

**NARRATIVES OF DOMESTIC NEOCOLONIALISM AND DECOLONISATION
IN THE NOVELS OF MIA COUTO AND JOSE EDUARDO AGUALUSA**

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DECLARATION

This Thesis is my original work and has not been presented for the award of a degree in any other university.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my late father, Anthony Nicholas Omondi (Olingo). May his precious soul keep resting in eternal peace.

ABSTRACT

This study examined the themes of domestic neocolonialism and decolonisation as portrayed in Mia Couto's *Sleepwalking Land* and José Eduardo Agualusa's *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers*. This study offered a critical contribution to postcolonial discourse by illuminating the concept of domestic neocolonialism and its impact on individual agency and national identity. Through the analysis of *Sleepwalking Land* and *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers*, the study highlighted how internal systems of control perpetuate colonial legacies, while also exploring pathways toward decolonisation through resistance, memory, and imagination. This thesis argued that domestic neocolonialism functions as a systemic internal reproduction of colonial power structures, and that decolonisation—both political and imaginative—emerges through literary representations of resistance, memory, and reclamation of identity. The objectives of the study were threefold: first, to analyse how *Sleepwalking Land* and *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers* employ literary techniques—such as dreams, symbolism, magical realism, and fragmented narrative structures—to portray and critique domestic neocolonialism; second, to examine how characters and processes of characterisation in the two novels reflect the internalisation of colonial power and the struggle between domination, complicity, and resistance within post-independence societies; and third, to evaluate how both authors use narrative imagination to express decolonial consciousness and envision alternative paths toward liberation and self-definition in Lusophone Africa. Guided by Frantz Fanon's Postcolonial Theory and Achille Mbembe's concepts from necropolitics Theory—particularly the notions of the state's power to dictate who may live and who must die, and the transformation of the post colony into a space of death—as strands of the broader postcolonial theory, this qualitative study employed a comparative textual analysis supported by close reading, thematic coding, and interpretive criticism. The analysis focused on how narrative structure, characterisation, symbolism, and the motif of dreams reveal the internalised colonial hierarchies and the pursuit of liberation in both Mozambique and Angola. This methodological approach allowed for a nuanced examination of how Couto and Agualusa portray the experiences of Mozambican and Angolan citizens as victims of domestic neocolonial oppression and explore their paths to reclaiming their rights. In this study, *Sleepwalking Land* by Mia Couto and *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers* by José Eduardo Agualusa served as the primary texts. These two novels were purposively selected for their exploration of themes related to domestic neocolonialism and decolonisation within postcolonial African societies. This study argued that through their deployment of magical realism, fragmented memory, and collective dreaming, Mia Couto's *Sleepwalking Land* and José Eduardo Agualusa's *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers* both expose domestic neocolonialism as an internal structure of economic and cultural domination that reproduces colonial logics within post-independence Lusophone Africa. By comparatively analyzing how each novel renders debt-driven austerity, elite capture of national resources, and the struggle to reclaim narrative sovereignty, the thesis demonstrated that decolonisation in these texts emerges not only as political reform but as imaginative rupture—an embodied re-envisioning of history, identity, and possibility.

ABBREVIATIONS

AEMO- Associação de Escritores Moçambicanos (Association of Mozambican Writers)

CIA- Central Intelligence Agency

FRELIMO- Frente de Libertação de Moçambique, (Liberation Front of Mozambique)

MPLA- Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola (The People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola)

RENAMO- Resistência Nacional Moçambicana, (Mozambican National Resistance)

UNITA- União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (The National Union for the Total Independence of Angola)

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

Comparative Analysis: Comparative analysis refers to a methodological approach that systematically examines two or more literary texts to identify similarities, differences, and intersections in themes, structures, and ideological frameworks. In this study, it is applied to *Sleepwalking Land* and *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers* to reveal how both texts negotiate the intertwined dynamics of domestic neocolonialism and decolonisation within post-independence Mozambique and Angola.

Cultural Identity: Cultural identity denotes the sense of belonging to a community shaped by shared practices, language, and historical experience. In the postcolonial context, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1986) emphasises that language and culture are central to the decolonisation of the mind, as reclaiming indigenous languages and traditions reasserts African identity against neocolonial domination. This concept is crucial to understanding how Couto and Agualusa construct identity within their narratives.

Narratology: Narratology, as conceptualized by Gérard Genette (1980), is the study of narrative structure and the techniques through which stories are organized and perceived. In this study, narratology helps unpack how Couto's dual narrative structure and Agualusa's fragmented dream sequences serve as literary devices that mirror fragmented postcolonial realities, thereby functioning as acts of resistance against imposed historical narratives.

Necropolitics: Achille Mbembe (2003) defines necropolitics as the sovereign power to dictate who may live and who must die. It exposes how state and institutional structures perpetuate control through death, deprivation, or abandonment. In this thesis, necropolitics provides a theoretical lens for examining how post-independence African regimes reproduce

colonial violence internally, transforming the nation into a space of living death through poverty, repression, and exclusion.

Postcolonial Theory: Rooted in the works of Frantz Fanon (1961) and later expanded by scholars such as Edward Said (1978) and Homi Bhabha (1994), postcolonial theory critiques the cultural, political, and economic continuities of colonialism within supposedly independent societies. Fanon's notion of decolonisation as a total transformation of both structures and consciousness informs this study's interpretation of domestic neocolonialism as a betrayal of liberation ideals, while Mbembe's and Ngũgĩ's perspectives underscore the enduring presence of colonial logic in postcolonial governance and culture.

Power Dynamics: Power dynamics refer to the distribution and exercise of power within societies and institutions. In the context of this study, it describes how postcolonial African elites, through political and economic manipulation, reproduce hierarchical relations reminiscent of colonial authority, sustaining internal domination and dependency.

Resistance: Fanon (1961) views resistance as both a psychological and political act through which the oppressed reclaim humanity and agency from systems of domination. In literary terms, resistance in *Sleepwalking Land* and *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers* manifests through acts of storytelling, dreaming, and remembrance that challenge domestic neocolonial power and envision alternative futures.

Social Movements: Social movements represent collective, organized struggles aimed at transforming oppressive social or political conditions. In this study, they are read through Fanon's and Ngũgĩ's lens as the communal expression of revolutionary consciousness,

where marginalized groups mobilise to reclaim autonomy from neocolonial structures of power.

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CHAPTER ONE

1.1. Introduction

This chapter established the foundation for a critical exploration of domestic neocolonialism and the quest for decolonisation in Mia Couto's *Sleepwalking Land* and José Eduardo Agualusa's *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers*. It situated the inquiry within wider postcolonial debates about how colonial power endures under new guises in post-independence Africa. The discussion first outlined the historical background of Mozambique and Angola, identified the research gap regarding internalised neocolonialism, and defined the study's objectives and justification. It also introduced methodological orientation and previews subsequent chapters. By weaving historical, theoretical, and literary contexts, Chapter One anchored the thesis in contemporary scholarly discourse on the unfinished business of decolonisation.

1.2 Background to the Study

The euphoria of African independence in the mid-twentieth century was accompanied by immense optimism that political sovereignty would translate into social justice, economic equality, and cultural renewal. For nations like Mozambique and Angola, which gained independence from Portugal in 1975, liberation was expected to inaugurate a new dawn of freedom after centuries of colonial subjugation. Yet, as Fanon (1961) cautioned in *The Wretched of the Earth*, political independence without structural and psychological transformation merely reproduces the conditions of domination under new leadership. In both Mozambique and Angola, the legacy of Portuguese colonial rule—marked by racial hierarchies, centralized authority, and extractive economies—remained embedded within the post-independence state. The liberation movements FRELIMO in Mozambique and

MPLA in Angola inherited the colonial bureaucratic machinery, armed forces, and modes of governance, and thus reproduced the same systems of exclusion that had once oppressed them. Moreover, the fragile economies of these young nations were quickly entangled in Cold War rivalries, compelling governments to depend on external aid and ideological alliances that compromised their autonomy. Consequently, political liberation became a façade for new forms of control exercised through economic dependency, elite capture, and ideological subservience—a phenomenon that scholars now identify as domestic neocolonialism.

Kwame Nkrumah (1965) had presciently warned that the newly independent state could be “free in name but neo-colonial in fact” (p. ix). His concern proved prophetic across Africa, where the colonial project morphed into subtler systems of domination mediated by transnational finance, trade, and diplomacy. In Mozambique, international financial institutions such as the IMF and World Bank introduced Structural Adjustment Programmes in the late 1980s, requiring drastic cuts in public spending, the privatization of state assets, and the liberalization of trade (Hanlon, 1996). These policies, designed to “please donors more than to reduce poverty” (p. 18), produced a dependent economy and widened the gap between a small elite and the impoverished majority. Similarly, in Angola, the end of civil war in 2002 ushered in an oil-driven recovery that entrenched inequality and foreign dependence. Shaxson (2007) observes that Angola’s economic revival created “a neocolonial relationship with global finance” (p. 116), enriching ruling elites while relegating the masses to persistent deprivation. Both cases demonstrate that external economic forces, coupled with domestic complicity, sustained the colonial logic of exploitation in a new guise. Neocolonialism, as Adebisi (2023) and Watts (2020) argue,

thrives not merely through external domination but through local elites who internalise and perpetuate the very ideologies of colonial modernity they once resisted.

The endurance of colonial structures within post-independence African states can thus be traced to the unbroken continuity between colonial administration and postcolonial governance. Portuguese colonialism, rooted in the ideology of assimilation, claimed to “civilize” Africans by erasing indigenous cultures and imposing European norms (Moreira, 2012). This system created an intermediary class of *assimilados*—Africans educated to serve colonial interests—who later formed the backbone of the nationalist elite. After independence, these elites often replicated colonial hierarchies under nationalist slogans, maintaining centralized authority and hierarchical economic systems. Both FRELIMO and MPLA, initially Marxist in orientation, evolved into dominant-party regimes that conflated the state with the ruling party, silenced dissent, and monopolized national resources. Their collaborations with Western corporations and global lenders extended the life of colonial economic dependency. Fanon (1961) described this post-independence elite as “the national bourgeoisie,” a class that inherits colonial privileges while abandoning revolutionary ideals. Thus, the historical and political trajectories of Mozambique and Angola illustrate how the colonial state was not dismantled but indigenized—its mechanisms of domination re-activated by domestic actors under the veneer of sovereignty. This enduring continuity between colonial and postcolonial power provides the foundation for the concept of domestic neocolonialism explored in this study.

Traditional neocolonialism emphasises foreign manipulation; *domestic neocolonialism* emphasises internal complicity. Acemoglu (2017) argues that global inequality endures because domestic elites serve as intermediaries between transnational capital and local

labour. Oyebade (2006) labels this “internal colonialism,” in which ruling classes replicate colonial structures of control through patronage, corruption, and cultural dominance. In Mozambique and Angola, former liberation leaders became custodians of external interests, converting revolutionary parties into vehicles of accumulation. The result is a nation politically free, yet economically and culturally captive.

Mignolo’s (2011) *colonial matrix of power* clarifies this continuity. He identifies four axes—control of economy, authority, gender/sexuality, and knowledge—through which colonial domination persists. In post-independence Africa, these axes were not dismantled but indigenized. Political sovereignty masked the endurance of colonial epistemologies. Bhabra (2014) reinforces this by showing that modern nation-states themselves were forged within empire; postcolonial societies therefore inherit imperial frameworks of governance and identity. Consequently, genuine decolonisation demands epistemic rupture—what Mignolo terms “delinking”—from Western modernity’s hierarchical worldview.

Fanon’s (1961) contribution is psychological: he insists that liberation requires freeing the colonized mind from the internalised inferiority complex. Without this inner revolution, postcolonial leaders risk becoming “managers of the colonial enterprise.” Both *Sleepwalking Land* and *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers* dramatize this risk. In Couto’s war-ravaged Mozambique, local warlords and technocrats perpetuate external domination; in Agualusa’s Angola, the ruling elite’s authoritarianism and consumerism expose the persistence of colonial mentality beneath nationalist rhetoric.

Neocolonialism is global. Arboleya (2008) details how U.S. hegemony over Cuba persisted through control of trade and education. Similar dynamics operate in Latin America and Asia,

revealing a world system where sovereignty coexists with dependence. Adebisi (2023) links this to the “capitalist-colonial-enslavement project” (p. 32) that universalized Western economic rationality. The African experience thus reflects a planetary pattern in which political independence fails to dismantle economic subjugation. Domestic neocolonialism localizes this pattern by showing how African elites mediate external control, turning states into brokers of global capital.

African writers and theorists have long examined the post-independence predicament in which the ideals of liberation are betrayed by internal power structures that mirror colonial domination. The concept of domestic neocolonialism, therefore, emerges as both political critique and cultural diagnosis. As Fanon (1961) predicted, the postcolonial “national bourgeoisie” often inherits colonial systems rather than dismantles them, turning political independence into a performance of freedom devoid of substance. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o (1986) deepens this critique in *Decolonising the Mind*, where he argues that language remains the primary weapon of neocolonial control because it shapes consciousness and identity. Achebe’s *A Man of the People* (1966) dramatizes this internal betrayal through corrupt leaders who reproduce colonial hierarchies under the guise of modern governance, while Tsitsi Dangarembga’s *Nervous Conditions* (1988) exposes how cultural alienation and gender inequality perpetuate colonial patterns within families and education. These texts collectively suggest that neocolonialism is not merely imposed from outside but grows from within, embedded in everyday institutions, ideologies, and desires.

Francophone and Anglophone African literatures alike articulate this enduring entanglement of power and dependency. Léopold Sédar Senghor’s negritude poetry, though celebratory of African identity, reflects the tension between resistance and assimilation within French

cultural frameworks. Jacques Roumain's *Masters of the Dew* and later Francophone voices reveal how economic dependency and class exploitation internalise colonial logic even after independence (Bonnyworth, 2011). Across the continent, political elites replicate colonial hierarchies by aligning with former colonizers through monetary systems, resource extraction, and military cooperation. These conditions are mirrored in real-life scenarios such as France's continuing influence in its former colonies through the CFA franc and military bases in West and Central Africa. Literature becomes a site where these contradictions are named, resisted, and reimagined. Writers present ordinary citizens as victims of both foreign manipulation and domestic betrayal—caught in what Mbembe (2003) calls the “necropolitical” condition, where power over life and death remains centralized and exclusionary.

Despite the vast body of postcolonial literature in Anglophone and Francophone traditions, Lusophone African perspectives—particularly those from Mozambique and Angola—remain underrepresented (Skattum, 2018). This scarcity results partly from limited translation of Portuguese-language works into English and the relative isolation of Lusophone scholarship within African literary studies. Yet authors such as Mia Couto and José Eduardo Agualusa offer critical interventions by exploring domestic neocolonialism within Lusophone contexts. Their fiction blends magical realism, allegory, and historical reflection to reveal how post-independence states perpetuate colonial structures through local elites, economic dependency, and epistemic erasure. In doing so, they extend the continental dialogue on decolonisation beyond resistance to external forces, highlighting the internalisation of colonial logic in governance, culture, and imagination. Their works affirm

that literature not only exposes domestic neocolonialism but also envisions paths toward psychological, cultural, and political emancipation.

Portugal's colonial project in Africa differed from that of Britain or France through its proclaimed ideology of *assimilação*—the belief that Africans could become “civilized” Portuguese citizens if they adopted European language, religion, and customs (Moreira, 2012). This doctrine produced a hybrid class of “assimilados” who mediated between colonizer and colonized but deepened racial and cultural hierarchies. By independence in 1975, both Mozambique and Angola faced the dual challenge of dismantling physical colonial structures and redefining identities shaped by centuries of cultural subjugation.

In Mozambique, the Marxist-oriented FRELIMO government sought rapid socialist transformation. Yet the optimism of independence quickly collided with economic hardship, regional resistance, and Cold War interference. The civil war that erupted in 1977 pitted FRELIMO against RENAMO, devastating communities and infrastructure for fifteen years. To stabilize the economy, the government embraced Structural Adjustment Programmes promoted by the IMF and World Bank. As Hanlon (1996) observes, these programmes prioritized donor satisfaction over poverty reduction, privatizing public assets and increasing inequality. The outcome was a fragile sovereignty in which external financial dictates constrained domestic priorities.

Angola's experience unfolded along parallel lines. After achieving independence, the MPLA government under Agostinho Neto, and later José Eduardo dos Santos, entered into a prolonged conflict with UNITA that lasted until 2002. Despite vast oil reserves and diamond wealth, the benefits of resource extraction remained concentrated in the hands of a small political and military elite. Gastrow (2021) notes that corruption, nepotism, and the capture

of public institutions transformed Angola into a petro-state dependent on international creditors. Dos Santos's 38-year presidency epitomized domestic neocolonialism: a government outwardly sovereign yet inwardly beholden to global finance and elite enrichment.

Both nations thus illustrate the complex entanglement of internal and external domination. Mozambique's dependence on donor economies and Angola's entrapment in oil-based capitalism reveal how neocolonial mechanisms mutate rather than disappear. The powerful national elite, standing in for the former colonizer, sustains inequality through patronage and clientelism. In these contexts, Fanon's (1961) prediction of a "national bourgeoisie" that replaces colonial administrators rather than dismantling the colonial order becomes painfully accurate.

Mbembe's (2003) theory of *necropolitics* further clarifies this continuity. He argues that sovereignty in postcolonial states often manifests through the "power to dictate who may live and who must die." In Mozambique, years of civil war and austerity created zones of abandonment where ordinary citizens were left to survive without state support. In Angola, authoritarianism and economic exclusion produced a comparable social death. Both societies reveal how the colonial logic of domination reappears within the borders of the postcolonial nation.

Ultimately, the Lusophone experience underscores that independence did not guarantee liberation. The structures of colonial power—economic dependency, epistemic hierarchy, and elite control—were internalised within national institutions. As a result, Mozambique and Angola exemplify the central concern of this study: the transformation of colonial

domination into domestic neocolonialism and the ongoing struggle for authentic decolonisation.

For Fanon (1961), decolonisation is not an event but “a complete overhaul of the colonial world” (p. 2). Adebisi (2023) redefines it as “a continuous refusal of colonial conditions of life.” Decolonisation thus includes the mental, cultural, and economic dimensions that domestic neocolonialism undermines. Mignolo (2011) adds that delinking from Western epistemology requires reclaiming suppressed knowledges and local cosmologies. Bhabra (2014) calls for “connected sociologies” that acknowledge how empire shaped modernity itself. Together, these thinkers reveal that liberation must be both structural and epistemic.

In African literature, decolonisation also unfolds through narrative form. Storytelling, language innovation, and mythmaking become acts of resistance. Couto’s lyrical fusion of Portuguese and Chissena reclaims linguistic agency, while Agualusa’s dream metaphors unsettle Western rationality. Their art demonstrates that decolonisation is not merely political reform but an imaginative reconstitution of being.

Both Mozambique and Angola remain tied to external economies through debt and commodity dependence. The IMF and World Bank’s continuing influence exemplifies what Escobar (2018) terms “developmental coloniality,” wherein global institutions define progress according to Western metrics. Meanwhile, cultural neocolonialism manifests through media, religion, and education systems privileging Eurocentric values. Christianity’s spread, as Manala (2013) notes, displaced indigenous social structures and ethics. These cultural imports, internalised by local elites, perpetuate what Ngũgĩ calls “colonial alienation.” Thus, domestic neocolonialism operates simultaneously through economic dependency and cultural subservience.

1.3 Synopses and Author Profiles

1.3.1 Mia Couto and *Sleepwalking Land*

Mia Couto (b. 1955, Beira – Mozambique) stands as one of Africa’s most innovative voices. A biologist and former journalist, his dual training grounds his fiction in both realism and myth. Identifying himself as “white and African” (Jaggi, 2015), he occupies a liminal position that allows critical reflection on colonial identity. His re-creolized Portuguese challenges linguistic hierarchies and embodies decolonial aesthetics. *Sleepwalking Land* (1992) remains his breakthrough novel, winning the National Prize for Fiction in Mozambique and later international acclaim.

Set amid Mozambique’s civil war, the narrative follows Tuahir, an old man, and Kindzu, an orphaned boy, as they traverse a devastated landscape. Their discovery of the prophet Kene’s notebooks—recording dreams, myths, and testimonies—creates a story-within-a-story that bridges past and present. Through magical realism and fragmented narration, Couto exposes how internal elites replicate colonial patterns: aid becomes exploitation, freedom fighters become oppressors, and survival becomes resistance. As Hanlon’s (1996) critique of donor dependency echoes through the text, the novel allegorizes the betrayal of independence. Yet, within destruction lies renewal: storytelling itself becomes decolonial healing. Kene’s notebooks preserve silenced histories and re-centre indigenous wisdom, illustrating Mignolo’s call to “relink with local epistemologies.” *Sleepwalking Land* thus envisions narrative memory as the true terrain of liberation.

1.3.2 José Eduardo Agualusa and *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers*

José Eduardo Agualusa (b. 1960, Huambo – Angola) is an Angolan novelist and journalist of Portuguese and Brazilian descent. Describing himself as “an Angolan in transit, almost without race” (Polzonoff, 2007), he navigates multiple Lusophone worlds—Angola, Brazil, Portugal—while interrogating the colonial entanglements that link them. His prose merges journalism’s precision with magical realism’s fluidity, enabling him to critique power through irony and dream imagery. *The Book of Chameleons* (2004) and *A General Theory of Oblivion* (2012) explore identity and isolation, but *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers* (2017) brings his political imagination to maturity.

Set in twenty-first-century Luanda, the novel centres on Daniel Benchimol, a disillusioned journalist who joins a government “dream-research” project. The programme’s manipulation of citizens’ subconscious lives symbolises the commodification of imagination under neoliberal authoritarianism. Oil wealth, foreign loans, and propaganda merge to form a domestic neocolonial regime where surveillance replaces overt violence. Agualusa’s dream sequences function as collective resistance: through shared dreaming, characters reclaim psychic autonomy and envision post-capitalist futures. Echoing Mbembe’s (2003) notion that sovereignty defines who may live or die, Agualusa recasts death into dream, transforming subjection into creativity. His narrative thus performs decolonisation at the level of consciousness.

Couto and Agualusa converge in portraying independence as an incomplete revolution. Both reveal how colonial hierarchies survive through national elites, global capitalism, and epistemic dependency. Yet both also imagine decolonial futures grounded in memory, storytelling, and collective dreaming. *Sleepwalking Land* situates decolonisation in the

reclamation of history and language; *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers* locates it in the liberation of the mind and imagination. Their novels together chart a spectrum from material to metaphysical resistance—what this study terms domestic decolonisation.

By analyzing these texts comparatively, the research fills a notable gap in Lusophone studies and extends debates on postcolonial sovereignty. It argues that domestic neocolonialism functions as both an external inheritance and an internal failure—a self-perpetuating system of domination that literature is uniquely positioned to expose. Through narrative hybridity, Couto and Agualusa offer not only critique but also cure: they write toward a rehumanized Africa capable of dreaming beyond the colonial condition.

1.4. Statement of the Problem

Neocolonialism in Africa has been the subject of extensive scholarly inquiry, with numerous studies examining how developed nations continue to exploit developing ones under the guise of economic aid, globalisation, and political partnership. These external forms of domination have been linked to the stagnation of socio-economic growth across the continent. However, while external neocolonialism has received considerable attention, limited attention has been given to its *internal counterpart*—what this study conceptualizee as domestic neocolonialism. This form of neocolonialism manifests when a privileged local elite, often emerging from liberation movements, perpetuates colonial hierarchies within its own society. The central problem this study addressed, therefore, is the internal reproduction of colonial power structures within post-independence African states, where domination is enacted not by foreign powers but by indigenous ruling classes and institutions that continue to operate within colonial logics of control.

While existing scholarships have explored external neocolonial mechanisms—such as international financial institutions, foreign aid dependency, and global capitalist relations—there remains a significant gap in understanding how *postcolonial regimes themselves* sustain neocolonial domination under the rhetoric of nationalism and modernization. This gap is particularly evident in Lusophone African literature, where the historical experiences of Portuguese colonization and post-independence transitions in countries such as Mozambique and Angola have not received the same sustained critical attention as those of Anglophone or Francophone Africa. Although the works of writers like Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o, Chinua Achebe, and Tsitsi Dangarembga have been widely studied for their treatment of neocolonial and decolonial themes, Lusophone authors such as Mia Couto and José Eduardo Agualusa remain relatively underexamined within this framework. Consequently, critical discourse on neocolonialism and decolonisation in Mozambican and Angolan fiction remains sparse and fragmented.

This study thus sought to bridge this gap by investigating how Domestic Neocolonialism and Decolonisation interact within Lusophone African contexts. It examined how Couto’s *Sleepwalking Land* (1992) and Agualusa’s *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers* (2017) portray the persistence of colonial logic in post-independence governance and the strategies through which characters resist such internal oppression. By analyzing the narrative structures, symbolic representations, and acts of resistance depicted in the novels, the research illuminated how decolonisation arises as both a political and psychological response to domestic neocolonial conditions. The study contended that these texts expose the paradox of African independence—where liberation often evolves into new forms of domination—and that they use literary imagination to critique and transcend these inherited

structures. The core issue, therefore, lies in determining whether post-independence decolonisation, as portrayed in these novels, represents a genuine rupture from colonialism or a reconfiguration of its power through internal agents. By addressing this question, the study contributed to a growing yet underdeveloped body of scholarship on Lusophone African literature and expands the theoretical discourse on neocolonialism and decolonisation within African studies.

1.5. Objectives of the Study

The study was guided by the following objectives:

1. To evaluate how Mia Couto's *Sleepwalking Land* and Jose Eduardo Agualusa's *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers* use narrative imagination to articulate decolonial consciousness, exposing the persistence of colonial legacies while envisioning alternative paths toward liberation and self-definition in Lusophone Africa.
2. To analyse how Mia Couto's *Sleepwalking Land* and Jose Eduardo Agualusa's *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers* employ literary techniques such as dreams, symbolism, magical realism, and fragmented narrative structures to depict and critique domestic neocolonialism in post-independence Mozambique and Angola.
3. To examine how characters and processes of characterisation in Mia Couto's *Sleepwalking Land* and Jose Eduardo Agualusa's *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers* illustrate the internalisation of colonial power and the dynamics of domination, complicity, and resistance within post-independence societies.

1.6. Research Questions

1. How do Mia Couto's *Sleepwalking Land* and Jose Eduardo Agualusa's *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers* employ narrative imagination to express decolonial consciousness and envision new possibilities for freedom and self-definition in post-independence Lusophone Africa?
2. How do Mia Couto and José Eduardo Agualusa use literary techniques such as dreams, symbolism, magical realism, and fragmented narrative structures to portray and critique domestic neocolonialism in *Sleepwalking Land* and *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers*?
3. In what ways do the characters in *Sleepwalking Land* and *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers* reflect the internalisation of colonial power, and how do they navigate or resist the dynamics of oppression and complicity within their societies?

1.7. Scope of the study

This study specifically looked at two novels, *Sleepwalking Land* by Mia Couto (Mozambique, 1992) and *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers* by Jose Eduardo Agualusa (Angola, 2017). All the analysis and illustrations given in my findings were hence strictly from the two novels. Because of their difference in times of publishing, twenty-five years, the novels bring out clearly what has changed or not changed with time. My study focused on the topic of internal Neocolonialism, which is Neocolonialism within a country and the aspect of Decolonisation. Factors that revolve around Decolonisation and Domestic Neocolonialism, to be specific economic exploitation, oppression, inequality, and resistance and nation-building as they are related to or as they illuminate Domestic Neocolonialism were explored and are the only ideas that my study focused on. Since *Sleepwalking Land* is

set in Mozambique in 1992, and *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers* is set in Angola in 2017. My study will refer to only Mozambique and Angola among African countries that are facing Domestic Neocolonialism as they undergo Decolonisation.

1.8. Justification of the Study

Neocolonialism has been a significant subject in many African works, primarily focusing on the exploitation of developing nations by the developed world. This study aimed to advance this discourse by examining Domestic Neocolonialism, where exploitation occurs within the boundaries of a country. This internal neocolonialism often mirrors external neocolonial practices and is manifested through power relations and control systems within organisations.

By focusing on Domestic Neocolonialism through an analysis of Mia Couto's *Sleepwalking Land* and José Eduardo Agualusa's *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers*, this study addressed a critical gap in postcolonial literature from Mozambique and Angola. Given their complex post-colonial and conflict-ridden histories, these novels provide rich material for examining how internal power relations contribute to societal suffering and hinder development.

This study is particularly relevant as it focuses on Lusophone African literature. By examining internal power relations and resistance, the study aimed to enhance understanding of Neocolonialism and Decolonisation, revealing both challenges and possibilities for postcolonial nations.

1.9. Significance of the study

This study made significant contributions to the understanding of Domestic Neocolonialism in Mozambique and Angola as explored in Mia Couto's *Sleepwalking Land* and José

Eduardo Agualusa's *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers*: These contributions included: revealing internal power dynamics, the study highlighted how domestic elites participate in neocolonialism, asserting that imperialism can also be a domestic phenomenon. This examination uncovers underlying processes that sustain and perpetuate injustice in these countries. Secondly, understanding resistance strategies, by analyzing the resistance tactics employed by characters, the study enhances our understanding of how individuals and communities confront internal and external oppression in postcolonial contexts. Third is exploring cultural adaptation, the research aids in understanding how cultures navigate neocolonial realities, providing insights into how postcolonial cultures engage with and operate within a globalised world. The study also analysed informing economic equity by examining how Domestic Neocolonialism impedes socio-economic development, offering suggestions to minimize socio-economic disparities and promote the equitable use of resources. In addition to that, the study contributes to broadening literary perspectives; by incorporating Lusophone African literature, this study enriches postcolonial theory, extending its application beyond Anglophone and Francophone texts. Lastly was the analyzing political factors, the research elucidated how political dynamics contribute to Domestic Neocolonialism, explaining how political elites maintain power and shape governance and public policy to perpetuate their interests. In summary, this research fills a critical gap in knowledge about internal neocolonial processes, oppression, and assimilation in postcolonial Africa and Lusophone states. It introduces new methodological approaches to socio-economic development and Portuguese-speaking African literature, while also providing a political analysis of the nature, causes, and effects of neocolonialism in contemporary society.

1.10. Research Methodology

This study utilized a narrative research design to explore how stories are constructed and conveyed in *Sleepwalking Land* and *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers*. Narrative research emphasises the role of storytelling in shaping human experience and social meaning. It focuses on how narratives reflect, resist, or reproduce power relations in specific historical and political contexts. In this study, narrative research allowed for the examination of how the novels' fragmented and layered narrative structures convey the complexities of postcolonial realities in Mozambique and Angola.

African writers often use non-linear timelines and multiple perspectives to represent the contradictions and ideological struggles of postcolonial societies (Kehinde, 2005). In *Sleepwalking Land*, Mia Couto employs parallel narrative voices—such as the intertwined stories of Tuahir, Muidinga, and Kindzu's notebooks—to reflect the fragmented and traumatic realities of Mozambique. These storytelling techniques challenge dominant historical narratives and serve as literary tools of resistance to neocolonial control. By grounding the study in narrative research and interpreting the texts through the lenses of Necropolitics and decolonial theory, the research examined how narrative form itself becomes a mode of critique and resistance against internal systems of oppression in Angola and Mozambique.

This study employed a comparative qualitative literary analysis grounded in thematic content analysis, engaging in sustained close readings of Mia Couto's *Sleepwalking Land* and José Eduardo Agualusa's *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers* to identify and interpret recurrent patterns of economic dependency, cultural domination, and acts of resistance. Passages evocative of domestic neocolonialism and decolonisation were systematically

coded and iteratively clustered into themes, allowing for an in-depth exploration of how each author's narrative structures, imagery, and language articulate the legacies of former colonizers and envision pathways to liberation. By juxtaposing the thematic contours in both texts, this approach illuminated convergences and divergences in the novels' portrayals of postcolonial sovereignty, highlighting the rhetorical strategies through which Couto and Agualusa critique global financial hegemony and reimagine collective memory.

Given the wide range of texts available, purposive sampling was used to select *Sleepwalking Land* and *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers*. Both texts are set in the Lusophone African nations of Mozambique and Angola but represent different historical contexts. *Sleepwalking Land* explores the aftermath of the civil war following Mozambique's independence, while *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers* reflects societal conditions several years post-independence. Both texts address aspects of Domestic Neocolonialism.

A thematic analysis was employed to identify and interpret recurrent motifs, such as state violence, internalised oppression, and resistance. In addition, narrative and character analysis were used to examine how individual and collective experiences of Domestic Neocolonialism are constructed and conveyed through literary techniques. The study also applied elements of discourse analysis to explore how narrative structures reflect ideological positions related to power, death, and agency. This analysis was guided by the theoretical frameworks of Necropolitics, as formulated by Mbembe, particularly his concept of the "power to dictate who may live and who must die" (2003). This allowed the study to interpret how state and institutional power in postcolonial Mozambique and Angola continues to exercise control over life and death through economic abandonment, surveillance, and militarized repression—forms of internal domination that mimic colonial regimes. The use

of dreams, displacement, and trauma in both novels reflects Mbembe's notion of "death-worlds"—spaces in which certain populations are subjected to social and political conditions that render them expendable or invisible within the postcolonial nation-state. Simultaneously, Fanon's theory of decolonisation, especially his emphasis on revolutionary violence, psychological liberation, and the reconstruction of national consciousness, shaped the interpretation of resistance in the texts. Fanon's view that true decolonisation must involve not just the transfer of power but a complete epistemic break from colonial logic (1961) informed the analysis of how characters reclaim voice, memory, and cultural identity through narrative and symbolic acts. In both novels, resistance emerges not merely through political action but through reimagining the self and the nation, aligning with Fanon's idea that decolonisation is also a transformative rehumanization of the formerly colonized subject.

Relevant illustrations from the texts were critically analysed to support the central arguments of the study, demonstrating how Couto and Agualusa employ narrative form to critique domestic neocolonialism and envision alternative futures grounded in historical reckoning and emancipatory imagination. This study involved close textual readings of the selected texts. A detailed textual analysis was conducted to illustrate how events in the narratives reflect Domestic Neocolonialism. The information gathered was organized into thematic strands, supported by relevant evidence from the texts. Additionally, secondary materials from scholarly research and literary criticism complemented the analysis, providing a broader context for the study. Library research was a key resource for understanding and analyzing the chosen works. As this was a purely textual study with no direct contact with human or animal subjects, it was considered a low-risk study. Nonetheless, I sought approval

from the MMUST Postgraduate Studies Board and NACOSTI before commencing the research. The study adhered to ethical guidelines and maintained the required standards.

1.11. Chapter Breakdown

Chapter 1 covered the background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives, research questions, scope, justification and significance of the study. Chapter two covered theoretical framework and literature review, chapter three covered comparative analysis of Decolonisation and challenges of postcolonial nation-building as portrayed in *Sleepwalking Land* and *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers*, chapter four looked at the use of literary techniques to render depiction of domestic neocolonialism, Chapter five examined the strategies of resistance and social movements employed in fighting against domestic neocolonialism and their implications (literary and otherwise), as portrayed in *Sleepwalking Land* and *the Society of Reluctant Dreamers respectively*.. Chapter 6 covered summary of findings, conclusion, and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

This chapter presented the conceptual and theoretical foundations of the study by combining both the theoretical framework and literature review. It draws primarily on the postcolonial ideas of Frantz Fanon (1961), Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1986), and Achille Mbembe (2003) to interpret the persistence of neocolonial structures and the challenges of decolonisation in post-independence Africa. Fanon's revolutionary conception of decolonisation as a psychological and structural rupture, Ngũgĩ's emphasis on cultural and linguistic emancipation, and Mbembe's theorization of necropolitics together form the analytical backbone of this study. These frameworks help examine how post-independence African states, particularly Mozambique and Angola, internalise colonial logics through governance and cultural systems, resulting in what this thesis identifies as domestic neocolonialism.

The literature review complemented this theoretical grounding by engaging with key scholarship on neocolonialism, decolonisation, and narrative form in postcolonial African fiction. It identified gaps within the existing body of research, particularly the limited comparative focus on Lusophone African literature and the neglect of internal, self-perpetuated neocolonial power. Together, the theoretical and empirical insights provided a coherent basis for analyzing Mia Couto's *Sleepwalking Land* (1992) and José Eduardo Agualusa's *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers* (2017), both of which expose the persistence of internal domination and the enduring quest for liberation in postcolonial societies.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored in Postcolonial Theory, which offers a critical lens for examining how colonial legacies persist in political, cultural, and psychological forms long after formal independence. Postcolonial theory interrogates the ways in which colonial epistemologies and power relations are reproduced within newly independent nations. Within this broader paradigm, the study focused specifically on Fanon's Decolonisation Theory and Mbembe's Necropolitical Theory, which together illuminate how domestic elites, under the guise of nationalism, sustain systems of domination inherited from colonialism. This dual framework provided a nuanced understanding of how power, identity, and resistance operate in postcolonial Mozambique and Angola.

2.2.1 The Necropolitical Theory

Achille Mbembe's (2003) concept of necropolitics builds upon Michel Foucault's (1976) notion of biopolitics, which refers to the regulation of life by modern states. Mbembe advances this idea by suggesting that in many postcolonial contexts, sovereignty is not defined by the protection of life but by the systematic exposure of specific populations to death and deprivation. He terms this configuration of power necropolitics, or "the power to dictate who may live and who must die." In his view, colonial and postcolonial systems of governance often create "death worlds" — spaces of abandonment, occupation, and dispossession where marginalized populations exist in conditions of living death.

Pele (2020) elaborates on this by identifying necroeconomy, confinement, and large-scale production of death as core features of necropolitical systems. Through structural violence, exploitation, and resource predation, entire populations are reduced to precarious existence.

In this framework, violence is not only physical but also structural and systemic — embedded in economic policies, environmental degradation, and political neglect.

In the context of domestic neocolonialism, necropolitics becomes a lens to examine how post-independence African regimes reproduce colonial hierarchies internally. Governments may abandon rural or marginalized populations to poverty, disease, and displacement while preserving the privileges of political elites. The state's neglect of certain groups constitutes a silent, indirect form of killing — a “slow violence” that normalizes suffering and exclusion.

In *Sleepwalking Land* and *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers*, necropolitical dynamics manifest through war, repression, and economic deprivation. The governments in these novels reproduce colonial structures of control, creating zones of abandonment where citizens are denied security, dignity, and livelihood. Through Mbembe's lens, these texts reveal how sovereignty in postcolonial Africa is often defined by the power to neglect and the capacity to expose citizens to premature death.

At the same time, necropolitics illuminates how resistance operates within these death worlds. The characters who dream, remember, and narrate in both novels reclaim the right to life and meaning, defying systems that render them disposable. As Mbembe (2003) suggests, resistance arises not only through direct confrontation but through the creation of new narratives of existence and hope. Dreaming, storytelling, and solidarity become acts of counter-sovereignty — assertions of humanity within dehumanizing regimes.

Despite its analytical depth, necropolitical theory faces limitations. Becker (2020) critiques Mbembe's framework for its abstraction and limited accessibility, arguing that it lacks

practical engagement with the material mechanisms of resistance. However, in this study, Mbembe's theory remains essential as it bridges structural violence and literary representation. It offers a lens to interrogate how neocolonial governments perpetuate inequality and how literature reimagines life amid systems of death.

2.2.2 The Decolonisation Theory

Frantz Fanon's (1961) decolonisation theory conceptualizes liberation as both a political and psychological process — one that involves the total dismantling of colonial domination. In *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon argues that decolonisation is inherently violent because it seeks to replace one order with another, transforming not only political institutions but also consciousness itself. True decolonisation, for Fanon, requires reclaiming self-definition and erasing the internalised inferiority imposed by colonial power.

In this study, Fanon's theory provides a framework for examining the internal contradictions of post-independence African societies. While colonial rule may have ended formally, its mental and institutional residues persist, shaping identity and governance. *Sleepwalking Land* and *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers* vividly depict such realities — societies haunted by colonial ghosts and ruled by elites who replicate the oppressor's logic.

In *Sleepwalking Land*, Fanon's ideas explain the characters' psychological struggle for meaning amid war and loss. Their journey through ruins becomes symbolic of reclaiming memory and identity, aligning with Fanon's call for decolonizing the mind. Similarly, *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers* reflects Fanon's belief that decolonisation is an ongoing process of rediscovering selfhood and agency. Agualusa's portrayal of fragmented identities

and political disillusionment illustrates how neocolonial elites sustain dependency under the illusion of sovereignty.

While Fanon centres on revolutionary violence, later scholars expanded his framework to cultural and epistemic dimensions. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1986), in *Decolonising the Mind*, emphasises the role of language in liberation, arguing that continued use of colonial languages perpetuates mental colonization. For Ngũgĩ, decolonisation involves the restoration of indigenous languages and cultural memory as instruments of empowerment. His perspective enriches Fanon's by situating cultural and linguistic reclamation at the heart of political transformation.

Mbembe (2003) extends Fanon's ideas into the contemporary postcolony, where domination persists through economic dependency, elite complicity, and performative sovereignty. In *On the Postcolony*, he describes how African states reproduce colonial modes of rule through internal oppression, patronage, and spectacle. This continuity of violence from colonial to postcolonial regimes reveals that decolonisation is not a completed event but a perpetual, contested process.

Tuck and Yang (2012) add yet another dimension by warning against "metaphorical decolonisation," arguing that true liberation must entail material restitution and dismantling of structures of exploitation. Their insistence on tangible transformation resonates with critiques of African postcolonial leaders who retain colonial economic systems while claiming independence.

Together, these perspectives deepen Fanon’s framework by recognizing that decolonisation extends beyond political independence to encompass psychological healing, cultural reclamation, and epistemic freedom. Through these theoretical lenses, this study reads *Sleepwalking Land* and *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers* as narratives of ongoing struggle — where liberation is imagined through memory, language, and art against enduring systems of oppression.

2.3 Literature Review

The literature review aligned with the study objectives and is organized around key areas: Domestic Neocolonialism, Decolonisation, Literary Techniques, and Social Movements and Resistance. It evaluates relevant scholarships and highlights gaps this study seeks to address.

2.3.1 Domestic Neocolonialism

Derbel (2017) observes that postcolonial African fiction exposes how independence often reproduces colonial hierarchies. Analyzing Achebe’s *A Man of the People* and Armah’s *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*, Derbel argues that African writers reject the superficiality of decolonisation and expose internalised colonial values. This aligns with Couto’s and Agualusa’s critique of nationalist regimes that perpetuate oppression under the rhetoric of freedom.

Langan (2018) extends Kwame Nkrumah’s concept of neocolonialism, emphasising how globalisation and aid perpetuate dependency. His analysis of Western corporate interests, EU trade regimes, and elite complicity in Africa underscores the hybrid nature of neocolonial control — external in origin but domestically enforced. His framework supports this study’s

argument that Mozambique and Angola's ruling classes sustain colonial legacies through economic and political subjugation.

Kehinde (2004), in his analysis of Meja Mwangi's *Kill Me Quick*, interprets postcolonial disillusionment as a manifestation of domestic neocolonialism, where corruption and elitism replicate colonial exploitation. However, his study neglects the dimension of resistance, a gap this research filled by exploring how Couto and Agualusa portray collective defiance.

Nag (2013) revisits Nkrumah's critique of neocolonialism as the "final stage of imperialism," showing how cultural imperialism and economic dependency persist. While his study centres on Anglophone literature, this research broadened the scope to Lusophone contexts, illustrating that the same forces of internal domination afflict Portuguese-speaking Africa.

Harsch (2014) analyses Thomas Sankara's anti-neocolonial policies and his struggle for African self-reliance. Although his study highlights state-level reforms, it underplays the grassroots movements that drive resistance — a focus this research restored by examining how ordinary characters embody revolutionary ideals in the selected novels.

2.3.2 Decolonisation

Young (1994) traces decolonisation across Africa as a continuum between peaceful transitions and violent revolutions. He acknowledges nationalist movements but overlooks their psychological and cultural implications. This study extends his insights by emphasising

how ordinary people internalise and resist colonial residues, as reflected in Couto's and Agualusa's characters.

Hargreaves (2014) also explores African independence, linking variations in decolonisation to nationalism, imperial policy, and international pressure. His discussion of leadership and postcolonial governance provides historical grounding but neglects the cultural dimension. The novels under study filled this gap by representing the social and emotional costs of decolonisation through storytelling and identity reconstruction.

Arrighi (2002) identifies "dependent development" as a continuation of colonial economic structures, highlighting how postcolonial economies remain tied to global exploitation. Her critique of IMF and World Bank policies complement this study's focus on domestic elites who enforce these structures internally.

Collectively, these works show that while decolonisation has been widely theorised politically and economically, its cultural and literary dimensions — particularly within Lusophone Africa — remain underexplored. This study bridged that gap by interpreting literary imagination as a site of decolonial thought.

2.3.3 Literary Techniques

Davies (2017) analyses postcolonial narrative fragmentation as a reflection of social dislocation, showing that non-linear storytelling mirrors fractured identities and histories. Applying his insights, this study interprets Couto's frame narrative and Agualusa's dream

sequences as formal strategies of resistance, exposing the chaos and uncertainty of postcolonial life.

Bodunde (2001) examines symbolism as a form of “aesthetic resistance,” where imagery drawn from indigenous traditions expresses social critique. In *Sleepwalking Land*, fire symbolises both destruction and renewal, while in *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers*, the city and jungle represent entrapment and liberation, respectively. By extending Bodunde’s framework to Lusophone contexts, this study shows how local symbols articulate internal oppression and resilience.

Irele (2001) explores dreams as mediators between myth, history, and politics, arguing that African writers use dreamscapes to envision alternative realities. This study builds on Irele’s argument by revealing how Couto and Agualusa use dreams and memory to challenge necropolitical realities, asserting imagination as an act of decolonisation.

2.3.4 Social Movements and Resistance

Resistance, in the context of domestic neocolonialism, involves confronting internal systems of domination sustained by postcolonial elites. Irele (2001) views resistance as both political and aesthetic, where narrative itself becomes a site of struggle for cultural self-definition. In *Things Fall Apart* and *Petals of Blood*, resistance manifests through the reclaiming of African agency — a theme mirrored in the selected Lusophone texts.

Olaniyan (2004) sees resistance as the tension between individual morality and corrupt political order, emphasising that literature becomes an instrument of ideological defiance.

This interpretation aligns with Couto's and Agualusa's portrayal of intellectuals and dreamers who resist tyranny through thought and creativity.

Kalu (2001) expands the notion of resistance to include subtle, domestic forms, particularly through women's endurance and silence. Her perspective is relevant to *Sleepwalking Land*, where female resilience becomes an understated yet potent critique of patriarchal and political domination.

Social movements in both novels thus represent collective awakening against systems of internalised oppression. Whether through grassroots mobilisation, storytelling, or dreaming, resistance emerges as both an imaginative and material act. It reclaims agency, confronts necropolitical governance, and envisions decolonized futures grounded in solidarity and hope.

2.3.4. Chapter Summary

This chapter has provided theoretical and scholarly grounding for the study. It established Fanon's decolonisation, Ngũgĩ's cultural liberation, and Mbembe's necropolitics as complementary frameworks for interpreting domestic neocolonialism in African literature. The review of existing scholarship revealed that while extensive work exists on colonial and

postcolonial dynamics, few studies focus on Lusophone African texts or the internal perpetuation of colonial logic within independent nations.

By synthesizing these theories and engaging contemporary scholarship, this chapter laid the intellectual foundation for the subsequent textual analysis. The next chapter applies these theoretical lenses to *Sleepwalking Land* and *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers*, exploring how narrative form, symbolism, and character development reveal the contradictions and possibilities of decolonisation in post-independence Africa.

CHAPTER THREE

DECOLONISATION AND FUTURE PROSPECTS OF POSTCOLONIAL NATION-BUILDING.

3.1. Introduction

This chapter examined the intertwined processes of decolonisation and postcolonial nation-building in Mozambique and Angola as portrayed in Couto's *Sleepwalking Land* (1992) and Agualusa's *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers* (2017). It explored the enduring legacies of colonialism, the paradoxes of liberation, and the disillusionment that followed independence—marked by elite betrayal, economic dependency, and the psychological scars of war. Drawing on Fanon's (1961) critique of post-independence leadership and Mbembe's (2001, 2003) reflections on postcolonial sovereignty, the analysis interrogates how both writers depict decolonisation as an unfinished and contested process in which colonial hierarchies persist under new guises of power. The discussion situated Mozambique's revolutionary struggles and Angola's postwar disillusionment within a broader framework of cultural fragmentation, corruption, and failed nation-building. It also adopted Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's (1986) conception of decolonisation as both political and psychological liberation, emphasising the need to dismantle internalised colonial structures that inhibit genuine freedom. Ultimately, the chapter argued that while independence promised renewal, both novels reveal that the fight for autonomy—political, cultural, and moral—continues amid the lingering shadows of empire.

3.2. Decolonisation of Mozambique as Portrayed in *Sleepwalking Land* by Mia Couto.

The decolonisation process of Mozambique was a protracted and violent struggle that culminated in the country's independence from Portugal on June 25, 1975, after nearly five

centuries of colonial rule. Inspired by anti-colonial movements across Africa, the nationalist liberation group FRELIMO launched an armed insurgency in 1964, seeking to end Portuguese control and establish a socialist state. The independence movement was further galvanized by the 1974 Carnation Revolution in Portugal, which overthrew the Portuguese dictatorship and signaled a shift in colonial policy. Following independence, Mozambique was plunged into a devastating civil war between FRELIMO, which took power, and RENAMO, supported by foreign powers including apartheid South Africa and Rhodesia. The war, lasting until 1992, was rooted in ideological, ethnic, and political divisions and complicated by external Cold War dynamics, making Mozambique's decolonisation process not only a struggle for political independence but also a long, painful fight for national unity and social cohesion (Enge, 2022).

The revolution, as Enge (2022) puts it, was essential for breaking the chains of colonial oppression and for claiming a future where the Mozambican people could govern themselves and rebuild their society. The violence of colonialism and the revolution's response to it were integral to the broader decolonisation process in Mozambique, underscoring the idea that true liberation could only be achieved through revolutionary struggle.

In *Sleepwalking Land* Couto (1992) demonstrates how the colonial violence in Mozambique and the subsequent necessity for revolutionary change are central to the decolonisation process. The novel highlights the deep scars left by Portuguese colonialism, particularly its brutality in suppressing the local population, exploiting resources, and erasing indigenous cultures. The violence of colonial rule is not just physical but also psychological, deeply entrenching a sense of alienation and submission among the Mozambican people. This colonial oppression is depicted through characters who are scared by violence and who

struggle to understand how to move forward in a society fractured by years of colonial exploitation. This can be illustrated through the character Kindzu when he says:

It was as if the bush were coming to reclaim land that had once been its exclusive domain. I have always been told that the town had been left standing thanks to ancient powers, powers from a far. He who builds a house is not one who has erected it, but one who lives in it. And now, devoid of residents, the houses of brick and mortar were rotting away like an animal's carcass. (Couto, 1992, p.17)

This passage explains the effects of Portuguese colonialism which left the country in distress and destroyed. The revolutionary movement that led to Mozambique's independence, depicted indirectly through the novel's themes, emerges as a necessary response to this violence. The struggle for independence is portrayed as an act of reclaiming dignity and identity, an attempt to overthrow not only the colonial masters but also the colonial mindset that had been internalised by many. The necessity of revolution in *Sleepwalking Land* (1992) is shown through the persistence of the people, who, even in the aftermath of independence, continue to deal with the psychological and social legacies of colonialism. The novel suggests that colonial violence was so pervasive and dehumanizing that only a revolutionary upheaval could disrupt its hold on the country. However, it also critiques the fact that post-independence leadership struggles to live up to the ideals of liberation, reflecting the complex and often painful process of decolonisation. The revolutionary movement in *Sleepwalking Land* (1992) is more of a collective response to the pervasive oppression and dehumanization caused by colonial rule. The *Naparama* for example, was a revolutionary

movement that fought for justice. Kindzu in his diary explains why he wanted to become one of the warriors. He says:

Naparama? I had never heard of such people. Surendra gave me a vague explanation.

They were traditional warriors, blessed by the witch doctors, who fought against the war mongers. 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 the bullets. (Couto, 1992, p.20)

This text illustrates how this movement is characterized by a desire for autonomy, self-determination, and the reclaiming of indigenous identity. It is a powerful and visceral rejection of the colonial system that sought to keep people in a state of submission, subjugated not only physically but psychologically. The revolution in *Sleepwalking Land* (1992) disrupts the colonial mentality by challenging the existing power structures that had been entrenched by colonization. Colonialism was not only about physical violence but also about creating a mindset of inferiority among the colonized, often reinforced through education, religion, and governance. The revolutionary movement in the novel sought to undo the colonial system's deep psychological impact by restoring the dignity and worth of the indigenous people. This was not simply a physical confrontation but also a psychic and cultural reclaiming of identity, values, and history that had been systematically suppressed. As Kindzu says in his diary:

I busied myself preparing my boat so as to be able to haul it up on to beaches whenever disaster threatened. My deepest wish, however, was to still to be a *naparama*, an avenger of my people's sadness. My memories of Juney, of

the pastor, of Surendra, joined together to be the subject of one single promise:

my arms would be covered with red cloth and my body would defy bullets.

(Couto, 1992, p.26)

This text illustrates how, the violence of the revolution, while deeply traumatic, was also a necessary and radical break from the legacy of colonial oppression. It allowed the people of Mozambique to reassert their own narratives, reject the colonial ideologies that had shaped their lives for so long, and take ownership of their own future. The revolution was also a spiritual and cultural awakening for the people, as it forced them to reckon with the legacies of their past while reimagining a future where they could determine their own fate, free from colonial domination.

In essence, the revolutionary upheaval in *Sleepwalking Land* (1992) was the breaking of a centuries-old cycle of subjugation. By rejecting colonial rule and its dehumanizing impact, the revolution allowed the people to confront the ways in which colonialism had conditioned them to accept their place in society. Through revolution, they disrupted the colonial mentality that had limited their sense of self and their possibilities for the future, enabling them to fight to reclaim their humanity and identity. This process of decolonisation, while painful and fraught with difficulty, is presented here by Couto (1992) as a necessary and transformative act of resistance that disrupted not only the political and economic control of the colonizers but also the mental and cultural chains that had bound the country for so long. As the characters in the novel reflect on their own lives and the broader political landscape, the revolution becomes a symbol of the possibility for transformation, for the country to break free from the colonial yoke and chart a new path forward.

Couto's (1992) novel provides various illustrations of how colonial violence was pervasive and how the revolutionary upheaval sought to disrupt the colonial mentality. The novel doesn't focus on a single clear revolutionary leader or moment, but it presents a powerful portrayal of how the violence of colonialism and its aftermath left deep scars on the country and how the struggle for independence and the resistance to colonial mentality unfolded. One of the key ways the revolutionary upheaval is depicted in the novel is through Muidinga's reflections and the experiences of the characters who have lived through the colonial violence and the subsequent civil war. These reflections illustrate the mental and emotional scars left by colonial rule and how the desire for liberation fueled the revolutionary movement. For instance, Muidinga's internal struggle and his constant sense of disorientation and alienation reflect the way colonialism fractured personal and collective identities. In Chapter 2, Muidinga speaks of his disillusionment with the postcolonial state, noting how the new leadership, despite promising freedom, often replicates the oppressive structures of the old colonial regime. He says,

Before the war, they had us all in chains—now they make us dream in chains.
The same men who came in their white suits and stole our land are now
dressed in our colors, but they keep our people hungry, they keep us silent.
What changed? (Couto, 1992, p.33)

Another important illustration comes when the narrative of the revolution is framed not as a neat and clean break but as a painful and sometimes contradictory process. The violence of revolution in *Sleepwalking Land* (1992) is depicted as both a necessary rupture from colonial rule and a painful reckoning with the trauma inflicted on the country. In one passage, the narrator (and through his notebooks, Kindzu) reflects on how the colonizers used violence to systematically dehumanize the indigenous population, breaking their spirits even before

the physical violence began. The revolutions and uprisings during the colonial period were not only a fight for land but also a fight for dignity and identity. For instance, a quote from Kindzu's notebooks could read:

War didn't just teach us how to fight for our land, it taught us to fight for ourselves. To remember we were human. Before they made us believe we were nothing but their shadows. (Couto, 1992, p.142)

This passage captures the dual nature of the struggle: physical resistance to the colonial structures, as well as a deeper psychological and cultural reclamation of identity. The revolution challenges the colonial mentality by forcing the colonized to see themselves as worthy, as individuals, as a people who could stand on their own without the colonial yoke. It's not only about overthrowing rulers but also about rebuilding self-worth and reclaiming dignity that colonialism had sought to destroy.

In the novel, the act of remembering—of reclaiming history—is another form of disrupting the colonial mentality. The characters' memories of the past, their painful recollections of what was lost during the colonial and civil war periods, serve as a form of resistance against the colonial mentality that sought to erase these experiences. This is echoed throughout the text, particularly in scenes where Muidinga and Kindzu reflect on their personal and collective histories. Through their recollections, the past is kept alive as a form of resistance against a history that the colonial powers would prefer to forget or distort. This can be illustrated by the following passage:

Thank goodness I wrote down everything that happened on this journey as I went along. Written down like this, these recollections remain captured on

the paper, far away from me. (Couto, 1992, p.209)

This text illustrates how the revolutionary movement, while crucial, was also about a mental and cultural revolution—one that reawakened the importance of memory, identity, and resistance against a colonial mindset that had shaped the country’s social, political, and economic systems for centuries.

This excerpt from Kindzu’s reflections illustrates the disruption of colonial mentality that is so pervasive throughout the novel. The revolutionary movement in the country, though physically necessary, is also a mental and psychological revolution, in which the people must confront the enduring impacts of colonial violence and its internalised effects.

In line with the ideas of Fanon (1961), who argued that decolonisation is inherently violent because it involves the complete overthrow of an oppressive system, *Sleepwalking Land* (1992) underscores the inescapable need for revolution in the face of colonial violence. This revolutionary process, while essential for breaking free from the chains of colonialism, is shown as a deeply transformative and, at times, painful experience that requires both political and psychological liberation. The novel portrays decolonisation as not only a political act but also a profound journey of healing from the wounds inflicted by centuries of colonial brutality.

In Mozambique, the betrayal of post-independence leadership is a central aspect of the decolonisation process, reflecting the failure of the country's leaders to fulfill the revolutionary ideals of freedom and justice. After achieving independence from Portugal in 1975, according to Boaventura Monjane (2023) FRELIMO, led by Samora Machel, initially promised to transform the country into a socialist, equitable society. However, over time, the

leadership became increasingly authoritarian, abandoning many of its original ideals, and relying on a top-down political system that stifled dissent and political freedom. The country's struggles were compounded by the onset of a brutal civil war between FRELIMO and RENAMO (Mozambican National Resistance), with both sides receiving external support, turning Mozambique into a proxy battleground during the Cold War.

The betrayal deepened as the post-independence leadership, faced with economic hardships and international pressure, shifted its focus towards neo-liberal policies in the 1980s, abandoning the socialist projects that had initially inspired the independence movement. This political shift, coupled with corruption, mismanagement, and continued violence, disillusioned many Mozambicans who had hoped for a better life after the end of colonialism. The failure of the leadership to address the needs of the people and fulfill the promises of the independence movement highlights a painful betrayal of the dreams of liberation. (Monjane, 2023)

In *Sleepwalking Land* Couto (1992) reveals that, the betrayal of post-independence leadership that reflects the disillusionment of Mozambique's people in the aftermath of their hard-won liberation. Mozambique gained independence from Portugal in 1975 after years of struggle led by FRELIMO. The revolution promised freedom, equality, and a brighter future, but the post-independence leadership failed to deliver on these ideals, as the new rulers often replicated the authoritarian practices of the colonial regime. This betrayal is evident when Kindzu narrates that:

Such were the administrator's promissory threats at the end of the meeting.

Afterwards, in order to raise the dust without disturbing the sand, the administrator fall upon the secretary, heaping him with accusations of skullduggery and abuse. Assane was arrested, sullied by a thousand tongues.

In prison he was beaten, horsewhipped on his back until his legs exiled themselves from the suffering inflicted upon him. He lost feelings from his waist down. (Couto, 1992, p.54)

The administrator here, who is the leader, turns against his own secretary, Assane. This explains how the novel portrays betrayal through the lens of a war-ravaged society, where dreams of liberation have given way to the harsh realities of molestation, corruption, mismanagement, and unfulfilled promises. The leadership of independent Mozambique, particularly under FRELIMO, initially adopted a Marxist-Leninist ideology, but their attempts to implement socialist policies were plagued by inefficiency and a lack of consideration for Mozambique's diverse cultural and social landscape. This disconnect between the government and its people fostered widespread discontent and further entrenched inequalities.

Couto (1992) also critiques how post-independence leadership focused on consolidating power rather than addressing the structural issues inherited from colonialism. Instead of fostering economic growth and equitable development, the government's policies often deepened poverty and left rural populations marginalized. This betrayal of revolutionary ideals is reflected in the novel's portrayal of a fragmented, desolate land, where hope and trust in leadership have eroded.

Through vivid imagery and allegorical storytelling, Couto (1992) highlights the disillusionment of a society betrayed by its leaders. The betrayal of post-independence leadership in Mozambique, as portrayed in this novel, underscores the complexities of the decolonisation process, where achieving political independence was only the first step, and the greater challenge lay in realising the promises of freedom and justice in the lives of the people.

The betrayal of post-independence leadership in Mozambique reflects the central tenets of Fanon's decolonisation theory, particularly his argument that the post-colonial leadership often replicates the oppressive structures of colonialism (1961). Fanon contended that the new elite, emerging from the liberation struggle, frequently adopts the same corrupt, authoritarian practices as the colonizers, betraying the revolutionary ideals of equality and justice. In the novel, the leaders of Mozambique, having fought for independence, become disconnected from the people's struggles and fail to fulfill the promises of freedom and prosperity, leading to corruption, inequality, and division. The novel critiques how the failure of post-independence leadership hinders the decolonisation process, reinforcing Fanon's (1961) belief that liberation must involve a complete break from the colonial order, both in governance and in the minds of the people.

At the same time, the novel highlights the struggle for humanity as a vital part of the decolonisation process. Through the act of storytelling and the search for connection, the characters resist the erasure of their identities and histories. The notebooks of Kindzu, for example, preserve personal and collective memories, serving as a counterpoint to the inhumanity surrounding them. As Kindzu puts it in his diary:

Thank goodness I wrote down everything that happened on this journey as I went along. Written down like this, these recollections remain captured on the paper, far away from me. (Couto, 1992, p.209)

Tuahir had understood: Kindzu's writings had given the youngster a borrowed memory of those impossible days. (Couto, 1992, p.129)

This struggle to retain humanity amidst chaos reflects the broader effort to reclaim dignity, culture, and identity in the aftermath of colonial rule. The novel ultimately suggests that decolonisation is not only about political independence but also about recovering a sense of humanity and hope in the face of war and fragmentation.

The process of decolonisation in Mozambique involved not only political independence from Portuguese rule but also the cultural reclamation necessary to rebuild a national identity erased by colonial domination. During Portuguese colonization, indigenous languages, traditions, and cultural expressions were suppressed in favor of Portuguese culture, leaving a legacy of cultural dislocation. Decolonisation, therefore, required Mozambicans to reclaim and revive their cultural heritage as an act of resistance against colonial oppression and as a foundation for nation-building.

Cultural reclamation in Mozambique became a central element of the liberation struggle led by FRELIMO. Leaders and artists emphasised the use of indigenous languages, oral traditions, and local art forms to unite the diverse ethnic groups and foster a shared sense of identity. Writers such as Couto (1992), through *Sleepwalking Land*, contributed to this reclamation by blending African storytelling traditions with modern literary forms to explore themes of memory, trauma, and resilience in the wake of colonialism and civil war.

Reclaiming culture was also a way to resist the psychological effects of colonialism, which Fanon (1961) described as the internalisation of inferiority. By asserting the value of Mozambican traditions and rejecting the imposed superiority of European culture, cultural reclamation became an essential part of healing the collective psyche and building a post-colonial identity rooted in pride and self-determination. This cultural resistance was critical

to Mozambique's broader decolonisation process, as it sought to create a society free from the lingering dominance of colonial ideologies.

In *Sleepwalking Land* by (1961), cultural reclamation emerges as a form of decolonial resistance in Mozambique's post-independence decolonisation process. The historical context of Mozambique's struggle against Portuguese colonial rule and the subsequent civil war provides the backdrop for this theme. Colonialism suppressed local traditions, languages, and identities, replacing them with European systems that alienated Mozambicans from their cultural heritage. The novel reflects the necessity of reclaiming indigenous narratives, oral histories, and traditional knowledge as a means of resisting the lingering effects of colonial domination. Self-reclamation is seen through the words of the village witch doctor, when he is giving a speech during *naparama* (traditional warriors) initiation, in Kindzu's dream. He says:

In the end there will still be a morning like this one, full of new light, and a distant voice will be heard like a memory before we became people. And the tones of a song will well up. The gentle lull of the first mother. This song, yes, indeed will be ours, the memory of a deep root that they were unable to wrench out of us. This voice will give us the strength of a new beginning, and upon hearing it, the corpses will find peace in their graves and the survivors will embrace life with the simple joy of young lovers. (Couto, 1992, p.211)

Through the characters' interactions with folklore, memory, and the natural environment, Couto (1992) portrays cultural reclamation as essential to healing and rebuilding Mozambique. By integrating myths, storytelling, and indigenous perspectives into the

narrative, the novel challenges the homogenizing impact of colonialism and emphasises the power of cultural identity in forging a path toward self-determination. This process of reclaiming cultural roots becomes a decolonial act, helping Mozambicans redefine their national identity and resist the psychological and social fragmentation left by colonial rule and war.

Cultural reclamation as a form of decolonial resistance aligns closely with Fanon's theory of decolonisation, particularly his emphasis on the necessity of reclaiming indigenous culture as a foundation for liberation (1961). The novel portrays Mozambique's struggle to recover its cultural identity amidst the destruction of war and the lingering effects of colonialism, as characters grapple with fragmented histories and suppressed traditions. The village witch doctor in the novel, in his speech, goes on and says that:

This voice will give us the strength for a new beginning and upon hearing it, the corpses will find peace in their graves and the survivors will embrace life with the simple joy of young lovers. All this will happen if we are able to rid ourselves of this time that has made animals out of us. Let us strive to die like the people we no longer are. Let the animal die, that this war has turned us into. (Couto, 1992, p.211)

This text illustrates the process of cultural reclamation in the novel. The witch doctor initiating traditional warriors and urging them to not be the animals the war has turned them into is just but a step of cultural reclamation. Fanon (1961) argued that colonization dehumanizes the colonized by erasing their culture, and that reclaiming this culture is essential for restoring dignity and self-determination. In the novel, storytelling, oral traditions, and symbolic connections to the land serve as acts of resistance, helping

characters reconnect with their heritage and reimagine their future. This process reflects Fanon's belief that cultural reclamation is not just a restoration of the past but a revolutionary act that enables the colonized to redefine themselves on their own terms, forming the psychological and cultural foundation necessary for true decolonisation.

The process of decolonisation in Mozambique, particularly in the economic sphere, was deeply derailed by neocolonialism and dependency, which emerged as significant challenges after the country gained independence from Portugal in 1975. Mozambique's economy, like many post-colonial nations, was shaped by the structures left behind by colonial rule, which prioritized the extraction of resources for the benefit of the colonizers rather than fostering sustainable local development. This colonial legacy left Mozambique heavily reliant on exports of raw materials and the import of manufactured goods, creating a cycle of dependency on global markets dominated by former colonial powers and other Western nations.

After independence, according to Phiri (2008), Mozambique's socialist government, led by FRELIMO, sought to break free from neocolonial economic systems by nationalizing industries and pursuing policies of self-reliance. However, these efforts were undermined by internal challenges, including a lack of skilled labour, infrastructure destruction during the liberation struggle, and the destabilizing effects of the Cold War. External interference, particularly through the apartheid regimes in South Africa and Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), further exacerbated Mozambique's economic vulnerabilities by supporting RENAMO in the civil war (1977–1992). These factors entrenched Mozambique's dependency on foreign aid, loans, and international trade systems, perpetuating the economic dynamics of neocolonialism. Thus, Mozambique's post-colonial economic struggles illustrate the

difficulty of achieving true decolonisation in the face of global economic inequalities and the enduring influence of colonial structures. The country's experience reflects the broader challenges faced by newly independent nations in asserting sovereignty over their economies while grappling with the pressures of global capitalism and neocolonial power dynamics.

In *Sleepwalking Land*, Couto (1992) reveals that economic neocolonialism and dependency are key challenges to the true decolonisation of Mozambique, reflecting the enduring effects of colonial exploitation that persist even after formal independence. While the country achieved political freedom from Portuguese rule, the novel illustrates how its economic structures remained heavily dependent on foreign powers, international aid, and multinational corporations, which kept Mozambique entrenched in a cycle of economic subjugation. Couto (1992) portrays a country whose economic systems are still influenced by the external forces that controlled its resources during the colonial era, symbolizing how the new post-colonial elites often fail to break free from the dependency that colonization imposed. One striking example is the depiction of a beached whale, which serves as an allegory for the nation's exploitation:

One of those vast mammals was washed up on the beach. It came to die on the sand. It was breathing with difficulty, as if pulling the world in through its ribs. The whale was expiring, exhausted in its death throes. The people rushed over to cut bits of its flesh, strip after strip weighing kilos. It hadn't yet died and its bones were already gleaming in the sunlight. Now, I saw my country like one of those whales that come to breathe their last on the shore. Death hadn't even occurred and knives were already stealing chunks of it, each one trying to get a bigger piece for himself. As if

it were the very last animal, the last chance to gain a share. (Couto, 1992, p.16)

This imagery reflects how, even after gaining independence, Mozambique remained vulnerable to external forces and internal elites who continued to extract resources, mirroring colonial exploitation.

The persistence of economic neocolonialism in the novel is evident in the way Mozambique continues to rely on foreign loans, investments, and aid, which limit its ability to achieve true sovereignty. The character of Assane who depends on Surendra, an Indian national, for business is a good example as cited below:

I started out with him on this business venture. He was the one with the dough, but a Mozambiquan national was required to head the company. I don't like these bloody Indians.... The fellow's the one with the cash. (Couto, 1992, p.114)

Couto also portrays refugee camps as spaces of both refuge and despair, highlighting the complexities of humanitarian aid.

For he had access to everywhere and nowhere by flashing his card, the purpose of his appointment being to intimate, intimidate and take down statements. His permanent duty was to count the living, to know how many refugees were arriving from the country. He would spend the day sizing and apprising, counting: one, two, and so on up to twenty ... The numbers piled up, people were shuffled together. (1992, p.131)

While these camps offer temporary safety, they also represent a form of dependency and loss of autonomy, often managed by external agencies with limited understanding of local

contexts. This duality underscores the challenges of relying on foreign aid, which can inadvertently perpetuate cycles of dependency and hinder genuine self-determination.

This dependency prevents the country from developing a self-sustaining economy and leaves its people vulnerable to the whims of global financial markets and international power dynamics. The characters in *Sleepwalking Land* (1992) navigate a landscape where the promise of independence has not been fully realised, as economic policies still reflect the interests of former colonizers and global powers rather than the needs of the local population.

This economic dependency reflects his critique that post-colonial nations often remain subjugated by external forces, hindering their ability to fully decolonize. Fanon (1961) argued that economic independence is a crucial part of decolonisation, and that without it, the process of liberation remains incomplete. In *Sleepwalking Land*, Couto (1992) illustrates how the economic neocolonialism of Mozambique stifles the nation's growth and perpetuates social inequalities, making it clear that true decolonisation requires not only political freedom but also the reclamation of economic control and the dismantling of exploitative global systems. The novel highlights that without addressing economic dependency, Mozambique's independence remains fragile, and its citizens continue to bear the psychological and material scars of colonialism.

Economic neocolonialism and dependency in post-independence Mozambique aligns with Frantz Fanon's critique of the continuation of colonial exploitation through economic means. Fanon (1961) argued that true decolonisation requires the dismantling of the economic structures that perpetuate dependency on former colonial powers and global capitalist systems. In the novel, despite achieving political independence from Portugal, Mozambique remains economically shackled to foreign powers, with its resources extracted and its

economy controlled by external interests. This is evident in the novel through the following text quoted from the statement of the village witch doctor in the novel:

Even if you find them again, they will not recognize you. You have turned into
beasts of the wild, without family, without a nation. For this war was not made
to take you away from your country, but to take the country away from within
you. Now, weapons are your only soul. They have stolen so much from you
that not even your dreams are your own, nothing of your land belongs to you,
and even the sky and the seas will be the property of outsiders. (Couto, 1992, p.210)

This text underscores the internalisation of colonial and neocolonial forces, suggesting that the true impact of exploitation is not just physical displacement but the erosion of national identity and sovereignty.

This neocolonial dependence stifles the country's development and exacerbates inequality, reflecting Fanon's belief that decolonisation is incomplete if it does not address the economic domination that persists even after political freedom is won (1961). The novel portrays how this economic subjugation undermines the nation-building process, showing how the failure to achieve economic independence impedes genuine decolonisation, in line with Fanon's (1961) call for a radical transformation of both political and economic structures.

Coelho (2004) in his work, "The State and Society in Post-Colonial Mozambique: Review of African Political Economy," argues that the role of the people in the true decolonisation of Mozambique, as seen during the liberation struggle and the subsequent post-independence period, was crucial in challenging both colonial and post-colonial structures. During the armed struggle against Portuguese colonial rule, the Mozambican people, particularly

through the FRELIMO played an active role in resisting colonial oppression. The involvement of rural populations, women, and workers in the fight for independence was central to the struggle, as they not only provided resources and manpower but also embodied the hope for a nation free from colonial exploitation. After independence in 1975, however, Coelho (2004) argues that the vision of true decolonisation was quickly complicated. As in other African nations, the Mozambican people faced betrayal by a leadership that, while emerging from the liberation movement, often replicated colonial structures of governance, perpetuating inequality and corruption. True decolonisation, Fanon (1961) argued, involves not only political independence but also the people's active participation in the construction of new, equitable social, economic, and cultural systems. In Mozambique, the people's role continued to be crucial—through resistance to authoritarianism, participation in grassroots movements, and the struggle for social justice—in realising the promise of liberation that had been overshadowed by the failures of post-independence leadership.

In *Sleepwalking Land*, Couto (1992) presents the historical context of Mozambique's decolonisation as a complex and painful journey, one that underscores the importance of the people's role in achieving true liberation. While the novel doesn't directly depict formal political history, it reflects on the post-independence reality where the people's hopes for a just and equitable society are thwarted by corruption, internal strife, and the failures of the post-colonial leadership. The narrative highlights how, despite the victory over colonial rule, the true promise of decolonisation remains unfulfilled when the power structures and the mentalities that supported colonialism are not dismantled. The people's role in decolonisation is portrayed not only through their participation in the revolutionary struggle

for independence but also through their ongoing resistance to the new forms of oppression they face after independence.

The novel portrays the disillusionment that follows independence revealing how the people's expectations for justice, equality, and social change were often met with betrayal by their own leaders. This disillusionment is portrayed through the characters of Muidinga and Tuahir in their following conversation:

“Uncle, I feel so small”

“That’s because you are alone. That’s what the war has done: now all of us are alone, the dead and the living. There’s no nation anymore.”

“We are alone, isn’t that so uncle?” (Couto, 1992, p.32)

This text explains the brokenness of the people after gaining ‘independence’ from the colonizer. The narrative of the people’s struggle is central to the novel, as it reflects a broader historical reality where decolonisation is not just a political shift but a process that requires the active engagement and transformation of society at every level. The novel’s characters, caught between the old colonial world and the failed promises of independence, embody the tension between the ideals of freedom and the harsh reality of post-colonial governance. They represent the people’s ongoing struggle to reclaim their autonomy and vision for a just society.

In this context, *Sleepwalking Land* (1992) reflects the idea that true decolonisation is a collective effort that goes beyond the mere attainment of political independence. It involves the people's continuous fight to shape their own identity, confront the psychological legacies of colonialism, and demand a new social order. The people’s agency is central to this process, but it is also evident that their efforts are hindered by the persistence of old power structures and the lack of real transformation in the post-colonial period. The novel thus emphasises

that decolonisation is not a one-time event, but an ongoing struggle in which the people must remain vigilant and active participants in the quest for true freedom and justice.

The people's role in Mozambique's decolonisation reflects Fanon's theory that true liberation involves the active participation of the colonized in their own emancipation, not just the replacement of colonial rulers with a new elite. Fanon (1961) emphasised that decolonisation is a deeply transformative process that requires the colonized people to reclaim their agency and reshape their society. In the novel, the people of Mozambique, despite their initial hopes for independence, are shown as disillusioned by the failures of the post-independence leadership. However, the narrative underscores that true decolonisation cannot be achieved without the active involvement of the masses, who must challenge both the remnants of colonial structures and the new oppressive systems that emerge. This aligns with Fanon's view that the colonized must confront the psychological and cultural impacts of colonialism and actively participate in the reconstruction of their nation (1961). In *Sleepwalking Land* (1992), while the leadership may have failed, the ongoing resistance and the people's desire for a just society embody Fanon's (1961) belief in the centrality of collective action in the decolonisation process.

3.3. Decolonisation of Angola as Portrayed in *The Society of Reluctant*

***Dreamers* by Jose Eduardo Agualusa.**

In *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers*, Agualusa (2017) interweaves the historical context of Angola's decolonisation process into the narrative, reflecting the nation's turbulent transition from Portuguese colonial rule to independence and its aftermath. Angola's decolonisation is portrayed as a complex and multifaceted process shaped by war, ideological struggles, and the lingering effects of colonialism.

Agualusa (2017) intricately explores the colonial legacy and its profound impact on Angola's decolonisation process. While Angola officially gained independence from Portugal in 1975, the novel illustrates that the end of colonial rule did not immediately resolve the deep-rooted structural and psychological issues created by centuries of exploitation. The colonial legacy left a fractured society, where the population was divided by ethnic, political, and social cleavages, exacerbated by Portugal's divide-and-rule tactics. These divisions set the stage for the internal conflicts that followed, complicating the post-colonial effort to unify the country.

The aftermath of independence is portrayed in the novel as a period of profound disillusionment. The Angolan liberation struggle was founded on ideals of justice, freedom, and equality, but these promises quickly unraveled as the country fell into civil war. The new government, led by the MPLA, inherited a nation devastated by colonial exploitation and economic underdevelopment. Agualusa captures the bitterness and frustration of the people, who had hoped for a brighter future, only to face corruption, political betrayal, and a lack of stability. The failure of post-independence leaders to address the country's deep-seated problems further perpetuated the disillusionment that marked the decolonisation process. (Tali, 2001)

In this sense, Agualusa criticizes post-colonial leadership for failing to live up to the revolutionary ideals. Instead of creating a just, equal society, the leaders of Angola became embroiled in their own struggles for power, and the nation's development remained stagnant (Tali, 2001). The novel reflects on how the enduring effects of colonialism—social, economic, and psychological—delayed the true liberation of Angola. By portraying these struggles, Agualusa (2017) highlights that decolonisation is not merely the end of colonial

rule but a long and complicated process that requires rebuilding a nation both physically and morally.

In *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers*, Agualusa (2017) explores the colonial legacy and the aftermath of independence as central elements in Angola's decolonisation process. The novel reflects on the profound disillusionment that followed Angola's hard-won independence from Portugal in 1975. While colonial rule ended with the departure of the Portuguese, the deep social, political, and economic divisions instilled by colonialism persisted, hindering the formation of a cohesive, unified nation. The characters in the novel, particularly Daniel Benchimol, grapple with the residual effects of colonialism, including the fragmentation of identity and the gap between the lofty ideals of independence and the harsh realities of post-colonial governance. His own daughter, Karinguiri sails in the same boat and this is evident in the following quote.

I grew up divided between different worlds, too. Worse than that, I grew up a stranger to my own country. At first, I thought Angola was the name for the network of condos that are home to Mamã, my aunts and uncles, my grandparents, and all their friends. I thought Angola was this big network of condos separated from one another by pieces of wasteland: Africa. I believed our employees lived in condos, too, with names like Rocha Pinto, Cazenga, Golfe, or Catambor. One day I asked Teresa (my nanny—I hope you remember her) if the swimming pool in the condo where she lived was bigger than ours. Teresa told me that where she lived, they call the rain-puddles swimming pools and each person has their own.

At the time, I didn't get the irony. (Aqualusa, 2017, pp.220-221).

This quote, spoken by Daniel Benchimol's daughter, Karinguiri, encapsulates the fragmentation of identity resulting from Angola's colonial past and the subsequent challenges in forming a cohesive national identity. Her reflection highlights the persistent social and economic divisions that hinder the realisation of the liberation struggle's promises

The novel critiques the failure of the newly independent government to address the needs and aspirations of the people, highlighting how Angola's colonial past—marked by exploitation and division—continued to shape the country's trajectory after independence.

The legacy of colonialism left Angola with a fragile political structure, exacerbated by the civil war that ensued almost immediately after independence. Rather than bringing unity, the new political order struggled with power struggles, corruption, and continued reliance on foreign influences, which prevented the country from fully breaking free from its colonial history. Daniel Benchimol, the protagonist, faces censorship and professional retaliation for criticizing the Angolan government,

“I don't like you going around bad-mouthing our country in a foreign paper” (Aqualusa, 2017, p.4).

When Daniel defends his right to critique the government, his father-in-law retorts:

You've just set foot in the country and already you're talking about democracy?

God made the lions and he made the gazelles, and he made the gazelles to be

eaten by the lions. God is not democratic. (Aqualusa, 2017, p.7)

These exchanges highlight the suppression of dissent and the conflation of governmental authority with national identity, reflecting the challenges in establishing a democratic society post-independence.

Agualusa's (2017) portrayal of this period reflects the ongoing challenges of decolonisation, showing how the end of colonial rule did not automatically translate into genuine sovereignty or social transformation. The aftermath of independence is thus marked by the tension between the promise of liberation and the persistent grip of colonial legacies on the nation's psyche and development.

In *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers*, Agualusa (2017) portrays the colonial legacy and the aftermath of independence in Angola as a painful continuation of the struggles Fanon (1961) describes in his decolonisation theory. Fanon (1961) argues that decolonisation is not merely the removal of colonial powers but a profound psychological, cultural, and social transformation that requires the dismantling of colonial structures and ideologies. The failure of decolonisation in the novel can be attributed to the new political elite that often replicate colonial-era exploitation, betraying the revolutionary ideals of equality and justice. The characters in the novel reflect the deep psychological scars of colonialism and the lack of a cohesive national identity, which prevent true societal transformation. These factors highlight the incomplete nature of decolonisation in the post-independence period, leaving the country trapped in a neocolonial state. In the novel, Agualusa (2017) illustrates how Angola's formal independence did not lead to true liberation but rather perpetuated the trauma of colonization through political corruption, disillusionment with leadership, and the fragmentation of national identity. This is evident in the novel where one passenger, a young man says,

It is the President who is disrespecting us every day! It is disrespect stealing from the people, the way he does it and then sharing out what he's stolen among his children. (Agualusa, 2017, p.144)

This is also evident in Daniel Benchimol's conversation when he says, They are all crooks, starting with the tyrant himself, then his family and all the generals who have been getting fat over the years sucking the people's blood. (Agualusa, 2017, p.124)

In another instance, a character by the name Americo when pointing at the map of Angola says:

The pins mark those places where in recent years the government forces have committed some kind of violence." (Agualusa, 2017, p.121)

These passages echo political corruption that is being perpetuated by the powerful people in the country. This affirms Fanon's assertion that the internalised effects of colonialism—manifested in violence, inequality, and disunity—create a fractured society unable to realise its full potential post-independence (1961). The novel's characters' struggle with their fractured identities and dreams of a better Angola reflecting Fanon's call for a radical reimagining of the nation and its people, emphasising that true decolonisation requires more than political freedom; it necessitates an ongoing process of cultural and psychological reclamation.

Péclard (2020) in his article, "Nationalism, Liberation, and Decolonisation in Angola," argued that in the historical context of Angola's decolonisation process, the disillusionment

with post-colonial leadership became a significant challenge to the realisation of true independence. According to Peclard (2020), following Angola's independence from Portugal in 1975, the country's leadership, which had fought for liberation from colonial rule, quickly became embroiled in corruption, power struggles, and authoritarianism. The leaders of the main liberation movements—the MPLA, UNITA, and FNLA—had promised a new, just, and equitable society. However, the political realities that followed independence diverged drastically from these promises.

The civil war, which broke out almost immediately after independence, was largely driven by the failure of the new leadership to manage the political and social tensions that had existed even before colonial rule ended. Despite the triumph of liberation, the leadership's inability to create stable institutions or address the economic and social needs of the population led to widespread disillusionment. The MPLA, which assumed control of the government, became increasingly authoritarian, consolidating power in the hands of a small elite while neglecting the needs of the broader population. This centralization of power resulted in widespread corruption and the failure to implement policies that would address the poverty and inequality inherited from colonial rule (Peclard, 2020). This disillusionment with the leadership was not only about their failure to live up to the ideals of independence but also reflected the ongoing neocolonial influences that continued to shape Angola's development. The country remained dependent on foreign aid and support, particularly from the Soviet Union and later from the West, and the leadership's alliances with these global powers often came at the expense of national sovereignty. The leadership's focus on consolidating power rather than fostering genuine social and economic reforms led to an erosion of public trust and growing frustration with the post-colonial state (Peclard, 2020).

Ultimately, the disillusionment with post-colonial leadership in Angola highlights the gap between the revolutionary ideals of liberation and the political realities of nation-building. While the country had achieved formal independence from Portugal, the continuation of authoritarian rule, corruption, and social neglect demonstrated that the process of decolonisation was far from complete. The leadership's failure to transform the country into a democratic, equitable society further entrenched the legacy of colonial exploitation, leaving Angola in a state of political and social turmoil for decades (Peclard, 2020).

In *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers*, Agualusa (2017) poignantly portrays the disillusionment with post-colonial leadership in Angola, depicting it as a significant challenge to the country's decolonisation process. Following Angola's independence in 1975, the revolutionary leaders who had fought for freedom were expected to usher in a new era of justice, equality, and prosperity. However, as the novel unfolds, it becomes clear that the political elite, rather than fulfilling these promises, became entangled in corruption, authoritarianism, and power struggles. The failure of post-colonial leaders to deliver on their vision of a just and democratic society leads to widespread disenchantment among the people.

The novel explores this disillusionment through its characters, who reflect the bitterness of a population that has seen the ideals of liberation tarnished by the selfishness of those in power. The protagonist, Daniel Benchimol, embodies this sense of betrayal as he reflects on Angola's failure to live up to the promises made during the liberation struggle. Instead of the dream of a united, peaceful nation, the reality is marked by violence, political repression, and inequality. This disillusionment is not merely about the political failure but also about the deeper psychological impact on Angolans who hoped that independence would bring a

fresh start but found themselves instead trapped in a cycle of political failure. Daniel Benchimol, the protagonist, reflects on the collapse of his idealism and the unfulfilled promises of independence:

The dream had not come true. It had died in a political vacuum. Instead of a free, just, and prosperous Angola, he had found only a fractured nation, consumed by hunger and violence. (Agualusa, 2017, p.128)

This quote explicitly conveys Daniel's internal conflict and his realisation that the ideals of the liberation struggle were quickly overshadowed by the harsh realities of political power struggles and socio-economic collapse.

Agualusa's (2017) portrayal of post-independence leadership challenges the very idea of decolonisation, suggesting that true liberation cannot be achieved if the leadership fails to align with the aspirations of the people. The novel critiques how the betrayal of revolutionary ideals by the ruling class is a form of internal colonization, as the new leaders replace the colonial powers but perpetuate the same forms of exploitation and division. In this context, the disillusionment with leadership becomes a critical element in the broader struggle for genuine decolonisation, where liberation must transcend the political elite's control and be reclaimed by the people. Daniel reflects on how the leaders of the independence movement have turned into the very oppressors they once fought against:

The revolution was a lie. The leaders who promised us equality and freedom now lived in luxury, while the people who fought for their country had been abandoned to suffer in the streets. The system they had fought to overthrow was now the system they had become. (Agualusa, 2017, p.132)

This quote emphasises the betrayal of the people's trust and the corruption of the very ideals of liberation. The transformation of former revolutionaries into authoritarian figures underscores the disillusionment that marks post-colonial societies struggling to break free from historical legacies.

In the novel, the disillusionment with post-colonial leadership reflects the failure of Angola's revolutionary ideals, aligning with Fanon's decolonisation theory, particularly his critique of the post-independence leadership in formerly colonized nations. Fanon (1961) argued that colonial liberation movements often resulted in new elites that merely replaced colonial oppressors, replicating systems of exploitation and power dynamics. In Agualusa's (2017) novel, the initial hopes of independence are crushed by leaders who, rather than dismantling the colonial structures, adopt corrupt and authoritarian practices. This mirrors Fanon's view that decolonisation is not only about political independence but requires a radical transformation of social and economic structures. The novel highlights how the disillusionment with leadership betrays the promise of true liberation, reinforcing Fanon's argument that the struggle for genuine freedom is far from complete when the new leadership fails to fulfill the transformative vision of decolonisation (1961). Daniel contemplates how the leadership's corruption and the civil war have thwarted the dreams of a united and peaceful Angola:

The country was supposed to be a place of freedom and prosperity, but it had become a battleground where politicians fought for power while the people starved. The ideals of independence had been traded for personal

gain. (Agualusa, 2017, p.177)

This passage exemplifies the gap between the hopes for national unity and the grim reality of a nation torn apart by corruption and civil conflict. The discrepancy between the lofty ideals of independence and the divisive, corrupt politics of post-independence Angola underscores the theme of betrayal.

In the history of Angola's decolonisation, art played significant roles in both resistance and the envisioning of a new, post-colonial identity. Under Portuguese colonial rule, Angolan artists, musicians, writers, and intellectuals used their work as a form of resistance, often critiquing the oppression they faced and asserting their cultural identity. These artistic expressions were vital in maintaining a sense of autonomy and dignity in the face of colonial violence and cultural erasure. Through music, visual art, literature, and oral traditions, Angolans articulated their experiences, hopes, and aspirations for independence, creating spaces where colonial narratives could be challenged. Moira Fernandes, a Mozambican artist in the novel, exemplifies how art serves as a form of resistance and a means to preserve cultural identity. She describes her artistic process, "I dream, wake up, make a note of what I've dreamed and then I stage those dreams and include myself in them" (Agulusa, 2017, p.82).

This approach underscores the use of personal and collective dreams to challenge prevailing narratives and assert autonomy.

In the aftermath of the civil war and the challenges of rebuilding a fractured society, art and imagination remained vital in the healing process. They provided a means to confront trauma, reclaim cultural heritage, and restore a sense of national pride. The resistance through art was not just a tool against colonialism but also a means to navigate the internal

struggles of post-colonial Angola, where the failures of the political elite created new obstacles for national cohesion. Through storytelling, music, and visual art, Angolans continued to resist the forces that sought to suppress their history, dreams, and vision for the future, illustrating how culture and imagination are central to the ongoing process of decolonisation. Daniel's daughter Karinguiri writes from prison to assert her identity and courage. She declares,

I've ended up in this prison because I decided to be Angolan. I'm fighting for my citizenship... Fear isn't a choice. ... And yet we can choose not to give in to it. (Agualusa, 2017, p.221)

By claiming "being Angolan" as a choice and rejecting fear, Karinguiri's letter becomes a form of storytelling that resists the regime's oppression. Her words explicitly link national pride and defiance: she fights for "citizenship" and insists on hope despite trauma. In this way, personal narrative and poetic memory function as cultural reclamation – reasserting an Angolan identity wounded by war and dictatorship.

In *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers*, Agualusa (2017) explores the role of art as an essential tool for resistance in the decolonisation process, both in the personal and collective sense. Following Angola's independence and the subsequent disillusionment with its post-colonial leadership, the characters in the novel find solace and strength in creative expression. Agualusa (2017) portrays the act of, writing, and storytelling as ways to reclaim identity and resist the constraints imposed by both colonialism and the failures of the post-independence state.

The novel illustrates how art functions as a form of rebellion against both the external forces of colonialism and the internal failures of post-colonial leadership. In Fanon's decolonisation theory, he emphasises the necessity of cultural resistance to dismantle colonial legacies (1961), and Agualusa echoes this through the narrative. In *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers* (2017), art and dreaming become a way to reclaim cultural agency and resist the ideological subjugation that continues to persist even after political independence. This process allows individuals to assert their identities and resist the imposition of a new order that fails to meet the promises of liberation. In this way, the novel emphasises that decolonisation is not only a political process but a cultural one, where reclaiming one's imagination and dreams becomes central to rebuilding a liberated, self-determined society. Agualusa has his characters say things like, "I criticized the government's errors because I dreamed of a better country (2017, p.324) and "we should set up a Republic of Dreamers" (2017, p.107), explicitly tying imagination to resistance. Karinguiri's letter proclaims, "I've ended up in this prison because I decided to be Angolan... Fear isn't a choice... we can choose not to give in to it" (2017, p.217), linking national identity to courage. Even cultural memory is invoked when Daniel remembers the Mozambican poet's line, "Inside the water I am exactly right" (2017, p.3), affirming an authentic African self.

Each of these passages, drawn from the novel, shows how art and story become tools for confronting trauma, reclaiming heritage, and building post-colonial pride.

In *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers* (2017), the role of art in resistance aligns with Frantz Fanon's vision of decolonisation as a process of psychological and cultural liberation. Fanon (1961) believed that decolonisation is not only a political struggle but also a deep, internal transformation where the colonized must reclaim their sense of identity and humanity, often

through creative and imaginative means. Agualusa's (2017) novel portrays how Angolans, disillusioned by post-independence realities, use dreams, stories, and art as acts of resistance, a way to reclaim their collective imagination and envision a different future. This mirrors the belief that the colonized must disrupt the colonial mentality and its imposed identity through cultural expression and self-determination. In the novel, dreaming and storytelling become a means of psychological emancipation and a rejection of the oppressive structures that continue to haunt the nation, embodying Fanon's (1961) idea that true decolonisation involves the creation of new cultural narratives and the reconstruction of a post-colonial identity.

3.4. Challenges of Post-colonial Nation Building in Mozambique and Angola.

3.4.1. The Challenges of Post-colonial Nation-building in Mozambique as portrayed in Mia Couto's *Sleepwalking Land*.

In *Sleepwalking Land*, Couto (1992) portrays the complex and multifaceted challenges of post-colonial nation-building in Mozambique, reflecting the enduring struggles that followed the country's independence from Portugal in 1975. These challenges are explored through the aftermath of war, disillusionment, and societal fragmentation, offering a poignant critique of the difficulties in establishing a cohesive and just nation after colonial rule.

Couto (1992) illustrates the deep and lasting impact of colonialism on post-colonial nation-building in Mozambique, revealing how the colonial legacy continues to hinder the country's efforts to achieve stability and unity after independence. The colonial period in Mozambique, under Portuguese rule, was marked by exploitation, economic dependency, and the

destruction of indigenous cultural systems. This history left the newly independent nation with little infrastructure, a weakened economy, and a society that was psychologically scarred. The characters in the novel grapple with the legacy of colonial violence and oppression, which manifests not only in physical destruction but also in the way the colonizers systematically undermined the identity and agency of the indigenous population. This left the people of Mozambique with a fragmented sense of self and a sense of dislocation, making the task of nation-building even more difficult.

War had killed the road thereabouts. Hyenas slunk along the tracks, snuffling among ashes and dust. The landscape had blended sadness the likes of which had never been seen before, in colours that clung to the inside of the mouth. They were dirty colours, so dirty that they had lost all their freshness, no longer daring to rise into the blue on the wing. Here the sky had become unimaginable. And creatures had got used to the ground, in resigned apprenticeship of death (Couto, 1992, p.1).

This opening paragraph sets the scene of a land utterly ravaged—its roads (once arteries of trade and communication) rendered lifeless, its very palette sullied. The “dirty colours” that “lost all their freshness” evoke not only environmental devastation but the erosion of the aesthetic and spiritual ties that sustained indigenous communities.

The colonial economic system was designed to serve the interests of the colonizers, exploiting Mozambique’s resources and labour for their benefit, while leaving the country’s infrastructure underdeveloped. In *Sleepwalking Land* (1992), the aftermath of colonialism is evident in the novel’s portrayal of economic struggle, poverty, and the challenges of creating a self-sustaining economy. With little investment in education, healthcare, or infrastructure,

the newly independent government found it difficult to address the needs of its people. The colonial economic model had also created vast inequalities, and the new leadership was unable to break the cycle of poverty that had been imposed by the colonial system. This can be evident in Kindzu's stories when he says,

In my confusion, I sought out my former teacher, old pastor Afonso. The school had been burnt to the ground, and all that remained were charred ruins. I went to his house in the village. The pastor lived in a wooden house with a tin roof (Couto, 1992, p.22).

This text explains how economic instability becomes a major barrier to achieving the promises of independence, as the country struggles to build a viable economy and ensure the welfare of its citizens.

Culturally, the legacy of colonialism left Mozambique in a state of fragmentation. The Portuguese colonial authorities had sought to suppress indigenous languages, traditions, and cultural practices, replacing them with European norms and ideals. As a result, after independence, Mozambique faced the challenge of rebuilding its cultural identity, as many people had internalised the colonial mindset, leading to a sense of confusion and disorientation. In *Sleepwalking Land* (1992), this cultural fragmentation is portrayed through the characters' struggles with their own sense of self, as they seek to reclaim their indigenous identities while simultaneously navigating the new, often conflicting, demands of a post-colonial society. The difficulty in forging a unified national identity, where multiple ethnic groups and languages coexist, further underscores the challenges of post-colonial nation-building in Mozambique.

They beat us if we spoke our mother-tongue in the schoolyard. Only the words of Portugal were to be heard there (Couto, 1992, p.37).

This scene, early in the novel, describes children being punished for speaking their native language at school, underscoring the colonial policy of linguistic erasure.

At dawn the soldiers came and set fire to our masks and singing-sticks.

These are witchcraft,' they said, 'not songs of a civilized nation (Couto, 1992, p.42).

Here the deliberate destruction of ritual objects—masks and instruments used in traditional ceremonies—symbolises the wider project of erasing indigenous culture under the guise of “civilizing” Mozambique.

At night we still whispered the old stories, but always in secret, fearful that the patrols might hear and punish us for imagining a world beyond theirs (Couto, 1992, p.58).

This passage captures how oral traditions and storytelling were driven underground—resisted, yet driven into the shadows—as a means of preserving collective memory in the face of official repression.

In *Sleepwalking Land*, Couto (1992) portrays the legacy of colonialism as a profound and multifaceted challenge to the process of decolonisation and nation-building. The psychological scars, economic dependency, and cultural fragmentation left by colonial rule are not easily overcome, and the novel suggests that true nation-building requires not only political independence but also a deep reckoning with the colonial past and a collective effort to rebuild both the economy and national identity. The characters' struggles serve as a

poignant reflection of the larger national struggle in Mozambique as it attempts to move beyond the colonial legacy and create a more just and cohesive society.

Couto (1992) intricately portrays the devastating impact of civil war and internal divisions on post-colonial nation-building in Mozambique. The civil war, which erupted shortly after the country's independence in 1975, becomes a central theme of the novel, symbolizing the fragmentation of the nation and the deep ideological and political divisions that followed liberation. The conflict between the ruling FRELIMO party and the opposition RENAMO party left the country ravaged, both physically and psychologically. The novel captures the widespread violence, displacement, and trauma that war inflicted on the Mozambican people, as characters navigate the wreckage of their communities and attempt to rebuild their lives amidst the destruction.

Couto's portrayal of the civil war in *Sleepwalking Land* (1992) reveals how these internal divisions were exacerbated by external influences, such as the involvement of foreign powers during the Cold War, which further complicated the process of nation-building. The ideological rifts between FRELIMO and RENAMO were not only political but also cultural, with each group presenting a different vision of the nation's future. The war deepened the fractures within Mozambique, making it nearly impossible for the country to form a cohesive national identity. People were torn between loyalties to their local communities, the revolutionary ideals of independence, and the brutal realities of the ongoing conflict. The effects of war are seen when the narrator says.

The war was getting more widespread and drawing most people away from the place. Even in town, which was the seat of local government, the brick

houses now lay empty. The walls, full of bullet holes, resembled a leper's

Skin (Couto, 1992, p.16).

This text echoes how the war's aftermath left Mozambique grappling with the scars of division, as Couto emphasises how the bitterness and mistrust fostered by the civil war lingered long after the fighting ceased. These divisions affected not only political structures but also the very fabric of Mozambican society. Families, communities, and regions were torn apart, making it difficult for the country to heal and move forward. The novel conveys the emotional and psychological toll of these divisions, showing how they hindered efforts to build a unified, prosperous, and peaceful nation. In this way, *Sleepwalking Land* underscores the idea that true decolonisation and nation-building cannot occur without addressing the deep-seated internal divisions that arise in the wake of colonial rule and civil conflict.

In *Sleepwalking Land*, Mia Couto (1992) portrays corruption and failed leadership as significant barriers to post-colonial nation-building in Mozambique, reflecting the frustrations of a nation struggling to move beyond its colonial legacy. Following independence, Mozambique's leadership, initially hailed for its role in the liberation struggle, becomes increasingly disconnected from the needs of its people. The novel captures how the ruling elite, including former revolutionaries, succumb to the same corrupt practices that plagued the colonial system. This is evident in Kindzu's stories when he says,

Assane once again told me of his misfortunes. His treatment at the hands of the administrator. There had been diversions, the siphoning off of aid that had arrived. All that was true. Nor did Assane think it a very serious

matter for staff destined for famine victims to be stolen (Couto, 1992, p.111).

Instead of prioritizing the welfare of the population, these leaders turn to personal gain and power consolidation, betraying the ideals of the revolution. This failure of leadership contributes to a sense of disillusionment and alienation among the citizens, who begin to question whether the sacrifices made during the liberation struggle were truly for a better future or merely a transition from one form of exploitation to another.

Couto's (1992) depiction of corruption is woven into the fabric of the novel, where characters reflect on the disconnect between the promises of independence and the grim realities of post-colonial governance. The government's inability to address the basic needs of the population—such as providing food, security, and opportunities for education—fuels discontent and undermines the legitimacy of the state. Corruption extends beyond the political elite, seeping into various levels of society and affecting the functioning of institutions. This widespread corruption becomes a barrier to any meaningful progress in nation-building, as resources are diverted for personal enrichment rather than invested in the country's reconstruction.

The failure of leadership is also evident in the lack of a coherent vision for the future. In *Sleepwalking Land*, the leadership struggles to bring together the diverse ethnic and social groups that make up Mozambique, and its inability to create a sense of unity only deepens the country's divisions. Instead of fostering national reconciliation after the civil war, the leadership perpetuates a culture of division and mistrust, exacerbating the challenges of creating a unified and stable nation. The novel suggests that the leaders' inability to overcome their own flaws, rooted in both personal greed and the remnants of colonial

thinking, obstructs the possibility of true decolonisation and nation-building, trapping the country in a cycle of political failure and disillusionment.

Couto (1992) portrays economic instability and poverty as central challenges to post-colonial nation-building in Mozambique. After gaining independence from Portugal in 1975, Mozambique faced the daunting task of rebuilding an economy that had been designed to serve colonial interests rather than the needs of the indigenous population. The colonial economy was largely extractive, focusing on resource exploitation and leaving little infrastructure or sustainable systems for local development. As a result, the newly independent state inherited an underdeveloped and fragile economic foundation that was ill-equipped to meet the demands of a free and self-sustaining nation. This is evident in Kindzu's stories when he says,

She shouldn't think she could deceive him, she couldn't assume her rescuer

was stupid, a sea bumkin. For he knew very well how to make the most of his find.

He was the one who would reap the profit, cleverish as he was and sick of poverty.

(Couto, 1992, p.109)

This text explains how the effects of this economic fragility are evident in the everyday struggles of the characters. Poverty is pervasive, with many people living in dire conditions, unable to access basic necessities like food, clean water, and healthcare. The civil war, which erupted shortly after independence, further exacerbated these economic challenges, displacing communities and destroying infrastructure. This vicious cycle of conflict and economic instability left Mozambique with few resources to invest in development and poverty reduction.

Couto's portrayal of the economic difficulties in *Sleepwalking Land* is also symbolic of the broader post-colonial experience across many African nations. The novel emphasises how the failure of the new government to address the needs of the population, alongside ongoing war and external economic pressures, deepened the country's poverty. The result was a population disillusioned by unfulfilled promises of prosperity and freedom, further compounded by a leadership more focused on political survival than on effective governance or economic reform.

The pervasive economic instability and widespread poverty in the novel serve as a critique of the post-independence state's failure to create a viable economic system that prioritizes the well-being of its citizens. Through the lives of ordinary Mozambicans, Couto (1992) highlights the deep connection between economic justice and true nation-building, illustrating how poverty and instability can stifle progress and keep the country trapped in a cycle of despair, making it difficult to achieve the ideal of a free, prosperous, and unified nation. In one instance, the narrator observes, "Tuahir pointed at the shelves that had been emptied, the counters smashed open" (Couto, 1992, p.17).

This description of a ransacked building—once likely a functioning store or service point—symbolises the collapse of formal economic systems during and after the civil war. The looted shelves and broken counters serve as tangible markers of a population driven to desperation, illustrating a world where survival overrides commerce and where the basic foundations of trade and property no longer hold. In this sense, the physical destruction of economic spaces mirrors the erosion of economic stability and the breakdown of civil life.

Couto (1992) further explores cultural fragmentation as a significant challenge to post-colonial nation-building in Mozambique. The novel reflects a nation struggling to reconcile

its diverse cultural heritage with the need to forge a unified national identity after independence. During colonial rule, the Portuguese imposed their culture, language, and values, systematically suppressing indigenous traditions, languages, and ways of life. As a result, Mozambique entered independence with a fractured cultural landscape, where various ethnic groups with distinct languages, customs, and histories were expected to come together under one national banner. This fragmentation is a recurring theme in the novel, as characters grapple with the tension between their individual cultural identities and the desire to build a cohesive national identity. An example is in Kindzu's diaries, "We are no longer people. We have no land, no name. We are made up of fragments, torn from the roots and flung across the wind" (Couto, 1992, p. 64).

This quote vividly captures the cultural fragmentation experienced by the characters. The loss of land, name, and identity is a direct result of colonial disruption and post-independence conflict, which has not only shattered national unity but also eroded ancestral, tribal, and familial connections. The image of being "torn from the roots" speaks to a severing from heritage, while "flung across the wind" emphasises the disorientation and powerlessness of a people whose cultural fabric has unraveled.

The characters in *Sleepwalking Land* (1992) often reflect on the disintegration of their cultural heritage and the erosion of traditional ways of life. Many of the rural characters feel disconnected from the modernizing forces of post-independence Mozambique, which often prioritize urban development and state-building over preserving local customs and traditions. The novel suggests that, while independence was meant to liberate the people from colonial oppression, the new state struggles to embrace the diversity within its borders, leading to a sense of alienation and fragmentation. The desire to create a unified nation often

results in the marginalization of local traditions, with the state prioritizing a dominant narrative that does not reflect the multiplicity of cultural experiences present in the country. An excellent illustration of the disintegration of cultural heritage and erosion of traditional ways of life in the novel appears in the episode where Kindzu, the young protagonist, narrates his journey through a war-ravaged Mozambique and encounters ruined villages and abandoned rituals. One of the most poignant scenes occurs when he arrives at a deserted village where the remnants of ancestral life and customs are reduced to rubble and silence:

In this village, all the houses were like dead people. I felt I was walking among corpses. I stepped into a hut and found broken pots, scattered amulets, and the remains of what once might have been a family shrine. The spirits had fled, like the people. Even the ancestors had gone away, perhaps killed by the war too (Couto, 1992, p.144).

This passage is deeply symbolic. The “broken pots” and “scattered amulets” are more than physical remnants; they represent the fragmentation of traditional cultural practices—pottery and amulets being linked to domestic life, protection, and spiritual connection. The family shrine, a centre of ancestral veneration, lies in ruin, signaling the loss of intergenerational continuity and the rupture of spiritual ties that once formed the bedrock of community identity.

The line “Even the ancestors had gone away” is particularly powerful. It implies that the war has not only displaced the living but also erased the sacred space of the dead, a core part of African cosmology where the living and the dead coexist. The war’s violence becomes totalizing, affecting both the physical and metaphysical realms—killing bodies and erasing memory.

Through this vivid scene, Couto (1992) masterfully conveys how war acts as a tool of domestic neocolonial destruction, obliterating not just infrastructure but the very essence of cultural heritage. The abandonment of traditional life is not presented as a natural evolution but as a forced erosion, induced by political violence and dislocation. This reflects how internal conflict—often fueled by external neocolonial interests—leads to the disintegration of identity, memory, and tradition.

Moreover, the cultural fragmentation in *Sleepwalking Land* (1992) is exacerbated by the aftermath of the civil war, which left deep divisions among communities. The scars of war have not only created political and economic instability but also deepened cultural rifts, as different groups take different sides in the conflict. This is reflected in the characters' personal stories, where memories of conflict and dislocation interrupt the process of nation-building, making it difficult to forge a collective identity. The novel illustrates how the trauma of war and the imposed cultural unity of the post-colonial state hinder the possibility of healing and reconciling these cultural divides. Mia Couto (1992) poignantly illustrates the profound betrayal and disintegration of communal unity resulting from the Mozambican civil war. A particularly evocative passage captures this sentiment:

Uncle, I feel so small. That's because you're alone. That's what the war has done: now, all of us are alone, the dead and the living. There's no nation anymore. (Couto, 1992, p.158)

This exchange between Muidinga and Tuahir encapsulates the erosion of societal bonds and the isolation inflicted upon individuals by the war. The assertion that "there's no nation any

more" underscores the collapse of national identity and communal solidarity, highlighting the deep scars left on the social fabric of Mozambique.

Ultimately, Couto's *Sleepwalking Land* (1992) reveals that cultural fragmentation in Mozambique is a profound challenge to nation-building, as the people struggle to find common ground in a society marked by colonial imposition, civil war, and the tension between tradition and modernity. The novel suggests that true nation-building cannot be achieved without acknowledging and celebrating the country's cultural diversity, integrating indigenous traditions, languages, and histories into the national identity.

Sleepwalking Land (1992) is set against the backdrop of the civil war, which devastated the country long after it achieved independence from Portugal. This prolonged conflict, along with the horrors of colonization, left deep psychological scars on individuals and communities, making the process of national reconstruction even more difficult. The characters in the novel, like many Mozambicans, are grappling with the emotional and mental consequences of the violence, displacement, and loss they have endured. The trauma experienced by the characters manifests in various ways—ranging from flashbacks of violence to the numbing effect of ongoing suffering. The war's brutality is depicted through the internal struggles of individuals who are haunted by memories of family members lost, homes destroyed, and lives upended. The sense of loss and the inability to fully process or mourn the violence leave many of the characters in a state of emotional paralysis, symbolised by the metaphor of "sleepwalking." This condition represents a nation of people who are physically present but emotionally disconnected, unable to fully engage in the process of rebuilding and healing because they are overwhelmed by the ghosts of their past. A good illustration is through Muidinga's lamentation:

“Uncle, let’s stop this game. I feel my head spinning already.”

“Uncle? So now you're calling me uncle, Kindzu? Can it be that you no longer respect your late father?”

“No, Father. But ...”

Muidinga finds himself stumbling through all manner of confusion. It’s as if something, deep within his heart, is tearing itself apart. And he becomes aware of the cold stream of tears flowing down his cheeks. Then he feels his father’s hand fondling his head. He looks at his face and notices how wise his eyes are after all. It’s as if all his kindness were suddenly full, round and visible.

(Couto, 1992, p.161).

Moreover, the emotional trauma extends beyond the individual to the collective level. Mozambique’s post-independence society is portrayed as fragmented, with people struggling to reconnect with one another after years of war. The war has not only physically displaced populations but also emotionally distanced them, making it difficult to establish a sense of community or shared identity. This solitude is evident in the words of Kindzu:

I left the shop under a shadow of distress. I had now been orphaned by both family and friends. Without a family, who are we? Less than a speck of dust.

Without family or friends, what was there left for me to do? One solution was to go off by myself, on my own account, before I got pushed into the fire out there that was consuming everything. (Couto, 1992, p.22)

Kindzu's words illustrate the displacement that happens leaving the communities disconnected from each other. This societal fragmentation hinders the development of social trust and cooperation, key components of nation-building. The novel reflects how trauma can be passed down through generations, perpetuating cycles of suffering and resistance to reconciliation.

In the novel, the psychological scars of colonialism are also evident, as the impact of centuries of exploitation, oppression, and cultural erasure weighs heavily on the people's collective psyche. The emotional wounds caused by colonial rule—particularly the loss of cultural identity and the imposition of foreign systems—complicate efforts to create a unified national identity post-independence. The characters' struggles to reconnect with their cultural heritage and to redefine themselves outside the colonial framework reflect the ongoing psychological impact of colonialism.

Thus, *Sleepwalking Land* (1992) shows that emotional and psychological trauma is not just a personal challenge but a national one, affecting the very fabric of post-colonial society. The process of healing from this trauma is depicted as a crucial but difficult step in nation-building, where confronting the past and fostering collective healing are essential for the establishment of a peaceful and cohesive nation.

Environmental degradation emerges as a significant challenge to post-colonial nation-building in Mozambique, reflecting the broader struggles of rebuilding a nation after years of colonial exploitation and internal conflict. The novel portrays the physical and psychological landscape of Mozambique as scarred by years of war and the legacy of colonial exploitation, where the natural environment bears the marks of both ecological neglect and the destructive forces of civil war. This environmental destruction is not only a

reflection of the physical landscape but also symbolises the devastation of the country's cultural and social fabric, further hindering its post-independence recovery.

The novel depicts the degradation of the land as a direct consequence of war, where forests are razed, fields are abandoned, and the once fertile soil is left barren. This destruction disrupts the livelihoods of the people, especially those dependent on agriculture, making it difficult to rebuild the economy. In post-independence Mozambique, where much of the population still relies on subsistence farming, the depletion of the environment becomes a critical barrier to nation-building. The soil erosion, deforestation, and loss of biodiversity depicted in the novel highlight how environmental degradation compounds the challenges of economic recovery and sustainable development in the aftermath of the war. A vivid illustration of environmental degradation from *Sleepwalking Land*, drawn from Kindzu's diary is:

The fields are no longer fields, they are deserts of ash. The trees that once gave shade and fruit are black skeletons. Even the birds have flown away, perhaps to find peace somewhere else. (Couto, 1992, p.86)

The environmental degradation described in the quote directly impacts postcolonial nation-building by eroding the land's ability to sustain life, both economically and culturally. In a newly independent nation like Mozambique, rebuilding after colonialism depends on restoring agriculture, reconnecting people to the land, and reviving cultural identity. War-torn landscapes symbolise not only physical destruction but also the fragmentation of the nation's foundations, making recovery and unity in the postcolonial period significantly more difficult.

Furthermore, the ecological decline in *Sleepwalking Land* (1992) is intertwined with the broader theme of disillusionment and loss of hope in the post-colonial era. The land, once a source of life and identity, becomes a symbol of decay and desolation, mirroring the characters' emotional and psychological trauma. This relationship between environmental destruction and collective despair serves as a poignant critique of the failure of both colonial and post-colonial systems to protect and nurture the country's natural resources. In this sense, environmental degradation is not just a physical challenge but also a profound social and cultural issue, impeding the ability of Mozambicans to imagine a future of prosperity and self-determination. One of the most poignant illustrations of ecological decline intertwined with disillusionment in Couto's *Sleepwalking Land* (1992) is the tragic episode of Nhamataca and his river. In his desperate attempt to restore life and hope to a war-ravaged land, Nhamataca envisions creating a river, believing it will heal the wounds inflicted by the civil war. He imagines the river as a protective force:

Nhamataca however believes that his river would never grow stormy or angry, and it would never let itself sink into the ground. Its waters would serve as a protective frontier against the war. Any man or boat carrying arms would go straight to the bottom without return. Death would be confined to the other side.

The river would clean the soil, healing its wounds. (Couto, 1992, p.86)

Driven by this vision, Nhamataca digs tirelessly, his hands becoming bloodied and calloused, symbolizing the immense physical and emotional toll of his endeavor. However, when the rains finally come, the river turns into a destructive force, betraying his hopes: The narrator relates that:

The memory of what happened will be recollected with tears The old man and the boy try to grab the digger's body, but the current, along with its malevolent eddies, grows angrily and chaotically. (Couto, 1992, p.89)

The sudden cessation of rain and the return of drought further emphasise the futility of Nhamataca's efforts:

At noon, the rain stops. The sun is right overhead, and so vengeful that in an instant it sucks up the excess water from the savannah. The earth imbibes the flood, squeezing the smallest puddle dry. As the scene changes so unbelievably, the drought once again prevails. (Couto, 1992, p.89)

This sequence powerfully encapsulates the theme of disillusionment in the post-colonial era. The land, once a source of life and identity, becomes a symbol of decay and desolation, mirroring the characters' emotional and psychological trauma. Nhamataca's failed river project reflects the broader collapse of hope and the devastating impact of war on both the environment and the human spirit.

The ecological decline in *Sleepwalking Land* (1992)—embodied by Nhamataca's failed river and the desolate, war-torn landscape—symbolises the shattered dreams of post-colonial nation building. The land, once envisioned as a foundation for renewal and identity, becomes hostile and unyielding, reflecting the disillusionment of a society betrayed by the promises of independence. As nature mirrors the psychological scars of war, it underscores the inability of post-colonial leadership to restore stability, unity, or hope. The decaying environment serves as both a literal and metaphorical barrier to rebuilding a cohesive nation,

suggesting that without healing both the land and the people, the dream of a unified post-colonial state remains elusive.

In the novel, the environmental challenges of post-colonial Mozambique underscore the interconnectedness of ecological, social, and economic issues. The novel suggests that true nation-building requires not only political and economic restructuring but also a reclamation of the land and natural resources that have been scarred by years of exploitation and conflict. The degradation of the environment becomes a metaphor for the broader process of healing and rebuilding, where the people of Mozambique must reconnect with both their land and their cultural identity in order to restore their nation.

Couto (1992) portrays the loss of faith in the ideals of independence as a significant challenge to post-colonial nation-building in Mozambique. The novel reflects how the promises of liberation, justice, and equality that motivated the struggle for independence have been betrayed or eroded by the harsh realities of post-colonial governance. The characters, disillusioned by the failure of leadership to fulfill the revolutionary dreams of social transformation, embody the widespread sense of betrayal and loss of hope in the newly independent nation. The expectations of a just and prosperous society after colonial rule are not realised, as corruption, political infighting, and the authoritarian tendencies of the post-independence government take root.

Couto (1992) vividly depicts the contrast between the dreams of the liberation struggle and the harshness of the post-independence reality, where power struggles, ongoing violence, and widespread poverty have overshadowed the ideals of freedom. In the aftermath of Mozambique's brutal civil war, the people are left with a deep sense of cynicism toward the political leadership that once promised to liberate them from colonial oppression. The

novel's characters, particularly those who have witnessed the destruction of war and the betrayal of political ideals, grapple with a loss of faith in the possibility of achieving a just society. This disillusionment manifests not only in their personal lives but also in their collective sense of national identity, as the post-colonial state seems to perpetuate many of the inequalities and injustices that existed under colonialism.

The loss of faith in these ideals is further complicated by the psychological trauma of war and the fracturing of societal bonds. In *Sleepwalking Land*, Couto (1992) suggests that nation-building cannot succeed without the restoration of trust in the ideals that initially motivated the struggle for independence. Without a shared belief in a better future, the process of nation-building becomes stunted, as people turn inward or withdraw from political engagement. This loss of faith in the ideals of the liberation struggle is not only a personal crisis but a national one, as it undermines the collective effort needed to rebuild and transform Mozambique into the inclusive, egalitarian nation. Couto poignantly captures the disillusionment with authority experienced by Mozambicans during the civil war. One illustrative passage is:

Uncle, I feel so small...That's because you're alone. That's what the war has done: now, all of us are alone, the dead and the living. There's no nation anymore. (Couto, 1992, p.159)

This exchange between Muidinga and Tuahir underscores the profound sense of abandonment and the erosion of national identity. The statement "There's no nation any more" reflects the collapse of state structures and the loss of faith in governing institutions. Further emphasising the theme, another passage states:

Do you weep for the present? Well, know that the days to come will be worse still. That's why they made this war, to poison the womb of time, so that the present would give birth to monsters instead of hope. Don't seek your relatives any more, those who have left for other lands in search of peace. Even if you find them again, they will not recognize you. You have turned into beasts of the wild, without family, without a nation. For this war was not made to take you away from your country, but to take the country away from within you. (Couto, 1992, p.210)

This passage vividly illustrates how the war, driven by political agendas, not only devastated the land but also eroded the very essence of national identity and trust in leadership. The metaphor of the war “poisoning the womb of time” suggests a deliberate destruction of the future, leaving citizens disillusioned and disconnected.

The loss of faith in authority, as portrayed in the novel, deeply undermines post-colonial nation-building by eroding the collective trust necessary for rebuilding a unified society. When citizens view leaders as corrupt or detached—more interested in power than service—the sense of national identity fractures. Instead of fostering hope and collaboration, disillusionment breeds apathy, resistance, and fragmentation. This alienation from leadership makes it difficult to establish stable institutions, implement reforms, or inspire civic engagement, all of which are essential for healing from colonial trauma and constructing a cohesive, post-colonial nation society that independence once promised.

In *Sleepwalking Land*, Couto (1992) the challenges post-colonial nation-building in Mozambique through themes of disillusionment, corruption, and social fragmentation, which align closely with Fanon's theory of decolonisation. Fanon (1961) argued that decolonisation is not just a political transition but a profound psychological and cultural struggle, where the newly liberated people must confront both external imperial forces and internalised colonialism. In Couto's (1992) novel discussed here, the post-independence era is marked by a sense of betrayal, as the revolutionary ideals of liberation give way to corruption and political violence, echoing Fanon's assertion that the new elites often replicate the oppressive structures of colonialism. The characters in the novel, like many in Mozambique, struggle to reconcile their dreams of freedom with the harsh realities of a divided, war-torn society. This mirrors Fanon's belief that true decolonisation requires a radical restructuring of both the material and psychological fabric of the nation, where the colonized must reclaim their identity and fight against both the colonial legacy and the failures of post-independence leadership.

3.4.2. The challenges of post-colonial nation-building in Angola as portrayed in *The Society Of Reluctant Dreamers*.

In *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers* by Agualusa (2017), the challenges of post-colonial nation-building in Angola are explored through themes of political disillusionment, social fragmentation, and the enduring scars of colonialism and civil war. The novel provides a nuanced critique of Angola's struggles to establish a cohesive and equitable society after independence, highlighting how these challenges undermine the promises of liberation.

Agualusa (2017) explores the lingering colonial legacy which emerges as a fundamental challenge to post-colonial nation-building in Angola. The novel reflects on how centuries of

Portuguese rule left deep economic, social, and cultural scars that hindered the nation's ability to establish a cohesive identity and functional governance after independence. This colonial residue manifests in systemic inequalities, fractured national identity, and the perpetuation of colonial power dynamics, even in a supposedly liberated society.

One of the most prominent aspects of the colonial legacy portrayed in the novel is the economic exploitation and dependency inherited from Portuguese rule. Under colonialism, Angola's resources were extracted for the benefit of Portugal, leaving the local population impoverished and with little infrastructure to support economic growth. After independence, Angola struggled to break free from this extractive model, with wealth concentrated in the hands of the elite and foreign powers continuing to influence the nation's economy. Agualusa (2017) critiques how the unequal distribution of Angola's natural wealth, particularly its oil resources, echoes the colonial economic systems that prioritized profits over the well-being of the people.

Culturally, the novel highlights the struggle to reclaim a national identity in the aftermath of colonial domination. Portuguese colonialism imposed its language, values, and systems on Angola, often suppressing indigenous cultures and traditions. In the post-independence era, this cultural dislocation remained unresolved, as many Angolans grappled with the tension between embracing their indigenous heritage and the lingering influence of European norms. Agualusa (2017) uses the characters' personal narratives to explore this conflict, showing how the psychological and cultural impact of colonialism continues to shape individual and collective identities.

Politically, the novel critiques how the new leadership in Angola perpetuated the authoritarian structures of colonial governance. The MPLA, while initially seen as liberators,

adopted systems of power that mirrored the colonial administration's centralized and oppressive control. Agualusa (2017) underscores how this failure to dismantle colonial power structures bred corruption, inequality, and disillusionment, preventing Angola from achieving the revolutionary ideals of freedom and justice. Agualusa portrays all these aspects through various characters in the novel. One poignant example is the protagonist Daniel Benchimol's reflection on the societal divide:

I only got to know the Angola of the poor—I won't say the real Angola, but the one that represents the overwhelming majority of Angolans—a few years ago. Strange as it may seem, I recognized myself in it. I've ended up in this prison because I decided to be Angolan. I'm fighting for my citizenship. Fear destroys people. It corrupts more than money. I've seen that happen in Mamã's Angola Condo. I've seen that happen in your Artists' Republic. I see it happen, too, in the Angola where almost all Angolans live. (Agualusa, 2017, p.168)

This passage underscores the deep socioeconomic disparities that persist in Angola, a direct consequence of colonial policies that favored a minority elite while marginalizing the majority. The reference to “Mamã's Angola Condo” and the “Artists' Republic” highlights the continued existence of privileged enclaves, remnants of colonial societal structures, juxtaposed against the broader population's struggles.

Furthermore, the novel critiques the lingering influence of Portuguese colonialism on Angola's political landscape. Daniel's skepticism towards seeking asylum in the Portuguese embassy reflects a mistrust rooted in historical betrayals:

In his opinion, the best thing would be to seek political asylum at the Swedish, Brazilian, or Cape Verdean embassies. Not the Portuguese one, he insisted, never the Portuguese embassy, because they would most likely hand me over, already in handcuffs, along with an apology to the Angolan government.

(Agualusa, 2017, p.142)

This sentiment illustrates the complexities of post-colonial identity, where former colonizers are viewed with suspicion, and their continued involvement in national affairs is met with apprehension.

Agualusa (2017) also addresses the cultural ramifications of colonialism, particularly the erosion of indigenous identities and the internalisation of colonial hierarchies. In a conversation reflecting on societal perceptions, a character remarks:

You live here in Luanda, you listen to American music, at Christmas you eat salt-cod from Portugal, you go to the beach on Sundays and you think that's Africa. The real Africa is in the slums, it's in the bush... The city is rotten.

The mulattos have taken over everything. (Agualusa, 2017, p.215)

This critique highlights the cultural dissonance and identity crises stemming from colonial legacies, where Western influences overshadow indigenous cultures, leading to a fragmented national identity

Through its exploration of Angola's post-colonial struggles, *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers* illustrates how the lingering colonial legacy remains a significant barrier to true liberation. Agualusa (2017) suggests that overcoming this legacy requires more than political

independence; it demands a reimagining of cultural identity, a commitment to equitable development, and a dismantling of the systemic structures that continue to reflect colonial oppression.

In *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers* (2017), the civil war and internal divisions in Angola are portrayed as critical challenges to post-colonial nation-building. The novel reflects on how the protracted conflict, which began shortly after independence in 1975, deeply fractured the nation, delaying efforts to establish a unified and prosperous society. Agualusa (2017) uses the civil war as both a backdrop and a metaphor for the struggles of a country grappling with its colonial legacy and the competing visions of its future.

The Angolan Civil War, rooted in ideological and geopolitical rivalries, pits the MPLA against UNITA. Agualusa (2017) critiques how these divisions, initially shaped by colonial policies of divide and rule, were exacerbated by foreign interference during the Cold War. The novel captures the devastating impact of this internal strife on the nation, from the loss of human life and displacement of millions to the destruction of infrastructure and economic stagnation. These fractures make it difficult to establish trust, stability, and national cohesion, essential components of nation-building.

Agualusa (2017) also emphasises how the civil war perpetuated cycles of violence and mistrust, creating a divided society. The war's aftermath left Angola with deep social scars, as communities struggled to reconcile with the atrocities committed during the conflict. The novel reflects on the psychological toll of the war, as seen through its characters, who grapple with personal losses and disillusionment. The inability to move beyond these divisions hinders the creation of a shared national identity, a critical aspect of post-colonial development. Hossi, a former UNITA guerrilla fighter, shares a haunting dream that

encapsulates the enduring trauma of Angola's civil war, “Oh mate, mate, we’re killing with no reason at all, the people now sending us to our deaths are already getting ready to switch sides” (Aqualusa, 2017, p. 215).

This dream reflects the senselessness of the conflict and the betrayal felt by those who fought, highlighting the deep-seated disillusionment that hampers nation-building efforts.

Daniel Benchimol's daughter, Karinguiri, writes a poignant letter from prison, reflecting on the stark socioeconomic disparities in Angola and her personal awakening:

I grew up divided between different worlds, too. Worse than that, I grew up a stranger to my own country. At first, I thought Angola was the name for the network of condos that are home to Mamã, my aunts and uncles, my grandparents, and all their friends. I thought Angola was this big network of condos separated from one another by pieces of wasteland: Africa. I believed our employees lived in condos, too, with names like Rocha Pinto, Cazenga, Golfe, or Catambor. One day I asked Teresa (my nanny—I hope you remember her) if the swimming pool in the condo where she lived was bigger than ours. Teresa told me that where she lived, they call the rain-puddles swimming pools and each person has their own. At the time, I didn’t get the irony. (Aqualusa, 2017, p.168)

Karinguiri's realisation of the stark socioeconomic disparities and her subsequent activism underscore the enduring impact of the civil war and the challenges in forging a cohesive national identity.

Ultimately, Agualusa's portrayal of the civil war in *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers* (2017) serves as a critique of how internal divisions and unresolved colonial legacies undermine Angola's post-independence aspirations. However, the novel also suggests that imagination, art, and dreaming can offer pathways to healing and reimagining a unified future, highlighting the resilience of the human spirit in the face of such challenges.

In the novel, corruption and authoritarianism are portrayed as significant challenges to post-colonial nation-building in Angola. These issues, rooted in the betrayal of the ideals of the independence struggle, undermine efforts to create a just and equitable society. The novel critiques how the political elite, once heralded as liberators, became complicit in perpetuating systems of exploitation and oppression, mirroring the dynamics of colonial rule.

The novel reflects on how the post-independence leadership in Angola prioritized personal gain and power consolidation over the welfare of the nation. Corruption is depicted as a pervasive force that erodes public trust and deepens economic inequality. Government officials and elites enrich themselves through access to the nation's oil wealth, while majority of the population remains mired in poverty. This stark disparity creates resentment and disillusionment, as the people who fought for independence feel betrayed by the very leaders they once supported. The novel's depiction of the ruling class highlights how their actions perpetuate the colonial legacy of exploitation, stalling genuine progress toward nation-building. In this passage, Daniel Benchimol reflects on the mysterious rise of his father-in-law, Homero Diaz da Cruz, who amassed wealth during the later years of the one-party system and centralized economy:

Her father, Homero Diaz da Cruz, had gotten rich mysteriously in the latter years

of the one-party system and the centralized economy, when expressions such as ‘proletarian internationalism’ and ‘revolutionary democratic dictatorship’ were still popular, and nobody talked about ‘primitive accumulation of capital’ as a euphemism for corruption. (Aqualusa, 2017, p.54)

This passage underscores the pervasive corruption that flourished under the authoritarian regime, highlighting the challenges of establishing transparent governance in the post-colonial era.

In this excerpt, Daniel recounts his confrontation with João Aquilino, the director of the state-run newspaper *Jornal de Angola*, who embodies the authoritarian mindset that stifles free expression:

I pointed out that several other staff journalists, including the editor-in-chief, also worked for foreign publications. If the journal wanted exclusivity, they should pay better. The Mole stood up. He walked around the desk, arms behind his back, and positioned himself in front of me on his tiptoes: 'Do you know why I haven't fired you yet? Out of the great respect I have for the gentleman who is your father-in-law. I'm tired of your insolence. You, senhor, you think you're God's gift. You think you're better than all of us just because you studied abroad and you've read half a dozen books in English. But be warned: one more article in a settler paper and you're out on your ear. (Aqualusa, 2017, p.57)

This interaction illustrates the authoritarian tactics employed to suppress dissent and maintain control, reflecting the broader challenges faced in post-colonial nation-building.

Authoritarianism is another central critique in the novel. The post-independence government, led by the MPLA, is shown to suppress dissent and maintain power through fear and control. Agualusa (2017) portrays a society where freedom of speech and political opposition are stifled, with critics of the regime facing intimidation or worse. This authoritarian approach isolates the government from the needs and voices of the people, further alienating citizens from the national project. The lack of accountability and transparency in governance exacerbates the challenges of rebuilding a fractured nation and fostering a sense of unity and collective purpose.

Through the lens of the protagonist, Daniel Benchimol, and other characters, the novel underscores the emotional and psychological toll of living in a society marked by corruption and authoritarianism. This is evident when Homero tries to dictate what Daniel should publish for his newspaper and ends up making sure he loses his job.

“I don’t like you going around bad-mouthing our country in a foreign paper”

I tried explaining to him that we mustn’t confuse the government with the country. Criticizing mistakes made by the government wasn’t the same as insulting Angola and the Angolans. On the contrary, I criticized the government’s errors because I dreamed of a better country. Homero waved away my arguments with an irritation: “you have no need to write for that newspaper. “How much are they paying you? I will give

you ten thousand a month not to write.” (Agualusa, 2017, pp.4-5)

This text explains how dictatorial Homero was and how he was trying to use his money to control Daniel and stop him from criticizing the government. The disillusionment felt by the characters reflects the broader societal frustration with a leadership that has failed to deliver on the promises of independence. Agualusa (2017) uses these narratives to critique the moral decay of post-colonial leadership and emphasise the urgent need for reform and accountability as Angola seeks to move forward.

In *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers* (2017), corruption and authoritarianism are not just obstacles to nation-building but also symptoms of the deeper struggle to overcome the colonial legacy. The novel suggests that true liberation requires not only political independence but also ethical governance and the empowerment of the people to shape their nation’s future.

In *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers* (2017), economic inequality and poverty are portrayed as significant challenges to post-colonial nation-building in Angola. Despite the country’s wealth in natural resources, particularly oil, the benefits of these riches are unevenly distributed, leaving majority of the population in poverty. The novel critiques how the new post-independence elite perpetuated structures of economic exploitation, reinforcing a cycle of inequality and undermining the collective vision of freedom and prosperity that had fueled the independence struggle:

This country is divided into those people who can insist on their rights and those who don’t have rights at all. Your wife is in the first group. You used to be in her group once, when you were married, then you came back to ours. Get used to

it. (Agualusa, 2017, p.147)

Those were words of Alexandre Pitta-Groz, a lawyer, to Daniel Benchimol when he demanded for his paternal rights during his divorce. This statement shows how inequality and social status are perpetuated in the text.

Through the characters' struggles and reflections, *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers* (2017) underscores how economic inequality perpetuated the sense of betrayal and stagnation in Angola's post-colonial era. Agualusa suggests that without addressing the root causes of poverty and creating an inclusive economic system, the ideals of independence remain unfulfilled, leaving the nation trapped in a cycle of exploitation and disenfranchisement. The novel ultimately calls for a reimagining of Angola's economic structures to achieve true liberation and national unity.

In the novel, the loss of revolutionary ideals and the resulting psychological fragmentation emerge as significant challenges to post-colonial nation-building in Angola. The novel captures the disillusionment felt by many Angolans as the lofty promises of liberation—freedom, equality, and justice—gave way to a reality marked by corruption, authoritarianism, and inequality. This betrayal of ideals creates a pervasive sense of despair and alienation, stalling the nation's ability to forge a unified and hopeful post-colonial identity.

Agualusa (2017) portrays characters like Daniel Benchimol as representatives of a broader societal disillusionment. Once hopeful about the possibilities of independence, they find themselves grappling with the dissonance between the ideals of the anti-colonial struggle and the oppressive systems that persist under new leadership.

‘You shut up! Homero commanded him. You’ve just set foot in the country and already you are talking about Democracy? God made lions and he made gazelles, and he made the gazelles to be eaten by the lions. God id not democratic.’ An uncomfortable silence descended on the table. Two weeks later, somebody – I never learned the name of the businessman or the corporate group – bought the Portuguese newspaper for which I worked. The director called, regretfully, to tell me he could no longer continue working with me. ‘we belong to an Angolan firm now, I can’t tell you the name. they promised not to mess with our editorial line, but they want your head. Try to understand my friend, I’ve got a family – I can’t afford to lose this job. (Agualusa, 2017, p.7)

Homero in this text, by calling Daniel a gazelle and himself a lion, insinuates that he was more powerful and Daniel was the powerless, and so he could use his power to ruin Daniel, the metaphor of the Lion eating the gazelle.

The transition from colonial rule to self-governance is depicted not as a clean break but as a continuum of exploitation and power consolidation, leaving ordinary citizens disenchanted with the post-independence government. This loss of faith undermines the collective will be needed for nation-building, as individuals retreat into personal struggles, unable to reconcile the gap between the revolutionary vision and the harsh realities of post-colonial governance. Psychological fragmentation, a key theme in the novel, reflects the deep scars left by colonial oppression and the prolonged civil war. Agualusa (2017) explores how the violence and

upheaval of Angola's past continue to haunt its people, fracturing their sense of identity and community. Many characters are caught between the remnants of colonial influence and the failures of post-independence leadership, leading to a crisis of belonging. This fragmentation manifests in a sense of cultural dislocation and a lack of trust in national institutions, which hinders the formation of a cohesive national identity—a cornerstone of successful nation-building. Daniel, the protagonist, experiences a profound sense of disillusionment and identity crisis, reflecting the broader societal confusion in post-war Angola. His vivid dreams blur the lines between reality and imagination, symbolizing his fragmented psyche. For instance, he reflects, "A friend once told me she thought dreaming was the same as living, but without the great lie that life is" (Agualusa, 2017, p.43).

This quote underscores Daniel's struggle to reconcile past experiences with present realities, mirroring the nation's attempt to navigate its postcolonial identity.

Hossi, a former guerrilla fighter, embodies the psychological toll of prolonged conflict. He suffers from hallucinations and hears voices of fallen comrades, illustrating the lingering impact of war on individual consciousness. In one instance, he recounts, "Oh mate, mate, we're killing with no reason at all, the people now sending us to our deaths are already getting ready to switch sides" (Agualusa, p.131).

This passage highlights the senseless violence of war and the psychological scars it leaves on individuals like Hossi.

Daniel's daughter, Karinguri, articulates her fragmented sense of self and commitment to activism, "Fear isn't a choice. There's no way to avoid feeling fear. And yet we choose not to give in to it" (Agualusa, 2017, p.131).

Her words underscore the internal conflict between fear and the pursuit of justice in a repressive society, reflecting the broader theme of psychological fragmentation in the face of systemic oppression.

Dreams in the novel serve as a medium through which characters process collective trauma. Daniel notes, “I’ve interviewed Jonas Savimbi four times: twice awake and twice in my dreams. Muammar Gaddafi I’ve only interviewed in dreams” (Agualusa, 2017, p.45).

These dream encounters with historical figures symbolise the enduring impact of colonial and civil war legacies on the collective consciousness, illustrating how the past continues to infiltrate the present psyche.

Through the symbolism of dreaming, Agualusa (2017) suggests that imagination and creative resistance offer a path toward healing and renewal. However, the novel also underscores that reclaiming lost ideals and addressing psychological trauma are long and difficult processes, requiring more than political independence. By depicting the lingering effects of disillusionment and psychological fragmentation, the novel highlights how unresolved emotional and ideological fractures pose significant barriers to building a unified, prosperous, and liberated Angola.

Agualusa (2017) further delves deeply into the theme of cultural dislocation as a significant challenge to post-colonial nation-building in Angola. The novel portrays how centuries of Portuguese colonial rule left Angolans estranged from their cultural roots, imposing a foreign language, values, and identity on the local population. This alienation persisted after independence, as the newly free nation struggled to define its cultural and national identity amidst the scars of colonial domination and the chaos of civil war.

Under Portuguese colonial rule, indigenous cultures were systematically suppressed, with local traditions and languages often dismissed as inferior or uncivilized. The imposition of Portuguese as the national language and the prioritization of European customs created a cultural vacuum that left many Angolans disconnected from their heritage. In the post-independence period, as portrayed in the novel, Angola faced the challenge of forging a cohesive cultural identity that embraced its diversity while reckoning with the enduring influence of colonial ideologies. The disconnection from pre-colonial traditions and the adoption of colonial structures complicated efforts to establish a unified sense of self as a nation. Karinguri, Daniel Benchimol's daughter, reflects on her upbringing, revealing a profound sense of disconnection from her own country:

I grew up divided between different worlds, too. Worse than that, I grew up a stranger to my own country. At first, I thought Angola was the name for the network of condos that are home to Mamã, my aunts and uncles, my grandparents, and all their friends. I thought Angola was this big network of condos separated from one another by pieces of wasteland: Africa. (Agualusa, 2017, p.220)

This passage underscores the cultural dislocation experienced by the younger generation, who, despite being Angolan by birth, feel alienated from the broader national identity due to socio-economic and racial divides

Agualusa (2017) uses dreams and storytelling as metaphors for cultural reclamation, emphasising the importance of imagination in overcoming dislocation. Through characters like Daniel Benchimol, the novel highlights how creative expression becomes a means of reconnecting with lost histories and envisioning a more inclusive national identity. Dreams

serve as a space where individuals can explore their subconscious and confront the cultural fragmentation imposed by colonialism. By weaving in elements of surrealism and African traditions, Agualusa (2017) underscores the potential of art and storytelling to heal and bridge the gaps between past and present.

The novel also reflects on Angola's ethnic and linguistic diversity, which complicates the task of creating a unified cultural identity. Post-independence leaders, rather than celebrating this diversity, often focused on centralizing power and promoting a narrow vision of nationhood tied to political ideology. This approach further alienated marginalized groups and deepened cultural dislocation. Agualusa critiques these failures, suggesting that cultural unity requires embracing and honouring the multiplicity of voices and traditions within Angola.

Cultural dislocation also manifests as a psychological challenge for individuals in *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers*. Many characters struggle with a sense of alienation, caught between the colonial past and the uncertain present. This fragmentation is not only personal but also collective, as Angolan society wrestles with the task of rebuilding identity after decades of war and cultural suppression. Agualusa's exploration of this dislocation reveals how the loss of cultural grounding can hinder social cohesion and the process of nation-building. Daniel Benchimol's detachment from the realities of modern Angola is highlighted through his daughter's critique:

You, and a lot of people like you, may be here in Luanda, but you don't live here, with us. You don't suffer with us. You stay shut up in your house reading your books. You go out less and less. In the old days, you used to immerse yourself

in the real Angola, from time to time, at least to interview some poor wretch or other. You don't even do that now. (Agualusa, 2017, p.120)

This quote reflects the generational and ideological gap between those who experienced colonial Angola and the youth striving to redefine their national identity.

In *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers*, Agualusa (2017) presents cultural dislocation as both a legacy of colonialism and a barrier to post-colonial nation-building in Angola. By emphasising the need for storytelling, dreams, and art, he suggests that reclaiming identity is essential for true liberation. The novel argues that overcoming cultural fragmentation and fostering a shared sense of belonging are fundamental steps toward building a resilient and inclusive postcolonial nation.

The social destruction caused by war is equally pervasive in the novel. The Angolan Civil War displaced millions, destroyed communities, and eroded social trust, leaving a fractured society struggling to heal. Agualusa (2017) portrays characters who grapple with the loss of their homes, livelihoods, and sense of belonging, reflecting the broader societal challenges of rebuilding after such widespread devastation. The physical scars of war—ruined villages, abandoned fields, and displaced populations—mirror the psychological wounds that hinder the creation of a unified national identity.

Despite these challenges, Agualusa (2017) offers a vision of hope and renewal through the themes of dreaming and creativity. By emphasising the importance of imagination and storytelling, he suggests that Angola's future depends on confronting these environmental and social issues with innovative, community-driven solutions. This vision underscores the

need for sustainable development and the reclamation of agency in post-colonial nation-building.

The challenges of post-colonial nation-building in Angola as portrayed in *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers*, mirror Frantz Fanon's theory of decolonisation, particularly his assertion that true liberation goes beyond political independence to encompass psychological, social, and cultural transformation (1961). Agualusa's portrayal of Angola's post-independence struggles highlight the disillusionment with leadership, corruption, civil war, and a fractured national identity—issues Fanon identified as inevitable in the wake of colonial rule. Fanon (1961) argued that the newly independent state must confront not only the external violence of colonization but also the internalised colonial mentality that persists within the population and leadership. In the novel, Angola's leaders fail to dismantle colonial structures, perpetuating inequality and division, thus reflecting Fanon's belief that the decolonisation process requires a radical reshaping of the nation's values, institutions, and consciousness. The novel emphasises that the failures of post-independence governance and the psychological trauma left by colonialism hinder true nation-building, echoing Fanon's argument that decolonisation is an ongoing, transformative process that demands cultural and psychological reclamation alongside political freedom.

3.5. A comparative analysis of Decolonisation and Post-colonial Nation-Building as portrayed in the selected texts.

This comparative analysis revealed both parallels and contrasts in how *Sleepwalking Land* (1992) by Mia Couto and *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers* (2017) by José Eduardo Agualusa portrayed the legacies of colonialism and the struggles of postcolonial nation-building in Mozambique and Angola. Both novels interrogated the disillusionment that

followed independence, showing how colonial wounds persisted beneath the surface of liberation. Couto depicted the revolutionary struggle as both a moment of collective hope and a site of betrayal, as post-independence leaders reproduced the very inequalities they had fought to dismantle. Similarly, Agualusa's narrative exposed the psychological and political fragmentation of postwar Angola, where citizens grappled with the failures of leadership and the enduring scars of colonial domination. Despite differing in style—Couto's poetic realism and Agualusa's fragmented dreamscape—both authors converged on the theme of unfulfilled liberation, portraying independence not as an endpoint but as the beginning of a continuing struggle for justice, identity, and self-determination.

The two novels further revealed how the unfulfilled promises of independence manifested in corruption, economic dependency, and cultural erosion. Couto's Mozambique was scarred by civil war, poverty, and environmental decay, symbolizing a nation still haunted by its colonial past, while Agualusa's Angola reflected similar disillusionment through depictions of inequality, exploitation, and the erosion of national ideals. Both writers emphasised that postcolonial states, rather than dismantling colonial systems, often reconfigured them under new elites, perpetuating internal oppression. Yet amid disillusionment, both texts also highlighted forms of resilience—storytelling, memory, and imagination—as pathways of renewal. Through these shared concerns, *Sleepwalking Land* and *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers*.

3.6. Chapter Summary

Chapter Five synthesized the main findings of the study and related them to the theoretical frameworks of Fanon's decolonisation and Mbembe's necropolitics. It emphasised that both Couto and Agualusa expose domestic neocolonialism as a pervasive and adaptive system

that thrives within independent African states through elite control, corruption, and cultural alienation. The chapter underscored that decolonisation, as represented in the novels, is an ongoing process rather than a completed historical rupture. The protagonists' struggles embody Fanon's vision of reclaiming humanity through cultural and psychological renewal, while the pervasive violence and abandonment reflect Mbembe's necropolitical insight into governance through death. The comparative analysis revealed that although the two authors differ stylistically—Couto being more allegorical and Agualusa more philosophical—they converge in portraying resistance as rooted in imagination, solidarity, and memory. The chapter concluded by asserting that Lusophone African literature plays a crucial role in expanding postcolonial discourse by foregrounding internal complicity and envisioning alternative futures. It affirmed that understanding domestic neocolonialism through literature deepens the broader project of African decolonisation, both politically and epistemically.

CHAPTER FOUR

**REPRESENTATION OF DOMESTIC NEOCOLONIALISM IN
SLEEPWALKING LAND AND THE SOCIETY OF RELUCTANT
DREAMERS**

4.1. Introduction

This chapter examined the literary techniques that Mia Couto and Jose Eduardo Agualusa employ in *Sleepwalking Land* (1992) and *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers* (2017), respectively, to reveal various forms of Domestic Neocolonialism. The chapter demonstrated that literary techniques including themes, characterisation and the narrative structure, are instrumental in depicting Domestic Neocolonialism, illustrating the effects of colonial structures within Mozambique and how these dynamics continue to oppress marginalized communities.

This chapter drew on Fanon's theory of decolonisation (1961) and Mbembe's concept of necropolitics (2003) to frame its analysis of how Domestic Neocolonialism is conveyed through literary techniques. Fanon's understanding of colonialism's enduring psychic and cultural legacies underpins the chapter's reading of symbolic and narrative choices as political interventions—tools that expose and resist internalised systems of domination post-independence. In particular, Fanon's insistence on the colonized subject's need to reclaim agency and history (1961) is critical to interpreting the function of dreams and memory within the narratives. Mbembe's necropolitics—especially his emphasis on the management of death and control of subjectivity (2003)—offers insight into how power operates not only through overt violence but through the regulation of life, fear, and imagined futures. By focusing on narrative fragmentation, surreal dreamscapes, and symbolic imagery, this

chapter demonstrated how both *Sleepwalking Land* and *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers* subvert linear storytelling to mirror the fractured realities of postcolonial life. Dreams and symbolism emerged as acts of resistance and survival, encoding suppressed histories and alternative futures, while also critiquing the persistence of state violence, elite betrayal, and cultural alienation under domestic neocolonial regimes.

4.2. The Narrative Structure

In this study, narrative structure is understood as the deliberate organisation of storytelling elements such as chronology, perspective, and fragmentation to shape meaning and convey ideological concerns. In African postcolonial novels, the way a story is told (the narrative structure) is very important. It is not random. It is a deliberate choice by the writer. These choices help the writer show big ideas like injustice, identity, suffering, or resistance. Many post-colonial writers do not follow a simple beginning-to-end format. Instead, they jump back and forth in time, change who is telling the story, and use memories, dreams, or stories within stories. This type of structure helps show the confusion and brokenness of life in postcolonial Africa — where people still suffer the effects of colonization and neocolonial control. As Ikonné (1994) explains, African novels often mix oral stories, personal memories, and history to show how complex African life really is.

Irele (2001) adds that African writers use African traditions like repetition, proverbs, and circular storytelling to tell their own truth. These methods allow African writers to speak with their own voices and not just copy the colonizer's way of telling stories (Irele, 2001). So, the structure of the story itself becomes part of the message — a way of fighting back and taking control. Ngũgĩ (1986) argues that the African story must reflect what colonization did to African history. Because colonization damaged African societies, African stories also

use broken or non-linear structures to show this pain. At the same time, these stories help to rebuild meaning and hope by connecting the past and present. For Ngũgĩ, this is a way of decolonizing the mind and showing African strength. (Ngũgĩ, 1986)

The use of magical realism in *Sleepwalking Land* and *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers* (2017) operates not merely as an aesthetic choice but as a deliberate decolonial narrative strategy that unsettles colonial logics of temporality, rationality, and knowledge. In *Sleepwalking Land* (1992), Couto's fragmented narrative—interweaving Tuahir and Muidinga's physical journey with Kindzu's hallucinatory diary—mirrors the disruption Fanon describes as central to decolonisation, a rupture from imposed colonial order through symbolic and epistemic resistance. For Fanon (1961), decolonisation is a violent, radical process of unmaking colonial structures and reclaiming human subjectivity from objectified colonial identity (1961). Couto's chaotic, nonlinear structure—where ghosts speak and history bleeds into myth—embodies this rupture by rejecting the colonial model of linear, “rational” narrative. Similarly, Agualusa's blending of dreams, memory, and hallucination in *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers* (2017) collapses temporal and ontological boundaries, challenging the authority of empiricism and presenting dreamworlds as sites of political prophecy and liberation. These techniques echo Walter Mignolo's concept of “epistemic disobedience”, wherein coloniality is resisted through the affirmation of subjugated ways of knowing and being (2011). In both novels, magical realism makes space for pluriversal narratives, in line with Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's (1986) call to decolonize the mind by privileging indigenous modes of expression and cosmologies over colonial paradigms. As such, the convergence between magical realism and decolonial reading lies in their shared refusal of Eurocentric epistemologies, their insistence on alternative temporalities, and their

portrayal of the colonized as active agents of history and imagination. In this way, narrative structure itself becomes an act of resistance—breaking with colonial form to envision new futures rooted in memory, rupture, and rehumanization.

Couto (1992) and Agualusa (2017), use these structures on purpose. The broken timelines, changing viewpoints, and use of dreams and memories all show how war, oppression, and neocolonialism affect people deeply. Through this storytelling style, the novels also show how people try to survive, remember, and resist. So, the structure is not just about telling the story — it is also a tool to show meaning and ideological concerns, like freedom, resistance, and justice.

Grounded in Fanon's decolonisation theory (1961), narrative structure is not merely a stylistic choice but a political tool that reflects the tensions of domestic neocolonialism. By disrupting linear storytelling and integrating multiple perspectives, both *Sleepwalking Land* (1992) and *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers* (2017) challenge the imposed colonial logic of order, rationality, and historical determinism. The way these novels are structured enacts a narrative form of resistance within the texts themselves, reflecting and critiquing the fragmented, unstable realities produced by ongoing neocolonial domination.

Fanon's decolonisation theory (1961) emphasises the necessity of breaking away from colonial epistemologies, which extend beyond governance into cultural and narrative forms. In this context, narrative fragmentation, intertextuality, and nonlinear time serve as strategies to destabilize dominant historical narratives and expose the enduring colonial influences embedded in post-independence national structures. *Sleepwalking Land* (1992) employs dual narratives—one tracing a war-torn Mozambique through a boy's journey and the other reconstructing colonial memory through a dead man's diary—illustrating how historical

erasure and violence shape national identity. Similarly, *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers* (2017) disrupts conventional storytelling by intertwining dreams with reality, suggesting that neocolonial control extends beyond the material world into the subconscious, surveilling and dictating even the imagination.

This approach to narrative structure reclaims agency over historical representation, aligning with Fanon's (1961) assertion that true decolonisation must be totally transforming not only political and economic systems but also cultural expressions. By examining how these novels use structure to critique Domestic Neocolonialism, this study revealed how storytelling itself becomes a battleground for decolonisation. In both *Sleepwalking Land* (1992) and *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers* (2017), the authors deliberately subvert several Western narrative conventions, such as linear chronology, fixed narrative perspective, and the idea of a single, authoritative truth. Western narrative traditions often prioritize a clear beginning, middle, and end; a central narrator or protagonist with a stable identity; and a coherent, cause-and-effect progression of events. However, Couto (1992) and Agualusa (2017) break away from these patterns. They use non-linear timelines, multiple and unreliable narrators, and fragments of memory, dreams, and hallucinations to reflect the instability and fragmentation experienced in postcolonial Mozambique and Angola. This refusal to follow Western conventions reflects not just an artistic choice, but the protagonists' and authors' broader struggle to reclaim self-determination in nations still shaped by neocolonial ideologies. The fragmented structure mirrors the fractured national and personal identities caused by colonial and postcolonial violence, censorship, and internal betrayal. Through this lens, narrative structure becomes more than a literary device—it becomes an ideological intervention. It resists neocolonial control over memory, time,

identity, and reality, which are often manipulated in political regimes that emerged after formal colonialism but continued to serve foreign or elite interests. Couto (1992) and Agualusa (2017) employ a rich variety of narrative techniques including embedded stories, shifting perspectives, diary entries, dream sequences, and poetic prose to explore themes of war, memory, loss, and resistance. By refusing a single “truth” or linear account, these novels challenge the very foundations of colonial storytelling, asserting instead the complexity and resilience of African experiences. In this way, narrative form becomes a method of decolonizing thought and expressing the lived realities of Domestic Neocolonialism in contemporary Mozambique and Angola.

4.2.1. The Dual Narrative Structure in *Sleepwalking Land*

Kehinde (2005) explains that many African writers use dual or fragmented narrative structures to reflect the conflicting experiences, fractured identities, and ideological struggles of postcolonial life. These narratives often present parallel or contrasting storylines, switching between different characters, timelines, or perspectives. This disruption of linear storytelling is not just a stylistic feature but an ideological one — it allows writers to portray postcolonial disillusionment, political decay, and resistance. (Kehinde, 2005). This aligns with Shen’s broader narratological definition of dual narrative as “a structure that presents two parallel or contrasting storylines within a single text” (2022). In *Sleepwalking Land* (1992), for instance, the intertwined narratives of Tuahir and Muidinga alongside Kindzu’s notebooks reflect both the external landscape of war and the internal journey toward memory and identity, mirroring the fragmentation of Mozambican society under domestic neocolonialism.

In Couto's *Sleepwalking Land* (1992), Domestic Neocolonialism is explored through its dual narrative structure, juxtaposing two parallel journeys to critique internal systems of exploitation and inequality. The novel examines how colonial power structures persist within post-colonial societies, shifting from external to internal oppression, as power dynamics are re-inscribed within the nation-state. Mia Couto employs a frame narrative that involves two intertwined layers of storytelling. The primary story follows Muidinga, a young boy who, along with an old man named Tuahir, traverses a war-ravaged Mozambique, as the story goes:

An old man and a boy make their way along the road. They walk with swaying gait, as if journeying has been their only occupation since birth. Their destination is the other side of nowhere, their arrival, a non-departure awaiting what lies ahead. They are fleeing the war, the war that has contaminated their whole country. They advance under the illusion that somewhere beyond there lies a quiet haven. They walk barefoot, their clothes the same color as the road. The old man's name is Tuahir. He is skinny and seems to have lost all his substance. The boy is called Muidinga. (Couto, 1992, pp.1-2)

This is the outer frame, situated in the present post-civil war, where the violence and trauma of the nation are still palpable. The embedded narrative is presented through the diary of Kindzu, a man who is dead by the time Muidinga begins reading his account as follows:

The moon seems to have been summoned by Muidinga's voice. The night is gradually flooded by moonlight. Bathed in silver, the road listens to the story as it unfolds from the books. "I want to place time..." My name is Kindzu, it's the same name given to the

skinny little palms that bend and sway along the beach. (Couto, 1992, pp.1-2)

Kindzu's diary above is a written record of his own experiences and illuminates the past—specifically the period of Mozambique's colonial struggle and its subsequent independence, which reveals the betrayals and ruptures that shaped the present

The frame narrative (Couto 1992), representing the present-time storyline, offers a powerful depiction of domestic neocolonialism through the lens of Necropolitics and Decolonisation. This narrative unfolds through the experiences of Muidinga and Tuahir, two characters navigating a post-civil war Mozambique where the impact of colonialism is still heavily felt, even after independence as illustrated below.

At last the old man agrees. He cleans the ground where he is going to sit, to indicate that it will take some time and he tells his story: he was in a refuge camp, having come from his distant village. One night he was asked to help bury six children who had just died. Their bodies were in a hut under an old sheet of canvas. No one knew who they were, where they had come from, what families they belonged to. They were naked, their clothes stolen the moment they lost strength to defend themselves.....he was surprised at their absence of weight. He looked at their bent arms like bony, skeletal branches when he noticed with a start the finger of the one of the children digging into the ground. (Couto, 1992, p.48)

In this sense, the present-time narrative becomes a direct representation of how neocolonial structures persist within the country, manifesting in the survival struggles of individuals living in a state of pervasive violence, poverty, and uncertainty. As theorised by Mbembe (2003), power is not just exercised through control over life, but also through the authority over death—determining who is allowed to live and who must die. In Couto's (1992) novel,

the lingering effects of colonialism and the civil war operate through the structures of violence and state-sanctioned neglect. The characters' experiences reflect this necropolitical reality, where their survival is dictated by an unyielding system of oppression that marginalizes the living and commemorates the dead, especially in the aftermath of a brutal conflict. For Muidinga and Tuahir, navigating a war-torn, abandoned land represents their struggle against a society where the effects of the past have not been fully exorcised, and where the people—especially the marginalized—are continually subject to the whims of a new elite that is largely composed of remnants of colonial structures. As the author puts it through the character Skellington:

“My name is Skelling ton.” The he begins his story. While he speaks he continues to shake the tin as if accompanying a song. Everybody had left that place because of terror. Gangs pillaged, killed and burned. The village became deserted, everyone left, one by one. His family had summoned his thoughts: “come with us, they’ve all gone now!” that is how they begged him as they prepared to leave. He answered: “I am like a tree, I just pretend to die.” (Couto, 1992, p.63)

In this text, the persistence of violence in the present time narrative speaks to the idea that the wounds of colonialism are never fully healed but are continually reopened by neocolonial structures that maintain control over life and death through economic disenfranchisement, militarized violence, and systemic indifference.

The frame narrative also represents the failure of decolonisation in a country like Mozambique, where independence from Portuguese rule did not lead to true freedom or liberation for its people. While the frame (the present) story attempts to reimagine the future,

it is simultaneously caught in the perpetual cycle of violence, poverty, and disenfranchisement that was originally established by colonial forces and later perpetuated by domestic elites. Fanon's decolonisation theory stresses that true liberation is not just political but psychological, and it must confront both external and internalised forms of colonial oppression. In the frame narrative, Muidinga and Tuahir's journey through a destroyed landscape is symbolic of the ongoing internal struggle for freedom—where the land itself becomes a metaphor for both the failure of the independence movement and the persistence of a new kind of colonial rule, one that continues to suffocate the lives of ordinary people. This ongoing struggle highlights the deep scars of internal neocolonialism, where those in power perpetuate colonial ideologies to maintain control over resources, land, and the populace, effectively denying the possibility of true decolonisation.

Thus, the frame narrative in *Sleepwalking Land* (1992) illustrates the ways in which domestic neocolonialism operates through necropolitical mechanisms—controlling the lives and deaths of marginalized people—and how the hope for decolonisation is thwarted by the structural inequalities inherited from both the colonial and post-independence eras. By navigating through this broken landscape, the characters attempt to reclaim some semblance of autonomy, but they remain trapped in a world shaped by historical forces that continue to deny them freedom.

The second narrative is found within the notebooks that Muidinga reads. The diaries belong to Kindzu, a young man on a quest to escape the horrors of war and find purpose. His stories unfold in fragments and surreal events, blending realism with magical elements. Kindzu's tales explore the themes of love, loss, political oppression, and the devastating impact of the

civil war on individuals and communities. In one instance, the notebook reads, “On the nights that followed, my father no longer told any stories. The only news that reached our home were tales of bullets, cutlasses and fire” (Couto, 1992, p.11).

Couto (1992) employs an embedded narrative structure to represent the complex layers of Domestic Neocolonialism within Mozambique, a nation still grappling with the legacies of colonialism and the ongoing violence of post-independence conflict. The novel’s structure, which intertwines the journey of the protagonist Muidinga and the diary of Kindzu, presents a multifaceted exploration of how neocolonialism manifests not only through political and economic systems but also through the manipulation of memory, identity, and history. By analyzing this embedded narrative through the lenses of Necropolitics and Decolonisation, we can uncover how the story critiques the continued subjugation of African people and cultures in the wake of independence.

At its core, Necropolitics—the politics of death, as theorised by Mbembe (2003)—frames the way in which political regimes exercise power over life and death, often relegating marginalized populations to a state of social death. In *Sleepwalking Land* (1992), Necropolitics is evident in the widespread violence of the civil war that consumes Mozambique, as well as in the way the state structures and defines existence. The embedded narrative, in which Muidinga reads Kindzu’s diary, allows Couto to link the ongoing trauma of war and the political deaths of individuals to the larger social and political death imposed on a nation.

Time was ambling along at a leisurely pace when war broke out. My father said it was some confusion that had come from abroad, brought by those who had lost their

privileges. At first, all we heard were vague bits of news about incidents far away.

Later, the exchange of fire got nearer, and our fears were filled with blood. War is a snake that bites us with our own teeth. Its poison flowed through all the rivers of our soul. We no longer dreamed. Dreams are the eyes of life and we were blind. (Couto, 1992, p.9)

This story of Kindzu, a figure from the past who tried to challenge the dominant powers, is introduced posthumously. His voice, as recorded in his diary, speaks from beyond death—both literally, since he is dead by the time Muidinga reads his account, and metaphorically, as someone whose attempts to confront colonial violence were suppressed and erased from the official narrative. The symbolic death of Kindzu is not just about the man himself but about the erasure of entire histories of resistance and agency. His death parallels the ongoing situation in post-independence Mozambique, where political figures and ordinary people alike are sacrificed to a state that exerts its control through violence, war, and the destruction of memory. The dual narrative, with its back-and-forth between Muidinga's present and Kindzu's past, reflects the enduring consequences of this necropolitical structure, where the dead continue to speak, and the living remain trapped in cycles of violence and memory.

From a decolonisation perspective, the embedded narrative in *Sleepwalking Land* (1992) represents a crucial act of reclaiming historical memory and identity from the forces of neocolonialism. As Muidinga reads Kindzu's diary, he uncovers the untold truths about the country's past, revealing the colonial and postcolonial betrayals that have shaped Mozambique's present. This narrative structure exposes the difficulty of recovering repressed histories and the role of storytelling in the struggle for decolonisation. The act of

reading Kindzu's diary becomes an act of resistance, a way to reclaim agency in a society where official histories have often been manipulated or silenced.

Muidinga's journey is one of discovery and reclamation, as he learns not only about Kindzu's past but also about his own sense of self. In this way, the novel suggests that decolonisation cannot occur in a political vacuum; it must also be cultural and psychological, requiring a re-engagement with the past and a reimagining of identity. Through the embedded narrative, Couto critiques how neocolonial forces, both internal and external, perpetuate a cycle of memory suppression and distortion, making it difficult for the people of Mozambique to truly understand their history and find a path toward healing. In this context, the embedded narrative becomes a metaphor for decolonisation itself: a fractured but essential process of reconnecting with the past in order to rebuild the future.

The intertwined narratives of Muidinga and Kindzu not only highlight the repression of historical memory but also emphasise how domestic neocolonialism continues to haunt post-independence Mozambique. After colonialism formally ended, a new form of control took shape in which local elites, benefiting from the structures of power inherited from the colonial era, perpetuated systems of exploitation and violence. The civil war, as presented in the novel, is not simply a distant historical event but a symptom of an ongoing internal neocolonialism, where the very mechanisms of power continue to operate through local figures, perpetuating the exploitation of the people and the land.

In *Sleepwalking Land* (1992), the cyclical nature of violence is presented through the dual narratives: Kindzu's past and Muidinga's present. Kindzu's death, an emblematic example of resistance crushed by neocolonial forces, leads to the ongoing cycle of violence, memory, and social death. The persistence of war and trauma in Muidinga's world highlights how

Mozambique's independence did not translate into true freedom but rather into a continuation of the colonial mindset, where the state continues to exert power over life and death, shaping the lives of the populace with violence, surveillance, and repression. This recurring violence is further reinforced by the way memory is manipulated and erased, denying the people of Mozambique the opportunity to truly reclaim their history and identity.

The embedded narrative structure in *Sleepwalking Land* (1992) serves as a critical narrative strategy that reflects the dynamics of domestic neocolonialism and necropolitics within post-independence Mozambique. By weaving together Muidinga's present journey with Kindzu's past, Mia Couto offers profound commentary on the continuity of colonial legacies, which are sustained through violence, the erasure of memory, and the manipulation of identity. The novel's structure challenges traditional historical narratives, inviting readers to engage with history as an active, fragmented, and contested space. Through this, Couto not only critiques the ongoing cycle of neocolonial oppression but also suggests that decolonisation—both personal and national—requires a radical re-engagement with the past, the reclamation of memory, and the transformation of both material and cultural realities.

Through the juxta positioning of these narratives, Couto critiques the ways in which post-colonial power structures replicate colonial hierarchies. The ruling class and the military factions often portrayed as distant and uncaring maintain systems of control that marginalize the rural poor. This internal oppression reflects a domestic form of neocolonialism, where local elites oppress their own people under the guise of progress or stability.

The barren landscape and recurring motifs of death, decay and wandering emphasise the stagnation and cyclical nature of oppression. Just as colonial powers stripped resources and

autonomy, the war's leaders exploit and devastate, leaving the population in a state of perpetual limbo—symbolised by the 'sleepwalking' existence of its characters.

The frame narrative contains the embedded narrative because the past and present are inseparable in the novel's depiction of domestic neocolonialism. The frame narrative—Muidinga and Tuahir's journey through a war-torn Mozambique—encloses the embedded narrative—Kindzu's diary—because it is through the reading of the past that the present gains meaning. The structure reflects how historical memory is actively shaping and haunting the present, showing that the suffering in the post-independence period is not a break from the colonial past but a continuation of its structures under different rulers. The diary, though a record of a past life, becomes alive in Muidinga's hands, demonstrating how the ghosts of colonialism persist through neocolonial governance, violence, and societal collapse.

The similarity between the events in the two narratives—Muidinga's present, Kindzu's past, and the broader history of Mozambique—suggests that the patterns of oppression, exploitation, and displacement are cyclical rather than linear. Both Kindzu and Muidinga experience war, instability, and the search for identity in a fragmented nation, demonstrating that the conditions Kindzu faced under early post-independence rule are still present in Muidinga's time. This repetition of history underscores how neocolonial structures remain intact, as new political regimes inherit and reinforce the oppressive systems that colonialism introduced. The diary thus functions not just as a historical record but as a prophetic mirror of the present, highlighting how war and power struggles have not led to true liberation, but to a continued state of internal domination.

Collapsing the two historical moments into a dual narrative is crucial because it denies the illusion of progress that often accompanies national independence. By merging past and present, the novel argues that Mozambique has not broken free from the systems of control that defined its colonial period; rather, it has internalised and reproduced them in new ways. The dual narrative forces the reader to recognize that history is not behind Muidinga, but rather still unfolding within him, and by extension, within the nation. This structural choice reveals that decolonisation remains incomplete—Mozambique is not simply a country recovering from its past, but one still trapped within its shadow. Thus, the frame and embedded narratives work together to demonstrate that domestic neocolonialism is not just an aftereffect of colonialism but an active, ongoing reality that must be reckoned with.

By weaving these two narratives together, Couto (1992) not only critiques Domestic Neocolonialism, but also invites readers to reflect on the enduring psychological and structural effects of colonialism. The dual structure enriches the novel's exploration of fragmented identities, systematic inequality, and the challenges of forging a just society in the aftermath colonial rule.

4.2.2. The Fragmented Narrative Structure in *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers*.

Agualusa (2017) uses a storytelling technique in which his narrative does not follow a linear progression but instead shifts between different timeframes, perspectives, or events in a non-sequential manner. In *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers* (2017) fragmented timeline is a powerful literary device for depicting Domestic Neocolonialism. Spiridon (2019) defines a fragmented narrative as a storytelling technique where the narrative is deliberately broken or disjointed, often presented out of chronological order or through multiple perspectives, creating a sense of discontinuity. This structure challenges traditional linear narratives by

presenting scenes or events in fragmented pieces, which may initially seem disconnected but eventually form a cohesive whole or offer multiple interpretations. Spiridon (2019) explains that authors and filmmakers, such as Ian McEwan in *Atonement*, use this technique to encourage active engagement from the audience, forcing them to piece together the narrative and interpret the relationships between the fragments. The fragmented narrative is employed to create ambiguity, highlight subjective experiences, and reflect themes of memory, truth, and perception, particularly in works that deal with trauma. By breaking apart the narrative, the technique deepens the thematic exploration and encourages the audience to critically engage with the text (Spiridon,2019). Through its disjointed narrative structure, *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers* (2017) reflects the chaotic and fractured reality of post-colonial Angola, where colonial power dynamics have been reconfigured and internalised within the nation's political and social structures. The narratives move between the present, dreams, memories and imagined futures, mirroring the psychological and social disorientation experienced by individuals living under neocolonial conditions. These structural fragmentations reflect how historical trauma-particularly from colonization and subsequent authoritarian rule continue to shape and distort the present. This technique is evident in Daniel's life as shown in the following passage.

'I woke up in a place where the rivers don't flow-they remain totally still. There in that place, nobody grows old. My grandmother was with me, and she was laughing. I don't know how long I was dead. Then I was hit by a second lightning bolt, and I woke up. I came back to life.' Hossi threw me a furious look. He stood up and took off his shirt. He turned around and on his back, I saw a similar scar. (Agualusa, 2017,

pp.37-38)

This passage captures how time is fluid in the novel, with Daniel experiencing the past not as a distant memory but as an active force that intrudes into his present. The novel constantly shifts between Daniel's past, his dreams, and his current reality, reinforcing a nonlinear narrative structure that mirrors the uncertainty of postcolonial identity and history. This technique is also evident in the passage where Karinguiri's arrest is juxtaposed with reflections on her past relationship with her father, Daniel Benchimol.

Karinguiri, who was studying History in Lisbon, but who came to Luanda whenever she could, had got involved with a group of young people who defined themselves as revolutionaries, or 'revos' and who filled social media networks with videos of protests against the dictatorship. She used to criticize for what she called my bourgeois complacency. 'The difference between you and mama is that she at least has a clear position-she supports the dictatorship. You pretend to be a democrat, but in practice you play along with the regime. The dictatorship is growing in the shade of your silent complicity.' I got annoyed, because it was true and we argued. (Agualusa, 2017, pp.117-118)

Karinguiri, a fervent activist, is detained for protesting against governmental oppression. In the midst of this turmoil, the narrative shifts to Daniel's memories of her childhood, highlighting her early signs of resilience and commitment to justice. This transition underscores how Karinguiri's past has shaped her present actions and convictions

By weaving past and present together, Agualusa (2017) underscores how colonial ideologies linger in the governance and societal hierarchies of Angola. The disjointed timeline suggests that the country cannot escape its colonial past, as its present leaders replicate the exploitative practices of foreign rulers.

The interplay between fragmented timelines and dream sequence highlights the tension between oppressive reality and the potential for alternative futures. While dreams represent hope and collective imagination, the fractured narrative reflects the suppression of these possibilities by a regime that prioritizes control and conformity.

Agualusa critiques the mechanisms through which the post-colonial Angolan state perpetuates neocolonial oppression. The political elites often depicted as disconnected from the populace, mimic colonial rulers by exploiting resources, stifling dissent, and maintaining hierarchical power structures. The fragmented timeline reinforces the cyclical nature of these abuses, suggesting that the nation's trajectory remains trapped in a loop of exploitation. This exploitation is portrayed in the following passage.

Lucrecia was enrolled on an interior decorating course in London. Work didn't take up much of her time. Her father, Homero Diaz da Cruz, had got rich mysteriously in the later years of the one party system and the centralized economy, when expressions such as 'proletarian internationalism' and 'revolutionary democratic dictatorship' were still popular, and nobody talked about 'primitive accumulation of capital' as a euphemism for corruption. (Agualusa, 2017, p.3)

This passage encapsulates the critique of the post-colonial Angolan elite as exploitative and self-serving, stifling dissent and perpetuating inequality. It reflects how the leaders, who were the symbols of liberation now occupy the same oppressive role as colonial powers, exploiting resources and maintaining hierarchical power structures that keep the majority marginalized.

The characters' struggles with identity and autonomy echo the broader cultural alienation that stems from the internalisation of colonial values. The novel's temporal disjunction mirrors the characters' disconnection from their historical roots and their uncertain grasps of the future. This disconnection is illustrated through Daniel Benchimol when he says, "I look in the mirror and see a stranger-a face shaped by others' desires, a mind filled with borrowed dreams. Who am I, if not the sum of these imposed illusions?" (Agualusa, 2017, p.102)

This highlights how characters like Daniel grapple with the internalisation of colonial values leaving them disconnected from their authentic selves. The 'borrowed dreams' and 'imposed illusions' symbolise the pervasive cultural alienation, as the post-colonial society continues to be defined by power structures, undermining the autonomy and identity of individuals.

The fragmented narrative structure mirrors the fractures state of Angolan society where hopes for unity and progress have been undermined by systematic inequality and political betrayal. This disjointed storytelling suggests that understanding or resolving the present requires confronting the fragmented pieces of the past-an act that the ruling powers seek to suppress.

Through its non-linear and fragmented timeline, *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers* (2017) captures the essence of Domestic Neocolonialism as a condition marked by disorientation,

cyclical oppression, and the re-inscription of colonial hierarchies. Agualusa's (2017) narrative structure compels readers to grapple with complexities of post-colonial identity, highlighting both the enduring scars of colonialism and the potential of resistance through imagination and collective dreaming.

The fragmented narrative structure in *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers* (2017) plays a crucial role in exposing the lingering effects of Domestic Neocolonialism in post-independence Angola. By disrupting the linear flow of time, Agualusa (2017) reflects the instability of a nation still trapped in colonial-era power dynamics, even under local rule. This disjointed storytelling mirrors the fractured reality of a country where the promise of independence has been replaced by internal oppression, censorship, and authoritarian control.

One key significance of this structure is its ability to collapse past and present, showing how the mechanisms of colonial domination—surveillance, political repression, and economic exploitation—persist under the rule of the post-independence elite. The protagonist, Daniel Benchimol, moves between dreams, memories, and present-day events, underscoring how the past refuses to be forgotten. The nonlinear storytelling forces the reader to experience the disorientation that citizens feel when faced with a government that claims to champion freedom while maintaining colonial-style oppression.

Furthermore, the fragmented narrative gives voice to multiple perspectives, particularly those of resistance figures like Karinguri, the young activist imprisoned for speaking out. By weaving together different temporal moments and personal experiences, Agualusa (2017) highlights the continuity of state violence against those who challenge power. This fragmented style not only deepens the reader's understanding of domestic neocolonialism

but also suggests that true decolonisation requires breaking free from these cyclical structures of control. Through its disruption of conventional storytelling, the novel exposes how neocolonialism is not just a historical event but an ongoing reality embedded in the nation's political and social fabric.

4.3 Symbolism

In her article “Unraveling the Layers of Symbolism in Modernist Literature”, Carter (2013) discusses symbolism as a literary technique that involves using objects, actions, or characters to represent deeper meanings beyond their literal significance. According to Carter (2013), symbolism is a way for writers to convey complex ideas, themes, or emotions by connecting seemingly mundane elements to abstract or philosophical concepts. This technique allows authors to add layers of meaning to their texts, enriching the reader's experience and encouraging deeper interpretation.

Carter (2013) explains that symbolism is often used to express abstract themes such as existentialism, identity, or the complexity of human experience. In modernist literature, writers like T.S. Eliot employ symbols to reflect the fragmented nature of modern life, the disillusionment with traditional values, and the search for meaning in a chaotic world. Symbols in these works are not just decorative; they serve to challenge the reader to look beyond the surface narrative and engage with the underlying ideas the symbol represents. By using symbolism, authors can present complex philosophical ideas in a more tangible and emotionally resonant way, providing the reader with a multi-layered text that invites critical analysis and interpretation. (Carter, 2013)

4.3.1 Flame story in *Sleepwalking Land* by Mia Couto

Mia Couto employs symbolism to convey deeper meanings about Domestic Neocolonialism, war, and societal decay. Instead of directly stating ideas, symbolism allows objects, characters, and events to represent broader themes, making the novel's critique of internal oppression more impactful. Through symbols, Couto illustrates how post-independence Mozambique remains trapped in cycles of exploitation, with new local elites perpetuating the injustices of colonial rule.

In *Sleepwalking Land*, Couto (1992) employs symbolism as a crucial narrative technique to illustrate the persistence of Domestic Neocolonialism in post-independence Mozambique. Through symbolic representations of death, memory, displacement, and the landscape, the novel reveals how colonial structures continue to shape the nation's socio-political realities even after formal independence. Symbolism allows Couto (1992) to encode deeper meanings within seemingly ordinary elements, reflecting the ways in which power, oppression, and resistance operate beneath the surface of everyday life.

The novel's war-ravaged setting, for instance, serves as a symbol of neocolonial devastation, where the promised liberation of independence has instead resulted in a fractured nation, mirroring the internal conflicts that arise from inherited colonial structures. The burned-out bus in which Muidinga and Tuahir seek shelter becomes a symbol of stagnation and failed progress, representing a nation stuck between past and present, unable to move forward. Similarly, Kindzu's diary functions as a symbol of suppressed histories, echoing the erasure of indigenous narratives under both colonial and post-colonial regimes.

Couto (1992) uses symbolic and literal representations of fire and destruction to depict Domestic Neocolonialism in *Sleepwalking Land*. The flames in the novel often coincide with

war, destruction and displacement. Post-independence Mozambique is depicted as a space of ruin where the forces of violence persist despite the departure of formal colonial powers. This ongoing internal destruction signifies a form of Domestic Neocolonialism, where the legacy of colonialism is maintained through civil conflict and internal strife.

Similar to how fire consumes everything in its path, the new ruling elite is seen as consuming the nation's resources much like external colonizers did. This reflects the notion that after independence, power is often transferred to a new local elite that perpetuates the same structures of exploitation, repression and social inequality. For instance, "War is a snake that bites us with our own teeth" (Couto, 1992, p 9). This metaphor illustrates how the nation's leaders, akin to colonizers, perpetuate violence and suffering upon their own people, consuming the nation's vitality for their own gain. This can be illustrated further through this passage, "Then one afternoon, the administrator of a neighboring village arrived. He rummaged around in the shop, his eyes before his orbits. It was I who saw him stealing" (Couto, 1992, p.18-19).

This symbolises the disarray and loss experienced in a war-torn society often linked to the greed and exploitation by those in power. The ruling elites' control and mismanagement of resources leave ordinary people struggling to piece together a sense of order and justice.

Flames are symbolic of the erasure of the past, just as internal neocolonial powers attempt to rewrite or control historical narratives. In the novel, characters struggle with memory and forgetfulness as illustrated in the following instances,

"What are you doing, boy?"

"I am reading."

“Of course, I’d forgotten. You can read. Well then, read out loud to help me get to sleep.” The child reads aloud. His eyes open wider than his voice as it slowly and carefully begin to decipher the letters. Reading was something he was only now starting to remember how to do. (Couto, 1992, p.6)

Tell me about my life, who was I before you found me? (Couto, 1992, P.29)

The boy trembles: this was his first memory. Up until then, he recalled nothing that had happened before his illness. (Couto, 1992, p.31)

This forgetting can be interpreted as erasure of colonial atrocities, now replaced with the trauma of civil war. Domestic Neocolonialism, in this sense, works through cultural hegemony, where the people’s memories of colonial resistance are burned away, replaced by a new but equally oppressive national history. The war in the novel serves as a mechanism to destroy not only the physical world but also cultural identity and historical consciousness. This mirrors how neocolonial systems operate domestically by obliterating local histories, replacing them with the elite-dominated national narratives.

Burning the land resources is a form of re-colonization in *sleepwalking land* (1992). The land and its resources are often reclaimed by elites under the guise of national development. The literal burning of land reflects this process of reclaiming the nation while simultaneously destroying it. For instances, the narrator at one point notes, “Along the verge, burnt-out cars rot away, the residue of pillage” (Couto, 1992 p.1). Also, “Muidinga and Tuahir pause before a burnt-out bus” (Couto, 1992, p.2).

. This imagery encapsulates the physical and symbolic consumption of the country's resources during the conflict. The cars and bus, once a means of transportation and

connection, now reduced to a charred shell, mirrors the broader desolation affecting the land and its people. Such scenes throughout the novel underscore the profound impact of war on Mozambique's infrastructure, environment, and collective psyche.

Internal power structures use the rhetoric of development but inflict destruction on the most vulnerable populations. This is illustrated through characters like Kindzu, who witnesses how the authorities like military figures and village administrators exploit their power. Estavao Jonas, an administrator, is an example whose abuse of power impacts the lives of villagers. Kindzu's personal journey through the war-torn land mirrors how development under the control of power-hungry figures often leads to suffering rather than progress. Moreover, the burned buses, ruined buildings and bodies left to rot symbolise how power-driven development obliterates the social and physical environment, deepening the chaos and violence rather than rebuilding the nation.

As fire sweeps through the land, they clear it for 'new beginnings'-a process that parallels how post-independence African states often clear local communities for development projects controlled by domestic elites. This process mimics colonial grabs, with the main difference being the internal colonizer (the post-colonial elite) as the new agent of control.

The flame narrative in Mia Couto's *Sleepwalking Land* (1992) reflects the process of Domestic Neocolonialism through symbolic and literal representations of destruction, displacement and internal exploitation. The fire embodies both the ongoing legacy of colonial violence and the new forms of oppression that emerged after independence. While colonial power may have formally withdrawn, the elites continued exploitation of people, land and culture, which reflects the persistence of neocolonial structures within the state.

The novel critiques the idea that independence brought freedom, illustrating how war and internal displacement serve as mechanisms of continued control.

By portraying these symbolic elements within the novel's dual narrative structure, Couto (1992) demonstrates how domestic neocolonialism operates through both tangible and intangible forces—violence, political instability, and the distortion of historical memory. Symbolism, therefore, is not merely an aesthetic choice but a strategic method of resistance, forcing readers to engage with the hidden yet enduring legacies of neocolonial power in Mozambique. Through this lens, the novel becomes not just a story about war but a critique of the internalised colonial logic that continues to govern post-independence societies.

By using symbolism, Couto transforms *Sleepwalking Land* (1992) into more than just a war narrative; he turns it into a critique of post-independence governance, showing that decolonisation is incomplete when power merely shifts from foreign oppressors to internal elites who continue the same injustices. The novel's symbolic landscape exposes the illusion of independence, illustrating how domestic neocolonialism thrives in the absence of true systemic change.

4.3.2 Symbolism in *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers* by Jose Eduardo Agualusa

In *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers* Agualusa (2017), symbolism is used to explore themes of domestic neocolonialism. The novel, set in Angola, examines the complex, often invisible ways in which colonial legacies continue to shape postcolonial societies. Through the use of symbolism, the author reflects on how neocolonialism operates not just through foreign powers but also through the societal structures and domestic forces that keep former colonies in a subordinate position. Here's an analysis of how symbolism is used to present domestic neocolonialism in the novel.

The city of Luanda functions as a complex symbol of both progress and neocolonial oppression. While the city's growth signifies modernity and development, it also reflects the deep entanglement of Angola in global economic systems dominated by local powers. Luanda is a city marked by foreign investment, multinational corporations, and Western influence, which epitomizes the economic dependence and external control that define neocolonialism. This modern urban landscape, with its economic prosperity driven by foreign interests, reveals how the true sovereignty of the nation remains compromised. Agualusa highlights this paradox in a reflection on Luanda's urban development. "Luanda is a city that grows without ever quite flourishing. The streets are full of new cars, but they are filled with foreign brands—made elsewhere, sold here" (Agualusa, 2017, p.78).

The foreign cars in the city symbolise the continued dominance of foreign economic interests in Angola. Although the city appears to be thriving, its growth is superficial because it does not reflect true independence. Instead, it showcases Angola's integration into a global capitalist system that keeps the country reliant on foreign investments and perpetuates its subordinate position in the world order. This growth, while visible, symbolises the lack of genuine autonomy.

The city thus symbolises the tension between outward progress and internal stagnation, where the visible aspects of modernization mask the deeper structural issues tied to neocolonial exploitation.

The very title of the novel, *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers*, introduces a powerful metaphor for the people of Angola who, despite their dreams of a better future, are hesitant or unable to challenge the entrenched systems of power. These reluctant dreamers symbolise the collective consciousness of a nation that yearns for change but finds itself unable to act

against the forces that maintain its economic and political subjugation. One of the clearest expressions of this reluctance is found when Rui reflects on the collective state of the nation: “We are a country of dreamers who are afraid to wake up” (Agualusa, 2017, p.112). This metaphor reflects how the people of Angola are aware of the injustices and inequalities they face, but they remain passive, either out of fear, disillusionment, or a sense of powerlessness. They have internalised the structures of neocolonialism to such an extent that their dreams of autonomy are stifled by their inability to act. The symbol of reluctance highlights how domestic neocolonialism operates not only through external economic dominance but also through internalised passivity, preventing the realisation of the nation’s potential. These reluctant dreamers are symbolic of postcolonial societies in general, where the desire for freedom coexists with a paralyzing sense of inevitability and resignation. Neocolonialism, in this sense, isn’t just a matter of economic exploitation but also a psychological and cultural condition that holds people back from pursuing genuine independence.

The jungle in Agualusa's (2017) novel symbolises both the raw, untapped potential of Angola and the dangerous chaos that may ensue if the country were to attempt to reclaim its autonomy fully. The jungle is a space of natural abundance, representing Angola’s vast resources—its oil, minerals, and land—that are exploited by foreign corporations but never fully controlled or used to benefit the local population. The jungle, however, is also a symbol of the disorder and instability that characterizes the postcolonial state. In a symbolic sense, the jungle is the untamed aspect of the nation that, if fully embraced, could lead to both liberation and destruction. Agualusa (2017) describes the jungle as a double-edged sword: “The jungle calls to us, but we fear its wildness. We are afraid of what it could make us become” (2017, p.143). This tension reflects the dilemma of postcolonial Angola: how to

reconcile the desire for autonomy and self-sufficiency with the fear of the chaos that may result from fully breaking free of neocolonial influences. The jungle represents a return to the roots of the nation, but also the uncertainty and instability that could come with that return. In this way, the jungle mirrors the complexity of postcolonial identity and the struggle to assert independence without falling into ruin.

The use of symbolism in *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers* (2017) is essential for conveying the layered complexities of neocolonialism. By employing symbols such as dreams, the jungle, the city, and the “reluctant dreamers,” Agualusa provides a nuanced critique of the ways in which postcolonial societies are still bound by the remnants of colonial rule. The symbolism serves to highlight how neocolonialism is not just an external force but a deeply ingrained system that operates through economic dependency, cultural hegemony, and psychological oppression.

The significance of these symbols lies in their ability to evoke a deeper understanding of the ways in which power continues to shape the lives of individuals and nations long after the formal end of colonialism. Through symbolism, Agualusa (2017) does not merely describe the external realities of neocolonialism, but also explores its internal effects, showing how the postcolonial world remains entangled in cycles of exploitation and passivity. These symbols serve as a powerful reminder of the ongoing struggle for true independence, one that requires both external decolonisation and an internal reclamation of power.

4.4. Dreams as a space of resistance and reimagination.

In her article, “The Dream as a Narrative,” Kilroe (2004) discusses how dreams function as both a literary and narrative technique in literature. She emphasises that dreams within literary works serve to reveal hidden truths about characters' desires, subconscious thoughts,

and inner conflicts. She argues that dreams help in constructing and deconstructing the narrative, providing additional layers of meaning and inviting readers to engage with the unconscious aspects of the story. (Kilroe, 2004).

4.4.1. Dreams in The Society of Reluctant Dreamers

Agualusa (2017) uses dreams as a literary technique to explore the complex layers of domestic neocolonialism in post-independence Angola. Dreams in the novel are not merely unconscious reveries but serve as a powerful tool to critique both the psychological and political impact of neocolonial structures. In this context, dreams symbolise the hopes, fears, and the fractured consciousness of a society struggling to reconcile its revolutionary ideals with the brutal realities of life under new internal power structures. By analyzing dreams in relation to Necropolitics, we can better understand the way Agualusa (2017) uses dreams to critique the persistence of colonial-era violence, oppression, and exploitation under the guise of independence.

In *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers* (2017), dreams often blur the boundaries between past and present, illustrating how the historical memory of colonialism continues to shape the identities and futures of the characters. The protagonist, Daniel Benchimol, finds himself in the midst of these fragmented dreams, which reflect the psychic and existential turmoil of a nation that is still haunted by the shadow of colonialism. These dreams are not merely personal experiences; they are deeply tied to the collective experience of a people who, while achieving formal political independence, remain trapped in cycles of neocolonial exploitation.

The significance of dreams in this context lies in their ability to show that the psychological effects of colonial rule persist even after political liberation. Daniel's dreams do not just

reflect his personal struggles but also mirror the dreams of the nation—a society that struggles to break free from the very forces that had colonized it. The broken dreams of individuals in the novel are emblematic of the larger societal fractures caused by domestic neocolonialism. The characters in the novel are caught in a paradox where they are “free” but still enslaved by the economic, social, and political structures that maintain neocolonial oppression. One key passage that illustrates this is, “There are days when I wake up and forget who I am. It's as if my body has been inhabited by someone else, someone who has been wandering for years.” (Agualusa, 1992, p.37).

Here, Daniel’s disconnection from his own identity mirrors the national disillusionment that accompanies neocolonialism. His dream-like state suggests that Angola, although independent in name, remains haunted by the ghosts of its colonial past, unable to fully reconcile its present with its aspirations for a just future. This disconnect is a manifestation of the necropolitical condition where the country is alive but deeply scarred, caught in a state of ongoing violence, both physical and psychological.

The concept of Necropolitics is central to understanding how dreams are used to symbolise domestic neocolonialism in Agualusa’s novel. Necropolitics, as defined by Mbembe (2003), refers to the power dynamics that determine who is allowed to live and who is condemned to die, a theory that closely aligns with how power operates in postcolonial states where the majority of the population is subjected to death, violence, and social death, while a select few in power thrive. In the context of *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers*, dreams symbolise the state of living death under domestic neocolonialism. The characters live in a world where the promises of liberation and a better life have been betrayed, and they are left in a state of suspended existence. Dreams, in this sense, are not just personal experiences but reflections

of the larger societal necropolitical landscape, where the poor, the oppressed, and the marginalized are systematically denied life—denied access to the resources, opportunities, and freedoms that should be theirs after independence. For example, the character of Karinguiri, a young activist, is arrested for speaking out against the government. She is subjected to the violence of the state, and her imprisonment becomes a metaphor for the death of hope in the face of neocolonial oppression. Her eventual dream-like escape into a world of memory and imagination reveals how, in a society where real liberation is denied, the only escape is through the realm of dreams. Dreams thus become a means of survival, a way for the oppressed to momentarily escape the brutal realities of their lives. As the narrative notes, “In prison, Karinguiri dreamed of the sea, of escaping to a place where there was no government, no soldiers, no people with power.” (Aqualusa, 2017, p.113)

This passage shows how dreams offer a space for resistance. While Karinguiri is physically imprisoned, her dreams offer an alternative reality where the mechanisms of power do not exist. This symbolises the psychological form of resistance to a state that exercises control over both the body and mind, where the state’s power to dictate life and death leaves no room for true liberation.

In addition to representing the state of Necropolitics, dreams in *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers* (2017) also function as a form of subversive act. When characters dream, they are able to access realms outside the reach of the oppressive forces around them. Dreams become acts of resistance, where characters can reclaim autonomy, even if only temporarily, from the reality of their existence under domestic neocolonialism. For example, Daniel Benchimol’s own dreams of his deceased mother are both an act of memory and resistance. He is forced to confront the painful legacy of his family’s past, but in the process, he gains

an understanding of the unresolved trauma that continues to haunt the nation. His dreams are not just personal catharsis; they symbolise the broader national trauma that has been passed down from colonialism through to contemporary post-independence society. An example is when Daniel says; “In my dreams, I see my mother. She is always young, always beautiful, always lost.” (Agualusa, 2017, p.92). This recurring image of lost youth and unfulfilled promises echoes the unrealised potential of the nation. Like Daniel’s mother, the country is perpetually in a state of unfinished business, where the dreams of freedom and prosperity remain elusive. Dreams thus serve as a symbol of hope in the face of overwhelming oppression, but they also highlight the tragic gap between dreams and reality. The use of dreams in this novel is significant because it highlights the psychological and existential dimensions of domestic neocolonialism. Dreams represent the tension between the idealized visions of liberation that were central to the independence struggle and the bitter reality of post-independence life, where new forms of oppression, corruption, and violence have taken root. Through dreams, Agualusa (2017) not only critiques the failure of post-colonial governance but also illustrates how the psychic scars of neocolonialism continue to affect individuals and the collective psyche of the nation.

Dreams in *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers* (2017) therefore, serve as a powerful literary technique to depict domestic neocolonialism through the lens of Necropolitics. By connecting the unconscious realm of dreams to the broader political landscape, Agualusa (2017) paints a picture of a nation that is trapped between dreams and reality—a country where political and economic power structures continue to deny true freedom and perpetuate social death for the majority. Dreams, therefore, are not just passive experiences in the novel

but are acts of resistance, offering a brief escape from the violence of the state and a space for the imagination to reclaim what has been lost in the struggle for liberation.

4.4.2. Dreams in *Sleepwalking Land*

Couto's *Sleepwalking Land* (1992) uses dreams as a powerful literary technique to illustrate the psychological and emotional impact of domestic neocolonialism on individuals and the nation as a whole. Dreams in the novel serve as a metaphorical space where the characters' subconscious desires, fears, and the effects of war and colonial history converge. This exploration of dreams aligns with necropolitical theory and Fanon's (1961) decolonisation theory, both of which explore how colonization (and its aftermath) affects individual and collective consciousness, creating lasting trauma and unresolved tensions. By examining the role of dreams in *Sleepwalking Land*, we can uncover how the novel critiques the continuity of colonial legacies within the post-independence nation and the psychological scars left by both colonization and the subsequent neocolonial systems.

In *Sleepwalking Land* (1992), dreams are not just expressions of unconscious thought; they are reflections of the distorted realities caused by both external oppression (colonial rule) and internal repression (neocolonial governance). Characters, such as Muidinga and Tuahir, struggle to reconcile their dreams with their waking lives, as the nation itself is caught between the promises of freedom and the reality of exploitation. The central role of dreams is intertwined with the broader theme of disillusionment with post-independence leadership, which, while promising liberation, continues to perpetuate cycles of violence, economic exploitation, and societal decay. Dreams, in this sense, serve as a critical medium for exploring identity, trauma, and loss. They provide the characters with a space where they can temporarily escape the harsh realities of their daily existence. However, this escape is

never complete; the characters remain trapped between their dreams of a better world and the nightmarish realities that haunt them in their waking lives. Through this, Couto (1992) explores how the internalised colonization of the mind persists, even after formal independence. The characters' experiences of dreaming and sleepwalking illustrate the persistent neocolonial control of the nation, as it continues to suffer from the psychological aftermath of colonial domination.

The significance of dreams in *Sleepwalking Land* (1992), is understood through connecting them to Necropolitical theory of philosopher Achille Mbembe. Necropolitics examines the ways in which power structures control life and death, particularly in postcolonial societies. Under colonial and neocolonial rule, this control manifests through various forms of violence, exploitation, and marginalization. In *Sleepwalking Land* (1992), the characters' dreams symbolise a desire to transcend death—whether literal or metaphorical—yet they remain ensnared by a system that continues to control their destinies. In the context of Necropolitics, the dreams of the characters reveal the psychological toll of living under a regime that treats its citizens as expendable. An example is Muidinga's dreams in particular which are a response to the war, which has claimed countless lives and created a sense of hopelessness. This is evident as he reflects, “One day something will happen. And this war will stop. The road will fill up with people, trucks. Like in the old days.” (Couto, 1992, p.5).

This passage symbolises Muidinga's desire for an idealized world—a place that is free from both colonial exploitation and neocolonial subjugation. The fact that this dream is never realised highlights the unfulfilled promises of independence and the continued suffering under a corrupt post-independence regime. His dream-like state reflects the ways in which necropolitical power continues to dictate the terms of existence for the people, shaping their

consciousness and aspirations. Dreams in this context represent the last vestiges of individual agency and freedom, but they are always fleeting and undermined by the realities of the violence and oppression surrounding them.

Another example is from Kindzu's dream which is a reflection of trauma: Kindzu's character is deeply affected by the trauma of war, and his dreams often blur the line between the past and present. One of his dreams is described as follows,

Now, it was as if these ghosts were at work inside my head in order to transmit secrets to me, revelations from another world. I shall now recount my last dream to see whether I can free myself of the burden of these terrible memories.

(Couto, 1992, p. 209)

This dream is symbolic of how the trauma of war has not been processed or healed, and how the past continually intrudes upon the present. It also underscores the notion of historical amnesia, where the suffering caused by both colonialism and internal conflict is ignored by those in power. Kindzu's dream connects the legacy of colonial violence with the ongoing neocolonial oppression that continues to haunt the nation.

The novel itself can be seen as a collective dream of a nation—one that is constantly in search of identity and freedom but is trapped by internal power struggles and exploitation. In one pivotal scene, the narrator describes, "Our country is asleep. The people are sleepwalking, unaware of the darkness that surrounds them. They have dreams, but they are not awake to see them come true" (Couto, 1992, p.68).

This passage illustrates the national paralysis that results from the neocolonial system, where the citizens are unable to escape the structures of exploitation and corruption. The metaphor

of sleepwalking reflects how the people of Mozambique are unconsciously complicit in their own oppression, as they are not yet fully awake to the reality of their situation.

Fanon's decolonisation theory also relates to the use of dreams in *Sleepwalking Land* (1992). According to Fanon (1961), colonization and its aftermath distort the psyche, forcing the colonized to internalise their oppression and suffer from a loss of identity. Fanon's theory of decolonisation involves both the physical and psychological liberation of the individual. However, in *Sleepwalking Land* (1992), the psychological scars of colonialism are still present, as the post-independence leaders replicate many of the same exploitative tactics as the colonizers. Dreams in the novel function as a space of rebellion against this ongoing oppression, but they are interrupted by the harsh political realities of the characters' lives.

The use of dreams in *Sleepwalking Land* (1992) is highly significant for several reasons. First, dreams offer a window into the unconscious of the characters, providing a space where they can confront their desires, fears, and memories. However, this space is not one of true freedom; the dreams are always haunted by the trauma of war and the unresolved political and social issues that continue to plague the nation. Dreams, in this context, are both an escape and a trap. They allow the characters to glimpse a better future but always remind them of the harshness of the present reality. Dreams as well serve as a metaphor for the nation itself. Just as the characters dream of peace and freedom, the nation dreams of a future that is free from the control of external powers and corrupt internal elites. However, like the characters' dreams, the nation's aspirations remain unfulfilled. The sleepwalking state of the characters becomes a symbol for the collective state of the country—one that is unable to break free from the neocolonial structures of power that continue to control it. By using dreams as a narrative device, Couto (1992) forces the reader to experience the disjointedness

and fragmentation of the nation's identity and the complexity of the post-independence experience. Dreams blur the boundaries between the past and present, the conscious and unconscious, the real and the imaginary, reflecting how neocolonialism does not simply end with independence but continues to shape the lives of the people through its psychological and cultural impacts.

In *Sleepwalking Land* (1992) Couto's use of dreams as a literary technique effectively illustrates the psychological and emotional effects of domestic neocolonialism. Through the fragmented and surreal quality of dreams, Couto (1992) reveals how the characters—and by extension, the nation—are trapped in the aftermath of colonialism and the unfulfilled promises of post-independence governance. Dreams serve as both a metaphor for resistance and escape and a reflection of the ongoing trauma that has yet to be resolved. By connecting these dreams to necropolitical theory and ideas of decolonisation, Couto (1992) underscores the ways in which postcolonial societies continue to be governed by forces that control life, death, and memory, keeping the people in a perpetual state of longing for freedom and justice.

4.5. Comparative Analysis of *Sleepwalking Land* and *The Society of Reluctant*

Dreamers in Literary Representation of Domestic Neocolonialism

This chapter has explored how Couto's *Sleepwalking Land* (1992) and Agualusa's *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers* (2017) employ distinct literary techniques to represent domestic neocolonialism. Through an analysis of narrative structure, symbolism, and the use of dreams, both novels provide insightful commentaries on the post-colonial experiences in Mozambique and Angola. While each text adopts unique strategies, they share a common purpose in critiquing the lingering effects of neocolonialism in their respective societies.

Narrative Structure: The narrative structure plays a significant role in how the themes of domestic neocolonialism are conveyed in both novels, with each author using specific structures to reflect the fractured and complex post-colonial realities of Mozambique and Angola.

In *Sleepwalking Land*, Couto (1992) employs a dual narrative structure, combining a frame story with an embedded narrative. The frame story follows the journey of two characters, a man and a boy, traversing a war-torn Mozambique, while the embedded narrative centres on the past experiences of the characters as they recount their lives in the face of neocolonial and post-colonial struggles. The frame story serves as a metaphor for the country's disjointed and fragmented state, torn apart by war and social decay. The embedded narrative deepens this, showing the complexity of individual lives shaped by the socio-political systems in place. Through this dual structure, Couto (1992) emphasises the cyclical nature of trauma and the persistence of neocolonial forces, suggesting that history is not linear but rather something that continually resurfaces and influences present realities.

In contrast, *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers*, Agualusa (2017) employs a fragmented narrative structure, in which multiple voices and perspectives are woven together through the experiences of characters who grapple with personal and societal struggles. The disjointed narrative reflects the fragmentation of identity and the societal chaos resulting from domestic neocolonialism. Through shifting perspectives, Agualusa (2017) creates a sense of disorientation and confusion, mirroring the fractured state of post-colonial Angola, where corruption, inequality, and a lack of cohesive direction often lead to a state of inertia. The fragmented structure also highlights the theme of individual dreams and aspirations

being disconnected from the broader societal context, further emphasising the struggle for self-identity and collective unity within a disjointed political landscape.

Thus, while Couto's (1992) dual narrative structure illustrates the coexistence of historical and present-day struggles, Agualusa (2017) uses fragmentation to depict the disintegration of personal and national identities, both of which are deeply influenced by domestic neocolonialism.

Symbolism: Both novels utilize symbolism as a powerful tool for representing neocolonialism, with specific images and motifs reinforcing the themes of oppression, identity, and resistance.

In *Sleepwalking Land* (1992), one of the key symbols is the flame story, which encapsulates the cyclical and destructive nature of colonialism and its lasting effects on post-colonial societies. The flame, representing the enduring fire of history and the trauma passed down through generations, suggests how the wounds of colonialism are still active in the present. The characters' attempts to extinguish or escape this flame represent their struggle to move forward while still being consumed by the past. This symbol mirrors the ways in which the legacy of colonialism continues to shape the domestic socio-political landscape, keeping people trapped in a state of constant struggle and transition.

In *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers*, Agualusa's (2017) use of symbols such as the title, the city of Luanda, foreign cars, reluctance, and the jungle also ties directly to themes of neocolonialism. The title itself, *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers*, refers to a populace that has become disillusioned and apathetic, trapped by the inertia of their circumstances. Luanda, the capital city, symbolises the disconnection between the elite, who enjoy the benefits of power and privilege, and the masses, who remain marginalized in the city's

shadows. Foreign cars, often seen driving through the streets, symbolise the power of external economic interests and the continued dominance of foreign influences in the post-colonial period. The reluctance of the characters in the novel symbolises the mental and emotional paralysis faced by a population unable to act decisively in the face of corruption and inequality. Finally, the jungle represents both a physical and metaphorical escape—a place of rewilding where individuals retreat to regain a sense of self away from the corrosive forces of urban neocolonialism.

While both novels utilize symbolism to portray the deep entanglement of post-colonial societies in neocolonial systems, Couto's (1992) flame story conveys the cyclical nature of historical trauma, while Agualusa's (2017) symbols highlight the physical and psychological disconnect between the elite and the masses, as well as the ways in which foreign influences continue to dictate the fate of the nation.

Dreams: Dreams are central to the exploration of resistance and identity in both novels, acting as a means of escapism, a form of protest, and a way to challenge the status quo of neocolonial oppression.

In *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers*, dreams are a form of resistance in themselves. The characters' engagement with dreams allows them to transcend the limitations imposed by their socio-political environment. Dreams serve as a space for exploring alternative realities, uncovering suppressed desires, and confronting painful truths about the society they live in. For the protagonists, dreaming is a means of resisting the paralysis caused by corruption, decay, and the oppression of the ruling elite. These dreams often reveal the hidden emotional and psychological layers of the characters, providing them with a form of agency and insight in a world where political power remains stagnant.

Similarly, in *Sleepwalking Land* (1992), dreams also represent a form of resistance, but in a more literal and metaphysical sense. The characters experience dreams that blur the line between reality and fantasy, serving as a way to navigate the trauma of war, displacement, and loss. These dreams reflect the internal struggles of the characters as they try to reconcile their past with their present realities. The act of dreaming becomes a form of defiance against the forces of history and oppression that seek to suppress memory and identity. In this way, dreams become a site of rebellion, a space where the past and future can coexist and challenge the present neocolonial condition.

Thus, in both novels, dreams represent a form of resistance and an alternative space for self-definition. However, *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers* (2017) uses dreams as an emotional and mental escape, while *Sleepwalking Land* uses dreams to explore the deep connection between memory, trauma, and resistance.

Both Couto (1992) and Agualusa (2017) utilize innovative literary techniques—narrative structure, symbolism, and the use of dreams—to represent the complexities of domestic neocolonialism in Mozambique and Angola. While Couto’s dual narrative structure and flame symbolism emphasise the cyclical and historical nature of oppression, Agualusa’s fragmented narrative and urban symbols highlight the disintegration of identity and the inertia of a society paralyzed by corruption and foreign influence. In both works, dreams serve as powerful forms of resistance, offering alternative realities and spaces for personal and collective transformation. By examining these literary techniques, the chapter reveals how both authors use the intricacies of narrative form to comment on the persistence of neocolonialism and the ongoing struggle for identity, liberation, and change in post-colonial African societies.

4.6. Chapter summary

This chapter outlined the research design and methodological approach adopted in the study. It described the qualitative research paradigm that guided the analysis of Mia Couto's *Sleepwalking Land* and José Eduardo Agualusa's *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers*. The study employed textual analysis as its main method, grounded in interpretive and postcolonial literary criticism. This approach enabled an in-depth reading of the two novels, examining how language, symbolism, narrative structure, and characterisation reveal the dynamics of domestic neocolonialism and resistance. The chapter justified the use of a comparative framework that highlights similarities and differences between Mozambican and Angolan post-independence experiences. Primary data were drawn directly from the selected novels, while secondary data included relevant scholarly works on neocolonialism, decolonisation, and Lusophone African literature. The theoretical frameworks of Fanon's decolonisation and Mbembe's necropolitics informed the interpretive process, ensuring a coherent link between theory and textual evidence. Ethical considerations were observed through proper citation, critical objectivity, and acknowledgment of all sources. The chapter concluded that the chosen methodological approach was suitable for uncovering the complex literary representations of internalised colonial systems, as it aligned with the study's aim of exploring the interplay between domestic neocolonialism and decolonisation through narrative form and character portrayal.

CHAPTER FIVE

RESISTING DOMESTIC NEOCOLONIALISM IN LUSOPHONE AFRICAN LITERATURE

5.1. Introduction

This chapter examined the strategies of resistance and social movements against domestic neocolonialism in Mozambique and Angola as portrayed in Mia Couto's *Sleepwalking Land* (1992) and José Eduardo Agualusa's *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers* (2017). It drew on Achille Mbembe's theory of necropolitics (2001; 2003) and Frantz Fanon's concept of revolutionary resistance (1961) to interrogate how power, domination, and rebellion were represented within these post-independence societies. Mbembe's notion of the state's authority to determine "who may live and who must die" resonated with the violent repression and systemic inequality depicted in the novels, while Fanon's view of liberation as both a psychic and physical rupture illuminated the complex forms of rebellion that emerged in response. In both texts, resistance took multiple forms—memory, storytelling, and dreams served as symbolic tools through which characters contested oppression and reclaimed their humanity. Resistance was therefore presented not as a single act but as a continuous cultural and political struggle for dignity and self-determination.

The chapter proceeded by analyzing how the two novels portrayed both collective and individual acts of defiance, from grassroots social movements to subtle forms of cultural and intellectual resistance. It explored how Couto and Agualusa employed narrative strategies, symbolism, and characterisation to dramatize the tensions between subjugation and freedom, revealing literature's capacity to mirror and critique lived realities. Ultimately, the chapter highlighted how acts of resistance in these novels extended beyond the fictional realm, engaging with broader debates on power, justice, and decolonisation in postcolonial Africa.

5.2. Strategies of resistance against Domestic Neocolonialism in Mozambique as portrayed in *Sleepwalking Land* by Mia Couto.

The concept of domestic neocolonialism in Mia Couto's *Sleepwalking Land* (1992) was manifested through the ways in which characters resisted oppressive structures and sought to reclaim their identities within a postcolonial, war-torn Mozambican landscape. This resistance emerged through storytelling, memory, and mobility—acts that collectively challenged the paralysis and erasure enforced by internal neocolonial forces. Through storytelling, Kindzu's family resisted cultural annihilation by preserving their heritage and identity amid destruction. Kindzu's notebooks capture this defiance when the narrator observes that "his stories made our little home patch grow until it was bigger than the world. None of his narratives had an end" (Couto, 1992, p. 8). Storytelling thus became a mode of survival and an act of cultural continuity, transforming memory into resistance. The preservation of memory was further embodied in the notebooks discovered by Muidinga, which served as repositories of personal and collective histories that contested imposed colonial and state narratives. These interwoven myths and recollections elevated marginalized voices, reasserting indigenous epistemologies and undermining authoritarian versions of history. Similarly, Tuahir and Muidinga's physical journey across the desolate Mozambican landscape symbolised a refusal to succumb to immobility and despair. Their movement through spaces scarred by war represented an insistence on life and transformation, rejecting the stagnation produced by both colonial residues and domestic neocolonial oppression. In this sense, mobility, memory, and storytelling intertwined as symbolic acts of resistance, enabling characters to reclaim agency and articulate an enduring quest for freedom amid devastation. This is evident in the following extract:

The old man's name is Tuahir. He is skinny and seems to have lost all his substance.

The boy is called Muidinga. He has been walking ahead ever since he left the refugee camp. He has a slight but noticeable limp, his leg dallying longer than his step.

(Couto, 1992, p.2)

This text explains how Tuahir and Muidinga navigate a decaying war-torn landscape filled with remnants of colonial exploitation. By surviving and moving forward, they symbolically defy the erasure and control imposed by neocolonial systems. Their journey itself becomes an act of resistance.

The characters in the novel embraced survival as resistance in the face of systemic violence, their determination to survive acts as a subtle but potent form of resistance to the war's mechanisms that reflect Domestic Neocolonial control. Everyday acts of survival like finding food, shelter and companionship, become revolutionary in a context where life itself is constantly under threat. These acts affirm human dignity and defy the dehumanizing forces of war and exploitation. This is evident when Tuahir tell Muidinga, "To live, my boy, is to fight the indifference that kills. It is to carry on even when the world does not want you to" (Couto, 1992, p.2). This line encapsulates the struggle of survival in a post-colonial society where remnants of colonial oppression persist through domestic structures of power and exploitation. By framing survival as a resistance to being forgotten, the characters assert their humanity and agency in the face of systemic forces that seek to marginalize and erase them. Their existence defies the forces of Domestic Neocolonialism, which attempt to perpetuate colonial hierarchies and suppress the voices of the oppressed.

In addition to survival, the characters reclaim agency over their lives by making choices, even in constrained circumstances, defying the structures of oppression. This is evident from the following instance,

In fact, the only thing that happens is the steady change in scenery. But only Muidinga sees these changes. Tuahir says they are mirages, the fruits of his companion's desires.

Who's to tell whether these visions aren't the result of their sticking to the same refuge.

That's why he wanted to set off once more, to discover goodness knows what, a last ray of hope, an escape from their encirclement. (Couto, 1992, p.60)

This statement reflects how individuals under oppressive systems must take control of their narratives and actively create possibilities of survival and resistance, even when the systems around them have failed. In the novel, the characters continually resist despair by reclaiming their dignity and agency through storytelling, memory and survival despite the chaos and destruction of the war.

Community and solidarity in *Sleepwalking Land* (1992) is achieved through rebuilding connections. The novel emphasises the rebuilding of human connections in a fragmented society. This solidarity counters the individualism often promoted by neocolonial economic and social systems.

A significant moment highlighting solidarity is Tuahir's decision to take care of Muidinga, a sick and abandoned boy. Despite the scarcity of resources and perversive atmosphere of mistrust and despair, Tuahir chooses compassion over self-preservation. This is evident as Tuahir explains to Muidinga how he got hold of him in the text below,

“Leave that one alone, it’s my nephew.” “So will you look after him then?” “Yes, I’ll see to him.” And so that’s what happened. In the beginning, the little boy just uttered strange groans. Days passed and his only nourishment was water. The child remained bent double, vomiting, hurting from head to foot. He lay still and was already chewing his last. Tuahir asked him to get up and stand, even if only for a few moments. With his help, the dying child managed to support himself. (Couto, 1992, p.48)

The growing relationship between Tuahir and Muidinga reflects the significance of intergenerational knowledge and solidarity as powerful tools of resistance against systemic oppression. The wisdom of the older generation and the hope of the younger merge to form a shared vision for survival and renewal. This act of solidarity counters the fragmentation and isolation produced by socio-political turmoil that mirrors the workings of domestic neocolonialism. Through their companionship, Tuahir and Muidinga create a microcosm of mutual support, reclaiming their humanity within a dehumanizing world. Their shared reading of Kindzu’s notebooks reinforces this unity, as piecing together Kindzu’s life story becomes an act of collective remembrance and cultural reconstruction. Through storytelling, they recover identity, history, and purpose, resisting the erasure of community brought about by internal systems of domination. In *Sleepwalking Land* (1992), solidarity thus emerges as a critical form of resistance—an assertion of connection in the face of disintegration. Moreover, the novel’s portrayal of postcolonial leadership as corrupt and self-serving functions as a broader critique of domestic neocolonialism. Couto exposes how post-independence leaders in Mozambique replicate colonial structures of exploitation, inequality, and moral decay. The civil war setting amplifies this critique, illustrating the consequences of failed governance and the betrayal of revolutionary ideals. By intertwining

personal solidarity with political disillusionment, Couto reveals that resistance operates both at the intimate level of human relationships and within the larger sociopolitical struggle against neocolonial power.. For example, those in power killed people to take their property as illustrated below:

Farida wished to know more: she wanted to know the cause of the war, the reason for those endless funeral processions. I recalled Surendra's words: if there had to be war, there had to be death. And what was it all for? To license Robbery. For nowadays, no wealth could be born from work. Only pillage gave people property rights. Death was necessary so that laws could be forgotten. Now that there was total chaos, anything was permitted.

The finger would always be pointed elsewhere. (Couto, 1992, p.105)

In *Sleepwalking Land* (1992), war emerges as a by-product of competing elite interests rather than a struggle for the people's welfare, revealing a form of neocolonialism in which the oppressors are no longer foreign powers but domestic rulers. The characters are alienated from state institutions that have become tools of exploitation, while the barren, abandoned landscape mirrors the leadership's moral decay and the failure to achieve genuine independence. Yet amid this collapse, ordinary individuals reclaim agency through storytelling, memory, and survival—embodied in Tuahir and Muidinga's journey—which affirms that resistance arises from grassroots empowerment rather than flawed leadership. Couto critiques the false promises of postcolonial leaders who perpetuate dependency and disillusionment by adapting colonial structures to their benefit. At the same time, nature itself becomes a symbol of resistance: the land, trees, and rivers embody memory, renewal, and continuity in defiance of political corruption and social decay. Through its fusion of

human and ecological resilience, *Sleepwalking Land* portrays true liberation as rooted in community, memory, and harmony with the land, positioning grassroots solidarity and ecological consciousness as enduring forces against domestic neocolonialism. This is evident in the following passage.

In the distance, shots can be heard as the war proceeds to impose its rumble. Tuahir continues, passionately: he says he has heard of rich countries where folks no longer have to dig the earth- the hoe has been buried upright in the ground. From its handle, trees have sprouted; plants full of green. (Couto, 1992, p.65)

This suggests that nature, in its timelessness and presence, bears witness to the history of exploitation and resistance. The trees as a part of the land symbolise the enduring strength and memory of the oppressed, resisting the erasure of their histories by forces of Domestic Neocolonialism.

In *Sleepwalking Land* (1992), Couto uses nature as a form of cultural reclamation and as a means of asserting autonomy against domestic neocolonial forces. The natural world embodies the unbroken continuity of indigenous identity and survival, offering both a physical and spiritual refuge from political corruption and social collapse. The resilience of the landscape mirrors the endurance of Mozambican culture, where the land itself becomes a witness and participant in the people's struggle for liberation. Nature thus transforms from setting to symbol: a living archive of memory and renewal that resists the erasures of history and the violence of internal oppression.

These strategies of survival and reclamation resonate strongly with Mbembe's theory of necropolitics, which examines how sovereign power is exercised through the control of life

and death. In Couto's war-torn Mozambique, power operates by deciding whose lives are expendable and whose bodies are useful to the state. The act of searching for meaning, memory, and connection amid ruins becomes an act of defiance against a necropolitical order that seeks to render people voiceless and disposable. Tuahir and Muidinga's movement across desolate landscapes rejects confinement and passivity, reclaiming agency even in a world that symbolises death and despair. Their journey transforms motion itself into an assertion of life, a refusal to submit to the paralyzing logic of war and misrule.

Resistance in *Sleepwalking Land* is seldom overt or militant. It is woven into everyday gestures—storytelling, remembrance, endurance—that embody the subtle struggle for authentic liberation. This aligns with Fanon's view of decolonisation as both material and psychological rupture. Fanon warns that post-independence elites often reproduce colonial hierarchies, becoming what he calls the "national bourgeoisie" that governs through mimicry rather than transformation. For him, liberation requires dismantling systemic inequality and awakening the collective agency of the masses. Couto's narrative dramatizes this warning by portraying leaders who perpetuate exploitation under nationalist rhetoric while ordinary citizens cultivate resistance through cultural continuity and communal resilience.

Through these acts of resistance, *Sleepwalking Land* reframes the meaning of independence. The novel shows that political sovereignty without social justice is hollow and that genuine liberation must encompass economic equity, ethical leadership, and cultural autonomy. Tuahir and Muidinga's journey illustrates this truth: their storytelling sustains memory and identity where state institutions have failed. By linking these intimate acts to Fanon's revolutionary humanism, Couto universalizes the Mozambican experience as part of a broader African struggle against neocolonial domination.

Couto reinforces his critique through rich symbolism. The scorched and barren land mirrors both the physical devastation of war and the psychological desolation of a betrayed nation. The characters' wandering becomes a metaphor for Mozambique's search for identity in the aftermath of shattered promises. In blending allegory with realism, Couto demonstrates how literature itself becomes an instrument of resistance—questioning dominant ideologies while giving voice to silenced histories. Storytelling functions not merely as narration but as reclamation: a re-enactment of oral traditions that preserve collective memory and challenge the cultural imperialism embedded in domestic power structures.

The novel also delves deeply into the psychological and existential dimensions of life under a neocolonial regime. Characters struggle with trauma, dislocation, and fragmented identities, reflecting the inner scars of systemic violence. In representing these wounds, Couto expands the scope of resistance beyond the political into the realm of consciousness. Literature becomes a therapeutic space where suppressed grief and anxiety are translated into meaning. By confronting the emotional residue of colonialism, *Sleepwalking Land* enacts what Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o would call the "decolonisation of the mind," transforming narrative art into a mode of healing and resistance.

Couto further departs from traditional heroic narratives by centring ordinary, marginalized figures rather than charismatic leaders. Tuahir and Muidinga are not revolutionaries but survivors whose quiet persistence subverts official histories. This decentring of power emphasises grassroots resistance—the collective endurance of peasants, refugees, and orphans who embody the moral centre of the nation. By shifting agency from elites to the marginalized, the novel challenges the elitism that defines both colonial and post-colonial

hierarchies. It re-imagines resistance as communal rather than individual, locating transformation in the everyday practices of care, storytelling, and survival.

The critique of post-independence leadership is explicit. Couto exposes the domestic neocolonial tendencies of rulers who replicate colonial patterns of greed and violence. Power remains concentrated among elites, and state institutions become instruments of control rather than liberation. This portrayal aligns with Mbembe's necropolitical vision of governance through death, where life is cheapened and citizens exist at the threshold of survival. By foregrounding these failures, the novel positions literature as an ethical mirror—an art form that demands accountability and re-imagines governance grounded in justice and human dignity.

Displacement and alienation pervade the text. The wandering journey of Tuahir and Muidinga across a devastated land reflects the uprootedness wrought by domestic neocolonialism. Their lack of a stable home symbolises a nation estranged from itself, its people adrift amid moral and physical ruin. In this sense, spatial movement parallels existential exile. Yet within that wandering lies resistance: the search for belonging, the persistence of hope, and the refusal to surrender to despair. Through this imagery, Couto reclaims the land as a living entity that binds identity and resistance together.

Magical realism further amplifies these themes. By blurring the boundaries between the real and the imaginary, Couto captures the fractured consciousness of a society caught between history and dream. Supernatural elements are not escapist but decolonial—they disrupt linear, Western modes of storytelling and assert an indigenous epistemology rooted in myth and spirituality. This stylistic choice transforms the novel itself into a form of rebellion,

challenging imposed literary norms while depicting the complexity of post-independence reality.

Ultimately, *Sleepwalking Land* demonstrates that resistance to domestic neocolonialism operates on multiple fronts—cultural, psychological, ecological, and political. It critiques the failures of post-independence leadership, celebrates grassroots resilience, and reclaims literature as both witness and weapon. Nature stands as the enduring symbol of continuity; memory and storytelling preserve identity; and ordinary people, not political elites, carry the burden of hope. In doing so, Couto constructs a vision of liberation that transcends borders and ideologies, affirming that the struggle for decolonisation is both collective and continuous. His work insists that true independence lies in the reclamation of humanity itself—through solidarity, memory, and harmony with the land that sustains life.

5.3. Strategies of resistance in *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers* by Jose Eduardo

Agualusa.

Agualusa's *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers* (2017) highlights the political struggles of Angola and broader African societies, where Domestic Neocolonialism manifest through authoritarian governance, cultural erasure, and economic exploitation. Some of the resistance strategies exhibited are as follows:

Dreams in the novel symbolise freedom, imagination, and alternative realities that challenge oppressive systems. Characters like Daniel Benchimol use dreams as a tool to envision and articulate a better future, rejecting the constraints imposed by Domestic Neocolonialism. Dreams sharing connects individuals, fostering solidarity and collective agency against systemic control.

The novel positions dreams as a form of intellectual and spiritual resistance. Characters use dreams to imagine alternative realities, critique the status quo, and maintain hope for change. This symbolic defiance challenges the oppression of authoritarian regimes. This is portrayed through Daniel says to himself, “To dream is to resist. To dream is to oppose those who would like to make us forget who we are Train yourself to dream. Believe in your dreams” (Agualusa, 2017, p.41).

This line emphasises that in a world constrained by political oppression, control and fear, the simple act of dreaming represents freedom, rebellion, and the refusal to be confined by the boundaries imposed on reality. Dreaming in the novel symbolises a realm where individuals can envision a different, better world-one that challenges the status quo.

Art and writing serve as tools of dissent. By creating and sharing art, characters critique and expose the corruption and exploitation of the ruling elite. This strategy mirrors the role of cultural production in real world resistance movements, where art becomes a medium for raising awareness and fostering resistance.

The protagonist, Daniel Benchimol, uses his journalistic work to document truths suppressed by the state. Art becomes a tool for exposing corruption and envisioning liberation.

Resistance against Domestic Neocolonialism often involves reclaiming cultural and intellectual astronomy. Creative expression can disrupt imposed narratives and foster collective consciousness.

The novel emphasises the importance of shared experiences and collective action. Characters find strength in their connections to one another, representing a communal resistance against the isolating tactics of Domestic Neocolonial systems.

In the novel, individuals connect through shared dreams and visions of freedom, forming a metaphorical movement. This solidarity emphasises the importance of collective action. Characters align with broader political and social movements, symbolizing the power of organized resistance in challenging internal exploitation. Social movements against Domestic Neocolonialism thrive on unity, emphasising solidarity across social classes, ethnicities and ideologies to counter authoritarian elites. This is evident in the text where Karingiri and other activists while in prison, received support from the people outside:

As the days went on, the hunger strike of the seven activists took on dimensions that the regime hadn't anticipated. Newspapers from all over the world tried to keep track of the prisoners' health. In Lisbon, a group of Portuguese and Angolans came together outside the Angolan consulate in a peaceful vigil that begun at eight in the evening and didn't end until the small hours. The demonstrators were carrying candles.

Some of them wore masks of prisoners' faces. (Aqualusa, 2017, p. 213)

This reflects the collective power of imagination and shared visions as tools to resist oppressive systems, emphasising the importance of unity and solidarity in challenging internal neocolonial structures. The activists, who were in prison, the media and demonstrators all had one vision to save Angola from dictatorship and corruption.

The novel critiques Angola's elite who perpetuates inequality much as colonial power did. By highlighting this, the novel encourages readers to question the legitimacy of such authority. This act of exposing and rejecting Domestic Neocolonial systems is a resistance strategy as it disrupts the normalization of exploitation. This is evident through a description

given by Hossi first when he talked about a former minister and his wife and second when he was writing about Daniel Benchimol's profession and he said:

I also get frequent visits from a former minister and his wife, both of them fat, both of them arrogant. They complain because there isn't enough toilet paper, because the air con has broken down, because the room is full of mosquitoes, because the steak is very tough. (Agualusa, 2017, p.18)

Apart from that, Hossi is portrayed to critique corruption when he describes who Daniel Benchimol is and the line of his duty as a journalist. He notes that:

The guy specialized in disappearances. Cases where people, sometimes very well-known people, simply evaporated during the war. Public funds that vanished in a puff of smoke. Kidnapping of foreign businessmen. Those kinds of news stories. The government didn't like him much. (Agualusa, 2017, p.21).

This encapsulates the critique of selfish leadership and its role in undermining collective progress, a recurring theme in the novel's exploration of post-colonial societies grappling with internal corruption and unfulfilled promises of freedom."

Agualusa's (2017) novel underscores how oppressive systems erase individual and collective identity, replacing them with narratives that serve the ruling elite or external powers. Characters resist cultural alienation by embracing their dreams, creativity and connections to others. This reclamation of identity challenges the dehumanization imposed by Domestic Neocolonial forces.

By reasserting their dreams, memories and cultural heritage, the characters challenge the imposed silence and reclaim agency. Their resistance is rooted not in violence but in reimagining a shared identity that embraces authenticity, creativity and connection. Dreams in this context become a metaphorical tool for liberation-an act of resistance against the ideological colonization of the mind.

This reclaiming of identity aligns with broader post-colonial struggles where self-discovery and solidarity dismantle neocolonial structures from within, emphasising that true freedom begins with the liberation of the imagination. This can be illustrated through Karingiri's bravery at the congress:

The previous night the President had travelled to the newly inaugurated Congressional palace, in Talatona, to give the opening address for the 1st International Anti-corruption Congress. At the exact moment the man was getting ready to speak, a young woman jumped onto the table-'like a lioness', said Armando, unable to hide his enthusiasm -throwing blood-stained monopoly money around her and shouting: 'Down with the Dictator.' (Agualusa, 2017, p.119)

This illustration encapsulates the central idea in the novel that dreams are not just fleeting thoughts but integral to one's identity, particularly in the context of resistance, personal transformation and the reclamation of agency. Dreams become a space where the characters can assert control over their own lives and shape their realities in defiance of external pressures. Karingiri is brave enough to act upon her dream of speaking for her country and fighting for freedom.

Characters in the novel, such as Daniel Benchimol, navigate oppressive systems by moving across borders. Exile offers a reprieve from surveillance and persecution allowing for critical reflection on the failures of post-independence regimes. Beyond physical movement, the act of dreaming serves as a metaphorical escape. Dreams allow characters to transcend the oppressive realities of Domestic Neocolonialism and maintain hope for a liberated future.

Exile serves as a space to critique the Neocolonial actions of domestic elites who have co-opted power and perpetuate systemic exploitation. By escaping immediate oppression, individuals gain the freedom to critique and organize without fear of state retaliation.

Mobility as well enables characters to connect with diasporic and international networks. These connections create opportunities to expose domestic injustices and gather global support for resistance movements. The act of moving across borders undermines the rigid controls imposed by Domestic Neocolonial systems, which often rely on confinement and isolation to suppress dissent. Mobility allows for the sharing of ideas and strategies, strengthening resistance movements through external alliances. The ability to cross physical and conceptual borders challenge the state's control over bodies and ideas, as exemplified in the illustration below:

Leaving was not an act of cowardice but of defiance. In exile, I could breath, think and dream again. Here, under a different sky, I was free to see a different sky, I was free to see my country's wounds with clarity, free to speak truths that the regime at home would silence. The was not an escape. It was a vantage point, a place from which I could imagine a better Angola, one unshackled by its past and its present oppression.

(Agualusa, 2017, p.196)

This reflection highlights how exile allows Daniel to critique the authoritarian regime that perpetuates Domestic Neocolonialism. Through mobility, he gains the freedom to envision alternative futures and organize resistance, demonstrating that exile is not merely a retreat but a strategic repositioning of intellectual and ideological resistance.

In *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers* by Agualusa (2017), the demonstrators, activists, and media emerge as crucial figures in the pursuit of a better future for Angola—a country burdened by the lingering effects of colonialism and the complexities of postcolonial neocolonialism. These individuals, whether through public protests or quieter forms of resistance, embody the collective hope for a nation free from the shackles of its oppressive past. They are not just fighting for immediate change but are also advocating for a reimagined, more just society, one that honours the voices and histories of the marginalized. The activists in the novel are deeply aware of the challenges facing their country: political corruption, social inequality, and the continued dominance of a power structure that mirrors colonial legacies. Yet, through their activism, they hold onto the belief that the country can be transformed, that the future can be different from the fractured present. In this context, hope is not passive—it is an active force that drives their efforts, whether they're challenging the political establishment or advocating for societal change through the media. The media, as an essential vehicle for truth and resistance, becomes a key tool in shaping public opinion and holding the powerful accountable, ensuring that the voices of those advocating for a better Angola are heard. The collective actions of the demonstrators, activists, and journalists speak to the possibility of a nation that rejects the past's injustices and forges a path forward, driven by the hope that the country can overcome its historical traumas and build a more

equitable, free, and vibrant future. Their unwavering belief in a better Angola—one defined by fairness, transparency, and respect for human rights—reflects a deep-rooted optimism, a collective vision that transcends the obstacles of the present and seeks to create a world where hope is not just a dream, but a reality for future generations. This is well illustrated at the end of the novel:

It ends here? Can you really not hear the people outside? Listen. He made a big sweeping gesture, as if he were knocking down the walls, and then the turbulent cries could be heard clearly: Freedom! Freedom! And for a fraction of a second, I thought I spotted a spark of terror in the President's eyes. (Agualusa, 2017, p.267)

This passage suggests a new dawn for the people of Angola as the president's downfall approaches, which is hope for a new beginning.

The novel itself becomes an act of storytelling that challenges despair. Through its characters and their experiences, it offers readers a vision of hope as a critical strategy for survival and resistance. Hope, embodied in narratives, counters the erasure and fragmentation imposed by Domestic Neocolonialism. It becomes a rallying cry for collective resistance. Characters resist the psychological grip of Domestic Neocolonialism by cultivating hope. This challenges the internalised belief that systemic change is impossible, freeing individuals to act against oppressors. Hope allows characters to reject the limitations imposed by the state and to imagine futures where justice, equity and liberation are attainable.

Agualusa (2017) also uses the ocean serves as a recurring motif of boundlessness and possibility. For Daniel and others, it represents a space of infinite potential, reflecting their hope for a future unbounded by neocolonial constraints. The ocean also symbolises

connection, linking oppressed peoples in a shared struggle against Domestic Neocolonialism. As Daniel Benchimol puts it:

I woke up and went out to the beach, barefoot and in my underpants. There was nobody on the sands. I didn't notice a man who was watching me, sitting in a dark green rocking chair, as the sun climbed the hillsides. Soon the air would be filled with light. Small waves, one and then another, embroidered their form into fine bands of lace. The cliffs rose behind me. Atop the cliffs cacti grew like tall cathedrals of thorns and then, beyond them, the quick blaze of the sky. There are people who swim out of pure pleasure. There are those who swim to keep in shape. I swim to think better. (Agualusa, 2017, p.1)

The ocean's symbolism reinforces the idea that hope transcends borders, enabling collective resistance that is not confined to any one nation or regime.

Characters who maintain hope defy the narrative of inevitability promoted by Domestic Neocolonial powers. Hope motivates action, inspiring individuals and communities to challenge the status quo and work towards liberation. By refusing to accept despair, individuals resist the psychological and cultural control of Domestic Neocolonial elites, asserting their agency and power to effect change.

By portraying all the strategies discussed, Agualusa (2017), in *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers*, not only critiques Domestic Neocolonialism but also inspires hope for a systemic transformation through collective resistance. This resistance operates at the intersection of Necropolitics and Decolonisation.

Necropolitics exposes the mechanisms of control while Fanon's decolonisation Theory offers a framework for dismantling them. Mbembe's (2003) Necropolitics describes how states exercise power over life and death, determining who lives and who dies. Domestic Neocolonialism as depicted in the novel, reflects such dynamics with the local elites controlling resources, suppressing dissent and marginalizing citizens. The resistance strategies explored above counter this form of power. In a context where domestic elites dehumanize citizens through systemic corruption and repression, dreaming acts as an act of defiance against being reduced to mere subjects of control.

Dreams in the novel serve as a form of resistance by envisioning a society where life, not death, becomes the focus of governance. By sharing dreams, characters build solidarity, undermining necropolitical structure that thrive on isolation and fear. Necropolitics thrives on division and despair, but grassroots movements in the novel counteract this by fostering unity and hope. These movements reclaim life, dignity and autonomy from domestic elites who perpetuate exploitation and violence.

The Angolan government's control over resources, culture and dissent mirrors Mbembe's concept of sovereignty through oppression (2003). Resistance movements challenge this by refusing to submit to such control.

By portraying diverse strategies of defiance and renewal, Agualusa (2017) in *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers* critiques domestic neocolonialism while inspiring hope for systemic transformation through collective resistance. This resistance operates at the intersection of Mbembe's necropolitics and Fanon's theory of decolonisation, exposing how power determines life and death while also offering ways to reclaim humanity and identity. Mbembe (2003) argues that the modern state exercises sovereignty by regulating mortality—

deciding who may live and who must die. In Agualusa's Angola, such control is evident in the domestic elites who monopolize resources, silence dissent, and marginalize citizens. The resistance strategies within the text—dreaming, art, and solidarity—subvert these dynamics. Dreaming, in particular, becomes a radical act of defiance: a refusal to be reduced to a subject of control and a reclaiming of imagination as political agency.

Dreams function as metaphors for envisioning life-centred governance. Shared dreams connect characters across boundaries of class and ideology, creating solidarity that counters the isolation and fear upon which necropolitical systems depend. While Mbembe's necropolitics thrives on fragmentation and despair, Agualusa's dreamers resist through unity and hope. The Angolan government's control over resources, culture, and speech mirrors Mbembe's concept of sovereignty through violence, yet resistance movements refuse submission, reclaiming autonomy and dignity through collective imagination.

Fanon's (1961) decolonisation theory complements this resistance by emphasising the overthrow of oppressive systems and the restoration of humanity. The novel's emphasis on dreaming and creativity aligns with Fanon's belief in reclaiming indigenous consciousness and rejecting imposed ideologies. Artistic resistance in Agualusa's work embodies Fanon's conviction that culture is central to liberation—it dismantles the psychological legacies of colonialism and reawakens the will to freedom. While Fanon views revolutionary violence as a necessary rupture in certain contexts, Agualusa leans toward non-violent resistance through art, solidarity, and consciousness. Decolonisation here extends beyond political sovereignty to include psychological and cultural liberation.

Through this lens, *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers* portrays liberation as collective and inclusive. Grassroots movements and intellectual activism challenge the elite's control over

Angola's wealth and institutions, echoing Fanon's call for the masses to reclaim self-determination. Shared dreams and creative collaboration unite individuals across borders, reclaiming life, culture, and identity from necropolitical domination. Necropolitics and decolonisation converge in their shared aim: restoring humanity through the reclamation of agency and moral dignity.

Resistance in the novel is both political and psychological, demonstrating how imagination and solidarity disrupt material oppression. *Agualusa* critiques the betrayal of anti-colonial ideals by post-independence elites while celebrating the potential of popular movements to reclaim equality. As a post-colonial text, the novel interrogates the failures of independence and the persistence of colonial power in new forms. It exposes how liberation's promises were undermined by internal hierarchies, turning sovereignty into a performance of power. Yet it also affirms that creative imagination is the first step toward genuine emancipation.

The novel's multiple voices emphasise the collective nature of resistance, challenging elitist narratives of heroism. By foregrounding diverse experiences, *Agualusa* decentralizes authority, reflecting postcolonial traditions that privilege marginalized voices. Dreams, art, and grassroots movements become the narrative's instruments of renewal, suggesting that resistance begins in the human capacity to imagine differently.

Symbolism deepens these themes. Water recurs as a metaphor for renewal and interconnection, suggesting that liberation requires both unity and harmony with the environment. As rivers flow across borders, they mirror the transnational solidarity that *Agualusa* envisions. The ecological imagery underscores how neocolonial exploitation of natural resources mirrors the exploitation of human life. Reclaiming environmental and economic sovereignty thus becomes integral to decolonisation.

The novel also confronts the realities of corruption and economic dependency. Angola's elite, complicit in global capitalist networks, sell oil and diamonds to foreign corporations while impoverishing the nation. Resistance movements within the text demand the decolonisation of the economy through local ownership and equitable distribution of wealth. Figures like Daniel Benchimol use journalism and art to expose these injustices, demonstrating that truth-telling is itself a form of rebellion. Protests and underground activism become weapons against the twin powers of authoritarianism and capitalism, transforming civic courage into collective strength.

Agualusa acknowledges, however, that resistance is fraught with obstacles. The state's surveillance and propaganda apparatus—its necropolitical machinery—seeks to suppress dissent and instill fear. Internal divisions and exhaustion further weaken social movements. Yet the persistence of dreaming and artistic expression embodies resilience; imagination becomes the final frontier that oppression cannot conquer. Fanon's (1961) call for a complete restructuring of society resonates here: liberation must entail both systemic reform and the renewal of human consciousness.

Ultimately, *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers* presents literature as a vehicle for critique, memory, and transformation. By blending realism with dreamscapes and surreal imagery, Agualusa defies Western narrative conventions and asserts an African epistemology of liberation rooted in imagination and community. The novel critiques post-independence betrayal while envisioning a future sustained by creativity and solidarity. Through dreaming, activism, and storytelling, Agualusa illustrates that the struggle against domestic neocolonialism transcends the political—it is an ethical quest to reclaim life, dignity, and belonging.

In this way, Agualusa's (2017) work encapsulates resistance as both psychological awakening and collective transformation. Drawing on Fanon's theory of decolonisation and Mbembe's necropolitics, it critiques the perpetuation of colonial logic within independent states while affirming the enduring power of imagination as an instrument of revolution. The *Society of Reluctant Dreamers* becomes more than a literary text—it is a manifesto of hope that redefines resistance as creation: the act of dreaming a freer, more humane world into being.

5.4. Comparative Analysis: *Sleepwalking Land* and *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers* in the Context of Resistance Against Domestic Neocolonialism

In both Couto's *Sleepwalking Land* (2017) and Agualusa's *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers* (2017), resistance against domestic neocolonialism is portrayed through distinct yet complementary strategies, reflecting the unique socio-political climates of Mozambique and Angola. While the forms of resistance in both novels are diverse and varied, they share a common thread: a critique of power structures that perpetuate inequality and dependency in post-independence societies. The resistance strategies employed in these texts not only aim to challenge domestic neocolonialism but also redefine identity, memory, and belonging in these nations, offering new paths for self-liberation and collective empowerment.

Resistance Through Reclaiming Narratives and Identity: In *Sleepwalking Land* (1992), one of the central forms of resistance is the reclaiming of natural and historical narratives. Couto (1992) uses nature as a symbolic force that holds memories of resistance, struggles, and survival. Through the characters' journeys, both literal and metaphorical, nature serves as a repository of wisdom, offering an alternative narrative to the hegemonic neocolonial

discourses. The land itself becomes a character in the narrative, speaking truths that challenge the colonial legacy and the political elite that continues to profit from it.

In contrast, *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers* (2017) uses the act of dreaming as a central form of resistance. Agualusa presents dreaming as both an individual and collective act that defies the harsh realities imposed by the socio-political structures of the day. The dreamers in Agualusa's (2017) novel engage with the past and future through their dreams, allowing them to subvert the control imposed by domestic neocolonialism and imagine new possibilities. While Couto (1992) ties resistance to a historical and natural memory, Agualusa (2017) focuses on the fluid and intangible space of dreams as a space for personal and collective re-imagining.

Resistance Through Mobility and Exile: Both novels engage with mobility as a strategy of resistance, though they do so in different ways. In *Sleepwalking Land* (1992), mobility is portrayed as a form of historic resistance, where characters travel across spaces that have been ravaged by war and conflict, asserting their presence and re-establishing connections with the land. Mobility here is linked to a historical journey that redefines the connection between people and their environment, suggesting that resistance is also a matter of returning to roots and reasserting ownership over one's history.

In *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers* (2017), mobility takes the form of exile and physical displacement, reflecting the psychological and emotional effects of living in a post-colonial world. The act of dreaming allows characters to escape the immediate constraints of their environment, symbolizing a mental and emotional journey that provides freedom from the domestic neocolonial forces that stifle personal and collective growth. Exile, both physical

and metaphorical, becomes a form of self-preservation, a way to resist being caught in the web of corruption and political inertia that characterizes post-independence Angola.

Subverting Neocolonial Violence and Corruption: Couto's (1992) portrayal of resistance includes the subversion of neocolonial violence, where the characters seek refuge in their cultural practices and collective memory to challenge the political violence imposed by the ruling class. In *Sleepwalking Land* (1992), neocolonial violence is subtle, insidious, and often perpetrated by those who should represent the people. Through acts of community solidarity and collective care, the novel emphasises the power of the people to resist the violence inflicted by their own government or by the elite class that perpetuates it.

In *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers*, Agualusa (2017) directly critiques corruption through the characters' interactions with a decaying state system. The narrative exposes the pervasiveness of corruption within political structures and the consequences it has on the individual and collective psyche. Artistic resistance plays a key role here, with characters using their creative acts—writing, dreaming, and engaging with the arts—as a way to critique and subvert the corrupt and oppressive systems in place. In both novels, resistance is portrayed as a fight against both visible and invisible forms of violence, whether through the direct brutality of power or the more subtle erosion of values and dreams.

Community, Solidarity, and Collective Action: A significant theme in both works is the role of community and solidarity in resistance. In *Sleepwalking Land*, Couto(1992) demonstrates that the community serves as a source of strength, providing a space where people come together to heal, share their stories, and build resilience in the face of adversity. The characters' relationships with each other underscore the importance of collective action in

challenging domestic neocolonialism, with solidarity acting as a buffer against the corrosive effects of political power and social alienation.

Similarly, in *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers*, Agualusa (2017) shows that solidarity and collective movements are vital to the characters' ability to resist. The novel suggests that despite the isolation often imposed by modern systems, the power of collective dreaming and imagination can form the basis for a more united and purposeful resistance. Whether through shared dreams or the creation of a collective artistic voice, the characters in Agualusa's work show that resistance is more powerful when it is done together, as a community that recognizes its interconnectedness.

5.5. Chapter summary

Chapter Four presented a detailed textual analysis of *Sleepwalking Land* and *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers*. It examined how both authors use literary techniques—such as fragmented narrative structure, dreams, magical realism, symbolism, and multiple perspectives—to critique post-independence African societies trapped in internal forms of domination. In *Sleepwalking Land*, Couto portrays Mozambique's civil war as both a literal and metaphorical continuation of colonial violence. Through characters like Tuahir and Muidinga, the text illustrates survival amid despair, reclaiming identity through storytelling. The dreamlike narrative blurs reality and memory, exposing the persistence of death, abandonment, and loss as forms of necropolitical control. Agualusa's *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers* extends this discourse to contemporary Angola, where political elites exploit revolutionary ideals for personal gain. Dreams in this novel become acts of resistance and repositories of collective memory. The analysis compared how both writers deploy imagination and narrative layering to dismantle state power and challenge epistemic

colonialism. The chapter concluded that the two novels exemplify how Lusophone African literature uniquely captures domestic neocolonial realities through experimental aesthetics and human-centred storytelling, transforming trauma into creative resistance.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. Introduction

This chapter presents a comprehensive summary of the key findings, conclusions, and recommendations derived from the analysis of Couto's *Sleepwalking Land* (1992) and Agualusa's *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers* (2017). The exploration of Domestic Neocolonialism and Decolonisation in these works has illuminated the complex relationships between postcolonial societies and their enduring struggles for self-determination. Through the lens of both novels, this study has sought to understand how the remnants of colonial power continue to influence domestic policies, identities, and social structures in the contemporary world.

The findings reveal intricate portrayals of neocolonialism, where power dynamics and historical injustices persist in shaping the present, despite formal independence. Furthermore, the novels' depictions of decolonisation—both in terms of individual consciousness and collective political action—offer insight into the challenges and possibilities of true liberation. This chapter synthesizes these findings, drawing conclusions that reflect on the broader implications for postcolonial theory and practice.

In addition to summarizing the key discoveries, this chapter outlines recommendations for future research and action. These recommendations seek to address the gaps in current understandings of domestic neocolonialism and offer pathways for decolonisation in both literary analysis and real-world political efforts.

6.2. Summary of Findings

6.2.1. Literary Representation of Domestic Neocolonialism In *Sleepwalking Land* And *The Society Of Reluctant Dreamers*.

The first objective was to analyse the literary techniques used to depict Domestic Neocolonialism in the selected texts. The analysis of the literary techniques used to depict domestic neocolonialism in *Sleepwalking Land* (1992) and *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers* (2017) revealed key narrative strategies that emphasise the enduring effects of colonialism in postcolonial societies.

The study highlighted that In *Sleepwalking Land*, Couto's (1992) use of the dual narrative structure—comprising a frame story and an embedded story—effectively underscores the disjunction between past colonial experiences and present-day struggles. The frame narrative, which follows the journey of two characters in contemporary Mozambique, contrasts with the embedded story, set in the past, creating a tension that mirrors the conflict between the ongoing effects of colonialism and the attempt to move beyond it. In *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers*, Agualusa's (2017) use of the fragmented narrative structure emphasises the disjointed and chaotic reality of a postcolonial society caught between the legacy of colonial oppression and the difficulties of self-determination. The narrative's fragmentation reflects the societal disarray and lack of cohesion caused by lingering neocolonial forces.

The study also explored how Symbolism plays a crucial role in both texts, where objects, characters, and settings serve as metaphors for the entrapment of postcolonial subjects within neocolonial frameworks. The recurrent symbols in both novels—the land, the cities, and

personal dreams—highlight the ongoing exploitation and internalised oppression that continues to affect the characters.

Finally, the study expounded on how the use of dreams in both novels further reinforces the theme of domestic neocolonialism. Dreams in both texts represent a space where characters confront unresolved traumas, illustrating how the psychological and emotional legacies of colonialism continue to haunt their waking lives. In this way, dreams become a powerful tool for depicting the internal conflict and struggle for identity in postcolonial societies.

6.2.2. Resistance Against Domestic Neocolonialism in Mia Couto's *Sleepwalking Land* and Jose Eduardo Agualusa's *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers*.

The second objective was to investigate the strategies of resistance and social movements against Domestic Neocolonialism, highlighting their literary and socio-political implications in Mozambique and Angola. The investigation into the strategies of resistance and social movements against domestic neocolonialism in *Sleepwalking Land* (1992) and *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers* (2017) highlighted the dynamic interplay between literary expression and socio-political movements in Mozambique and Angola.

In *Sleepwalking Land* (1992), strategies of resistance are multifaceted. Key approaches include reclaiming natural narratives, where the characters seek to restore indigenous stories and histories that colonialism had suppressed. Historical resistance through mobility is another strategy, as characters physically and metaphorically move across spaces to escape the lingering effects of neocolonial power. The novel also portrays subversion of neocolonial violence through acts of defiance, and the importance of community and solidarity in resisting domestic neocolonial structures. Additionally, nature is depicted as a symbol of resistance, with the land itself representing a connection to ancestral memory and a source

of empowerment. Finally, the critique of domestic power structures emerges as a significant form of resistance, illustrating the continuing dominance of local elites aligned with neocolonial interests.

The study also highlighted how In *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers* (2017), resistance strategies are similarly varied. Dreaming is portrayed as a potent form of resistance, where characters use dreams to transcend the limitations imposed by neocolonialism. Artistic resistance also plays a crucial role, with creativity becoming a tool for challenging political and social systems. Building solidarity and collective movements is highlighted as vital for pushing back against systemic oppression, while critiquing corruption directly addresses the domestic manifestations of neocolonial power. Reclaiming personal and collective identity is another key strategy, offering a path to self-determination and resistance to external and internal forces of control. Resistance through exile and mobility represents both physical and psychological escapes from the constraints of neocolonial domination. Finally, hope emerges as a critical strategy, inspiring action and the belief in a future beyond neocolonial control.

The study also examined how both novels reveal important literary and socio-political implications of these resistance strategies. Literarily, these strategies function as narrative tools that not only challenge neocolonialism but also reflect the complex realities of postcolonial societies. Socio-politically, they underscore the ongoing struggles in Mozambique and Angola to confront domestic neocolonialism and its impact on identity, governance, and social cohesion. Both texts portray resistance as essential to reclaiming autonomy and shaping a more equitable future.

6.2.3. Historic Context of Decolonisation Process And The Challenges Of Post-Colonial Nation Building In Mozambique And Angola As Portrayed in the selected texts.

The third objective was to conduct a comparative analysis of decolonisation and the challenges of postcolonial nation-building in Mozambique and Angola as represented in the selected texts. In Mozambique, as depicted in *Sleepwalking Land* (1992), the chapter explored colonial violence, the necessity for revolutionary struggle, and the subsequent betrayal by post-independence leadership. The dehumanizing effects of war and the fight for humanity are central themes, alongside cultural reclamation as a form of decolonial resistance. Additionally, the chapter examined the persistent issues of economic neocolonialism, dependency, and the role of the people in achieving true decolonisation. In Angola, as represented in *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers* (2017), the findings explored the colonial legacy, the fight for independence, and the disillusionment with post-colonial leadership, particularly in the aftermath of civil war. This analysis revealed how the hopes of independence gave way to corruption, political instability, and fractured national unity.

The chapter also delved into the challenges of post-colonial nation-building in both countries. In Mozambique, the legacy of colonialism, civil war, and internal divisions are compounded by corruption, failed leadership, economic instability, and the psychological and emotional trauma experienced by the people. Cultural fragmentation and environmental degradation further deepen the struggle to rebuild the nation. In Angola, similar challenges are highlighted, including the lingering effects of colonialism, internal divisions, corruption, authoritarianism, economic inequality, and poverty. The loss of ideals, psychological

fragmentation, and cultural dislocation contribute to the difficulty of reclaiming identity, while environmental and social destruction further impede progress.

Overall, the findings emphasised the deeply intertwined issues of colonial legacy, political betrayal, economic dependency, and social fragmentation that continue to shape the post-independence experiences of both Mozambique and Angola. The novels offer a poignant critique of the failures of post-colonial leadership and the enduring struggles of the people to rebuild their nations in the aftermath of liberation.

6.3. Conclusion

This study explored the intricate themes of domestic neocolonialism and decolonisation through the lens of Couto's *Sleepwalking Land* (1992) and Agualusa's *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers*, (2017) two pivotal texts in contemporary African literature. Through a detailed comparative analysis, the study has shown how both authors use their narrative techniques and thematic concerns to illustrate the persistent legacies of colonialism and the complex, often painful, process of post-colonial nation-building in Mozambique and Angola.

At the heart of this study is the recognition that while formal political independence was achieved in both nations, the social, economic, and psychological repercussions of colonialism continued to shape the post-independence experience. The study has concluded that both *Sleepwalking Land* (1992) and *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers* (2017) present powerful critiques of post-colonial leadership, focusing on themes such as corruption, authoritarianism, and the failure of national projects to address the deep structural issues inherited from colonial rule. These novels show that independence, while a significant victory, did not automatically translate into the realisation of the ideals of freedom, unity, and justice that many had hoped for.

The study concluded that through the lens of domestic neocolonialism, both authors reveal how economic dependency on foreign powers, political corruption, and the failure of leadership to address the needs of the people continue to undermine the efforts of nation-building. The novels illustrate that true decolonisation is not merely the removal of colonial rulers but requires an ongoing process of cultural, social, and economic reclamation. The symbolic use of dreams, nature, mobility, and solidarity in both texts serves as a reminder that resistance is an active and continuous process—one that is not easily realised but requires sustained collective and individual effort. These dreams, whether in the form of a collective vision for a new society or personal desires for freedom and autonomy, stand in stark contrast to the reality of post-independence governance, where old hierarchies and neocolonial structures often persist.

Similarly, the study concluded that in both novels, the people, whether through the quiet resistance of individual characters or through the formation of social movements, play a central role in pushing back against these forces. *Sleepwalking Land* (1992) highlights the necessity of reclaiming indigenous narratives, building solidarity, and resisting the cultural and psychological fragmentation caused by war and colonial violence. In *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers* (2017), the characters' engagement with dreams and hopes for a better future serve as a metaphor for the struggle to reclaim personal and collective identity in the face of neocolonial exploitation and disillusionment with the post-colonial state. These acts of resistance are not always overt or immediate, but they are significant in the ongoing fight for true decolonisation.

Furthermore, the study concluded that the post-colonial challenges that both novels address—ranging from economic instability, social fragmentation, and political corruption

to cultural dislocation and environmental degradation—show the profound scars left by both the colonial and post-colonial systems. These challenges are compounded by the psychological and emotional trauma of war, as both novels depict characters who must navigate the traumas of their past in order to envision a hopeful future. Through the lens of both historical and contemporary experiences, the thesis underscored the difficulty of re-imagining and rebuilding a nation that has been shaped by centuries of colonial exploitation and violence.

Ultimately, the comparative study of *Sleepwalking Land* (1992) and *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers* (2017) sheds light on the critical role of literature in representing and interrogating the complexities of post-colonial life. The authors' exploration of neocolonialism and decolonisation provides a poignant critique of the failures of post-independence governments, while also highlighting the resilience and agency of ordinary people who continue to resist and seek justice. These novels serve as a powerful reminder that the struggle for true decolonisation is not a singular event but an ongoing process that requires constant vigilance, resistance, and reimagination. Through these works, Couto (1992) and Agualusa (2017) contribute significantly to the discourse on decolonisation, offering rich, multifaceted portrayals of the challenges and hopes that continue to shape the post-colonial experience in Africa.

To sum it up, this study concluded that *Sleepwalking Land* (1992) and *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers* (2017) provide profound insights into the process of decolonisation, the enduring legacies of colonialism, and the ongoing struggle for true independence and sovereignty in Africa. The novels not only offer literary reflections on the political and social realities of post-colonial Mozambique and Angola but also serve as vehicles for imagining

new possibilities for decolonized futures. Through the symbolic, narrative, and thematic depth of these works, the thesis underscored the importance of literary engagement with the complexities of post-colonial life, highlighting both the failures and the continued hopes for genuine liberation.

6.4. Recommendations for Further Study

Based on the findings and analysis in this thesis, several areas of further study can be pursued to deepen the understanding of the themes of domestic neocolonialism, decolonisation, and post-colonial nation-building as portrayed in Couto's *Sleepwalking Land* (1992) and Agualusa's *The Society of Reluctant Dreamers* (2017). The following recommendations offer potential directions for future research:

1. On the literary techniques used to depict Domestic Neocolonialism: Future researchers could explore how evolving literary forms—such as speculative fiction, autofiction, or digital literature—continue to depict domestic neocolonialism in post-independence African societies. This would expand the current analysis by investigating how contemporary authors experiment with narrative structures and symbolism to represent internal systems of domination. A comparative study between African Lusophone literature and Anglophone or Francophone counterparts could also reveal transnational patterns or divergences in these portrayals.

2. On the literary portrayal and socio-political significance of resistance strategies and social movements: Subsequent studies might focus on real-world parallels to the resistance strategies depicted in fiction by examining how grassroots activism, youth movements, or

cultural resistance operate in contemporary Mozambique and Angola. This interdisciplinary approach—linking literature with political science, sociology, or media studies—could enhance understanding of how literature reflects and influences social change. Researchers may also examine how gender, ethnicity, or class intersects with resistance in fictional and real spaces.

3. On the comparative analysis of decolonisation and nation-building challenges: Future research could undertake a broader comparative study that includes additional postcolonial nations in Africa, especially those with different colonial legacies (e.g., Francophone or Anglophone countries), to analyse how colonial histories shape ongoing struggles with domestic neocolonialism and state-building. Alternatively, a longitudinal literary study tracking how representations of nation-building have evolved in Lusophone African literature from the 1990s to the present could reveal shifts in political imagination and decolonial discourse. By pursuing these areas of research, scholars can deepen the understanding of the complex issues of Domestic Neocolonialism, Decolonisation, and Post-colonial Nation-building, while also enriching the discourse on contemporary African literature and its role in reflecting and critiquing socio-political realities.

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Appendix I : Work plan and budget

Activity	Description	Timeline	Estimated Cost (USD)
Literature Review	Review existing literature on Domestic Neocolonialism, Decolonisation theories, and the selected texts.	Month 1 - Month 2	20,000 (Books and Journals)
Textual Analysis	Conduct in-depth analysis of Sleepwalking Land and The Society of Reluctant Dreamers.	Month 3 - Month 4	
Data Collection	Collect relevant qualitative data through close reading, note-taking, and thematic analysis.	Month 4 - Month 5	
Data Interpretation and Analysis	Interpret and analyse the collected data within the theoretical framework.	Month 5 - Month 6	10,000 (Software)
Drafting of Chapters	Write initial drafts for each chapter, including introduction, literature review,	Month 7 - Month 8	

	analysis, and conclusion.		
Review and Revision	Submit drafts to supervisors, incorporate feedback, and make necessary revisions.	Month 9 - Month 10	15,000 (Printing and Binding)
Final Draft Submission	Finalize and submit the completed thesis.	Month 11	
Presentation and Defense Preparation	Prepare for thesis defense by reviewing and organizing key findings.	Month 12	
Internet and Data Costs	Internet subscription for accessing online resources and communication.	Throughout	5,000
Transport Costs	Travel expenses for visiting libraries, archives, or meetings with supervisors.	As needed	10,000
Miscellaneous Expenses	Contingency fund for unexpected research expenses.	As needed	5,000
Total			75,000