

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