

# The black, the white and the other: race and ethnicity in Angolan and Mozambican contemporary novels of Portuguese language

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## Abstract

The concepts of race and ethnicity are still currently discussed in the scope of social and cultural anthropology and sociology. They still persist in contemporary African literature of Portuguese language as landmarks of an identity process. Thus, we will study these two concepts in Angolan and Mozambican contemporary novels from a comparative perspective.

Contemporary conceptualization of race and ethnicity emanates from social and cultural anthropology, on one side, and sociology on the other. Thus, the concept of race is used to describe a social construction through which in a given society or a given historical moment certain groups of individuals are perceived, designated or self-designated.

Giddens considers that “race is one of the most complex concepts in sociology, not least because of the contradiction between its everyday usage and its scientific basis (or absence thereof)” (2001: 245).

In turn, the concept of ethnicity is used to define a social organization based on categorical assignments that classify individuals on the basis of socially differentiating cultural signs, and because of that, according to Giddens “ethnicity refers to the cultural practices and outlooks of a given community of people that set them apart from others” (2001: 210).

Starting from contemporary Portuguese language Angolan and Mozambican literature, more specifically from the imaginary of authors such as, in the Angolan case, José Eduardo Agualusa, Pepetela, Mota Yekenha, Sousa Jamba (see Fig. 1) and in the Mozambican case, Isabel Figueiredo, Mia Couto, Nelson Saúte, Paulina Chiziane (see Fig. 2), it is intended to carry out a comparative analysis of the representations of race and ethnicity concepts to demonstrate that these are product of a historical and epochal vision – related to past or present, colonialism or post-colonialism – of a race – black or white – and of a cultural context – occidental or African.

Within this scope, we chose to undertake a cross between, on one side black race and white race writers, and on the other side, between authors – either black or white race – that always remained in their native country and those who left their country to live abroad.

## Conclusion

Laying the Angolan and Mozambican identity constructions in an hybridism, in a complexity and ambivalence that makes them unique, the research, methodology is focused in convergences and divergences of the race and ethnicity concepts in the analysed novels to demonstrate the process of resignification and resimbolization that each identity was submitted.

## References

Giddens, A. (2001). “Sociology”. Cambridge: Polity Press.



Fig 1 / Angolan novels.



Fig 2 / Mozambican novels.