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**Cities of the
Lusophone World**

Literature, Culture and
Urban Transformations



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DORIS WIESER

12 Urban Transformations in Maputo after Independence: *Cronica da Rua 513.2*, by João Paulo Borges Coelho

The colonial world is a world cut in two. The dividing line, the frontiers are shown by barracks and police stations. In the colonies it is the policeman and the soldier who are the official, instituted go-betweens, the spokesmen of the settler and his rule of oppression.

—FRANTZ FANON

Introduction

Urban cultures in Lusophone Africa represent a relatively new research field, since the process of urbanization in these countries is much more recent and less extended than in other parts of the Lusophone world, especially Brazil. While Angola's capital, Luanda, has often been the location for poetry, novels and films in both the colonial and postcolonial era,¹ the urban transformation processes of Maputo have rarely been the subject of novels and films.² However, starting from the late 1940s, poets like Noémia de Sousa, José Craveirinha and Rui Knopffli began to conceive the national

¹ For more information about representations of Luanda in literature and other arts, see Ribeiro (2016) and the essays of Júlia Garrão, Christian Grünagel and Janek Scholz in this book.

² In the other Lusophone African countries (Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau and São Tomé e Príncipe), the literary interest in the peculiarities of urban life is even lower because, perhaps with exception of Bissau, there are no large cities.

idea of *mozambicanidade* and denounce the social inequalities in Lourenço Marques (Maputo). Later on, poets such as Calane da Silva, Luís Carlos Patraquim and Nelson Sature followed. Nevertheless, Maputo has not been a main location for fictional prose. Internationally known contemporary Mozambican writers such as Mia Couto, Paulina Chiziane and Ungulani Ba Ka Khosa have barely been concerned with the particular conditions of life in Mozambique's capital, paying more attention to rural areas and/or historical settings. Some of the few novels and short stories which deal with different issues concerning Maputo's urban life are *Neighbours* (1995) by Lília Mompê, *Palestra para um Morto* (1999) [*Lecture for a Dead*] by Suleiman Cassamo, *Crónica da Rua 513.2* (2006) [*Chronicle of 513.2 Street*] by João Paulo Borges Coelho (the object of study of this chapter), *A Canção de Zefânias Sforza* (2010) [*Zefânias Sforza's Song*] by Luís Carlos Patraquim and *Contos de Fuga* (2010) [*Tales of Flight*] by Helder Faife.³

Maputo, founded in 1782 as a colonial warehouse and military base, was called Lourenço Marques (after the Portuguese explorer) until 1976. In 1898, it replaced the Island of Mozambique as capital of the Portuguese colony. Due to its particular condition as a contact zone for African, Asian and European influences, the Island of Mozambique has for a long time occupied a more central place in Mozambican literature, particularly in poetry, as Jessica Falconi and Ana Mafalda Leite show in this volume. Today the municipality of Maputo has a population of close to 1.1 million people and the metropolitan area 1.7 million. According to UN-Habitat (2008: 6, quoted by Melo 2013: 82), 70 per cent of Maputo's population lives in semi-urbanized areas. The city gained importance in the twentieth century due to its well-equipped port and its railways to South Africa. Franz Fanon (1963) described the colonial city as divided into two zones, both following the principle of reciprocal exclusivity: the zone of the (foreign) settlers and the zone of the natives.⁴ To keep up this separation, violence was needed. This principle has been strongly visible in

3 For further comments on these works, see Ribeiro (2016).

4 'The zone where the natives live is not complementary to the zone inhabited by the settlers. The two zones are opposed, but not in the service of a higher unity. Obedient to the rules of pure Aristotelian logic, they both follow the principle of reciprocal exclusivity. No conciliation is possible, for of the two terms, one is superfluous' (Fanon 1963: 38–39).

the urbanization of Maputo. In colonial times the city was characterized by a dual division: on the one hand, the downtown area, where the whites and *assimilados* lived, was known as the 'city of cement' (*cidade de cimento*). It was characterized by an orthogonal layout with multi-storey buildings, sanitation facilities, electricity and piped water, and also by a greater concentration of capital and commercial activity. On the other hand, the neighbourhoods of the African population were called the 'city of reed' (*cidade de canho*) due to their traditional huts, built of reed and other vegetal materials, but there are also many wood-and-zinc houses. These neighbourhoods grew spontaneously, without planning, without basic infrastructures, and form a web of narrow and tortuous streets (Araújo 1999).

With the Carnation Revolution of 25 April 1974, more than 250,000 Portuguese settlers left the country, leaving not only a few loopholes in the economy and administration, but also a large number of empty houses in the 'city of cement'. In the first years of independence, the new, socialist-oriented government wanted to overcome spatial, social and racial segregation. Therefore, the empty houses were released for people from the suburbs and newcomers from the countryside (Raposo and Salvador 2007: 105). In addition, during the civil war (1977–1992), many refugees came to settle in the city and its peripheries. These people from rural areas maintained their habits, that is, they built huts and used the land, no matter how small, to dedicate themselves to agriculture (Araújo 1999).⁵ Due to both, the lack of maintenance and the rural and suburban habits of the new inhabitants, the urbanized part of the city deteriorated, that is, it 'suburbanized' (Raposo and Salvador 2007: 106).

Nowadays the 'cement'/'reed' division has been superseded and transformed into three different areas: the urban, suburban and peripheral area.

5 This practice is also adopted by the characters of the novel by João Paulo Borges Coelho, the object of study of this chapter: 'Cavámos nós, camponeses que quase ainda somos todos – recém-chegados à cidade, ou entrando e saindo dela – quase todos regando a nossa curve, quase todos tendo uma enxada no canto do quintal [...]?' [We dug, the peasants who are almost all of us – newcomers to the city, or coming in and going out of it – almost all watering our cabbage, almost all having a hoe in the corner of the yard] (Borges Coelho 2006: 102).

While the urban area corresponds more or less to the old 'city of cement', the 'city of reed' now comprises two areas with different characteristics: the suburban area and the periphery. The peripheral zone was annexed in 1986 with the purpose of constituting a reserve space for the expansion of the city. However, suburban neighbourhoods have been undergoing a process of rapid transformation. The 'cementing' of the suburbs, that is, the construction of brick houses and the installation of sanitation infrastructures, has had a gentrification effect, forcing the poorer residents to move to other places, for example the more peripheral areas (Araújo 1999: 178). The old boundaries between the 'city of cement' and the 'city of reed' have nowadays diluted and are much more permeable than before. Every day a large number of inhabitants of the suburban and peripheral areas moves to the centre of the city to dedicate themselves to different types of work and commerce, for example, informal small-scale activities. Thus, not only the countryside penetrates the city, but also the former peasants (sub)urbanize.

In the novel *Crónica da Rua 513.2* [*Chronicle of 513.2 Street*], by the Mozambican historian and writer João Paulo Borges Coelho (originally published in 2006), the fictitious 513.2 Street in Maputo's former 'city of cement', is the scene of multiple migratory processes and social transformations which take place in the first years after the Carnation Revolution and during the civil war (1977–1992). I will analyse how the novel deals with postcolonial social micro-strategies of the appropriation of urban space and the difficulties of building a national unity, which condense in urban areas where people converge from diverse backgrounds, creating a new sense of belonging.

Topography, Toponymy and Memory Spaces

Although the omniscient narrator of the novel does not tell us in which neighbourhood the 513.2 Street is situated, it undoubtedly forms part of the old 'cement city', since it is a street with brick houses, electrical installations and a sewerage system, which in colonial times were inhabited by

white settlers, served by 'mainarros de pés descalços e aventais engomados' (Coelho 2009 [2006]: 11) [barefooted laundress with ironed pinafores (my translation)⁶]. The reader also gets to know that the street is located in a topographically privileged area, since: 'Corre perpendicular ao mar, nascendo num maro algo elevado e descendo suavemente até morrer no areal da praia' (11) [It runs perpendicular to the sea, rising in a high forest and descending gently until dying on the sandy beach]. Due to these characteristics, the omniscient narrator proposes several names for the street: Rua da Boavista (11) [Good View Street], Rua das Buganvilias (12) [Bougainvillea Street], or even Rua do Sahara [Sahara Street] – not only as it is sandy and dusty, but to live up to the 'tempos de internacionalismo e africanidade' (16) [times of internationalism and Africanism], creating a Pan-African sense of belonging by evoking the geographically distant African desert. However, the street resists names with semantic weight because:

A Rua 513.2 tem um nome aritmético. Como se resultasse de uma conta precisa: 513,2 metros de comprimento desde o maro até ao mar, ou 5,132 metros de largura caso deixemos dançar a vírgula. Como se tivesse uma cota de partida de 0,5132 metros acima do nível do mar. (11)

[513.2 Street has an arithmetic name. As if it was the result of a precise sum: 513.2 metres long from the bush to the sea, or 5.132 metres wide if we let the decimal point dance. As if it had a starting quota of 0.5132 metres above sea level.]

This arithmetical name, immune to ideological suspicions, has survived the wave of post-independence renaming when the names of Portuguese heroes and Portuguese national dates were replaced by Mozambican heroes and Mozambican national dates, such as Eduardo Mondlane, Josina Machel, 25 September, 3 February and 25 July,⁷ or by key figures from the communist countries that began to provide technical, economic and ideological

⁶ All further translations are also mine.

⁷ 25 September 1964 was the day of the outbreak of the Independence War. On 3 February 1969, Eduardo Mondlane died in a letter bomb explosion in Dar-es-Salaam. The day was declared the 'Dia dos heróis moçambicanos' [Day of the Mozambican Heroes]. On 25 July 1975, the Independence of Mozambique was declared.

assistance to the new nation: hence the Karl Marx, Vladimir Lenin and Mao Tse Tung Avenues.⁸ However, the narrator points out that the names of many women who participated in the struggle for independence were forgotten (13) – with the exception of Josina Machel, perhaps only remembered because she was the wife of the first president of free Mozambique, Samora Machel. In this way, the independence and the construction of a new Mozambique are characterized as essentially male projects. João Paulo Borges Coelho aims to rescue (at least partially) the role of women in the construction of the nation. I will come back to this later on. 513.2 Street survives the wave of the creation of new memory spaces – that are national, masculine and associated with the communist ideology – and comes to represent on the one hand a more open, diverse and ideologically neutral face of the new country, and on the other hand the need for social justice that has to be translated into figures and equations, that is, an equal distribution of wealth:

[...] o enigmático número da Rua 513.2 permaneceu como estava. Tirá-lo de nome da rua seria como que desprezar a aritmética na altura em que ela era mais necessária, para dividir por todos a riqueza que esteve inacessível no tempo colonial. Seria renegá-la quando ela mais devia estar presente, para fazer as contas do futuro. (14–15)

[... the enigmatic number of 513.2 Street remained as it was. To take it away from the name of the street would be to despise arithmetic at the time when it was most needed, to divide for all the wealth that was inaccessible in colonial times. It would mean to deny arithmetic when it should be present, to do the accounts of the future.]

But will the dream of social justice come true for the inhabitants of 513.2 Street? Let's step back a bit in time and question the colonial history of this street first.

8 Nazir Can (2008) analyses the meaning of the names in the novel in detail, not only of the streets but also of the characters, arriving at the following conclusion: "The desire to rename the space, to clean the identity card of a place, belongs to the same logic of the continuous renaming of some of the residents of the street ('Tiro, Yalgy, Telles Nhaturumbo), characters who, curiously, were losing their voice with the passage of time' (Can 2008: 152, my translation).

Colonial Time

Contrary to what Eduardo Lourenço (2014: 35 and 57) came to denounce as the 'myth of Innocent Colonialism', according to which Portuguese colonialism would be better than others – softer, more human, less racist – João Paulo Borges Coelho gives us a more realistic view in his fiction: self-ish settlers who, without any modesty, pushed out the inhabitants of the areas they wanted to occupy themselves, disregarding the 'historical rights' of these people: "Cheguem-se para trás que nós queremos ficar aqui a ver o mar". [...] E o povo aceitava porque é da sua natureza aceitar e porque os outros tinham meios de lha lembrar' (17) ['Go to the back, because we want to stay here and see the sea'. [...] And the people accepted because it is their nature to accept and because others had the means to remind them]. The novel also presents another version in which the settlers try to silence any vestige of settlement prior to their arrival as if it had not existed:

Cheganos aqui a este espaço onde nada existia, desenhamos um projecto com perspetiva e vista (boa), riscámos a rua a teodolito, régua e compasso. Plantámos sombras, fomo-la concretizando. Vocês vieram depois, cercando-nos para ocupar os postos de trabalho que entretanto se iam criando. (17–18)

[We came here to this space where nothing existed, we designed a project with perspective and (good) vision, we drew the street by theodolite, ruler and compass, we planted shadows, we made it concrete. You came later, surrounding us to occupy the jobs that were being created.]

Note the colonists' willingness to 'write' a self-centred history in which they play the role of 'civilizers'.

Nevertheless, the novel still presents another voice, the collective voice of the 'popular neighbourhood', located behind 513.2 Street. This 'forgotten' voice (21) is metaphorized as a 'false sea' of 'various waves' and denounces the injustices of colonialism in the tone of a manifesto, starting all its sentences with 'Não mais...'. [No more...]. The first wave speaks of the servitude, imprisonment and animalization of blacks confined to the condition of non-citizens, and even non-human. The second wave denounces forced

labour, and the third recounts situations of rebellion among the peasants. It is precisely this popular, suburban neighbourhood that now penetrates the abandoned houses of 513.2 Street demanding from the new government its right to exercise full citizenship (denied by colonialism), saying: 'Com licença, caros camaradas, será que podemos ver a cidade e as suas luzes, será que podemos participar?' (21) [Excuse me, dear comrades, may we see the city and its lights, may we participate?].

The question of the participation of all social layers is central to the project of nation building. Let us recall the words of the Mozambican philosopher Severino Ngoenha and his remarks about the condition of Mozambicans in colonial times:

[...] nós participámos sempre como protagonistas passivos, como material sobre o qual os outros constroem o seu orgulho, onde os outros se forjam heróis. Quando não nos transportavam como escravos de um continente para o outro, utilizavam-nos para contar as suas epopeias sobre nós. (Ngoenha 1992: 9)

[...] we always participated as passive protagonists, as material on which others build their pride, where others become heroes. When they did not transport us as slaves from one continent to another, they used us to tell their epics about us.]

According to the philosopher, Mozambicans were 'objects' of history written by others, or raw material for the heroic accounts of a supposedly superior people. Therefore, they did not make themselves history, but only suffered the History of Portugal (Ngoenha 1992: 11). The consequences for their identity construction were profound. The Mozambican was almost stripped of his/her humanity and diminished 'de ser histórico que era, a um ser semi-histórico, de um ser cultural a um ser semi-cultural' (Ngoenha 1992: 12) [from a historical being, who he/she was, to a semi-historical being, from a cultural being to a semi-cultural being]. In fact, colonialism inevitably led to the construction of two different historical universes, an official and a peripheral one (Ngoenha 1992: 14). We can add that these universes are reflected at the urban level in the division between the 'city of cement' and the 'city of reed'. The violent separation, upheld by brute force, which Frantz Fanon indicates, produced a constant and profound humiliation and degradation, physical and

psychical wounds which are very hard to heal. Hence the postcolonial claim of dignity and even of humanity itself arises as does the voice of the popular neighbourhood in the novel:

Não mais a humidade e o calor das celas [...]; os fungos ferilhando nos cantos escuros e o cheiro do mijo furando-nos as narinas e chegando-nos ao cérebro, a animalidade crescendo em nós porque era impossível ser-se humano no buraco onde nos metiam como animais. (19)

[No more the humidity and the heat of the cells ..., the mould boiling in the dark corners and the smell of piss sticking in the nostrils and reaching the brain, the animality growing in us because it was impossible to be human in the hole where they put us like animals.]

Let us now see how the history of the street continues in the post-independence period.

Postcolonial Time

After 25 April, most of the white residents of 513.2 Street decided to return to the Metropolis, leaving space to be occupied by new residents who were leaving the 'city of reed' to dwell in the 'city of cement'. However, they had to live with the ghosts of the former settlers, an allegory for the long refusal of Portugal to free Mozambique, but also for a somewhat rushed exit. These ghosts dedicate themselves to observing and commenting on the events of the young Nation. The author remarks on this in an interview:

[...] a questão dos fantasmas [...] tem a ver com a cidade branca ter ficado abandonada e as casas terem sido reocupadas por quem não as construiu ou as construiu como trabalhador braçal e não como proprietário. Ou seja, as pessoas não sabiam viver dentro daquelas casas, e tudo é meio assustador. Isso produz os fantasmas, também. Os fantasmas são criados quando as histórias não estão bem resolvidas. (Wieser 2016: 157)

[...] the issue of the ghosts ... has to do with the white city being abandoned and the houses being reoccupied by those who did not build them or built them as a

handyman and not as a landlord. That is, people did not know how to live inside those houses, and everything is kind of scary. This produces ghosts, too. Ghosts are created when stories are not well resolved.]

These ghosts, often called 'resquícios' [remnants], continue to psychologically influence the events of the present, and are therefore vestiges of a past not yet finished because it remains in the collective memory as a trauma. It is also interesting that the new inhabitants do not show any astonishment about the appearance of the ghosts, probably because African spiritual life is based on communication with dead ancestors and spirits of nature. As such, the apparition of 'white' spirits is just another form of communication with the dead or absent. Accordingly, Borges Coelho shows how African spirituality absorbs new elements and transforms them into a blurred, syncretic spirituality.

The best example of the cohabitation of former and new inhabitants is the relationship between the FRELIMO secretary Filimone, who lives in the former home of a PIDE inspector Monteiro. Monteiro's ghost leads Filimone to distrust all his neighbours. While trying to control the ideological path of the residents of this arithmetically named street, unfounded suspicion and vigilance become obsessions of Filimone. In this sense, the new order (established by FRELIMO) ends up resembling the old (upheld by PIDE). That's why Sousa (2013: 112) talks about both those characters being a mirror of one another.

The novel consists of a long succession of episodes of the lives of the residents, without any acquiring protagonism, only the street itself, which represents the City and even the Nation on a micro-scale. The novel allows the following layout of the Street to be drawn (Figure 12.1).

I will now present a brief tour of the characters in reverse order, questioning their contribution to the new Nation.

In house number 11 live the mechanic Zeca Ferraz and his wife Guilhermina. The two are mulattoes – and therefore a new ethnic element, a product of colonialism. Originally from Chókwè, in the province of Gaza, they came to Lourenço Marques still in colonial times. Taking advantage of the troubled times after 25 April, Zeca Ferraz manages to buy the car repair shop of the setter Marques for a very low price. However, Marques (who shares his surname with the Portuguese explorer who gave his name to the city), continues to be present in the imagination of the new residents, having left a notebook in the garage, in which he unveiled his love for the Indian Buba.



Figure 12.1: Layout of 513.2 Street with its inhabitants.

Key:
Actual residents
[Former residents/ghosts]

House number 10 is occupied by Santiago Muianga, commander of the troops in the civil war. Muianga directs the construction of the air-raid shelter – in the vacant lot of number 9 – in a community action that shows the socialist spirit of the young nation, but which, however, fails. Having been poorly planned, sea water infiltrates the foundations. This episode not only criticizes the attempt to create a sense of community by force, based on an ideology alien to the local cultures (several neighbours invent excuses not to have to participate), but it is also an example of the lack of qualified personnel in the country after the exodus of the Portuguese.

In house number 8 lives the already-mentioned secretary of FRELIMO, Filimone Tembe, with his wife Elisa. Elisa plays an interesting role. She is one of the young women who end up, without any political pretension and simply out of natural curiosity and sympathy for others, mediating between FRELIMO and the people, and between Church and State. Thus, the role of women, usually silenced, is highlighted in the construction of the new Nation.

Tito Nharreluga at number 7 is a young man, 'rural e ingênuo' (113) [rural and naïve], who grew up in the province of Gaza. Attracted by the great city, he moves there at the time of independence. In the suburbs of Maputo he joins an older woman, Judite, who helps him to '(sub)urbanize' and to develop micro-strategies of appropriation of urban space. Together they occupy the house of the former colonists Doctor Pestana and Dona Aurora. Pestana, before returning to Portugal, destroyed the electrical installations and the water pipes with the mean intention of leaving the house uninhabitable. However, for the couple with rural and suburban habits, the semi-destroyed house is no problem. They cook with firewood and use candles, and Judite can even set up a small informal business selling *bagias* (a type of fried salty snack) – a fact that the ghost of the former settler greatly disapproves of, calling them usurpers (112). Tito and Judite thus represent the aforementioned infiltration of rural and suburban habits into the 'city of cement'. However, this infiltration is not yet sufficient for their national or even international integration. This becomes evident in the episode in which President Samora Machel pays a visit to 513.2 Street. Judite, eager for recognition and looking for business opportunities, offers the President a *bagia*. Though, he passes it on to the Russian politician who

accompanies him. The Russian refuses, Samora puts the *bagia* back on the tray and [Judite, desalentada, regressou à sua antiga condição] (154) [Judite, disheartened, returned to her former condition]. In this way, Borges Coelho criticizes the distance between the government and the people, as well as between foreign ideology (socialism) and local traditions.⁹

Another example of the new blend of rural, suburban and urban culture is the Mbeve family at number 6. Josefate, Antonieta and their numerous children come from the Xinhambanine suburb (also known as Bairro Luis Cabral), where they lived in a wood-and-zinc house. Josefate works at the Beer Factory – one of the symbols of the new national pride – but also plays the saxophone and loves American music, becoming an example of a mix of national values and (black) international influences from which the new nation cannot shield itself. He participates to some degree in a wider identity construction that has been called the 'black Atlantic' by Paul Gilroy (1995) and that had been interpreted as a threat by FRELIMO leaders like Samora Machel. For the first president of free Mozambique influences from the capitalist countries, no matter if from 'black' or 'white' cultures, were able to damage the new socialist mentality that FRELIMO aimed to create by giving more importance to activities that would benefit the community than to individual realization and joy. In his message to the people of Mozambique, on the occasion of the inauguration of the transitional government on 20 September 1974, Machel (1974: 13) highlighted the fact that cities were especially prone to foreign influences: 'a cidade é um dos focos do vício e da corrupção, da influência estrangeira alienante' [the city is one of the focuses of vice and corruption, and alienating foreign influence]. Josefate not only suffers from the 'vice' of enjoying foreign influences but also from the aforementioned vice of corruption. He represents the mentality of a part of the population that takes advantage of the historical moment in a selfish way, exchanging favours with the authorities, which turns him an 'enemy within'¹⁰ of the new nation. He illegally gets the house by bribing his cousin who works in the town hall. The family – characterized by Braun (2011: 100) as a Mozambican nuclear, monogamous, patriarchal and

9 For a detailed analysis of the visit of Samora Machel in the novel, see Can (2012).

10 For details about this concept, see Meneses (2015).

socially climbing family – lives with the ghost of Arminda de Sousa, an old reformed white prostitute, a character who not only contradicts the colonial prejudice that black women were used for prostitutes and white women for wives, but also permits a close friendship and solidarity between the two women, Antonieta and Arminda, sharing feminine marginalization in the public and political sphere, as Sousa (2013: 114) puts it. Thus, both the old and the new regime are criticized for being patriarchal.

House number 5 belongs to Basílio Costa, the only white settler who stayed in independent Mozambique, but who dies at the end of the novel, and with him also dies a part of the colonial past. However, this character shows how the few Portuguese settlers who did not ‘return’¹¹ gradually transformed themselves into Mozambicans, sharing social living and the concerns of the new nation. Costa helps, like the other residents of the street, in the construction of the air-raid shelter, an activity that accompanies the construction of his new identity, though in an ironic way because, as we have seen above, this collective project fails. Significantly, the chapter is narrated in the first-person plural, that is, the collective voice of the residents. This voice classifies Costa as an almost member of the new nation:

Basílio Costa afogueado, parece um qualquer membro do povo, as calças enroladas deixando à mostra umas pernas muito brancas, cavando como cavam os outros embora com menos jeito, como também sem jeito tenta entoar as canções de trabalho numa língua que desconhece. (102)

[Basílio Costa, enthusiastic, looks like any member of the people, his trousers rolled up revealing very white legs, digging as the others dig, though with less skill, but he also tries to chant the songs of work in a language he does not know.]

11 I refer here to the term *retornado* [returnee, home-comer] which has come to designate the approx. 500,000 Portuguese citizens residing in one of the African colonies who, with the outbreak of the state of war after 25 April 1974, decided to repatriate to Portugal. The term is disputed, not only because of its pejorative connotation used to mark a difference of identity, but also because it is imprecise, since it also includes white and mulatto children of the settlers born in Africa as well as assimilated Africans who decided to adopt Portuguese nationality. These people did not actually ‘return’ to Portugal but went there for the first time in their lives.

However, faced with the problem of the infiltration of sea water into the excavation, Costa suggests calling the authorities, a proposal that ironically demonstrates that he has not yet adopted the new ideology: ‘Pouco politizado, desconhece que o futuro está nas mãos do povo, como diz a palavra de ordem, e que portanto cabe a este resolver os problemas’ (105) [Hardly politicized, he’s unaware that the future lies in the hands of the People, as the slogan says, and that it is therefore up to them to solve their problems].

Banker Teles Nhamumbo and primary teacher Alice live at number 4. Teles reached his current position ‘através de uma ascensão meteórica devida tanto à retirada dos colonos – e à falta de quadros que ela criou – quanto às suas próprias capacidades de trabalho’ (209) [through a meteoric rise due to both the settlers’ withdrawal – and to the lack of cadres it created – as to his own working capacities]. But he too is an ‘enemy within’, on an even larger scale than Joséfate Mbeve. He accepts bribes and launders the money in the account of a fake fishing company. However, he is imprisoned because ‘[n]a altura [...] entrava a revolução na sua fase decisiva com a ofensiva presidencial contra a corrupção’ (213) [at the time ... the revolution was entering its decisive phase with the presidential offensive against corruption].

Valgy, the crazy *monbe*¹² at number 3, comes from Zanzibar but due to his Indian offspring he was almost expelled from the country in 1961/2.¹³ Since then he has been living in suspicion, full of fear, and goes crazy. As Braun (2011: 101) remarks, he has been living in the house before and after the Independence of Mozambique and alludes to the presence of the Indians in the Mozambican territory long before the arrival of the

12 In Mozambique, *monbe* is a pejorative designation for a person of Indian or Arab origin.

13 In 1961, India’s Prime Minister Nehru decided to invade the Portuguese enclaves Goa, Daman and Diu. Portugal failed to fight the Indian troops and lost these territories. They were annexed to India the following year. Then, in Mozambique, thousands of Indian descendants became British Indians and were viewed with suspicion as foreigners and potential enemies. The Portuguese colonial regime confined entire families to concentration camps; their properties were transferred to a colonial state body in order to redistribute them to white settlers (see Sousa 2013: 114–115; Thomaz and Nascimento 2012: 322).

Portuguese. His shop illustrates the dynamics of the Mozambican economy since the troubled years of 1974/5. It flourishes at the time of the exodus of the Portuguese settlers and then declines due to the import restrictions of the new government.

In addition, the activities of Alberto Pedrosa, the occupant of number 2, a Zambezian (from the centre of the country), illustrate the fall of the economy during the years of the civil war. As provisional director of the Colonial Company of Citrus Fruits, now transformed into a State Company, he lives with the portraits of the old directors who also seem to be ghosts. Alberto shares with Josefate his taste for imported products (beer and cigarettes).

Finally, house number 1 is in fact non-existent, but the beach 'bem podia ser o número 1' (311) [could well be number 1]. At the end of the novel, a new ghost, a *nguluvi*,¹⁴ begins to live there, the vengeful spirit of Tiro Nharreluga who lived at number 7 but was caught by soldier recruiters and died in the civil war. Tiro's spirit manifests himself during storms demanding explanations for his death because his life was never fully realized – just as Mozambique has not yet come to be a nation-state with social justice – suffering from the 'distância que todos os dias crescia entre onde estava um certo rapaz com ambições, e onde estavam as suas realizações' (330) [distance that grew every day between where there was a certain boy with ambitions, and where his achievements were].

The Future

At the same time as the last settler, Cosra, dies, the ghosts of the ex-settlers dissolve, leaving only 'um leve cheiro fétido, um cheiro antigo que o cheiro do *nguluvi*, mais activo e nacional, irá aos poucos afastando' (327) [a faint

14 In the beliefs of southern Mozambique, a *nguluvi* is a spirit of a dead person who wants to avenge itself.

stench, an old scent that the smell of the *nguluvi*, more active and national, will gradually drift away]. But what future delineates the novel for this new nation that has already replaced the old wounds (of colonialism) – not yet healed – with new ones (the wounds of civil war)? At the end it starts to rain. Nonetheless it is not a liberating rain capable of washing the past, erasing its ghosts forever, but rather a rain that turns the street into mire. The locals move to other places. The vision of the future, if it is not totally pessimistic, then is at least extremely uncertain: 'O futuro está para lá das águas e das lamas, nos espaços recônditos que cada um consegue descobrir [...] o futuro existe neste presente e é enlameado' (329) [The future is beyond water and mud, in the hidden spaces that each one can discover ... the future exists in this present and it is muddy].

The novel ends resuming the alleged neutrality of numbers and refers to the construction of walls around the houses, a sign of the preparation of the neighbourhood for richer renters, therefore, for gentrification or, as Simas-Almeida (2017: 115) puts it, for capitalist neocolonialism.

Nas velhas casas, agora rejuvenescidas, crescem alinhadamente os muros onde antes cresciam irreverentes bougainvillas, alguns deles chegando à desmesura de uns 5,132 metros de altura para que, atrás deles, uma nova privacidade por nós desconhecida possa ir fermentando. (332)

[In the old houses, now rejuvenated, the walls grew aligned where previously grew irreverent bougainvillea, some of them reaching an excess of 5.132 metres in height, so that behind them a new privacy unknown to us may ferment.]

This pessimistic image implies the reproduction of the colonial, spatial duality, based on 'race', in a postcolonial duality, based on 'class'. Thus, the masses are excluded from social participation in the new country and a post-utopic disillusion takes over: 'Onde está o mundo que antes tínhamos na mão, e que hoje nem de cima da acácia de dona Aurora se vê?' (332) [Where is the world that we once had in our hands, and which today, even from the acacia of Dona Aurora, can't be seen?].

Conclusions

In the fictitious 513.2 Street, located in what was once Maputo's 'cement city' inhabited by Portuguese settlers, characters cohabit in the post-independence era stemming from various parts of the country and heterogeneous social universes: FRELLIMO officials, businessmen, mechanics, school teachers, street vendors and musicians, among others. These new residents develop multiple economic survival strategies and spatial organization, both formal and informal, and even criminal. At the same time, they share their houses with the ghosts of the former residents, who contemptuously comment on the development of the young nation. Thus, the street becomes heir to the two 'historicities', Severino Ngoenha (1992: 30) refers to, the ethnic and the colonial historicity of Mozambicans, and it turns into a space where the identity of the new Mozambique is negotiated between memory and oblivion, tradition and (post)modernity, black Atlantic and universality.

It remains to be added that, for Ngoenha, neither the pre-colonial nor the colonial past constitutes a good basis for the construction of a national identity. Therefore, he proposes that forces should be concentrated in constructing the future, thus forming a 'community of destiny' (1992: 92) that liberates unifying energies and enables the construction of a new ideal of *moçambicanidade*. This common project can only be realized through the recognition of the existence of cultural pluralism and reconciliation between modernity and tradition (1992: 78). Even though the future of the characters in the novel seems 'muddy', their lives are at least an ephemeral example of this coexistence. In short, the fictitious 513.2 Street is conceived as a space of negotiation, interrogation, speculation and, last but not least, disillusion due to the failed social justice that seems to remain forever a future that never turns into a present.

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JANEK SCHOLZ

13 Caught between Local and Global, Rural and Urban: How Comic Artists Approach the Dynamics of Urban Development

You take delight not in a city's seven or seventy wonders,
but in the answer it gives to a question of yours!

— ITALO CALVINO

Urbanism is a topic of growing interest all over the world, since the rate of urbanization is increasing in most countries. A review of *The World Factbook* of the CIA (2013) reveals that the annual rate of change from 2010 to 2015 is particularly high in African and Asian countries. Angola displays a change rate of 4.97 per cent, with 44 per cent of the population classified as urban¹ and Mozambique has an urbanization index of 3.27 per cent, with a 32.2 per cent urban population. The numbers differ in Latin America: Brazil has a lower rate of change (1.17 per cent), because the percentage of urban population (85.7 per cent) is already high (as it is in its neighbouring countries). The data of Portugal (0.97 per cent, 63.5 per cent) and Cape Verde (1.99 per cent, 65.5 per cent) are rather moderate, in comparison. In the following analysis, five comic books from Brazil, Portugal, Angola and Cape Verde exemplify a genre which, due to its comparably quick registering processes (both in production and reception), can be seen as representative of a time of acceleration and urbanization, but which

¹ The numbers are similar to Guinea-Bissau: 4.13 per cent change rate, 49.3 per cent urban population.