

Re-reading Malangatana

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For more than 40 years Malangatana has been one of Mozambique's best known cultural figures, and indisputably her best known visual artist. Since his first appearance in a group exhibition in Lourenco Marques (now Maputo) in 1959, Malangatana's works have been shown in numerous countries across the globe. His trademark style – dense compositions contained within shallow pictorial space, consisting of simplified shapes, mostly figurative, often with pronounced eyes and teeth, and typically rendered with a bright palette and bold outlines – is instantly recognisable.

Malangatana was born in 1936 in Matalana, a rural village in the south. He was brought up by his mother and aunt. His father, a migrant worker, was largely absent. Malangatana had several years of mission education and gravitated for work towards the city, where he performed various menial functions, notably at the colonial club in Lourenco Marques. Having demonstrated an interest in drawing, he was sponsored by Augusto Cabral, a member of the local association Nucleo de Arte, to attend the group's evening classes. There he was taught to use oil paints by Jose Julio, and was 'discovered' in 1960 by the architect "Pancho" Guedes. Guedes became his patron, enabling Malangatana to embark on a career as a full time artist. Through Guedes, Malangatana met the South African architect Julian Beinart who wrote an article on him for *Black Orpheus*, a literary magazine founded by Ulli Beier in newly independent Nigeria. Guedes, Beinart and Beier were all influential in developing international awareness of Malangatana. Guedes notes that "in less than two years... [Malangatana] transformed from a bar server who painted at night to an internationally known and discussed painter". [1]

Guedes also introduced Malangatana to Eduardo Mondlane. The Frelimo leader encouraged the young artist to contribute to the struggle for liberation. Increasingly politicised, Malangatana withdrew from an exhibition in South Africa as an act of solidarity with the Rivonia Trialists, and he declined to represent Portugal at the Sao Paulo Biennale. In 1965, he was considered enough of a political threat to be imprisoned for 18 months.

Following political independence in 1975 Malangatana played several party political and official government roles: in 1978 he was deployed to the north, where he assisted with rural development. In 1980, he was appointed Director of Craft Development, responsible for developing cooperatives. He was also tasked with the development of the National Museum. From 1990 to 1994 he served as a deputy for Frelimo, and in 1998 he was elected as a member of Frelimo to the Maputo Municipal Assembly. He also taught art at the Eduardo Mondlane University, and at the School for Visual Art. [2]

Malangatana has received several prestigious awards, including from the Mozambican and Portuguese governments, as well as from Unesco. Numerous articles have been published on him since the early 1960s. In 1998 Julio Navarro edited the first full length monograph on him, subsequently translated from Portuguese into English in 2003. [3]

Despite Malangatana being one of Africa's most acclaimed artists, I have frequently found that much of the writing on him fails to adequately address his work. By engaging critically with literature on Malangatana, I hope to contribute towards the development of a more radical appraisal of him, one which highlights ways in which his works can be seen to represent an intense engagement with colonialism and its legacy.

In most writing on Malangatana the emphasis is on his individual self-expression as well as on his cultural roots. Referring to the colonial period Elizabeth Schneider says that: "[He] persisted in developing his own ideas and painting them in his own style. Themes that showed the rituals and concerns of his own people – traditional healings, sorcery and monsters – were chosen". [4] The political context, evident in the brief biography above, is usually underplayed, or even absent. Alternately, where it is acknowledged as a major influence, sweeping claims tend to not be substantiated. [5]

Amongst those seemingly in denial of the political context we find Ulli Beier, who devoted almost an entire chapter to Malangatana in *Contemporary Art in Africa*, published in 1968. [6] According to Beier, Malangatana's two major themes are witchcraft and women. Certainly there is no doubt that these are important themes in Malangatana's work, with strong autobiographical allusions. [7] However, Beier's reluctance to infer even the slightest political context for what he describes as "a world of horror and suffering and fear... torture, anxiety and perversion" is unsettling. [8] Similarly, Betty Schneider, in her first article on Malangatana in 1972 makes no political connection to her statements that: "Malangatana feels that any art which fails to express the anxieties and aspirations of the people is insignificant"; nor to her concluding reference to "the fury and pain he is experiencing". [9] The political context is also ignored by Marshall Mount in *African art: The Years since 1920*, published in 1989. This is despite lauding Malangatana as "the only important contemporary artist in Portugal's large African colonies". [10]

While it is true that Malangatana himself has said that his early themes drew primarily on his cultural upbringing, he has also said that the political content in his work accompanied the development of his political consciousness. In 1989 he told Jorge Costa: "I lived in a colonial situation where I saw my parents, my family, many people I knew going into forced labour, obliged to go to mines in foreign countries to survive. This affected me profoundly, although when I began to paint, these were not my themes ... that was only later... initially... themes about mythology and about traditional healing, about the past and present of the land where I was born... Only much later, with the development of a political consciousness, situations of pain, denunciation of colonialism, came to be a constant feature in my paintings". [11]

Certainly evidence suggests that Malangatana was significantly politicised by the time of Beier's book, and the above quote acknowledges the profound impact of

colonialism on his psyche from an early age, preceding a more conscious awareness. As early as 1962 Malangatana said that “My main themes are: hate, witchcraft, crime, anguish, passion for life and love.” [12] It is odd that the sources of emotions as extreme as hate and anguish do not seem to have been adequately interrogated by most writers. One could also ask what Malangatana meant by ‘crime’, and who he perceived to be perpetrators and victims. The reason for this failure to infer political readings in Malangatana’s art may in part arise from an unspoken understanding that political dissent was not encouraged in colonial Mozambique, and best not drawn attention to. Instead the specific anti-colonial sentiment in his work could be obscured by reference to general emotions. For example, Schneider claims that the artist’s works “reflect his feelings in a powerfully direct way.” [13] Such interpretations are easy to arrive at art historically, given western traditions of Romanticism and its derivatives Expressionism and Surrealism, art historical movements that emphasised the subjective, the irrational, as well as the primitive and exotic. Indeed, references to Expressionism and Surrealism occur frequently in writing on Malangatana.

Another probable cause for the failure to acknowledge a more directly politicised source for Malangatana’s work could be due to the common Western practice of linking contemporary African art to a traditional context, usually as a way of establishing ‘authenticity’ or ‘non-contamination’ by the European imperial and colonial legacies. Betty Schneider, in her second article on Malangatana for the American journal *African Arts*, assures us that: “The artists themes have long been based on his African roots, which is important for people in a new African nation to remember.” [14] Similarly, Frederico Pereira locates Malangatana within “the Maternal Culture into which he plunges, roots himself, towards which he transports us, outside of which he would cease to exist.” [15]

Beier also explains Malangatana by way of linking him to his ethnic roots. However, Beier does depart from the ahistorical anthropological model by identifying estrangement from indigenous culture as the artist’s primary motivating force. He writes that in Malangatana’s work: “The everyday world is invaded by spirits and monsters, the boundaries between reality and the supernatural do not seem to exist... the horrors and supernatural fantasies are not invented, they are lived. Witchcraft was a common and everyday phenomenon in Malangatana’s childhood. He is a Christian of course and his mission education quickly and effectively estranged him from his native culture. The gods and myths of his people are no longer known to him and they never feature in his work. As among many Africans of his level of education, however, they continue to figure in his imagination as an unknown quantity, as a complex of fears and an impenetrable world of demons, spirits and witches...” [16]

Beier’s recognition of the estrangement of European educated Africans is important. This alienation is a direct consequence of the Portuguese policy of ‘assimilation’, on the deliberate establishment of a buffer class between the ‘primitive’ native and ‘civilised’ colonial class. Christianity was integral to this strategy. Despite this well-known Portuguese practice, Beier fails to recognise the inherently political dimension of Malangatana’s estrangement. Instead he opts to explain it as an essentially apolitical, ethnically defined ‘collective consciousness’ that supposedly informs Malangatana’s psyche and art.

Published 24 years after Beier's book, Jean Kennedy also sees the 'clash of cultures' as a central theme in Malangatana's art. She writes that: "Conflict between current tragedy and past tradition is a characteristic of [Malangatana]. His powerful imagery weaves together the strands of indigenous culture with those of an imposed one, so that they still retain all of the stresses and strains of their inherent dichotomies". [17] She appears to go further than Beier in acknowledging a political dimension, referring to Malangatana as a "revolutionary painter", but a close reading of Kennedy's text undoes any illusions about its value in politically contextualising Malangatana. On one hand she appears to demonstrate a degree of specificity by distinguishing between "soldiers" and freedom fighters". However, when she locates them within "the barrios and streets of Maputo," the specificity of her interpretation begins to undo itself. The reference to Maputo takes us into the era of post-independence (and the civil war), creating confusion as to whether the 'soldiers' are Portuguese or Frelimo, and the 'freedom fighters' Frelimo or Renamo. This erases any clarity as to what she is talking about when she says that Malangatana's imagery conveys the "necessity for change." [18]

Having undermined her own framing of Malangatana as a politically motivated artist, Kennedy also demonstrates evidence of two associated points of view that converge in effectively depoliticising his art. The first of these concerns the notion that all great art is universal, and that this requires more abstract qualities to be elevated over specific temporal or spatially defined considerations. [19] The second point of view concerns the perception of politically directed work as propagandistic, and hence inimical to true art. Ultimately Kennedy steers her interpretation towards more abstract or generalised themes and practices that can be found in most cultures. She writes that: "[Malangatana depicts] conflict, struggle, rape, seduction, religious ritual, witchcraft and initiation rites." [20] To seal her dilution of the 'political' Malangatana, Kennedy places him within a chapter titled "Between the Natural and the Supernatural". She also quotes Beinart who claimed that Malangatana is ultimately concerned with "issues of universal importance – faith and love, jealousy, hate, mysticism and death... His paintings are for him the means of resolution, of showing things... that integrate and belong to all." [21]

Kennedy's failure to clearly distinguish between colonial and independent Mozambique is in many respects an echo of an earlier article on Malangatana subtitled "Artist of the Revolution", written by Elizabeth Schneider thirteen years after political independence. Schneider states at the outset that: "It would be interesting to see whether political and social events that have occurred since the new regime came to power have had any influence on [Malangatana]."[22] Readers could be forgiven for initially assuming that she is defining 'revolutionary' Mozambique as the period following independence when radical reforms were introduced by Frelimo. Alternately that "revolution" incorporates the armed struggle against the Portuguese. However, Schneider confuses things by explicitly defining the "revolution" as "a word I use to cover the fourteen month period beginning with the 1974 Lisbon coup... and ending with the formation of the present government in 1975." [23] By taking the Portuguese coup as her starting point and not naming the "present government" she could be understood as referring to the Portuguese revolution, indirectly implying that there was no revolution in Mozambique. Alternately if she is referring to the Frelimo government she implies that the Mozambican revolution began with the Lisbon coup. Neither reading makes much sense. [24] Although Schneider does narrate aspects

of Malangatana's activism, generally she fails to connect his political activity to his art. [25] Instead she emphasises the universality of Malangatana: "His portrayals of hunger, violence, and war protest against these evils all over the world"; [26] and "His works depict the concerns and struggles of ordinary people as well as their resilience and capacity for love." [27]

Arguably the paucity of specific critique of particular works by Malangatana is partially understandable. While some of his paintings contain specific references, either through their imagery or titles, frequently it is as if Malangatana draws from a percolating cauldron of sources, where the distinctions between themes are not always explicit. [28] The absence of a specific narrative in many of his works means that, for example, a terrifying image of fear and horror, peppered with blood and mutilated limbs, enables the viewer to read into it their own terms of reference: be it a sense of heightened primitivism or exotic barbarism ('witchcraft') or alternately, affinity with the violence of the colonial experience, or the Mozambican Civil War.

In contrast to writers who obfuscate the specific context, the Mozambican writer Mia Couto is more helpful. In 1986 he stated that: "This leap from the traditional to the modern was achieved with the unsolicited assistance of 'assimilation.'" [29] The value of Couto's observation becomes clear once one begins to interrogate examples of Malangatana's imagery, and in particular if one considers two frequent motifs in his work: long, flowing hair and the Christian cross, both frequently associated with women.

These motifs have often been commented on. In 1967 Julian Beinart claimed that: "When Malangatana paints traditional healers with Christian crosses on their necks or Africans with long hair he shows... that the value of a work of art is to show universal qualities, more than the particular qualities of small groups." [30] According to Beier, Beinart also suggests "that the long hair serves Malangatana as a kind of structural device, with which he ties his pictures together..." [31] Schneider sees Malangatana's treatment of hair as evidence of the artist's freedom of expression: "Although African women normally wear head scarves covering their short curly hair, painting his women with long straight hair does not seem inconsistent to him. He feels free to use whatever symbols he needs." [32] The question of what the hair symbolises is not addressed by her. Beier notes that "women's hair.... is mostly painted extremely long and flowing even when he paints African women." Beier senses that there is more at play here, adding that: "it is also charged with erotic significance." [33]

Looking back one can observe that Malangatana's preoccupation with women with flowing hair appears mostly in his earlier works, and is usually associated with lighter skin tone. [34] From the early 1970s long hair is more often worn by darker skinned women, and post-independence he continues to demonstrate a fascination with women's hair, but it is almost invariably more typically 'African', often braided.[35]

If Malangatana's use of long, straight hair features mostly during the colonial era, then is it far-fetched to speculate that it represents colonial assimilation? By this I refer to both the processes of miscegenation, widely practiced by the Portuguese in their colonies, which literally gave birth to the mulatto, as well as to the influence of western notions of beauty particularly regarding hair and skin tone. It appears that

Malangatana is either commenting on this process of assimilation, or has himself internalised its values. [36]

It can be observed that Malangatana frequently contrasts treatment of hair and skin tone on gender lines. In *Scene with Four Women and a Fetish* (1960) he represents four naked women, mostly animated, and rendered in shades of yellow, pink and white. They are contrasted with the 'Fetisher', a dark brown immobile male with a small penis who holds out his arms in a manner that invites associations with both justice and bewilderment. [37] The erotic *The Prisoner's Dream* (1965) contrasts two female figures painted in yellow ochre, one with long hair, with a darker male with classic 'negro' hair. [38] From Malangatana's monochromatic drawings we can recognise a similar pattern. *Studio* (1965) seemingly represents Malangatana engaged in an erotic encounter. The artist's short curly hair is contrasted with that of his voluptuous, long haired female model. [39] In *The Jealous Woman* (1965) a long haired woman peers through the window at an erotic coupling, where once again the woman's hair is contrasted with the male's short, curly crop. [40] The same contrast in hair between male and female can also be seen in *The Prisoner's Dream II* (1964). [41]

It may seem incorrect to interpret ethnic identity in Malangatana's works through the colours he assigns his figures. Generally, one can accept Beinart's view that "often it is difficult to tell whether figures belong to one race or another." [42] However, at times Malangatana definitely correlates ethnicity or race with his choice of palette, as in one of his most unambiguously political themes, *The Trial of the Militants of the Liberation Front of Mozambique* (1966). [43] Like many artists, Malangatana alternates between naturalistic and exaggerated modes of representation in both his treatment of colour and human proportions. However, if the contrasts in colour and hair cited above are arbitrary, then why does he seemingly never reverse the contrasts he employs between male and female?

If Malangatana's treatment of hair and skin colour can be read as evidence of his engagement with colonial values, the use of the Christian cross appears to support this interpretation. A striking feature of his use of the cross is how frequently it adorns a female figure, or is placed in close proximity to her. Often these images are erotically charged. As a lapsed Catholic I would argue that the strict application of Catholic doctrines on sexuality – that sex is purely for purposes of procreation between married heterosexual couples – inevitably produces feelings of guilt and fears of retribution for followers, to say nothing of converts, and Malangatana provides graphic evidence of this.

In *The Crying Blue Woman* (1959) two crosses feature, almost as daggers directed at a naked female figure (painted white, with long hair, and seen from behind), who appears to be the source of pain for the dominant figure, a naked female painted blue, with above shoulder length hair that is between curly and straight. [44] A heavy purple cross in *Nude with Crucifix* (1960) is contrasted with the jail-like window bars, the cropped composition heightening a sense of confinement. [45] Seen in comparison with a number of other works it becomes apparent that the cross evokes sexuality, guilt, and retribution. [46]

Zukuta (1961) is particularly revealing. The dominant, centrally placed figure is depicted naked except for a heavy beaded cross worn around her neck.[47] Malangatana has assigned her long hair and her skin is a rich brown, tonally lighter than most of the (clothed) figures around her, apart from those evidently European or possibly of Eastern origins. Interestingly the 'non-African' figures are placed in front of the main figure, possibly indicating her aspirations. Tellingly they are shown with their backs towards her, oblivious of her presence or her nakedness. In the lower left hand corner of the image, we see a woman's head, covered with a scarf. This modestly attired, presumably indigenous African woman is the only figure looking back towards the central figure, who is herself glancing awkwardly over her shoulder, aware that she is being stared at. Those staring from behind are mostly rendered in darker tones, at least two of whom have long hair. On both sides of the main subject there are darker figures with their eyes closed. It is hard not to read this image as a visual exposition of the somewhat uncomfortable, liminal positioning of the *assimilado*.

Interestingly Malangatana's symbols of assimilation, notably the cross, flowing hair and lighter skin tone, are absent in early erotic works where women wear headscarves or have more typically African hair. Tellingly these images express more desire than they do guilt. Examples include four versions of *Dream of Love in Prison* (1965). [48] Similarly, these symbols do not feature in his later, overtly erotic works, such as the *The Permanent Gaze* (1996), which communicate an unambiguously guilt free lust. [49]

It should be acknowledged that interpreting Malangatana's use of the cross requires critique of his representation of traditional religion and healing. If these images represent negative perceptions where the 'witchdoctor' rules a world of ignorance through 'superstition' and fear, as implied by several writers, then they could be seen to support the colonial agenda. Alternately if they represent an alternative to the hegemony of 'western medicine' they could be seen as part of the process of decolonisation. Unfortunately, while many writers have cited 'witchcraft' as a dominant theme in Malangatana, the task of critically interpreting this theme still needs to happen.

The struggle for decolonisation manifested in Malangatana's art in various ways. The most obvious is through direct and indirect images of resistance to colonial rule. Perhaps more profoundly decolonisation manifested itself as an intense struggle with the values imposed by the colonial other, and an ongoing battle to resolve these within the self.

Acknowledgements

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Notes.

[1] Julio Navarro (editor), *Malangatana*, translated by McGuire, H.C., Nunes, Z.C. & Rougle, W.P., (Dar es Salaam: Mkuki na Nyota Publishers, 2003). [translated English version], 14.

See original Portuguese: Julio Navarro (editor), *Malangatana*, (Lisbon: Editorial Caminho, 1998).

[2] Among his numerous other public roles Malangatana has since the late 1960s been involved in promoting cultural and educational activities in Matalana, and for several years he ran a school for children in his yard on Sundays. He was also a founder member of the Mozambican Peace Movement.

[3] Unfortunately for Anglophones the translation does not extend to excerpts of previously published texts that appear at the end of the book.

[4] Elizabeth Ann Schneider, "Malangatana: Artist of the Revolution," *African Arts* 21, no 3, (1988), 60.

[5] Frederico Pereira, whose essay "Speaking of Malangatana: Hearing Echoes of Matalana" emphasises that "outside of the Mother Culture it is impossible to understand [Malangatana]", does briefly acknowledge a political dimension to Malangatana. He notes: "the revelation of the colonialist's brutality and violence, shown with maximal clarity", but he does this with specific reference to Malangatana's poetry. Granted he does also maintain that "the painter's and poet's gaze... was contaminated by the intolerance, brutality and violence that the history of the colonial experience inflicted" but there is no specific reference and analysis, unlike his treatment of Malangatana's poetry.

See Frederico Pereira, "Speaking of Malangatana: Hearing Echoes of Matalana" In *Malangatana*, edited by Julio Navarro (Lisbon: Editorial Caminho, 1998), 17 & 21.

Similarly, an uncredited biography on Malangatana includes the observation that "the pressure he felt was always expressed in his paintings, which conveyed their meanings very clearly in spite of not using realistic portraiture. His works of that time all show symbolic denunciation of the oppression of the blacks." (See Navarro, *Malangatana*, 211). Again, this bold statement is not matched by any specific analysis or reference to Malangatana's paintings.

[6] Ulli Beier, *Contemporary Art in Africa* (London: Pall Mall Press, and New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1968).

[7] Malangatana grew up in a domestic setting headed by women. His grandmother is said to have told him Ronga folk-tales. According to Malangatana, his mother, who among other traditionalist practices filed teeth, "went mad in 1947 while my father was away." In caring for her Malangatana served for a while as an apprentice to a traditional healer. See Hans Bogatzke, Rolf Brockman & Christoph Ludszuweit, *Ondambo: African art Forum* (Windhoek: Gamsberg MacMillan, 2000).

[8] Beier, *Contemporary Art in Africa*, 71.

[9] Betty Schneider, "Malangatana of Mozambique," *African Arts* 5, no 2, (1972). 43

[10] Marshall Ward Mount, *African Art: the Years since 1920* (Bloomington & London: Indiana University Press, 1972), 160

[11] Navarro, *Malangatana*, 208. (my translation)

[12] Navarro, *Malangatana*, 204. (my translation)

[13] Schneider, "Malangatana: Artist of the Revolution", 40.

[14] Schneider. "Malangatana of Mozambique", 58.

[15] Navarro, *Malangatana*, 15.

[16] Since Beier played an active role in documenting Yoruba folk tales in Nigeria it follows that he would have been interested in establishing the extent to which Ronga mythology is a source in Malangatana's art. His categorical statement that Malangatana no longer knows these stories seems extreme, and notably it departs from a trend in writing on Malangatana where mythology is cited as a theme, but no details are offered. Malangatana himself claims that mythology was a frequent subject in his early work but this admission then begs the question that if this is indeed the case, then why was the artist seemingly reluctant to disclose evidence of this to Beier? (See Beier, *Contemporary Art in Africa*, 66.)

[17] Jean Kennedy, *New Currents, Ancient Rivers: Contemporary African Artists in a Generation of Change* (Washington, D.C. & London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992).

[18] Kennedy, *New Currents, Ancient Rivers*, 150.

[19] It can also be observed that, ironically, the emphasis on the 'universal' is often essentially Eurocentric, buttressed by western art history. Guedes, writing for Malangatana's first solo exhibition in 1960 claimed that: "he knows without knowing. His vision has uncanny parallels with European tradition... Some paintings... come from a direct, magical and uncontrived surrealism. He apparently has inherited this tradition without having had access to it and without any instruction. He is visited by spirits; some paintings are hallucinations, fragments of an inferno already seen by [Dutch painter Hieronymous] Bosch". (See Navarro, *Malangatana*, 13.)

[20] Kennedy, *New Currents, Ancient Rivers*, 150.

[21] Kennedy, *New Currents, Ancient Rivers*, 151.

[22] Schneider, "Malangatana: Artist of the Revolution"

[23] Schneider, "Malangatana: Artist of the Revolution", 58

[24] Hence statements Schneider makes about the revolution needing Malangatana (and vice versa) leave one distinctly confused as to what it is that she is saying. (See Schneider, "Malangatana: Artist of the Revolution", 63). In fact, Schneider provides further incoherent political contextualisation. She begins with: "The years following national independence have... been turbulent..." but effectively ignores the horror of this period, particularly the atrocities committed by Renamo. Instead she says that some of Malangatana's works "show the violence and barbarities they have endured while fighting for their independence" (See Schneider, "Malangatana: Artist of the Revolution", 58).

[25] An exception is when Schneider refers to works representing Malangatana's own incarceration in 1965, but the autobiographical reference is so explicit that to not do this would be virtually impossible. Also it is peculiar that she overlooks these works (and his imprisonment) in an earlier piece written by her during the height of anti-colonial struggle. This omission, taken with her incoherent political contextualisation in her subsequent article undermines any confidence in the value of her articles in situating Malangatana within a political framework.

[26] Schneider, "Malangatana: Artist of the Revolution", 62.

[27] Schneider, "Malangatana: Artist of the Revolution", 58.

[28] After recounting the narrative in *Malangatana's Story of the Letter in a Hat*, Beier correctly notes: "Most of Malangatana's pictures are less literal." (See Beier, *Contemporary Art in Africa*, 69.)

[29] Navarro, *Malangatana*, 206. (my translation)

[30] Navarro, *Malangatana*, 204. (my translation)

[31] Beier, *Contemporary Art in Africa*, 69.

[32] Schneider, "Malangatana: Artist of the Revolution", 42. (my emphasis)

[33] Beier, *Contemporary Art in Africa*, 69.

[34] Exceptions to this include *Untitled* (1961) and *The Soothsayer, the Serpent, and the Visionary Eye* (1962). (See Navarro, *Malangatana*, 46 & 53.)

[35] I base these general observations on a careful study of the images contained in Navarro's monograph, supplemented by my own informal 'archive'.

[36] Certainly there is a glut of images featuring long, straight haired women whose skin tone, while not necessarily 'white' is invariably lighter in tone than other figures in his paintings. Examples include: *The Crying Blue Woman* (1959); *Adam and Eve in Front of the Cathedral of Lourenco Marques* (1960); *The Lost Girl* (1960); *Zukuta* (1961); *The Final Judgement* (1961); *A Scene of Sorcery* (1961); *Abyss of Sin* (1962); *The Worker with his Heart Exposed* (1962); *The Spell* (1962). (See Navarro, *Malangatana*, respectively 25, 27, 34,47,44,49, 54, 56, and 59); and *Two Friends* (early 1960s). Interestingly Beier

notes of this last example, without interpretation, that the female “bodies are bright yellow”.(See Beier, *Contemporary Art in Africa*, 67.)

[37] Interestingly one figure is distinguished from the others by being painted in pink and white, and is less voluptuously endowed. Comparatively passive her difference is emphasised by being shown from behind, and positioned towards the edge of the painting with the top half of her head cropped. Adding to the complex task of categorically assigning racial identity in Malangatana’s art, she sports a hairstyle somewhere between curly Caucasian and Black afro. (See Navarro, Malangatana, 36.)

[38] Navarro, *Malangatana*, 70

[39] Navarro, *Malangatana*, 76.

[40] Navarro, *Malangatana*, 77.

[41] Navarro, *Malangatana*, 65.

[42] Kennedy, *New Currents, Ancient Rivers*, 151.

[43] Navarro, *Malangatana*, 86.

[44] Navarro, *Malangatana*, 25.

[45] Navarro, *Malangatana*, 37.

[46] The cross and the bible feature in *The Virtuous Woman and the Sinner* (1959), where two figures, both naked, are contrasted. (See Navarro, *Malangatana*, 26) There is nothing to suggest which is virtuous and which not, except that the dominant figure is blond and light skinned and the receding figure is red. Crosses on (presumably) the Cathedral of Lourenco Marques feature in two treatments of the classic biblical tale of the ‘forbidden apple’, *Adam and Eve* (1960). (See Navarro, *Malangatana*, 27 & 28) The rosary features in the narrative series *Story of the Letter in a Hat* (1960), a tale of infidelity and suicide. (See Navarro, *Malangatana*, 30-31) The cross is associated with death in *The Worker with his Heart Exposed* (1962). (See Navarro, *Malangatana*, 56-57). In *The Spell* (1962), the cross is associated with Christian concepts of Heaven, Purgatory, Hell and Limbo. (See Navarro, *Malangatana*, 58-59)

[47] See Navarro, *Malangatana*, 47.

[48] See Navarro, *Malangatana*, 71-74.

[49] See Navarro, *Malangatana*, 194.