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NIKETCHE: THE FICTIONAL IN THE REPRESENTATION OF RITUALITY SCENARIOS

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Abstract: Traditional African culture has been recorded in several written texts as a way of valuing oral customs. Niketche is the recreational and detailed narration of some of the Mozambican sociocultural rites, which, in the course of each chapter of this fictional work, the author, Paulina Chiziane, makes a fruitful interconnection that remains meticulous, in the description of the representative scenarios of the customs of the oral tradition existing in that territory. From the school of learning of the woman's initiation rite, the types of marriage, the supposed death of the spouse to the inheritance of the wife by the younger brother are part of the representation of this fictional story of African nature. The work in question brings a description of the real traditional world, of the multicultural rites existing in that circumcision of various ethnocultural groups in cohabitation with the western customs experienced in urban areas, which in a way conflict with contemporaneity. The present investigation was part of our doctoral research and its main objective is to demonstrate the sociocultural rites that are part of the elements of Bantu culture in this work as a representation of rituality that are factors of coexistence of sociocultural diversity in African societies. This study will seek to argue the theory of traditional Bantu culture by Altuna (2014), Bâ (1997), Leite (1998) and Vansina (2010), in a qualitative and bibliographic perspective.

Keywords: Culture; Tradition; rites.

INTRODUCTION

When we refer to culture, the term immediately takes us to humanity. Yes, no man is devoid of culture, since it is the cultural customs of each social group, regardless of their origin, where each one seeks to preserve these habits, despite globalized social transformations, such traits are intrinsically focused on rituals and on the social life of

each people.

Altuna (2014) tells us that traditional culture in Africa is transmitted orally, that is, the word has a primordial place in tradition. For this reason, for a long time, myths and prejudices of all kinds have hidden the real history of Africa from the world. M'bow (2010) states that African societies were seen as people who could not have history.

Nevertheless, the important works carried out since the first decades of the 20th century by pioneers such as Leo Frobenius, Maurice Delafosse and Arturo Labriola, specialists from different parts of the African world and linked to certain postulates, maintained that African societies could not serve as an object of scientific study for lack of sources and written documents. Hence the division of oral literature and written literature in non-graph countries, as the absence of writing does not mean a lack of history.

Indeed, there was a refusal to consider the African people as the creator of original cultures that progressed and perpetuated through the centuries in their own ways and that the historian can only learn by renouncing certain prejudices and renewing his method (M'bow, 2010).

Traditions or oral tradition are historical sources whose character is determined orally and not in writing and have the particularity that their way is solidified from generation to generation in the memory of men. In regions of the world, inhabited by peoples without writing, oral tradition is the main historical source, used for the reconstruction of the past, as stated by Hampate Bâ (2010) and Vansina (2010).

The history of the African people was spread to the world by European settlers through missionaries and travelers who presented the first reports about the life and customs of that unique people.

Generally speaking, African oral literature

has two fundamental roles: educational and recreational. The stories both amuse and teach those who listen to them. This is because the stories are commonly told by an older and respected member of the community who, most of the time, tells their stories to the younger ones, who are eager to know about the things of life; the experiences that that person, who is an example for them, has already gone through; of the things he has to teach and guide them (Cruz, 2014).

For Nascimento and Ramos (2011), the storyteller is usually an “elder”, a person with greater experience, responsible for the education of children; Preparing young people for life in the community is part of their role:

The valorization of oral tradition in Africa, far from being just a means of communication, shines as a way of preserving the wisdom of ancestry. In this sense, the word transmitted orally leads to the ancestral heritage that has great value in this culture (Nascimento and Ramos, 2011:5).

Cruz (2014) states that African written literature is based on oral stories told over the years in traditional circles of history around the campfire. In an oral society, teaches Vansina (2010), most literary works are traditions. As with all utterances, form and literary criteria influence the content of the message. This is the main reason why traditions are placed in the general framework of a study of literary structures and are critically evaluated as such.

Bâ (2010) comments that the progressive rupture in the transmission of traditional knowledge was disastrous for African society, due to the fact that, until then, this transmission, in Africa, was done orally from one generation to another through regular African initiations.

Niketche, a work released more than two decades ago, has a timeless character and continues to be updated in its critical analysis due to the cultural source that it carries in its fictional representation. In this narrative,

Paulina Chiziane, brings a well-crafted work in her fiction, where she presents some ritualistic elements well known in African cultural breasts practiced in Mozambique as a place of a diverse culture, in the literary text the main focus is to describe the scenarios of rituality in the fiction.

It must be noted that it was the sequence of blackness and the need for cultural affirmation of their heritage that made the African embark on the complex paths of oral tradition culture, in the concern to legitimize and differentiate African literature from European (Leite, 1998).

This was accomplished with the use of texts, and Paulina Chiziane and other African authors, in their writings, present characteristics of the African tradition in their critical discourses, and in the work in theory, seeking to establish the female characters, bringing them as an apparatus of denunciation in relation to the atrocities they face in sexist societies, in the face of a culture where they are subjugated and inferiorized.

NIKETCHE’S PHYSICAL AND GEOGRAPHIC SPACE

Without any intention of delineating the Mozambican territory in detail here, according to the geographic map that occupies this area, we bring in the text some physical spaces according to the cultural values that are presented in the work under study, where we can highlight the value according to its description, how much to the ethnic group that offer us an opportunity to know better the habits and customs of each group, of the many that appear in the plot that are seen in cultural ideological confrontations within the same country, but with a very rich cultural diversity.

African states, in the understanding of Maria Paula Meneses, are based on projects designated by each nation, which are evident in the ideological policy legitimized by the

state that guarantee the efficiency of the ethnic groups residing in the same country. In the cultural sense, it shares with communities, not only as territories, but also with those sets of elements that are linked to the habits and customs of specific mythological traditions of each ethnic group (Meneses, 2012).

We can consider this narration as what Meneses (2012) says is happening in Mozambique, as a new historiography of narrating from multiple sites of construction and interpretation, where history is responsible for rehabilitating the subject in a specific way with various facets of confrontation.

In a study of ethnic communities, of nations confronted with a political situation of change and renewal of ideological parameters, we believe that we cannot stop at the study of written production. To this end, Rosário (1989:5) states that:

[...] such is the weight of oral Tradition in the cultural and artistic activities of the people of Mozambique that in order to understand the meaning of writing we will necessarily have to go through orality. This means that, currently, written literature only takes on its sense of Mozambicanity, insofar as the reality of oral tradition cannot be ignored.

When creating a nationalist feeling, of national identification, it is necessary to get rid of the negativity imposed by the colonizer and to found bases that affirm the aspiration of building an independent country or a consolidated nation. This exercise is done by creating founding myths, inventing traditions, creating heroes, elevating the past and valuing of culture. For Hamilton (1999:18), (re) writing and (re)mystifying the past is “an aesthetic-ideological strategy that aims to protest against the distortions, mystifications and exoticisms carried out by colonialist inventors in Africa”.

In this context, Mozambican literature emerges as an important instrument of resistance to exploitation. One of the strategies

used in this practice is the appreciation of the local culture. The search for the pride of the past is not only verified at the national level, the exalted glories belong to everyone, they belong to the people of the continent, to all those who are engaged in the fight against imperialism. This attitude reveals a feeling of solidarity and complicity that unites them around a common experience and objective: colonialism and freedom. Among the poetic lyrics, an anti-colonialist nationalism is created (Campos, 2015).

Niketche, by Paulina Chiziane, emerged as a consequence of the author’s work in Zambézia province, in northern Mozambique, where she had the opportunity to make contact with matriarchal cultural traditions that were very different from the patriarchal ones she knew. According to the author, the cultural disparities were so significant that she truly felt like a foreigner in her own country.

Paulina Chiziane builds feminine universes designed in constant fusions between tradition and modernity, which provide a creative encounter between fiction and historical reality. Trying to concisely provide readings of Mozambican society, placing women and the female voice at the heart of the discussion and challenging the limits of their idealization within the socialist nation. By observing the existence, or not, of a feminine writing, which relates the thematic contents to gender identity, we find that Chiziane’s narrative materializes the condition of the Mozambican woman, contextualizing it socially and culturally (Santos, 2015).

The narrator takes focus to express what is happening inside the characters:

[...] Focalization can be defined as the representation of diegetic information that is within reach of a certain field of consciousness, whether that of a character in the story or the heterodiegetic narrator; consequently, targeting, in addition to conditioning the amount of information

conveyed [...], achieves its quality, by translating a certain affective, ideological, moral and ethical position in relation to this information (Reis & Lopes, 1988:246- 247).

In *Niketche*, the plot leads to the knowledge of traditional Mozambican spaces, through Tony's women, who each represent a national geographic space, from north to south, in the diversification of the great cultural mosaic that is Mozambique.

This work demonstrates in its narrative the discursive spaces of the region of Mozambique, where we find places that represent the description of the mystical and the wonderful, which are instilled in traditional culture, as a consequence of a natural and curious desire to learn something that differentiates us, as seen below:

You people from the south don't care about important things... You make love in the European way. They focus all their energy on the kiss on the mouth, as if that kiss was worth something. They say we think only about sex? How many southern men have left their homes forever? They call us late. You only have books in your head. They have money and shine. But they have no essence [...] Your life together has no charms (Chiziane, 2004:179).

Rami, narrator of the story, uses internal and external focus. The external is qualified for manifesting information of an apparent nature, whether about characters or spaces, establishing itself in a way that excels in description. Internal focus, on the other hand, would be a kind of filter through which the narrator's vision passes. There is a restriction of information given to the reader, however, this information is shown through the eyes of a character, that is, a subjective view of what is within the scope of the field of consciousness of those who focus on it (Santos, 2015).

As the story unfolds, Rami (or Rosa Maria), Tony's wife discovers the existence of other women, they are; Juliet: Tony's second wife;

Luísa: Tony's third wife; Saly: Tony's fourth wife; Mauá: Tony's fifth wife, these women originate from Mozambican locations such as Matutuine, Zambézia, Nampula and Cabo Delgado, but the main action takes place in southern Mozambique, in the city of Maputo.

The geographic term is linked to regionalism and connected to a parcel of land circumscribed by the inhabitants of a region, within a certain territory related to the customs of people who know the circumscribed area of their ethnological group.

For Martinho (1994), in Africa, traditional tales are clearly distinguishable from erudite tales. Well, the themes are related and committed to the cultural elements that are part of their coexistence within the African territory.

The representation that accompanies these narratives corresponds to the progressive update of the oral transmission that makes the exercise live and interactive among the members of society. The visual, the mimic, the imaginary and the enchanted, the oral text is responsible for communicating the legitimate heritage of local cultures through examples that show the solidarity of the ties between the members of the group and guarantee the discernment of the individual's place of attribution, his identity affiliation, allowing him a vision of himself and the other with a minimum of conflicts (Duarte, 2009).

THE REPRESENTATION OF RITUALITY IN FICTION

The Bantu, in their social experience, have a series of rites and customs that characterize them and differentiate them from some peoples of other societies. The Bantu are characterized by having common ethnicities and a culture that was exalted at the time of Negritude (Altuna, 2014).

The deep complexity of customs and rites in the relationships between ethnic groups

that reside in the same territory circumscribed by its inhabitants is composed of a rich and diverse specific habits that characterize and identify individuals, despite some similarities found, customs are practiced according to the region, age, precepts and the education received today among the same people, there are those more traditional families that preserve the customs of their ancestors and that insist that they be revived no matter if they are in the urban or sub-urban area. urban and there are those who no longer value it and pretend to leave them behind, but when something happens in which it wants to be right, then it invokes culture and tradition to seek to solve cultural and social problems.

In Niketche, fiction is represented by various rituals that identify the Bantu people in community cultural life. For this people, life from birth to death is complemented by the rites that lead the person to acquire their personality in what is the central foundation of human life and that without them, the person does not feel fulfilled, the rites are based on religious belief and society, thus making the person fit for life (Altuna, 2014).

The plot portrays some initiation rituals, which are part of the traditional culture of the Bantu. These are part of the collection of this cultural wealth, such as the clairvoyant teacher, who highlights initiation rites, spells, the eroticism of the dance itself, genital excision, the lobolo rite, polyandry, practiced by two characters, kutchinga and the mbele, which will be described in this study (Hamilton, 2018).

In some parts of Mozambique, the practice of rites of passage is common: so that an individual can continue to develop in a spiritual way and in communion with the society that surrounds him. When specific ages are reached, certain rituals are necessary, most of the time, corresponding to the passage from childhood to adulthood, from

adulthood to old age and, finally, from old age to ancestry, when the human being dies and returns to the cycle of life. Rami, however, was raised following the laws of the Christian religion of the Catholic Church, did not undergo these rituals.

According to Manod's understanding (apud Fernandes 1968), Africa is a world in a perpetual state of ritual activity, part of the phases of a ceremony, in which the symbology expresses complicated rites, conferring a status of religious feeling on the African man.

The different rites, says Altuna (2014:279) are decisive moments because they change a period of life. The initiations, both for the boy and for the girl, in puberty, are coated with different external and mystical meanings. Therefore, an adult person who has not performed these rituals is considered a child or not fit for adult life, being seen as an incomplete being. In Niketche, when Rami looks for the love counselor to take classes on the subject, she expresses this understanding illustrated in the excerpt below, where there is a dialogue related to the theme that;

How was your wedding preparation?

I started making layettes at the age of fifteen – I explain – [...] I grew up in the countryside and didn't know anything about embroidery and layettes.

Tell me how was your wedding preparation?
I had classes in the church, with priests...

And what did your family teach you?

She spoke to me of obedience, of motherhood. And sexual love?

Nobody ever said anything to me.

Then you are not a woman - tell me with disdain you are a child. How do you want to be happy in your marriage, if life for two is made up of love and sex and you haven't been taught anything about the matter?

(Chiziane, 2002:37).

As can be seen in the quoted excerpt, Rami is faced with a cultural conflict with the place

where he grew up. The woman she looks for to help her, to teach her the path of love, starting from the initiation rites, which must be learned by the woman when reaching puberty, when the first menstruation appears, are female initiation rituals, which may or may not be loaded with emotion and mysteries that leave or not physical and psychic marks in the life of women, as Hampaté Bâ (2010) says.

Traditional education concerns the knowledge related to an initiation and is linked to the experiences that link the person's life in society. For this author, traditional education begins within the family, with the parents or someone suitable.

For Rami, this education came too late, after already having children. It was necessary to seek help from an elderly woman outside her family. She is a counselor and she presents facts that the protagonist was unaware of in her life trajectory. Rami, in her forty-three years, is amazed to learn about the different local cultures, where women perform rites, things that neither the family nor the church ever taught her, she starts to understand from the classes the behavior of some men and the difference from the cultures of other regions of Africa. Altuna (2014) also warns that not all Bantu groups perform these initiation rites, despite belonging to the same group.

CULTURAL PLACES

Tradition is always present, emphasizing this understanding Leite (2013:79) declares that "the stories illustrate this knowledge and fable the tradition, they cover a specific time, since it is about the reappropriation of a secular voice and knowledge, recovery and response in a griotic attitude¹ of critical pedagogy".

¹ Term of French origin (griot), which designates "[...] a series of functions in the context of African societies of oral tradition. The griots would have assumed a prominent position, as they had the function of transmitting the historical tradition: they were the chroniclers, genealogists, heralds, those who mastered the word, being, at times, excellent poets; later they also became musicians and traveled great distances, visiting villages where they played and talked about the past" (Lima & Costa, 2015:223).

In initiation, you learn to know the treasure you have within you. The purple flower that multiplies in endless petals, producing all the beneficial currents of the universe. In initiation rites, they enable you to live and smile. You learn to know the anatomy and all the stars that gravitate inside you (Chiziane, 2004:39).

The complexity of the traditions brings with it the cultural phenomenon of female initiation, one of its important rites, in addition to being linked to the concept of the Bantu, constituting a set of rituals that accompanies its philosophy. For Aguessy (1982), initiation represents an institution.

These initiation ceremonies, especially in suburban and more inhospitable areas and, in small numbers in urban areas, strictly maintain this solemnity as it is a school of cultural learning, where the girl, from the moment of her first menstruation, goes to get teachings related to body hygiene and their future sex life (FERRAZ, 2020).

The places represented in Paulina Chiziane's work begin with the initiation school, where Rami discovers, at the age of forty-three, that she lacks traditional knowledge of her people when she is introduced to the teachings of teacher Macua and in the interaction with the other women of the her husband, she believes that not having practiced these rituals puts her at a disadvantage compared to Tony's other women (Chiziane, 2004).

It is through the counselor that Rami learns about Makonde culture, where women stretch their genitals to give men more pleasure. It is through conversations with her husband's other concubines, who also tell her how to arrest him, as it is necessary to go to the initiatory school to learn how to make love with a man, requiring several classes to do so.

Mauá, one of Tony's wives, says that in her culture, women have elongated genitals to have more sexual pleasures and conditions to arrest the man, which surprises Rami, because even though she was Mozambican, born and raised, she had never heard of these rituals since she was raised as an authentic European as a result of the assimilation her father imposed. She was a city girl converted into a Christian family, she must have had no contact with the native culture, which makes her uncomfortable to discover that Tony's other women had all fulfilled, at least, with the local rituals.

"[...]asks Mauá... - What is a woman who has not undergone sexual initiation. A child, who knows nothing about how to draw the curves of life" (Chiziane, 2004: 180).

The diversity of the rites varies according to the geographic area or ethnic group, which is why in the course of the plot it is verified that some rites practiced in the south are different in relation to the north, which makes them different both in the form of presentation of the clothes as in the way of thinking, in addition, when you reach a specific age, certain rituals are necessary, because they are indispensable to the passage of different stages of life.

Rami was raised in the city and her father was already assimilated by the culture of the colonizer, he did not comply with the cultural assumptions of the region, as he found them unnecessary for his condition as a man of the city, so his daughter, when faced with certain problems related their marital life is questioned in an incredulous way, as can be seen in the excerpt below:

- Are these rites so important?

- Without them, you're lighter than the wind. You are the one who travels far, without first traveling within himself. You can't get married, nobody accepts you. If he accepts you, he soon leaves you. You can't attend a funeral, much less approach a dead body because you're not mature. You

can't even attend a birth. You can't handle the affairs of a wedding. Because you are unclean. Because you are nothing, eternal child (Chiziane, 2004:40).

It is from the initiation school where people learn the teachings, in the case of women, as can be seen in the excerpt in which Rami, goes to the traditional teacher, she is asked if she had not passed the initiation ritual that was the school where the Bantu woman learns to know herself and to care for her future husband;

In initiation, you learn to know the treasure you have within you. The purple flower that multiplies in endless petals, producing all the beneficial currents of the universe. In initiation rites, they enable you to live and smile. You learn to know the anatomy and all the stars that gravitate inside you (Chiziane, 2004:39).

Aguessy (1982) states that the initiation rites represent an institution. Currently they are not very frequent, some families living in suburban areas keep them alive. These rites are considered decisive moments because they modify a period of life of the person who feels fulfilled in the face of their confirmation as in the case of the lobolo ritual that is part of marriage customs, in this contract between families it is where the woman acquires the status of wife.

In the view of Goffman (1964), in the institution of this rite, the contract does not need the intervention of political and religious authorities, but only the traditional authority with the evocation of the spirits of the ancestors.

According to the understanding presented by Fernandes and Kutassi (2009), the Bantu people are considered as the "people of the rite", given the thickness of the celebration of the sacred with the various rites, through which the myth is updated and comes into contact with the sacred. For this, prayer, music, dance, chants are used to touch the

untouchable, to speak of the ineffable, to express the mysterium. Here, the beauty of the religious sense is verified, since it is born from the collective-individual consciousness to “manage” the sacred in individual and community life.

In the story, Tony becomes the link and the archetype between the traditional African cultural customs of Mozambique, as he unites the territory from north to south through each of his lovers who needed to be legitimized in the face of customs, with the consent of the his legitimate wife, who had to trace an itinerary of recognition to make each of them, as legitimate as she, his first wife. In addition, rami was also introduced to rites, whether of initiation or passage, as a way of accepting the situation in which she found herself (FERRAZ, 2020).

Within the Bantu culture, the woman is seen as the element that came to complement the man, she is responsible for tasks such as taking care of the children, domestic services and supporting the great absences of her husband, as they are considered light work, “man is responsible for the work that require physical strength because they are considered heavier and more tiring” (Altuna 2014:265).

In view of this, each wife must fulfill her role as a traditionally married woman, which has as much cultural value as the civil law marriage, washing, cooking and serving her husband on her knees, as well as giving him the best parts of the chicken is part of from complying with the laws of traditional marriage, this rite is closely linked to polygamy or polygyny (Altuna, 2014).

And, the first woman has the role of supervising this entire tour, as she is also the main manager of the polygamous home and in the fulfillment of the ritual at the time of delivery.” I, the first lady, always ask questions about the delivery ritual” (Chiziane, 2004:128).

Each of Tony’s women must comply with the laws of being a wife in the week that she is destined to take care of her husband, she must not lack anything. “We do marital scale as we were taught” (Chiziane, 2004:128). However, this arrangement for that husband, all the effort necessary was causing him fatigue of having to stay around each week in a different house, just like their own, after their legitimation, they began to notice that in fact the life they wanted was not the one, in a meeting with the command of the first they decided to get a younger girl for her husband, it is part of the traditional Bantu culture, that the older woman if she thinks she needs help, with her consent she can allow it that the husband get a younger wife to procreate and meet the husband’s needs and pleasures.

As it was seen below:

In our traditions, women do not have the right to vote, only those who know how to share their husbands gain status, who have overcome the jealousy that preserves the values of tradition, who fulfills everything that the law commands. She earns much more when she suggests to her husband a new marriage and helps to choose a new wife (Chiziane, 2004: 131)

Just as the initiation rites are several stages through which the individual passes that are part of the succession of life, these stages that identify the Bantu person are of great importance for the continuation of life, among the various rites there are those of passage from earthly life to spiritual life and which is connected with the death of one of the spouses. In this case, in the fictional work, it is connected with the supposed death of Tony, a fact that will lead the first wife to have to comply with the cultural principles of the widow who needs to be purified in order to allow the spirit of the dead continue their journey and those who remain may have health and prosperity (FERRAZ, 2020).

In the narrative, the first wife is the one who

suffered the consequences, she had to comply with the kutchinga ritual, which is a practice performed in different Mozambican regions and is linked to washing the widow with her own herbs and to the sexual relationship between the widow and her younger brother new from the dead.

Chiziane's narratives, because they speak of the way of life of the Mozambican woman - that of the rural area that, however, extends to the women of the urban areas, subject themselves with submission to the practice of lobolo and polygamy. These practices have always been present in African societies before and after colonization. "This practice, accompanied by polygamy, is part of the life of Mozambican women, before and after colonization, remaining even after independence" (Tedesco, 2008:72).

In Huffman's (2010) view, these peoples believed in the spiritual powers of their ancestors and from that time onwards there was already the practice of patrilineal Bantu societies in the transaction of cattle by women.

In earlier times, the functions of lobolo in certain ethnic groups were multiple. The rite represented a compensation (in the broadest sense) and not a "dowry" or a "purchase price"; it legalized the transfer of the woman's reproductive capacity to her husband's family group, of which she became a part; it gave legal character and stability to the marriage union; it made the husband and his family responsible for the maintenance and well-being of the lobolada woman (wife); it legitimized the generated children, who always considered themselves as belonging to the family that had paid the lobolo; it constituted a means of acquiring another breeding unit for the weakened group (Ferreira, 1967/68:292).

Lobolo traditions are closely linked to oral narratives, through customs implanted in the Mozambican context of Bantu heritage. When narrating stories of a patriarchal society,

Chiziane resorts to traditional orality as a way of seeking to know the stories that the elders tell, as a means of translating morality in a didactic way:

The narrative develops the proverb, or the song, which opens the sense as an incipit and illustrates with a main story (which has others inside, embedded, as we will see) the argumentation necessary for the demonstration of the suggestions advanced by the motto (Leite, 2012: 201).

Oh Rami. That man is no child. You are a needy, poorly cared for, abandoned woman, you can see. He did you a service. There is nothing wrong with that.

(...)

Not just possessive. I come from a land where solidarity has no borders. I come from a place where you borrow your husband and your best friend to make a child, as easily as you borrow a wooden spoon. In my community the husband lends a wife to his best friend and distinguished visitor. In my land, love is solemnly shared in communion like a host... (Chiziane, 2004:83-84).

In carrying out the death, the widow, which implies, above all, a series of preparations, including physical and psychological disorders, which are carried out by the family of the deceased to see if the widow can withstand all these mishaps, otherwise she may be accused of having made a pact with her husband's death, as can be seen in the representation of the excerpt below:

I feel something warm touching my muster. It's a hand. An arm. I smell a man. A rope snatches me by the waist. It's the other arm that encircles me, that kidnaps me. The time for kutchinga has come, tradition delivers me into the arms of the heir. Why didn't they tell me it was today? Why all this secrecy, this surprise? I have nothing of my being. Neither desire nor shadow. If I refuse this act, they take everything from me, even my children, and I am left empty-handed. Nothing in this world is mine and I don't

even belong to myself (Chiziane, 2004:223).

(...) - They gave me food for widows, undercooked vegetables with unsalted water. They gave us little, to increase the pain and hunger, a kind of fasting and scourging of the widow. A widow who fills her belly falls asleep and doesn't cry properly - explains Lu. Meanwhile, you were speaking French, in a French restaurant, drinking French wine eating French cheese with this Gaby. (Chiziane, 2004:237).

Women in the traditional Bantu culture, in some regions, upon the death of their partner, must strictly comply with the procedures established by traditional customs, they are subjected to rituals involving the funeral ceremonies from before and after the burial. The suitable women are the ceremonial masters who govern the rite from beginning to end. In what Mondin (apud Imbamba, 2010:44) argues that man is a unique individual and performs customs in the diversity of his customs, where each group gives a different composure in the interpretation of each customary act.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

History has undergone major changes since the last decades of the 20th century, both theoretical and methodological, which have directed the historians' eyes to themes of social groups that until then were on the margins of historical studies, such as women, the elderly, the workers, peasants and slaves. Hence, women's history emerges, as a field of study, influenced by the new interests of the historical discipline and by feminist campaigns (Tedeschi, 2008).

Oral tradition literature has the function of affirming cultural identity. This is a reality that runs through each written line, presented by each of these Portuguese-speaking African authors. Verified through the appreciation of the literary corpus, we saw that oral aspects are highlighted in the works, demonstrating that oral literature anticipates the very history

of writing, in the same way that it maintains its role as an agent in the formation of people's awareness of culture. of customs.

Now the function of oral literature is educational, informative and formative and through it cultural traditions are passed on and rescued, being, therefore, a literature rooted in historical, sociocultural and anthropological references.

Considering the firmness and strength of women in Africa, they are strong influencers of the oral tradition, as it is their role to pass on the heroic stories of the people, as well as the teachings of habits and social customs to their children (they are the basis of the constitution of the home). Since the narratives of oral tradition are the reservoir of cultural values of a community with regional roots and personality, often lost in the amalgamation of modernity.

Some authors, especially African ones, tend to write about aspects related to motherhood, to the body itself at different stages of life, to domestic activities and related to childhood, its insertion in urban life, social events, that is, to the outside world, to the self, with repeated omission of war and business situations, from which they were withdrawn for reasons of the prevailing social organization.

Sociologically, these preferences are justified by historical reasons, as can be well observed in Niketche. The women, like any author who records to be read, wrote about what they knew best. The deep knowledge of life in the home and the role that the woman had there, allowed her further developments aiming at the creation of an intimate style of writing.

African women play a significant role in literature, since in their books, sometimes personal, complex and peculiar experiences are reported on a continent, where they face typical problems of many centuries past, such as polygamy, solitary motherhood,

prostitution and subjectivity. feminine, in addition to the ways found to escape the intense repression they suffer in that.

The fiction thoroughly explores various ritual aspects that are essential for the life of the Bantu, because they are linked to sociocultural foundations such as belief, traditional medicine, symbology, solidarity among others that are part of the way of life of this people.

The Bantu is supportive in all aspects of their experience, both family members and neighbors are always willing to share the good and bad moments, showing solidarity with every situation in which people in society need help, as can be seen in the beginning of the narrative and in the various moments during the course of the same where such acts that characterize the identity of each member are evident.

Right at the opening of the plot, the neighbors come to Rami's help and show solidarity, telling each one their story in order to calm her down. husband on his 50th birthday, by sharing the boyfriend of one of her rivals for being part of the cultural region where she came from, which was a normal ritual. Since this group has a cultural diversity that are evidenced by all peoples despite the distinct differentiation between ethnic groups.

Problems concerning marriage and love are elements well evidenced in works written by women as an affliction in the instrumentalization of the cultural tradition of marriage within cultural dynamics in an interest to demonstrate the concern to solve the problems experienced by women within polygamous families, in the face of of the struggles of abandoning women by their spouses and for survival in the support of children in the face of family relationships.

The cultural and traditional elements presented here, in the analyzed corpus, present ethnographic traits of the Bantu, the

result of the teachings received over time by the ancestors, in a revival of the power of the word in these cultures.

It is thus evident from this study that the main aspects of African culture to date are still passed through the form of oral tradition, although those who are in the city, seek to educate following Western culture. However, with the opening of paths in the post-civil war period, families have increasingly come together in large cities, which has caused major dualistic cultural conflicts in these environments that coexist harmoniously, causing astonishment in other cultures.

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