The Whip of Love: Decolonising the Imposition of Authority in Paulina Chiziane's *Niketche: Uma História de Poligamia*

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This paper addresses the issue of cultural identity within Portuguese postcolonial writing in Mozambican Paulina Chiziane's Niketche: A Tale on Polygamy. *With reference to Homi Bhabha's concepts of the performative and the pedagogical in the production of the nation as narration, it explores* Niketche *on the levels of national representation and cultural difference. Deriving national identity from variety, Chiziane produces a counter-narrative that, while working against FRELIMO's state socialism, also reveals the process through which the gendered exotic is produced, exchanged and consumed by the Portuguese metropolitan elite. I investigate how the book transforms the regionally gendered border into an object of imaginative marketing: just as the performative is interwoven with the pedagogical, so too is the language of resistance entangled with the language of commerce. This is particularly explicit in Chiziane's geographic reformulations of Mozambique, where regional borders are defined based on gendered stereotypical distinctiveness, producing what I term as the book's 'bodygraphies' defining womanhood throughout Mozambique.*

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Paulina Chiziane's most recent book, *Niketche: Uma História de Poligamia* (Niketche: a Tale of Polygamy), addresses the issue of variety and unity within national representation. Initially, the narrative approaches the issue from a polygamous domestic perspective.[1] As the book reveals the many wives of the 'national' husband, Tony, the issue of variety within unity acquires nationwide proportions. Deriving national identity from variety, Chiziane produces a counter narrative that, while working against FRELIMO's (Front for the Liberation of Mozambique) state socialism policies of national unity, also reveals the process through which the gendered exotic is produced, exchanged and consumed.

It is the aim of this paper to explore *Niketche* on the levels of national representation and cultural difference, with reference to Homi Bhabha's concepts of the performative and the pedagogical in the production of the nation as narration.[2] This study analyses Chiziane's transformation of the household into the site where class, gender and ethnic issues are disputed, and investigates how the book converts the regional border into a gendered object of imaginative marketing: just as the performative is interwoven with the pedagogical, so too is the language of resistance entangled with the language of commerce. This is particularly explicit in Chiziane's geographic reformulations of the Mozambican map, where the definition of regional borders is based upon gendered stereotypical distinctiveness, producing what I term as the book's 'bodygraphies' defining womanhood throughout Mozambique.

Niketche introduces the theme of cultural difference with reference to polygamy. The word comes trailing clouds of connotation that are very hard to shake off. Drawing a politics of what polygamy is brings with it the reproduction of its exotic marginality under Western eyes and confirms its place outside power, as opposed to the model of Western (white heterosexual) monogamous marriage. Literally, polygamy means *many marriages* and it is a marital practice in which a male has more than one female spouse simultaneously, as opposed to 'monogamy', where each person has a maximum of one spouse at any one time.[3] The term is often used in a *de facto* sense, applying regardless of whether such marriages are *legally* recognised. Apart from when it is employed to name the opposite of polygamy, the word 'monogamy' is hardly ever used in the west. Polygamy is to monogamy in the same way that polyandry (marital practice in which a female has more that one male spouse concurrently) is to polygamy: having a different word with which to name a group only reinforces a form of departure from a norm. If married heterosexual people are seen as the norm in the European world, then they do not have to worry over words: 'marriage' holds sway.

The marginality of polygamy in the West can be traced back to the writing of the Bible. Adultery and divorce are manifestly repudiated in the New Testament (Matt. 5: 27-32; Mark 10: 2-12; Rom. 7: 2-3), but polygamy is not considered at all in these passages. Nonetheless, it has been the consistent teaching of Roman Catholic officialdom that polygamy is incompatible with the Christian way of life: 'two persons only are to be united and joined together in Christian matrimony'.[4] Theorised in the West, these premises were throughout the centuries, put in practice in the East as a religious and legal imposition, shattering the cultural legacy of colonised countries.

Like all impositions, this one was reinforced by representations. How social groups are treated in cultural representations is part and parcel of how they are treated in life.[5] Chiziane's politicised writing of *Niketche: Uma História de Poligamia* (2002) clearly springs from the author's awareness that representations (of those historically dominated) reinforce impositions and are usually governed by the global knowledge industry. The book is not, contrarily to what the title suggests, merely a tale on polygamy. It questions, in a broader sense, the construed nature of discourses concerning love between males and females within polygamous and monogamous codes. Using Spivak's words, re-arranging desires is attained, in *Niketche*, through a re-arranging of national representations of sexuality, family and, particularly, womanhood. Its structuring scope dwells in a hope that all women in developing countries share: the expectation that organisation and resistance will, in the long run, provide many with a means of escaping from subordination.

Chiziane's subordinate position is twofold: as a gendered colonial subject under the Portuguese colonial rule, and as a gendered writer in Mozambique. In an effort to resist subordination, the author engages in a kind of double writing that entangles the pedagogical and performative forces of national discourses. Homi Bhabha explains that the production of the nation as narration always entails a split between 'pedagogical' and 'performative' forces that construct national discourse. In the production of the nation as narration, there is a split between the pedagogical and the performative, between the totalising powers of the social (It) and the forces that signify the more specific, contentious and unequal national subjects (Self). The splitting of the national subject (It/Self) implies a vacillation of the national totalising ideology, through which imagined communities are given essentialist identities (Bhabha, 2003: 300). In *Niketche*, the tension between the pedagogical and the performative is responsible for the haunting of the symbolic formation of two social authorities: the Portuguese and the Mozambican. It combines elements from the historically dominated system (polygamous African one) with elements from the dominant system (monogamous Portuguese one).

As many other examples of minor literature written in the major language of the Portuguese dominant culture by a subaltern writer, *Niketche* is termed in relation to the major canon and all its characteristics are defined in opposition or conformity to those which define canonical writing. Published in Portugal by Editorial *Caminho* in 2002, *Niketche* is framed in a way that instigates exoticised readings. The book's marginality is defined not in terms of who/what is different, but in terms of the extent to which such differences conform to Western cultural codes. Such tendency is easily perceived in the commentary found at the back of the front cover of *Niketche*.

Here, the dominant culture, 'us', exploits the book for its exotic appeal by suggesting a right/wrong, white/black binarism, clearly expressed in the usage of the words: 'o direito e o avesso da aventura da vida':

Paulina Chiziane estende-*nos* o fio de Ariadne e guia-*nos* com o desassombro, a perícia e a verdade de quem conhece *o direito e o avesso* da aventura de viver a vida. Niketche, dança de amor e erotismo, é um espelho em que *nos* vemos e revemos, mas no qual seguramente, só *alguns de nós* admitirão reflectir-se.

Paulina Chiziane throws at *us* the Ariadne thread and guides *us* with the easiness, skilfulness and truthfulness of someone who knows the *inside out* of the adventure of life. Niketche, dance of love and eroticism, is a mirror in which we see ourselves, but in which only *some of us* will admittedly find a reflection.' (Chiziane, 2002, my emphasis)

The front cover of *Caminho* publication also saddles the book with the word 'romance' (novel), in a classificatory effort sorting out what will be read within the boundaries of national discourse as a marginal text (*Caminho: Outras Margens* [Caminho: Other Margins] is the name given to the collection of Portuguese speaking foreign authors). Chiziane's comment at the back cover of the book is her response to the categorising mechanism activated previously. Here, she subverts the novel genre to inscribe a polyvocal consciousness that decolonises the imposition of linguistic authority by stating she is not a novelist, although others (Portuguese publishers, readers and critics) insist on treating her as such:

Dizem que sou romancista e que sou a primeira mulher moçambicana a escrever um romance (Balada de Amor ao Vento, 1990), mas eu afirmo: sou contadora de estórias e não romancista.

They say I am a novelist, the first Mozambican woman novelist (*Balada de Amor ao Vento*, 1990) but I say: I am a story teller and nor a novelist. (Chiziane, 2002)

Whilst often misread as a statement of modesty, her rejection of the word 'novelist' is indicative of Chiziane's resentment that her political views are consistently ignored. By reporting such neo-imperialist violence committed against the authorial and textual self-consciousness, Chiziane's declaration deconstructs, in Derridean terms, the relationship between language, power and culture, upon which authority in the colonial discourse is based, denouncing Western ethnocentric conceptualisations of writing.[6]

The author creates here an epistemic zone of the hybrid that is more complex than the hierarchical classification of oral/written. It is a political statement, performative in Bhabha's terms, because it erases totalising boundaries and opens up the possibility for other narratives and their difference to exist.

By setting up a zone of the hybrid, Chiziane connects her writing with the internal contradictions and historical fragmentation of Mozambique. The author accompanied the constant rise-and-fall of Mozambique throughout its recent past. She actively participated in the building of the Mozambican nation, witnessing colonialism, independence, civil war and the first steps of the present multi-party democracy. The fragmentation of the country is intimately connected with the contact with dominant European cultures, which had a devastating impact on the country's culture. For approximately five centuries Mozambique hosted the Portuguese. Racial domination was instigated through miscegenation (incitation of sexual intercourse between white men and black women) and assimilation (integration of detribalised Africans in the Western way of living), through which the Portuguese language, culture and religion were spread. Monogamy was institutionalised in a traditionally polygamous country as a religious and legal imposition, a condition without which civility would never be attained. This happened especially in the South of Mozambique. Here, polygamous structures were deeply rooted, originally serving as a dynamic principle of family survival, growth, security, continuity and prestige, in an area where: subsistence food production depends on the labour force that each family provides for itself, where the average rate of child mortality is very high, where the continuation of the family through male heirs is a grave responsibility, where each marriage contract multiplies the number of mutually helpful relatives and where a large number of well-brought up children is looked upon as the greatest of human achievements.[7]

Chiziane became a writer under the Marxist-Leninist political party FRELIMO, that governed the country after independence (1975) and won the fist multi-party elections of Mozambique in 1994, after a twenty-seven-year long civil war. With the socialist FRELIMO, Mozambique suffered, once again, the imposition of the politics of others, as the party followed Western progress models, which had little to do with Africa. At first, Chiziane accepted the views of the party, but soon she became more and more disillusioned with the political movement.

Niketche reflects this disillusionment, in its discursive ambivalence providing a narrative frame for representing emergent new social meanings.

The author openly undermines the workings of the essentialising tendencies of FRELIMO in her literary use of the theme of polygamy to show a rainbow of characters that works against the myth of the national unit proposed by the ruling party. The main character of *Niketche* (Rami) is the stereotype of the catholic married housewife. She has been married for twenty years, managing the household as her personal territory, and dedicating herself entirely to her (absent) husband, Tony:

Obedecer, sempre obedeci. Dele sempre cuidei… Modéstia a parte, sou a mulher mais perfeita do mundo. Fiz dele o homem que é. Dei-lhe amor, dei-lhe filhos com que ele se afirmou nesta vida. Sacrifiquei os meus sonhos pelos sonhos dele. Dei-lhe a minha juventude, a minha vida.

I always obeyed him. I always took care of him. To be honest, I am the most perfect wife in the world. I made him the man he is. I gave him love and children, which he used to achieve power and respect in this world. I sacrificed my dreams for the sake of his dreams. I gave him my youth, my life. (Chiziane, 2002: 16)

When Rami finds out that her husband has a lover (Julieta), she decides to meet and confront her. After being defeated by her rival during a fight at Julieta's place, Rami finds out that there are other women in the life of her husband: four, to be precise. Instead of fighting each other endlessly, they decide to unite and structure the polygamy they are forced to live in, reinventing it with changes that empower them in terms of agency and alternative. Rami helps the other women economically and psychologically. Instead of falling in the trap of criticising polygamy, Chiziane *re-arranges the desires* (Spivak's concept) of both women and men by re-organizing the hidden polygamous relations of her husband. The changes operated intend to put an end to the positions of subalternity and 'familiar apartheid' that the other women occupy in the society, by granting them mobility and self-consciousness. This is accompanied by a collective interactive process of coming to terms with the cultural differences among them, responsible for the negotiation, as opposed to substitution, of their dissimilar cultural values.

Niketche uses the variety of each woman's cultural background to derive national identity. The book addresses ethnic diversity in the North, Centre and the South of Mozambique and advances a stereotypical account of womanhood by depicting the five women according to their place of origin: Rami comes from Maputo (South), Julieta from Inhambame (Centre), Luísa from Zambésia (Centre North) Mauá (Macua) and Sally (Maconde) from the North.

These depictions not merely portray the culturally fragmented world of Mozambique, but mainly assert collective self-esteem, while criticising FRELIMO's state socialism that, in search of the national identity and union, ignores the country's cultural specificities.

Stereotypes are works in progress.[8] They are, in *Niketche,* strategic, more than representational: categorisation is here more about action than about depiction. This point is made clear in the way Chiziane uses stereotypes to react against particular FRELIMO policies, namely its policy of socialisation of the countryside, intended to transform household access to and use of resources, and its vision of the role of women in rural societies:

Frelimo's official policy was to promote the emancipation of women by abolishing polygamy, restructuring inheritance practices, and empowering women in public life.[9]

National identity tends to be defined by political leadership in order to make particular policies appear to be 'natural' expressions of that same identity.[10] The gendered landscape born out of the author's considerations on the women's cultural background produces a counter identity dislodging the forged national image used by FRELIMO to justify the implementation of the state policies pinpointed above.

Variety is visible not only in terms of each woman's cultural background. A personal stamp is put but also on each woman's household. The importance of the home is evident in *Niketche*. It is the place for personal identity displays reflecting the uniqueness and individuality of each woman. The house includes a wife's preferences for particular kinds of furniture styles, decorations and arrangements of the room. When Rami invades Julieta's home, instead of observing her rival, she is initially startled by the elegance of the place:

Olho em todos os lados, vejo brilho e elegância. Esta casa tem janelas mais largas (…). Reconheço que esta casa é de longe melhor que a minha, meu Deus, esta casa me deixa louca.... Olho para a parede. Um retrato pendurado aumenta a minha raiva.

I look around and see a shining elegance. This house has larger windows (…). I realise that this house if by far better than mine, my God, this house drives me crazy… I look at the wall. A picture hanging on it feeds my anger. (Chiziane, 2002: 22)

Throughout the narrative, the definition of household mutates according to the constant restructuring of the sexual relationships and redefinitions of male and female gender roles. The first household displayed is Rami's.

It is constituted by three members: herself, an adult female who remains inside the house, working in the tasks of shopping, cleaning, cooking and raising children; an adult male, Tony, who leaves the house to work as a police officer, earning cash income; and their child Betinho, who is absent throughout the narrative, only mentioned once, in the beginning of the book. From a Marxist perspective, and addressing the class and gender issues of production and distribution of labour, Rami's unpaid work is, in this situation, appropriated, consumed and distributed around the visible and invisible members of the family, by her husband. In fact, neither of Tony's lovers actually work and are being sustained by both his income and his official wife's surplus labour. Before finding out she was not the only woman in Tony's life, Rami had disciplined herself, believing the household was the nuclear support of the society. A particular ideology of love, holding that when a woman loves a man, a 'natural' form for that love is the desire to take care of him by marriage, preparing his meals and cleaning up after him, seems to have directed Rami's existence: 'Sou daquelas que acreditam no amor puro, no amor verdadeiro, amor eterno' (Chiziane, 2002: 178). Tony's notion of love implies that 'males want love and sex from females but are rather more ambivalent about lifetime commitment, via marriage.[11] From a feminist perspective, and addressing the production/distribution of meanings, such set of gender processes results from Western, patriarchal-centred, partially FRELIMO-inflicted indoctrination, from 'explanations in churches and schools that proper womanhood means caring for a home and the people within it, while adopting a subordinate position in relation to the "master of the house"'.[12] The implicit oppression suggested by such family state of affairs is materialised in the transformation of the household into a recurrent site of physical aggression. In *Bringing it All Back Home*, 'houses are social sites in which gender and class continuously shape one another'.[13] In *Niketche*, the household is also the site for physical struggle: the 'cat-fights' between Rami, Julieta and Luisa exemplify this situation, as they all happen inside the household.

The first time Rami goes to Juliana's place, she is impelled by the certainty that to 'become' something (a wife, in this case) is performative, demanding endless repetition and reiteration, and endless 'becoming'.[14] She invades Juliana's house to speak in the name of a certain law (marriage) that Rami thinks supposedly gives her privilege and authority. Yet, although she does not open the possibility of failure, she encounters the powerlessness of her suddenly unauthorised voice. Institutionalised marriage stops working when the conventions are not recognised. Unable to affect a felicitous performance, her 'failure' proves, however, not disempowering but enabling. This 'enabling failure' allows Rami to understand that Tony's lovers are not only signifiers of otherness, but are part of a more complex figure that calls into mind the trace of the other in the self.

Whilst interrupting difference in its binary form (conventional marriage), the women learn they are not so different at all. This destroys any possibility of turning against each other. Instead, they unite in a common contestation of national and familiar authority. Rami, once the object of the pedagogical, is now the subject of the performative:

Aprendi todas aquelas coisas das damas europeias … Nunca ninguém me disse a origem da poligamia. Porque é que a Igreja proibiu estas práticas tão vitais para a harmonia de um lar? Porque é que os políticos da geração da liberdade levantaram o punho e disseram abaixo os ritos de iniciação?

I learned all that stuff taught to European 'ladies'… No-one ever told me about the origins of polygamy. Why did the church prohibit such practices, so vital for the harmony of the home? Why did those politicians from the freedom generation raise their voices against the initiation rites? (Chiziane, 2002: 46)

The book disturbs ideological manoeuvres through which communities are given essentialist identities, and creates 'a temporality of the "in between" through the "gap" or "emptiness" of the signifier that punctuates linguistic difference' (Bhabha, 2003: 299). Within this temporality, a new household is formed, where all members are visible and committed to one another. The women unite and decide to gather in a family meeting around Tony. A new household rises by means of the inclusion of those women who lived in the margin of the society:

Somos cinco. Unamo-nos num feixe e formemos uma mão. Cada uma de nós será um dedo, e as grandes linhas da mão a vida, o coração, a sorte, o destino e o amor. Não estaremos tão desprotegidas e poderemos segurar o leme da vida e traçar o destino.

We are five. Let us unite and form a hand. Each one of us will be a finger, and the great lines in the palm shall be life, heart, luck, fate and love. We will protect each other, holding the helm of life and drawing our own destiny. (Chiziane, 2002: 107)

This household is multiple and does not abolish private ownership. The attack of the family is not dependent on the abolition of family private ownership (FRELIMO's state socialist policy), but is made in the name of the reconstruction of the family as an economic unit. After rejecting the sex role definitions of their supposedly monogamous families, they organise themselves economically, opening their own private business and running their private housekeeping according to the polygamous system they have reformulated.

In this sense, *Niketche* goes against the socialist idea that 'private housekeeping (should be) transformed into a social industry' and that 'the first condition for the liberation of the wife is to bring the whole female sex back into the public industry'.[15]

The new household is a move against historical sedimentation that steals from Rami her identity as *the* wife. If one thinks of Rami's identity (as monogamous wife) in terms of the country's identity (FRELIMO's policy), then such move is mainly one against the language of national collectivity and cohesiveness. If cultural undecidability is at the site where the pedagogical and the performative are articulated, then Rami's loss of identity is the link uniting *Niketche* to Bhabha's concepts.

To Rami, losing her identity as wife is intimately connected with losing her chastity as woman. Rami's loss of identity as wife is triggered by Luísa's invitation for the birthday party of one of Tony's illegitimate offspring. Rami accepts out of curiosity, and ends up seducing and being seduced by a man at the party, Luísa's lover (now that Tony has ran into the arms of a fourth woman), with whom she makes love in Luisa's bedroom. Rami's catholic conscience creeps in the morning after. Can a chaste woman be a seducer? Can an adulterous woman be a good woman? The act of lending a sexual partner to a friend is incompatible with the Western religious myths that stand between Rami and her own existence. But Luísa's peremptory tone is conclusive:

Não sou possessiva. Venho de uma terra onde a solidariedade não tem fronteiras. Venho de um lugar onde se empresta o marido à melhor amiga para fazer um filho, com a mesma facilidade com que se empresta uma colher de pau. (...) Se já partilhamos um marido, partilhar um amante é mais fácil ainda. (...) Adultério? Vocês, mulheres do Sul, perdem tempo com essas histórias e preconceitos.

I am not possessive. I come from a place where solidarity is infinite. I come from a place where one lends her husband to her best friend to give her a child, as if one were lending a spoon. If we shared a husband before, it will be even easier to share a lover. (…) Adultery? You, Southern women, waste time with those stories and prejudices. (Chiziane, 2002: 84)

Luísa's intervention gives voice to an emergent marginal cultural identity. Its signification 'opens up – and holds together – the performative and the pedagogical' (Bhabha, 2003: 305), by both asserting fixed forms of culture in the centre North of

Mozambique and questioning Western certainties prevailing in the South. Cultural difference is used as a form of social intervention, by erasing the harmonious totalities of culture.

According to Bhabha, 'the aim of cultural difference is to re-articulate the sum of knowledge from the perspective of the signifying singularity of the 'other' that resists totalisation', hence disturbing the calculation of power and producing other spaces of subaltern signification (Bhabha, 2003: 312). Although Luísa's words stir the waters of Rami's still existence, the latter keeps disputing Luísa's theory of life and love. In fact, as mentioned previously, new forms of meaning are here established, not by mere negation, refutation or substitution of concepts, but rather by negotiating, hence revealing, the difference between the forms. A reading of *Niketche* as a household/landscape modifier leads to the conclusion that cultural difference is 'to be found where the "loss of meaning" enters' (Bhabha, 2003: 313). It is always incomplete, continuously implicated in all existing symbolic social systems, perpetually open to cultural translations. If to Mia Couto, another Mozambican writer, each man is a race, then to Chiziane, each woman is all races, at once one and other.[16] Such is the definition of the 'uncanny' structure of cultural difference: it interrupts the representation of the fullness of life because it is uncannily 'at once ours and other' (Bhabha; 2003: 313).

Having negotiated their cultural differences and joined forces within the household, the women now turn to each other on the outer space of Mozambique. In Bhabha's parlance, cultural difference is not only defined in terms of what one says, but also in terms of the place from where things are said. The *topos* of enunciation is added to the logic of articulation. What the women in *Niketche* articulate verbally (their culturally specific discourses on love, family and womanhood) is firmly dependent on the place they come from. By discussing and negotiating cultural meanings among themselves, they become instigators of national awareness.

Readings of the book as a landscape modifier mapping down gender boundaries in Mozambique and defining womanhood brings with it the question of whether or not Chiziane is transforming the regional border into an object of imaginative marketing. It is true that 'various scales of borders act as tourist attractions when they offer a unique spectacle in the cultural landscape'.[17] The representation of women as regional frontier monuments seems to transform them into gendered tourist attractions. Does *Niketche* work towards social change or does it tactically preserve its marginality while claiming to celebrate cultural difference?

It could be argued that the author is well aware of the book's commercial viability. *Niketche*, as a producer of a new gendered Mozambican cartography, reveals both the cultural logic of consumer capital and the workings of the exotic categories of cultural gendered Otherness.

What brings out the process, through which the gendered exotic is produced, exchanged and consumed, is not exactly the theme of polygamy, but the book's 'bodygraphies' of regional stereotypical distinctiveness. The problem with this strategic marketing is that the capacity of any 'minor' writing to combat a dominant culture can be easily outmatched by that culture's ability to recuperate 'minor' writing for its own aesthetic and political purposes, in this case, for the metropolitan elite's own tourist interests.[18]

However, this study argues that the book is grounded on a minutely defined political agenda that subverts any possibility of assimilation by the dominant culture's tourist agenda. As mentioned in the introduction, just as the performative is interwoven with the pedagogical, so too is the language of resistance entangled with the language of commerce. In fact, Chiziane's transformation of Mozambique into a tourist community of the world is deeply rooted in her transformation of Mozambique into a world or specific communities. This is shown in an episode towards the end of the book, in which the women cross the borders of their country while looking for Tony's last ideal wife. Their travelling, usually a male dominated event, turns the symbolic field of postcolonial exotic upside down: while moving around the country, they 'mime' men, particularly Tony, in their voyeuristic gazing at the Mozambican sex tourism. The five women's adoption of a 'female masculinity' affords the reader a glimpse of how masculinity is constructed as masculinity.[19] The mimicry empowers the very makers of mimicry, 'who understand the symbolic profits to be gained from fashioning likenesses – but different likenesses' of men.[20] In the process of finding the ultimate wife for Tony, they turn the exotic machinery of representations against itself: in every region, they apply the same model, ask the same questions. They do so by means of showing that what is essentialist is not a stereotypical account of womanhood, but the gazes that orchestrate such accounts, and women themselves, slaves of the cat-walk, cat-fighting each other, who turn to marriage as an employment for life. By miming the dominant culture's capability of recuperating this text for its own interests, the author effectively undermines any attempts of assimilation.

Under the mask of writing a book on Mozambique, Chiziane also plays the role of the ironic commentator on the dominant Portuguese culture. In her depiction of the unfaithful husband, the author ironically apes the consequences of Western catholic practices and its 'modelos de pureza e santidades' (Chiziane, 2002: 95). Her considerations on the Bible and on the Western myths of origin exemplify how the author tactically resists domination by appearing to embrace it. By invoking the image of an Eden where a polygamous Adam lives surrounded by an army of Eves, Chiziane reclaims the pleasure of the original sin, neglected in the name of reproduction, and demands a Goddess to be part of the religious myths imposed upon her as a colonised subject. In Chiziane's imagined, apple-less Eden (there are no apple trees in Mozambique), the woman becomes her own Goddess, listening secretly to the other textual Eves, eavesdropping their specificities and re-arranging their desires.

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