“Do We Have More Yesterdays or More Tomorrows?”: (M/Tr)agical Realities and Postcolonial Utopian Prospects in Mia Couto’s *Sleepwalking Land*

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Abstract This paper examines Mia Couto’s idiosyncratic appropriation of magical realism as a discourse of ‘postcolonial utopianism’ in his *Sleepwalking Land* (1992). It argues that this literary gesture emanates from the very complex realities of post-independence Mozambique on one hand, and the ability of magical realism to render them and articulate future aspirations concurrently on another. Despite being a robust condemnation of this depressive atmosphere, the novel draws on a postcolonial discourse which coalesces the magical, the historical and the utopian to critically ‘re-read’ and ‘re-write’ the neocolonial formations of the day in an attempt to envisage a better future. In the light of Bill Ashcroft’s recent contribution to the field of postcolonial studies, i.e. his formulation of postcolonial utopianism, the paper scrutinizes the impact the Mozambican past, through memory in particular, has in framing utopian thinking and futuristic visions as opposed to the western versions of utopia/nism. Extrapolating Couto’s novel as a form of utopianism can open prospects to step beyond the traditional binarisms emblematic of postcolonialism generally and postcolonial literary criticism particularly. It sets the debate of what constitutes more an African dream in post (-) colonial Africa—past, present, or future musings—and the role of the African in this debate.

Keywords Couto; magical realism; postcolonial utopianism; history; memory

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"[H]ope may be disappointed but it can never be destroyed"[1]

"Utopias die; utopianism does not die."[2]

Introduction

The African version of the postcolonial novel has been always categorized as the right hand of the grand project of writing back to the empire. With the ebb of the twentieth century, however, the majority of African countries got their independence, and the African novel has started to be more context-reflexive in the sense that writers have centered their eyes on the emerging issues of this complex, transitional period. On one side, the colonial legacies have been overwhelmingly still felt, and the future of the continent has been bleak on another side. The novel has grown into a major catalyst to critically interrogate the postcolonial condition and, at the same time, to investigate the future possibilities of becoming lying beyond the boundaries of the nation-state, thus setting new trajectories of hope.

António Emílio Leite Couto, renowned as Mia Couto, is such a white Mozambican writer in Portuguese who unremittingly presents his readers with narratives imbued with fresh, kaleidoscopic visions of their mother country. Against the pamphleteering tradition of the 1970's, he carves out "a literary space" informed by his poetic language and "poetic vision of things" (Deandrea 221) that attributes him with a paradoxical position among the writers of his generation. Couto perceives of storytelling as a way of life above anything else:

> We are made of stories, as much as we are made of cells and organs. […] The narrative capacity of human being, more than any other skill or language, is a way in which we may recognize ourselves as forming part of the patrimony of life. It begins in our childhoods, when we invent and listen to fables. In this imaginative process, we are part of something that extends beyond the notion that we later create of our own humanity. ("Interview"16)

The overseas readership he has enjoyed, contrary to his contemporaries, because of the opportunity of publishing in the former colonial metropolis of his country,

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1 Bill Ashcroft, *Utopianism in Postcolonial Literatures*, Routledge, 2017, p. 207.

2 Lyman Tower Sargent, "Theorizing Utopia / Utopianism in the Twenty-First Century," *Spectres of Utopia: Theory, Practice, Conventions*, Peter Lang, 2012, p. 16.

Lisbon, at the end of the 1980's and 1990's has not produced much criticism on him in English. It was until the first decade of the twenty-first century that the body of scholarly studies in English on Lusophone African literature and Couto precisely has been enriched with a number of insightful readings along with translations of his works into English. Widening the scope of storytelling, he accesses the realm of novel writing through *Sleepwalking Land*, originally published as *Terra sonâmbula* in Portuguese in 1992, which has been selected as one of the best twelve African novels of the twentieth century. Since then, he has published other ten novels. His fiction, with the local context as the basic site of action, indicts profoundly the devastation caused by the Portuguese colonizer and equally the cynicism of the political entities of post-independence that had given rise to a severely fought civil war. More recently, Couto's strong attentiveness to the neocolonial mindset, globalization, so dominant in contemporary Mozambique is observed. He underlines, in Phillip Rothwell's words, "Mozambique's recent loss of sovereignty as it becomes integrated into the power structures of global capitalism" which "assured the neocolonization of the young nation" (*Postmodern Nationalist* 20).

In light of these points, Couto's literary project seamlessly crosses the national boundaries and attains a human, universal hue especially when considering his characters constant search for truth beyond the precincts of realities imposed by the western caliber of thought. A "mediator of his nation's culture to the outside world" (19), Couto inculcates aesthetically figures and experiences that pertain to the human condition of three quarters of the entire world though with a Mozambican touch. In addition, he depicts a web of multi-cultural relationships relevant to any society with a special focus on the colonizer-colonized relationship. About this, Rothwell states that "Couto has repeatedly sought to think beyond the limit, to think into the space of the Other as a means of asserting the common experience of humanity" ("Between Politics and Truth" 455). The universality of his literary output is further asserted through the innovative, regenerative ways he devises to view the future through the current world. The combination of his idiosyncratic language with the magic of the local culture sparks utopian visions of future Mozambique. By this, his fiction assumes a didactic function in terms of communicating the quest for hope and betterment common to all human beings. Patrick Chabal regards these unusual ways of approaching reality as "an attempt to rekindle the pleasure of the dream" against "the death of imagination brought about by the violence of life of contemporary Mozambique" (81). In the same way, Rothwell deems this recourse to and the valorization of the primordial aspects of the Mozambican cultural imaginary as an attack on the residues of colonialism with an

eye to "imagining a different future" and "projecting a better reality into the future" (*Postmodern Nationalist* 131).

Despite gainsaying Couto's writing style as magical realist, Bill Ashcroft's pronouncements on the existence of hope and its resilience in his fiction are much clearer compared to other critics. To him, in performing the orthodox function of envisaging a better world, Couto's literature is no exception. However, the "layering of multiple worlds" ("The Multiple Worlds" 109)— human and spirit, living and dead, modern and traditional, present and future …— and the "uncomfortable" task of "[t]he crossing of borders" to reflect "the spiral of African reality" constitute the inventiveness of "Couto the storywriter" (111). Such a daring literary venture not only imparts new promising visions of the future, but also concrete platforms of hope with temporal and spatial dimensions like the sea and the land. "*Vorschein*," or the "anticipatory illumination," makes the utopian verve of Couto's text more robust because it works "at an intensified level" as it "lies deeply embedded in [his] linguistic imagination" (121). There is a general critical consensus that his language "give[s] access to the underground world, the world of dream, of vision" (108).

Taking the Canadian critic Stephen Slemon's re-conceptualization of magical realism as a postcolonial literary discourse at its basis, this paper then penetrates the future horizons, the spirit of dreaming and imagining of other avenues arising from the current realities, that Couto's magical realist discourse in *Sleepwalking Land*[1] (*SL*) fascinatingly incarnates. It reads this "venturing beyond"[2] which stems from this discourse as a manifestation of 'postcolonial utopianism.' As such, the paper attempts an answer to the main following questions: in what way does Couto's magical realist discourse gesture towards utopian thinking? What are the specificities of the utopianism of this text? And how do both, magical realism and postcolonial utopianism, contribute to offer new possibilities of being and becoming?

Answering these questions necessitates pondering the factors relating to the political climate of the 1990's Mozambique. The euphoria that the independence from the Portuguese colonial powers brought on June 25th, 1975 under the leadership of FRELIMO, acronym in Portuguese of Frente de Libertação de Moçambique, had not lasted for long as the new conflicts broke out again just after two years. The RENAMO, Resistência Nacional Moçambicana, emerged as a counter-militant organization to FRELIMO. The "tight political control … [of] Frelimo to implement its socialist transformation" (Collier and Sambanis 161)

1 The paper reads Couto's English version of the novel, *Sleepwalking Land* (*SL*).

2 Ashcroft, *Utopianism in Postcolonial Literatures*, p.7.

was met with the violent character of RENAMO to involve the country in a civil war (1977-1992) "which provided horrific incidents of systematically orchestrated terror" (Newitt 185). It was estimated that Mozambique lost about one million of its citizens while four millions were displaced from their homes to live as refugees in camps within Mozambique or its neighboring countries (Vines 11). Added to this are the destruction of the economic infrastructure and the obstruction of international aid initiatives to reach those in need especially during the natural disasters that hit the country (Karl DeRouen and Heo 509). Foreign intervention, on another side, worsened the nature of the conflict and lengthened it as the power race of the Cold War era was strongly felt. To secure its position, USA along with South Africa sided RENAMO against the Marxist ideology of FRELIMO and its main external patron the Soviet Union.

This conflict was moreover riddled with the use of the ritual powers central to the local cultures. The twenty-eight-year old Manuel Antonio formed a group of warriors called themselves naparamas, a traditional name of warriors, to combat the injustices of RENAMO relying on traditional ways. Concerning this last point, Alice Dinerman says:

> Initially, the Naparamas spurned the use of firearms in favor of "traditional" weapons, such as spears, knives, machetes and bows and arrows. For protection, they relied on religious rituals and a secret "vaccine" (*parama*) derived from wild plants to render them invulnerable to enemy bullets. (1, original emphasis)

In a similar way, Couto's narrative presents the naparamas as:

> traditional warriors, blessed by the witch-doctors, who fought against the warmongers. They had brought peace to the lands up in the North. They fought with spears, lances and bows. Guns didn't bother them for they were shielded, protected from bullets. (*SL* 20)

Both naparamas and RENAMO depended on local rituals in the war. That being said, the naparamas were by far the most successful on account of their ability to abate the influence of RENAMO especially in the northern regions of Mozambique through keeping peace and allowing thousands of people to return to their homelands (Dinerman 2). Finally, after many rounds of talks under the auspices of Italy, the General Peace Agreement (GPA) between the two sides was signed on

October 4th, 1992.

Thematically speaking, Mia Couto's *Sleepwalking Land* is a straight depiction of the above facts. It features the rise of the tormenting 15-year civil war in post-independence Mozambique and tellingly captures the emergence of a parasitic class which survives on the blood of the poor masses. In a conspicuous way, it portrays how this class reenacts the practices of the ex-colonizer. Couto delves more deeply to unveil the defects of both sides of the struggle despite being himself an adherent of FRELIMO (Hamilton and Huddart 3). Contestations over political, historical, economic and future issues characterize this novel's discourse. As a multi-layered postcolonial discourse, magical realism is adeptly used to address the paradoxical and complex realities of post-independence Mozambique.

Sleepwalking Land, as a two-parallel-story novel, lays out two versions of the Mozambican history in each of its eleven chapters. The first section of each chapter panoramically showcases the experience of Tuahir and Mwidinga upon escaping the hell of the Civil War and the refugee camp. In their way, they stumble on a burnt-out bus with many bodies. A suitcase full of notebooks is found with one of the victims who, unlike the rest, is shot. The old man Tuahir resembles the oral storytelling tradition which is more concerned with the colonial period. Against his will, Mwidinga, the boy companion in this pursuit of better living possibilities, insists on preserving the notebooks as a source of amusement. So, every chapter becomes a story within another story whenever the boy reads the notebooks written by Kindzu, the catalyst of change in the novel who heads towards northern Mozambique in search of the naparamas. Kindzu's narrative covers mostly the intricacies of independence. His pen, however, unfolds also, through the memories of the characters he encounters in his journey, more complex issues of the colonial era. By setting them side by side, Couto stresses from the very beginning the importance of contemplating both versions of history to construct a true history of his country.

Utopian Trajectories through Magical Lanterns:

Postcolonial literature is often believed to be a resilient vehicle for postcolonial discourse. Stephen Slemon identifies its magical realism as a postcolonial literary discourse in his contentious essay "Magic Realism as Post-colonial Discourse" (1988). This step is challenging to all previous exegeses which abridge the scope of the concept to being either a mode or a genre. To explain the essence of his theory, Slemon leans on Mikhail Bakhtin's notion of dialogic discourse, thus seeing magical realism as a two-coded discourse which "recapitulates a dialectical struggle within the culture's language" (12). This makes the language of the magical realist

text a site of differing tensions. Though they represent two adversarial systems, none of the 'magical' or the 'real' manages to lay its supremacy over the other. Another kind of dialectic takes place not between the nature of codes but at the level of the meaning intended. It is a dialectic between the "codes of recognition" and "those imagined codes" of a particular language in a particular culture (12). Simply put, the battle herein includes the 'signifiers' and 'signifieds' of this language. The interaction between the two discursive systems allows the magical realist work to echo "in its language of narration real conditions of speech and cognition within the actual social relations of a post-colonial culture" (12). This double-fold reflection which enables an 'inward' and 'outward' reference to common features governing postcolonial cultures altogether is dubbed as the 'speaking mirror.' The ensuing dialogic tension in the text unveils "gaps, absences, and silences produced by the colonial encounter" (13). This literary discourse, then, is an emancipatory machinery to all discarded and silenced voices in the hegemonic discourses, be they colonial or neocolonial, pre-colonial or post-colonial.

In consideration of this insight, such a discourse, which stands on reconciling the controversies of its two-system nature, has an inveterate disposition towards renovation. Brenda Cooper certifies this saying that it "thrives on transition [and] on the process of change" (15). She perceives holding these characteristics as an existence in 'a third space' which entails seeing with a 'third eye.' Seeing with a third eye is not an escape from reality, but a return to it to acknowledge "that systems of oppression continue to determine history and also that life is complex and paradoxical" (3). Yet, this way of looking differentiates itself by having a prospective orientation, "a dream of a better life" that "embrace[s] art and literature" (14). Slemon recognizes this new way of looking provided through the magical realist lens by highlighting not only its effectiveness to reflect on the shared conditions of all postcolonial cultures, but by acknowledging its potential to bridge slots within the same culture also. It fingers continuities through relating today's magical realist texts with their ancient precursors. In the last section of his essay, he insists on "revisioning […] tyrannical units of the past" to establish this trope of continuities between the past, present and future (Slemon 21). Like Cooper, Slemon's new ways of seeing and being do not depart the reality. They rather take it as a genesis to visualize alternatives. Magical realism, in view of this, becomes a third-eye postcolonial discourse.

At another level, utopianism, as an anticipatory consciousness that flames the present, gains more currency in postcolonial cultures and literatures as the new century has brought new contours of hope. In spite of all the efforts to settle the

contradictions between utopia and utopianism, the relation remains ambiguous but innermost to postcolonial thinking. Bill Ashcroft sees postcolonial utopianism as a "utopianism in which past, present and future are laminated" ("Revolution" 17). The interconnectedness between past, present and future remains the dynamism of this philosophy. To locate its essence, Ashcroft pertinently muses:

> The development of postcolonial utopianism […] occurs against the backdrop of *imperial expansion*. But the defining difference is the persistence of *utopianism* over *utopia* in the postcolonial consciousness, the dominance of *utopian function* over *utopian form*, an expansion of the *imagination* rather than an expansion of territory. In this pursuit the function of art and *literature is central* […] while actual utopias by definition exist in the future, utopianism demands the prophetic *engagement with memory* in its critique of the present […] All of these paradoxes are resolved in particular ways by postcolonial literatures. (*Utopianism* 14-5, emphasis added)

Postcolonial utopianism venerates social dreaming seeking 'Heimat,' Ernst Bloch's word for home that Ashcroft borrows to refer to the home all colonized people dreamt of, which is almost situated in the future. Heimat is an abstract, spiritual concept that supersedes physical boundaries; it is neither home nor nation. It is "a sacred *form*" rather ("Future Thinking" 59; original emphasis). The above passage encloses a labyrinth of standards that frame this variation. It is tremendously difficult to ponder one element in isolation from the others. As all utopianisms, the postcolonial strand thrives on the dreaming and imagining of a better life. This sense of hope, or "Daydreams" of the "In-Front-Of-Us", constitutes a "mature desire" to transcend the current conditions ("The Ambiguous Necessity" 9). However, 'Dreaming' here is not a simple mechanism which goes one direction like it is the case in the other philosophies. It is "perhaps the archetypal demonstration of the infusion of the present and future with the hope of a mythic past, a fusion of time and place, because the Dreaming is never simply a memory of the past, but the focusing energy of the present" ("Spaces of Utopia" 6). Paradoxically enough, then, a basic criterion of the postcolonial utopian dream is its emergence from a mythic past. Dreaming derives from the act of remembering the past to energize the present in quest of the future. Therefore, another key feature of postcolonial utopianism is the perplexing connection between the past, usually the workings of memory, and the future. Memory is not a negative operation since it has not a nostalgic fervor here, but a well-intended recourse seeking revival and transformation. Postcolonial

memory exhibits its influence fundamentally through the 'Myth of Return' which can weave several shapes. The return re-envisions the present relying on a glorified, cultural past in "a cyclic 'return' to the future" ("African Futures" 99). In this process, time also becomes cyclic refuting the dominant notions of linearity. Dreaming of new prospects to renovate the present in light of the past makes this philosophy transformative, subversive, transgressive and critical.

Slemon maintains that the magic realist work reiterates a sort of contention between the "'codes of recognition' inherent within the inherited language and those imagined codes — perhaps utopian or future-oriented" (12). This statement implies that magical realism as a postcolonial discourse forges a fertile ground for the desire of betterment, the In-Front-Of-Us, so remarkable in utopianism to flourish. Furthermore, it strongly asserts that the imagined code, the utopian or the magical in this case, cannot exist without the real code or the postcolonial context itself. This literary gesture then is clearly profoundly invested in the present as a conduit of social dreaming. Future thinking subsists within it as a result of canvassing the African imaginaire that it revalues the postcolonial cultures and signals the cyclic view of time and the spirit of regeneration and resistance to fixity entrenched in postcolonial utopianism. Naturally enough, human consciousness is ushered into the future. The postcolonial magical realist narrative is a compelling fountain of this. It improvises a whole world and imbues it with utopian thinking to subvert the dominant visions and assumptions. It mobilizes a world of possibility in the midst of the dystopian post-colonial vibrations. In regard of all this, this paper considers magical realism as a discourse of postcolonial utopianism.

New Trajectories of Hope: Re-reading/writing Present and Future in *Sleepwalking Land*

Sleepwalking Land adopts some of the plot aspects of critical dystopia by entertaining the possibility of hope within the text, as opposed to the canonical dystopia, in the reader and the protagonist together and by escaping classical endings with its open ending. This narrative's literary discourse exuberantly fuses magic, myth, dream, and memory in the local, natural landscape in sight of its dystopian projections of Mozambique. These elements are defined by Humberto Núñez-Faraco as the basic thematic features that distinguish the magical realist text (115-16). Strongly allied to these is what Stephen Slemon calls the "foreshortening of history" to mirror "the long process of colonization and its aftermath" (12-13). Couto's text accordingly is not "a stylistic aesthetic emptied of political content" (Hart 12). In an explicit maneuver, Couto imbricates also 'the oral' within the textual fabric of his novel to strengthen the 'geographical stylistics,' Faris's term,

of the variety of magical realism he adopts. It is orality that gives the uniqueness of the African narrative. So, it is no exaggeration when Ato Quayson contends that "all of the African magical realist texts draw on the polysemy of oral discourse to establish the essential porousness of what might be taken as reality" (175). Understanding such a variety of realism entails the engagement with "a full range of oral discourses" (175). This paper will turn to the discussion of these elements in the main argument with further details while valuing 'writing' and 'reading' as two magical utopian processes that can lend change.

a. Re-historicizing (Possibilities in) Post-independence Mozambique

This section will highlight the utility of the act of re/writing in the utopian project of evaluating and reconciling the atrocities of the Civil War era against the backdrop of the failure of the utopia of independence. Mia Couto's novel wryly manifests this through the diary, notebooks, of its protagonist Kindzu which recapitulates the momentum of his daring journey to find justice. By acknowledging the weight of memory in shaping the present and the future at the very onset of his notebooks, kindzu asserts lucidly Couto's postcolonial utopian vision of Africa which pivots on its sublime past with its tricky relation with the notion of time. Kindzu writes:

> I want to place time in its unruffled order, with all its pauses and pliancy. But my memories are disobedient, uncertain of their desire to be nothing and their fondness for stealing me away from the present. I light the fire of a story and I douse my own self. (*SL* 7)

In these lines, Kindzu takes the initiative to institute the genesis of a new story, a story which demands deep involvement. This story, denoting the project of re-historicizing Mozambique in order to open up new utopian spaces for counter voices and narratives against the prevailing accounts, is seemingly difficult to lay out but not impossible. Unlike conventional utopias, the focus herein is unconventionally not on a fixed output, but on the flame or the mechanism underlying this project. Stated otherwise, Couto's perception champions the spirit of utopianism over utopia because it proffers primacy to the process at the expense of the end product.

Kindzu starts the re-examination of his country's history by dramatizing the evanescence of the independence ideals that once brought the Mozambican people under the umbrella of the War of Independence (1964-1975) through the disappearance of the last child of his family June 25th who was born on and named after the formal Independence Day. This birth metaphorically suggests the emergence of a new Mozambique vacillating between a long colonial legacy and

the demands of a newly independent nation. And, it foreshortens the time scheme of the whole process as Slemon assumes. These people are divided against themselves while a group of bandits takes charge of the political issues of the country instead of the educated class. With the rise of the Civil War, June 25th is hidden with the hens to be protected from the gangs of the day because a "hen wasn't a creature that inspired acts of brutality and cruelty" (11). Unfortunately, the boy masquerades into a chicken and disappears leaving ambiguous questions about the real reasons. This is the first irreducible element the novel presents the readers with. The violation of the collective Marxist beliefs that motivate resistance against the Portuguese is indirectly referred to in the first magical incident in Kindzu's notebooks following the day of his father's death. Golden-fruitful trees replace sea waters, and people rush to pick the fruits, but Taimo's voice interrupts "begging [them] to pause and ponder: these were very sacred fruits" (13). Since these fruits guarantee the stability of the country, the sea "filled the void once more in great gushes, swallowing up everything and everyone" once the first fruit is cut (13). The scene in Civil-War Mozambique is made more complicated with the assassination of the intelligentsia, seen through the case of Kindzu's teacher, that oppose what is happening. The analogy Kindzu draws between the situation of the country at this point and the whales that come to die on the shore best summarizes all the wounds: "[d]eath hadn't even occurred and knives were already stealing chunks of it, each trying to get a bigger piece for himself. As if it were the very last animal, the last chance to gain a share" (16).

A nuanced reading of Kindzu's first dream unveils Couo's distinction of those who celebrate independence as a utopian-end dream which culminates in failure, represented by the father, from the young generation that is fuelled with social dreaming to alter this degenerative dream into possibilities. In this dream scene, the dead father cautions his son against leaving his home village; otherwise, he will be cursed with apparitions that will haunt his trip. Being caught amidst the impasse of indecision, to live in peace or to be a fighter, certifies Kindzu as a realistic character. However, among many other incidents, his encounter with the mythical naparama while preventing the thievery of the Indian Surendra's shop is the most momentous to spark his last choice. The magical and spiritual powers of the naparamas became a deep-seated myth quickly in Mozambique. It was so because it appropriates its utopian rhetoric of justice from the local culture. Owing to this latter, Couto's tact of crossing the boundaries of differing realms to create a "vision of multiple worlds" ("The Multiple Worlds" 114) becomes so observable. The character of June, for instance, is an intersection of the human and animal realms that inveighs against

some independence related issues, and the naparamas blend the traditional and modern, the human and spirit worlds to invoke the utopian possibilities of healing the psychological wounds of the nation.

In *Sleepwalking Land*, the naparama represents the 'Myth of Return' which ignites its utopianism. This myth stands for the "collective memory", and "it is in writing that the myth of return is projected into the future" as Bill Ashcroft believes ("The Ambiguous Necessity" 13). The return is a "prophetic vision of the past" ("Critical Utopias" 423) through which the present is ruminated at all levels to conjure up a continual process of change that is premised on valuing the past. It sets itself apart from nostalgia which is inimical taking into consideration it locks people in the memories of the past. Kindzu, as a future naparama, is reminiscent of Ngugi's patriot Matigari who is endowed with magical abilities in his journey of freedom. Whereas Matigari is armed with guns, Kindzu is gifted with a strong dream-based action to change the reality. Perceiving the myth of return in the novel is associated with the myth of the unborn child which is, to Ashcroft, the unsurpassed "figure of a future inspired by memory" ("The Ambiguous Necessity" 10). Upon leaving, Kindzu goes to salute his mother who, to his surprise, claims she is pregnant at this age "bearing this child for years. [She doesn't] even want it to be born in these times" (*SL* 27). So, at the beginning of his text, Couto ascertains the interplay of magic, myth, dream and memory as the vigor of the novel's postcolonial discourse in its attempt to re-write the present.

As "an avenger of [his] people's sadness" (26), Kindzu embarks on a six-step magical journey which is plainly solidly grounded in reality in hopes of finding the naparamas to join them. He does not realize he becomes one until the last episode. This endeavor is a revolution which "is not simply a revolt but a revolving, a spiral into the future" (*Utopianism* 105) to come across the sacred heimat. In his notebooks, Kindzu re/writes his country after independence rigorously providing a new historiography, on many fronts, in defiance of the dominant versions of the tyrants of the novel, and gives voices to many silences by combining a series of magical and real events. In rendering the political complexities, Mia Couto, "whose political statement is implicit, but whose vision of the negative legacy of colonialism is nevertheless plain to see" (Venâncio 6), allegorically paints all the political powers and figures that thwart the country in Kindzu's dreams in the first episode of his journey while travelling by the shore of Tandissico as ghosts and mythical creatures. One of the xipocos, "ghosts that take joy from our suffering" (*SL* 37), throws him in a hole he digs in the sand in one dream, and his dead father warns that he will send the nampfana, " the bird that kills journeys" (40), after

him one day in another. Despite thinking of this as the onus of not adhering to his father's ideas of independence, he becomes more geared up for pursuing his dream of being a naparama. Depending on mythical epistemologies, Couto's utopianism, hence, induces change by transfiguring dystopian instances, nightmares, into a utopian desire following moments of a tense psychological confusion leading to self-introspection.

This utopian paradigm extends to many instances especially in the episodes of Matimati where the protagonist is startled with the sight of the huge number of refugees and their tragic conditions given the prerogatives the war unleashes through corrupt ways, politically and economically, to some figures who were one day in favor of the masses like the former secretary Assane. These people betray the principles they fought for. Symbolically, this is seen in the statue installed in the middle of the village to celebrate "the heroes of the independence struggle" to substitute the older one "which glorified the colonial warriors" (121). Perhaps, the most striking irreducible element punctuating the political and economic corruption in the novel is the resurrection of the main colonial figure Romão Pinto after a ten-year death while still thinking of himself as the boss. Romão meets the administrator and comrade-in-chief Estêvão Jonas, and he offers ridiculously his bloody coffin "as a present to the people" ! (173). Both cut a deal to exploit the economic sources in updated ways with the administrator as the "native face fronting the enterprise" (174). Couto upholds a mocking tone to comment on this neocolonial drama in which the public have no hand in in many magical realistic happenings which criticize the deterioration of economy and standards of life. This includes the case of the ships carrying aid to the locals and mysteriously sink because of the rocks that suddenly appear to destroy them to enable poor people to steal food which is "enough to save children, mothers and a whole Africa of relatives" (53). As long as "people were not behaving in a civil fashion in the presence of hunger [!]", the authorities issue "firm orders" to legalize the use of those goods and the ceremonies of dancing, for this alleged ritual may damage upcoming ships (53-4). Neocolonial economic practices are further literalized in the inauguration of Assane's bar bearing the ex-colonizer's name, 'Pinto's Bar.' Translating and revisiting these injustices common to all African countries qualify this text as a metonymy or "a "speaking mirror" of post-colonial culture" (Slemon 15).

The blight of neocolonialism, along with the psychological pressures it inflicts, seems to instill a feeling of unbelongingness in Kindzu to his nation complicating by that his sense of 'beingness' and 'becomeness.' This state summons up Kindzu's father's "ever-bitter" words to his mind: ""'Now we're a nation of beggars, and we

have nowhere to park ourselves" […] "But you, son, don't start trying to change people's destinies"" (*SL* 108). Albeit he does not comply with his father's advice, Kindzu reflects:

> Who knows? May be I was performing what had been my role from the beginning: a dreamer of memories, an inventor of truths. A sleepwalker strolling through fire. A sleepwalker like the land where I was born. Or those fires among which I forged my path through the sands. (108)

Through these words, there exists a utopian flame to not stop dreaming and an insistence on persistence as a key to "forge" one's "path" as an agent of transformation. By generating a utopian space of action which is based on dreaming, the discourse of the novel exposes another mode of resistance through which Kindzu acquires historical and political consciousness that requires him to be politically active against the status quo of his country. He thereby joins the people of Matimati in their provocative ritual of dancing to honor their ancestors for the sake of drowning more ships. On this premise, the magical historicity of this text comprises also of the act of Dreaming to heal one's self from these wounds.

One of the significant episodes of Kindzu's journey of becoming that deserves attention is the sea adventure introduced by a little magical creature, another irreducible element, which descends from the sky; it is "a *tchoti*, one of those dwarfs who drop from the heavens" (56). The tchoti escorts him to a shipwreck where the half-spirit, beautiful Farida resides temporarily after escaping the superstitions of her society, Makwa[1] people, against the twins. Literally and figuratively, Mozambique's (hi)story is encoded in this woman's story, and her personal memories get intertwined with Kindzu's. The only possible way to liberate himself from her captivating story and spirituality is to listen to her. To speak her magical sway, she admits to Kindzu:

> I had already seen you from that other side [world of the living], but your contours were aqueous, your face was morning mist. It was I who brought you here, it was I who summoned you. When we want you people from the light to come to us, we plant a seed in the world's ceiling. You were the one we sowed, you were born from our desire. I knew you were coming. I was waiting for you, Kindzu. (83)

1 One of the largest ethnic groups in Mozambique which settles mostly in the northern region.

By confessing this, Farida entrusts the mission of the society's bearer of utopian expectations and potential to Kindzu. Her love endows him with a new fervor of life and magical powers; thereupon, this experience enables him to see a lighthouse, Farida's sign of hope, in a remote island which he could not see at the beginning. Connoting one of the forms of heimat in the novel, the lighthouse exists symbolically in the "Not-Yet" future, yet it inflames the present of both Farida and Kindzu by keeping alive the concept of hope, "Dreaming" of the "In-Front-Of-Us" despite all the hardships. In this respect, "[t]he space of utopia" unlike the traditional utopias as Sargent points, "has become the space of social dreaming" in the present ("Utopian Traditions" 8). Couto elucidates the potency this anticipatory consciousness, a basic attribute of the main characters in their dreaming of a better future, has as a liberating machine from the exigencies of the country's unrest, whether it be psychological, political, historical or patriarchal, in the same way Bill Ashcroft theorizes the philosophy of postcolonial utopianism.

Substantively, Farida's oral narrative fortifies Kindzu's new written historiography (notebooks) inasmuch as it "involves the thematic foregrounding of those gaps, absences, and silences produced by the colonial encounter and reflected in the text's disjunctive language of narration" (Slemon 13). Farida's body and personal story thematize the importance of the feminist concerns in the utopian vision of Couto's magical realist discourse, and simultaneously the muting of the female voices and sufferings in the mainstream history of Mozambique. Like many children, Farida's son, resulted from her rape by the colonizer Pinto during the colonial period, is abandoned and left to suffer identity problems throughout independence: neither he belongs to the colonizers nor to the natives. A further gap that kindzu's version fills in pertains to the role of the white people of conscience through the character of Virginia, Pinto's wife, who adopts Farida as a daughter and teaches her reading and writing. The issue of the non-white ethnic minorities, or the acceptance of the 'Other,' in Mozambique is as serious as the former ones in Couto's utopian agenda. By denominating Kindzu as a man of "no race" (*SL* 22) in opposition with the rampant, local mindset which considers him as "a traitor to the race, a black who had fled from African traditions" (21-2), he stresses this. If realized successfully**,** racial harmony would establish a space in postcolonial societies for multi-cultural cooperation on a human basis for the good of all the cultures to rightly control some of their distressing tremors.

Within Couto's novel, postcolonial utopianism proves tobe a multifaceted paradigm which unearths itself variably. Markedly, Kindzu's journey helps to reinforce this and to carve out new understandings of the political scene, past and

present, to willingly construct new realities. Ashcroft writes that "[t]he idea that 'the journey is the goal' may not be strikingly original but it has a particular resonance in the context of African utopianism. The 'memory of the future' that characterizes so much literature of the myth of return is geared to energize the present, whether the goal is reached or not" ("Remembering the Future" 718). Farida's individual memory enlightens the collective memory of the naparama myth by lumping past, present and future through this journey which makes out of Kindzu an active agent. Partially or completely, the "goal is reached" when the protagonist induces rebellion and the spirit of dreaming in the refugees of the camp and the people he meets. Symbolically, he ingrains a regenerative seed of hope by impregnating Jotinha the lady of the visions there. The journey to nature, as the section on reading will unequivocally show, in itself is a return to the pure, primordial life of the past, a return to the origins which constitutes a counter action resulting in Kindzu's counter narrative. Most importantly, thus, the agency of Kindzu is linked to his pen whereby he integrates a series of sub-discourses within the magical realist discourse of the novel crossing borders to enter history and to avoid invisibility. Having history is a utopian project which warrants the emergence of other utopian horizons.

In the last but one dream of the novel, Couto stresses beautifully the significance of the act of writing in postcolonial Africa. The spirit of the father comes forth to inquire about the utility of Kindzu's journey:

> What are you doing with a notebook? What is it that you are writing?
> I don't know, Father. What I write depends on what I'm dreaming.
> And is anyone going to read it?
> May be.
> That would be good: to teach someone to dream. (*SL* 190)

This passage is a direct verbalization of the ability of writing to spark dreaming. To teach someone to dream is to teach him to live. In writing, there is a challenge to the current political regimes; there is hope to change this political tragedy into opportunities of living. Conjoining writing and "hope in *Heimat*", in Ashcroft's eyes, "may serve to reconstitute our understanding of resistance, to think of resistance as transformation" ("Revolution" 5; original emphasis). Writing in *Sleepwalking Land* becomes Kindzu's heimat which converts the utopian fixed form of hope, heimat of form, in African utopianism into function owing to its engagement with potentially-productive, future-oriented ways of looking.

Nearing the open conclusion, Kindzu expresses his gratefulness that he records

his journey and hurries to write his last dream, the most complicated of all, which fits into hallucinatory magical realism with its "difficulties in ascertaining which events have happened, which are imagined, and which are dreamed" (Faris 100). The dream robustly epitomizes the previously-described, general and postcolonial/post-independence aura in Mozambique. Out of the tragical realities, lights of a new morning fill the dream "like the world's first dawn" (*SL* 209). Not surprisingly, Kindzu transforms into a real naparama, for the first time in the novel, whose presence stamps all the neocolonial powers out and saves his brother June. His description of the dream interestingly runs:

> As I [Kindzu] sang, he [Juney] gradually turned into a person, one hundred per cent Juney. By his side […] my mother appeared, holding a child to her breast. I called them […]. Juney placed his open hand on his chest and then cupped both his hands together. He was thanking me. I waved goodbye, while he, holding my mother's arm, disappeared among the infinite vegetation. (213)

Standing on two worlds, the magical and the real, Kindzu is totally aware that he is in a dream: "[s]omething was telling me that I should hurry before that dream was extinguished" (213). Assuredly, then, the novel, as it is the case of African literature, does not eschew reality to communicate this fresh spirit of utopianism, the turmoil notwithstanding.

Sleepwalking Land evinces how hope gains its gist from the outlined struggles. Likewise, Ashcroft asserts that "[i]t is in the struggle with power that the trajectory of hope […] becomes most relevant" (*Utopianism* 204). The peculiarity of utopianism comes from the politics of location wherein it emerges, and accordingly deeply rooted in its African version is a regenerative, corrective and mythic Knowledge of the continent. Mia Couto's idiosyncratic style translates all this cleverly into "a dream which weighs more than reality" (Iweala 5). This is done by means of his embodiment of magical realism as a discourse and of dreams as its vehicle to convey facts, known or hidden, in which the reader fails sometimes to distinguish the real from the unreal. Dreams here, whether positive or negative, do not gesture towards the future without resorting first to the past from which it derives its identity. "To enter the world of dream and vision," in Renato Oliva's opinion, "is also to draw near to the ancestral world of tradition, a world which must be rediscovered, revisited, and re-dreamed" (187). In this sense if in no other, dreams piece together the past and the future. Read in this light, with their ancestral teachings, dreams become didactic about the past and the future jointly

since they prompt the will to act in the world. Dreaming and imagining the future is the first initiative "to build it, to bring into being a "new unblinded mythology" (189). This is at the core of Mia Couto's view of the utility of the utopian thought in postcolonial Africa and its artifact.

Dreams in this novel, dreams in a bigger dream, are thus magical lanterns that lead a spirit of change. When woven with the postcolonial utopian motif of the myth of return, they configure a new weapon to set fire to the odds by sustaining a critical platform to debate the nature of postcolonial resistance which is not always confined to direct confrontation. Utopian explorations contingent on the dialogic relationship between the individual and the antagonistic powers of the text form the pivot of the protagonist's agency and resistance. Problematic issues in postcolonial literature, hope ultimately here, according to Ashcroft are resolved dialogically; thus, Couto's text becomes an open conversation of the issues raised in it rather than a straight-to-the-point answer. His enigmatic ending scene, or rather dream, gives no exact statement of the protagonist's journey end result and visions of future Mozambique. All he is sure about is that his writings will carry on the same mission he embarks on: "the letters turn into grains of sand, and little by little, all my writings [Kindzu's] are transformed into pages of earth" (*SL* 213).

b. Re-reading the Present, Dreaming the Future

Mia Couto's novel commences subtly where it ends. So doing, Couto intends to establish a solid relationship between the two main sections that compose his text on the one hand and to metaphorically accentuate the cyclic nature of the events' time scope on the other. At the center of this novel hence is its engagement with the concept of African time. The cyclicity of time serves many functions. It is a stark allusion to the resurgence of the old forms of economic exploitation and dehumanization of the natives. But, most weightily, it is a reference to the integrity of postcolonial African utopian vision whose essence is the flexibility of time and its continuity. Time is purely cyclic in postcolonial utopianism, and it is both cyclic and linear in magical realism. A combination of both strands blurs the boundaries between past, present and future and dispels the strangeness of the idea that future in this case emerges basically from of the past. In this African narrative, circular time is the best option to express the different layers of time embedded in its magical episodes. Bill Ashcroft conceives this category of time as peculiar to the "forms of oral story-telling, in which 'then' and 'now' are in constant dialogue" ("African Futures" 101). This happens by way of exalting memory, the recurrence of the cultural and historical past in the present, and the dialogic bonding between the future and the past in the present. The novel's plot, however different techniques

it may amalgamate, accomplishes this literally by recasting the last scene, dream, in which kindzu on the threshold of two realms notices a boy approaching his shot body to collect the scattered notebooks. This is Mwidinga, at the beginning of the novel who discovers the burnt bus Kindzu uses to leave Matimati. This way, the whole novel becomes one circular piece which assumes its utopian soul from the two acts of writing and reading evenly.

Tightly related to this first point is the novel's incorporation of a splendid description of the cyclic vision of place as well when Tuahir and Mwidinga roams throughout Mozambique in the fixed wrecked bus, their shelter, which transports Kindzu at the end of the novel. In resorting to the stunning natural landscape of Mozambique before and after being decimated by the colonizer and the Civil War, the writer neatly clarifies the interface between the cyclic vision of place and time. Postcolonial utopianism engages not just with the concept of circular time which facilitates the extrapolation of history, but it is also an endeavor "to reconceive a place in the present, a place transformed by the infusion of this past, a place in process" ("Critical Utopias" 424).

Besides being commonly known with their utopian stance, 'reading' and 'writing' here execute magical roles. Interestingly, the cyclic vision of place and time is reinforced via the sturdy relation between the two acts, for the existence of writing allows the possibility(ies) of reading. Symbolically though, it is the act of reading, conducted by the boy Mwidinga, which gives prominence to the writings of Kindzu. Their content after firing Kindzu would have never been divulged without the boy's eagerness which makes the new historical version/vision embedded in them accessible to all the readers. One of the strong instances in the novel to demonstrate the utopian impulse of its magical realist discourse is the ability of reading the 'written' to transform the somber landscapes around the bus, Tuahir and the boy. Trees appearing and disappearing, surroundings changing suddenly into a cave, a road moving steadily are among the magical incidents that eventuate only "every time he [Mwidinga] reads Kindzu's notebooks" (*SL* 100).These magical shifts are filiatively attributable to Couto's judicious use of mythical and ritual epistemologies appertaining to the Makwa culture to spur the boy's, representative of the new/post-independence generation, faculties of apprehension and dreaming. The incident of the maker of the rivers, Nhamataca, who "is fulfilling the same destiny as his father" (86) is an outstanding example of this reversion to the origins. Nhamataca digs a river named 'Mother River' to pave the way for "hopes and unfulfilled dreams [to] travel […] it would give birth to the soil, to the place where men would once more be guardians of their own lives" (86) and to bind "together

the destinies of the living" (88). Mwidinga doubts the sanity of the man and the utility of his project as it takes place in a stony land; yet when it rains heavily, "Nhamataca celebrates the birth [of his river] as if it were the fruit of his flesh" (89).

In this vein, rivers are usually reckoned as symbols of hope and life in African literature and Couto's oeuvre in particular. The noticeable growth of the boy's consciousness and Tuahir's as well towards securing a new insight into the meaning of existence/ 'Beingness' and 'Becomness' in this period, the "Not-Yet" in Ashcroft's philosophy, is immensely a product of mingling the magical and the natural. This relation testifies to the germane role nature plays in African postcolonial utopianism. Hope, personified multifariously in the text, springs amazingly from the rich nature. This genre of utopianism which advocates the role of the environment and "does not look to an ideal situated solely in the future but to one that might already be possessed by others, by those seen to have superior cultural virtue" is labeled 'primeval' or 'primordial' utopianism by Ronald Niezen (723). It avers that "those who live close to the land feel an intimate sense of belonging with the surroundings of their birth; all the simple pleasures and occupations of ways of life that are instilled from childhood, even the very composition of their bodies, are based upon a connection with the soil" (723-4). To put it clearer, this primitivism, i.e. the tight and harmonious relation with the natural world, bestows special competencies on the characters like the sharp senses central to their contemplation.

Bearing in mind the above, *Sleepwalking Land* is thus a convenient frame of reference of how the natural invokes the utopian. Couto's magical realist style sanctifies nature by according it with some human-like qualities. Nature nurtures the fears and hopes of Kindzu, Mwidinga and Tuahir. Like Kindzu's journey, reading casts Mwidinga in the midst of diverse landscapes. The natural images are numerous, but certainly water images — the river and the sea —remain the most etched in the readers' minds in both sections: Kindzu's and Mwidinga's. The vividness of these images emanates from their sacred value in the mother culture. The river safeguards dreams in Mwidinga's section, and the open ocean typifies possibilities of peace and stability in the whole novel. In his quest, Kindzu travels by the sea, and in it he learns to think and dream farsightedly. Reading Farida's story inspirits the boy to get "some relief" with the sight of the ocean (*SL*182). Additionally, the ocean is the last scenery that reading drives the characters to because Tuahir insists to die in it after his disease. So, the boy puts him in an old abandoned boat which ironically bears the name of kindzu's father 'Taimo' to, like him, begin a "journey out into a sea full of infinite imaginings" (205). To the death myth, the dead man's soul connects with the sea to plunge into an afterlife. Melting

the past and the future in the sea makes out of it a 'eutopian enclave,' Sargent's term, and correspondingly a 'heimat,' Ashcroft's term.

In Couto's return to the African nature lies a radical step against the fake modernity imported by the colonizer, and a challenge to the realistic notions of temporality and spatiality. It is an attempt to recreate those highly valued pasts and to literarily carry them to the present to shore up its reconstruction while contemplating the future at the same time. In better words, it is a penetration of the possible to distill the impossible, and the dystopian to extricate the utopian. This is what reading in the midst of the pure world resolutely does in the boy who starts ruminating his life mindful of the Civil War antagonisms. To Sargent, this is a utopian enterprise which unites all the indigenous cultures whose depiction of "their ideal pasts […] stresses closeness to nature, including flora, fauna and physical features like mountains and rivers" ("Colonial and Postcolonial Utopias" 213). Therefore, alongside its utopian rhetoric, the novel harbors an ecological rhetoric which impels an ecological consciousness. Commenting on all the magical and mythical episodes they pass through, Tuahir sums up the whole process saying: "[i]t was the country which was parading past like a sleepwalker" (*SL* 141). He understands that the bus serves nothing more than a utopian machine moving backward and forward in time to achieve the above with the help of the cyclic movement of the road. As described, nature is also a sacred nexus between the different realms that make up the novel's world.

Amongst the vexing issues reading provokes is identity politics as already mentioned in the previous section. Kindzu's venture to rectify the historical fallacies through his notebooks instigates Mwidinga to reclaim his real identity before his illness instead of the false one ascribed by his savior. Under his insistence, the true story is revealed. Tuahir, for the sake of satisfying the missing fatherly side in him, proffers to Mwidinga the name of his eldest son "who had gone to die in the mines of the Rand" (50) after rescuing him from burial because of his miserable health condition. Mwidinga suffers from 'mantakassa', a disease which results from eating the poisonous fruit of Mandioca shrub. "The grip of hunger was too powerful", Tuahir laments (50). When viewed from Slemon's standpoint, Mwidinga's hi/story is deemed as a consummation of the vacuums that Kindzu's narrative skips.

Mwidinga's identity problem is inexorably aligned with his amnesia, memory loss. To cure his disease, the witch doctor cleanses "the content of [his] head" (129). Still, this rite could not supersede the paramountcy and the boy's mastery of writing and reading. Justifying his intention, Tuahir states:

> I [Tuahir] asked him [witch doctor] to do this on account of it being better that you should have no memory of that time. What's more, you were lucky with your illness. You could have forgotten everything. Whereas with me it's different, I have to carry this burden. (129)

To the old man's mind, the boy's amnesia is his freedom, a positive escapism and a second chance for rebirth as, his words indicate, memory is not always a blessing for those who endure war agony. This short quote stirs up Ashcroft's belief that "forgetfulness and memory—are equally necessary to the health of an individual" ("Remembering the Future" 708). The magicalilty of Kindzu's writings, however, would not leave the boy without a memory. The more he reads, the more he restores some of his early childhood recollections especially school days. Over time, Tuahir understands that "Kindzu's writings had given the youngster a borrowed memory of those impossible days" (*SL* 129). The psychic liberation he seeks for the boy through forgetfulness seems to exist paradoxically within the writings of Kindzu and the possibilities of living, remembering and imagining.

Foremost among the assets of reading also is the faculty of imagination and its ability to broaden the boy's horizons of both living and becoming. Reconciliation with one's own past and reality is one of the outcomes of reading and imagination. Out of solitude, the boy proposes a weird game of imagination in which he impersonates Kindzu's character while Tuahir does so with his father's character though it is risky to disturb the world of the dead. The reenactment of this father-son bond uncovers the confusion surrounding the real one in times of war, Kindzu and his father on the one hand and Mwidinga and the unknown father on the other, where survival issues overwhelm the very intimate human affairs like love and friendship. Understanding this, Mwidinga starts to look more deeply for ways to rejuvenate his self. It is in dreaming and acting that heimat exits, he also ascertains. Dreams are messages to the future, "letters we send to our other, remaining lives" (62). They are the typing machine of Kindzu's notebooks which "were surely not written by a hand of flesh and bones" (62). Imagination and Daydreaming can be viable utopian mind machines of survival during conflicts firstly and of anticipation of a superior future secondly. Accordingly, the novel evidences that the state of "Not-Yet-Becomness" is as important and equal as that of "Beingness", for none can outshine the other in the theorization of postcolonial utopianism ("The Ambiguous Necessity" 9).

Couto's magical discourse consists not only of poignant magical episodes, but also of the 'magic of the word.' The magic of natural images and the magic of

language, through the heavy use of figures of speech, equally form the kernel of the intricate concept of 'magic' in this novel. The poetic dimension of Couto's writing style resounds, through what Stephen Slemon terms as the speaking mirror, more nuanced issues. Carmen Concilio says: "one of the modalities of magical realist literature is to be found in a language's managing to articulate the unspeakable" (32). The following quotes are some of the instances of the novel's magic language:

> Take care, my boy, only the sea lives upon the sea. (*SL* 26) [witch doctor to Kindzu]
>
> I peered into the pitch blackness of night, there where the sea touches the feet of God. (37) [Kindzu]
>
> It was because of this child that she wept only tears of milk. They tickled, white over her dark skin, and when she touched them, they turned into tiny round suns, glistening in her fingers. (82) [Kindzu describing Farida]

Apart from the aesthetic pleasure they trigger and the well-thought issues they pinpoint, these examples and the like familiarize the readers with the concept of magic though the novel's magical language is in many cases cryptic and hard to decipher even to the characters of the text, like Kindzu, to whom magic is an ordinary constituent of their lives and culture. Thus, the core aim behind this is to urge the readers, while enjoying reading, to adopt a questioning attitude so as to be involved in the utopian project of the novel. Stephen Slemon hereof clarifies that the magical realist narrative "demand[s] a kind of reading process in which the imagination becomes stimulated into summoning into being new and liberating "codes of recognition" " (20). In yet other words, this type of texts is never complete without piercing its abundant strata of meaning to engender new understandings and prospects of the reality being lived.

To conclude this section, it is noteworthy illuminating the concepts of continuity and collaboration central to the utopian vision of Kindzu's writings and the novel in its entirety. Even though the writings implant the spirit of life once more in the boy, Couto uses deftly his rootedness in Makwa culture to hint at the factors incarcerating this project. The maker of the rivers episode likens the project to the process of constructing (digging) a river "that was the work of one man, it was a river that didn't last for long" (*SL* 89). Therefore, it is easily inferred that the absence of a consistent cooperation between people of the same experience—cultural, political, historical …—within the same generation and from one generation to another causes the fading of the utopian flame. In many ways, the

writer stresses the point indirectly like allowing Mwidinga, someone from a younger generation, to be the reader of the notebooks of Kindzu. The motif of the burnt bus also stitches the two sections of the novel as a crucible of hopes and a bridge between the prospects of the two generations. Mwidinga's section divulges different forms of heimat: better future, the bus, the natural world, the notebooks and the act of reading. But the project of re/writing history, re-historicization, is the most important and sacred form that heimat can take in Couto's vision. Besides recording events and critiquing them, writing molds imagination and provides conduits for becoming.

Conclusion: Mia Couto's Postcolonial Utopian Politics/ Poetics

After all, a blind man's torch is his hand. (37)

When I'm at peace, I'm blind; when I'm in a fight, I can see. (23)

By juxtaposing the dystopian reality with the utopian possibilities it releases, *Sleepwalking Land* succeeds to communicate many nagging issues conveniently. Herein exceptionally, Mia Couto's embodiment of magical realism as a discourse of postcolonial utopianism summons such future possibilities and visions. One of the forms of heimat his discourse targets persists within the majestic project of re-historicizing his country at many levels. In fact, this project, which involves the recuperation of the long discarded past/identity for the sake of reworking the present disappointing reality, relies heavily on the dynamics of memory—individual and collective—which is seemingly "the only recuperative strategy available to the oppressed" according to Ashcroft ("Remembering the Future" 708). In view of this, the postcolonial utopianism envisioned in the novel retrieves its soundness from the ontological African worldview and its assertiveness of the insurmountable bond between the individual and: (a) his community and (b) nature. This intentional recourse has a didactic propensity so as to avoid the political drama Mozambique endured for long because of the conflicting interests of those who brought the degenerate utopian dream of independence. Away from the superfluous celebrations of this latter, the novel's utopianism glorifies a continuing process, rather than an end-product, based on the individual's willingness to achieve change through his self-reliance and deep involvement in all the campaigns against corruption. This is superbly stressed in many occasions by dint of Couto's inciting magical language, among which the above two quotes. The African as an agent has a functional role in the debate of 'what constitutes future in Africa?', for it is at his hands to write, like Kindzu, his possibilities/ "tomorrows" and to fight for them. Though he counts on a magical realist discourse, Couto does not fabricate an alternative reality, but

he ushers the reader into deducing that heimat exists in the threshold of possibility which stems basically from the transformation of the present reality in light of, of course, a firm adherence to the rich 'Mother' culture.

Through the motif of the noble journey to stumble upon the utopian concept of justice and the naparamas justice makers, demonstrative of the myth of return, the abovementioned points are properly delineated. Couto's novel suggests the pen as a significant magical engine of resistance. The nascent, oppressed-based historiography destabilizes the borders of master narratives to attain the possibility of being at the center of 'History' i.e. to be visible. Read in this sense, then, this step, as an outcome of the questioning attitude of utopianism, represents a mode of epistemological resistance and liberation from the master narratives, be they the colonizer's or neo-colonizer's, through 'writing' and 'reading' which are skillfully literarily converted into two utopian and magical acts. Journeying, writing and reading is Couto's mechanism at the heart of his philosophy of postcolonial utopianism due to its reinforcement of consciousness rising, recording and criticizing, psychic liberation, nurturing imagination and dreaming within a magical realist context . Championing the 'Not-Yet-Becomness' as much as the 'Beingness' of the individual, accordingly, *Sleepwalking Land* brings into play the basics of Bill Ashcroft's thought.

The sacred form of 'heimat' which escapes categorizations and fixity singles postcolonial utopianism out from postcolonial utopia and the concept of utopia in general. This spiritual, resilient concept of home that all people dream of lies usually in the future, but the novel conveys the possibility of enjoying this feeling in the present under many shapes. Attention then should be paid to the attempts of postcolonial African authors to rejuvenate hope in their writings to remind the world of the other face of Africa.

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