



The Master-Slave Binary Opposition in African Fiction: An Advocacy of Slave Rebellion in Andre Brink's *An Instant in the Wind* (2008)

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Abstract: This paper dealing with slave rebellion in André Brink's *An Instant in the Wind* is analyzed through the lens of postcolonial studies, particularly its radical approach which emphasizes racial and cultural difference. It shows to what extent the slave rebellion paves the way for both the subversion of slaveholding discourse and the collapse of binarisms. First, the work suggests the master's process of subjectification through slaves' political hegemony and cultural imperialism. Second, slaves' peaceful and violent writing back to the masters exemplifies their subversion of the slaveholding regime. Third, the hopeful outcome of slave rebellion is revealed by means of the collapse of binary oppositions and blacks and whites' racial symbiosis.

Keywords: collapse, master, rebellion, slave, subjectification

L'opposition binaire maître-esclave dans la fiction africaine : Un plaidoyer pour la rébellion des esclaves dans *An Instant in the Wind* d'André Brink (2008)

Résumé: Cet article qui traite de la rébellion des esclaves dans *An Instant in the Wind* d'André Brink est analysé à travers le prisme des études postcoloniales, en particulier son approche radicale qui met l'accent sur la différence raciale et culturelle. Elle montre dans quelle mesure la rébellion des esclaves ouvre la voie à la fois à la subversion du discours esclavagiste et à l'effondrement des binarismes. Premièrement, l'article suggère le processus de subjectivation du maître par l'hégémonie politique et l'impérialisme culturel des esclaves. Deuxièmement, la réplique pacifique et violente des esclaves aux maîtres illustre leur subversion du régime esclavagiste. Troisièmement, l'issue prometteuse de la rébellion des esclaves est révélée par l'effondrement des oppositions binaires et la symbiose raciale entre les Noirs et des Blancs.

Mots-clés: effondrement, esclave, maître, rébellion, subjectivation.

Introduction

In interracial relationships, slavery stands out as a significant system that helped the white race to maintain oppression over black people. This took place in many parts of the undeveloped world, where inhuman and degrading treatments were thrust upon slaves by the white slave-owning class. In Haiti, the ownership of servile workers by white masters for mercantilist or labor purposes was a perfect illustration of this social bondage. Fed up with living in such serfdom, bondsmen took actions for their emancipation. One of the prominent figures of Haiti's slaves' liberation struggle was Toussaint Louverture. In his historical account of the emancipatory agenda of this black icon in *Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution*, Cyril Lionel Robert James shows how the Haitian slave revolt of 1794-1803 sets an example for the Third World freedom fighting movements. This is the narrative of a barely educated slave, Toussaint Louverture, who masterfully led the other slaves of San Domingo to victory against consecutive annexations by Western forces. In the book, James views the slaves' undertaking as a sign foreshadowing the fight and defeat of late colonialism and industrial power in this black republic. Bondage also took place in Africa, particularly in South Africa. Robert Ross is reminiscent of this in his 1983 book *Cape of Torments: Slavery and Resistance in South Africa*. This historical work confirms the existence and the maintaining of this shameful system by the white ruling class. In the same while, a progressive settlement of slaves in the Cape by their seething leaders is also triggered. Thus, attempted escapes or cases of sedition become commonplace. They were either non-violent or bloodstained.

André Brink has devoted his writing to the description of the political implications of South Africa's slaveholding history in some of his works. His novel *An Instant in the Wind* is a fictionalized reconsideration of the well-known slave rebellion of 1825 that shuddered the Cape. But, the revolt it portrays is not a group-felt experience like in James and Ross's books. In Brink, rebellions are only individual ventures. Hence, this paper grounded on his novel seeks to demonstrate the legitimacy of rebellion for slaves. The questions that seem to underly the topic are as follows: How does the master misrepresent the slave? How does the slave react to this misrepresentation? What are the benefits of this reaction for both the slave and the society?

Following some scholars' writings, slavery and colonization have close bonds. As if in illustration, Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin (2002, p. 2) echo that slavery is an overtly oppressive form of colonization. Given that postcolonialism deals with matters related to the colonial experience, the present paper, which per se deals with master-slave antagonism, will consequently be examined through the lens of this same theory. But specifically, it will encompass

the two wings of postcolonial studies. Throughout this article, some insights will be based on the hardcore politics of anti-imperial thought that Joshua B. Forrest (2006, p. 35) calls “postcolonial nationalism”. While this radical trend recommends the repudiation of Western codes, the accommodationist tendency, praising cultural negotiation, will suggest “the Third space of Enunciation” (Bhabha, 1994, p. 37) as a way of undermining dichotomies between high and low cultures. On the whole, the issue under study will be labored as follows. First, slave-owners’ processes of subjectification will be analyzed. Second, the subversion of slaveholding discourse will be scrutinized. Third, the positive outcome of slave rebellion will be tackled.

1. Slaveholding Discourse: The Master’s Hierarchical Epistemology for Slaves’ Subjectification

An Instant in the Wind is an example of slavery fiction in which Brink portrays the Cape as a colony which fosters and maintains slavery and its subsequent discourse. In this work, slaveholding discourse is a major gauge for the white ruling class to assess their actual authority over the black working lot. It also suggests slaves’ willingness to take orders given to them by the white master. Bondsmen are even obliged to obey the wishes of white children. Brink admits that for the slaves owned for chores and agricultural labors, complying with orders given to them by their masters’ children is a token of submission. Even though they have not yet reached the age of maturation, white youngsters are still considered as slave masters themselves. And this hegemonic stand still grants them some prerogatives over the slaves who work for their homestead. As a young girl in the Cape, Elisabeth also used to command her father’s indentured workers. During a talk with Adam in the wild, she remembers her bossy attitudes towards people she used to hold in servile obedience, totally at her disposal. She recognizes that “I used to order slaves in our house” (Brink, 2008, p. 66). For a girl from the slaveholding system, ordering slaves in the family house complies with the hegemonic epistemologies of the subsequent discourse. As the daughter of Marcus, one of the prominent figures of slaveholding discourse who owns some slaves himself, Elisabeth issues at will commands to slaves at their service. Favored by her prerogatives, the young girl used to keep slaves down. **Given** that her father also circulates these discourses in the familial environment, the little girl soon picks up the paternal authoritarian attitudes. Referring to postcolonial attacks ranged against slaveholding discourse, it is accurate to place Elisabeth’s reification of slaves in the context of what Homi Bhabha (1994, p. 67) calls “processes of subjectification”. Elisabeth’s process of subjectification is, in fact, a stereotypical discourse that mirrors a negative picture of the slaves of her homestead. As a daughter of a slaveholder, she can commission them to do

things for her. She can even get them to cook or to work for her while keeping a pejorative outlook on them.

Additionally, the South African writer suggests that slaveholders' process of subjectification is also evident in slaves' ouroboric (self-reflexive) punishment. This comes into being when the master makes some slaves turn on other slaves through the processes of invigilation and correction. In *An Instant in the Wind*, Willem Lowrens Rieckert uses his slave headman Adam against his fellow slaves. The slave-in-chief is even compelled to flog other servants, against his own will, when he is told to: "I even had to punish the other slaves when he ordered it. But I was a slave, I had no voice against him" (Brink, 2008, p. 94), Adam laments. For Brink, such a constraint on the "mandoor" (Ross, 1983, p. xi) is a case of political domination of the slave master. Under Rieckert's instigation, the mandoor is obliged to castigate his own peers, though he is not pleased about that. Adam does not have free scope to say no. If he dares, the Court will make him cede the field: "The Cape would have forced me" (Brink, 2008, p. 77), he recognizes. In this context, "The Cape" is a metaphor for the white-carved-out local judicial system that keeps hold of black slaves. Robert Ross (1983, p. 2) writes in illustration that under slavery in South Africa, "slaves were controlled by the massive use of judicial force". Because of reprisals hanging over, threateningly, the foreman is obliged to obey in order to escape the jaws of the biased law. Adam accepts humiliations and abasements to avoid the lot of punishments in store for untamed servitors. In addition to home punishment, he is also liable to legal proceedings Ross (1983, p. 2) calls "fiscaal". In the judiciary system of slaveholding South Africa, the fiscaal is a degrading punishment whereby the prosecuting attorney, the police officer or the local judicial officer can order the flogging or the constriction to work on the treadmill of an undisciplined slave.

From the foregone, it stands out that given the punishments he is liable to, Adam becomes totally incapacitated, and unable to say no when he is given an order. For, fear has killed in him any hint of insubordination. For fear of his life, he does not protest to taking a telling. Admittedly, when he is asked to punish the other slaves, he acts in obedience (Brink, 2008, p. 94). Held in serfdom, the indentured slave has no voice against his boss. From Homi Bhabha's writings against the excesses of colonialism, a parallel can be drawn between the condition of the colonized during colonization and the slave in the South African slaveholding system. Bhabha (1994, p. 82) advises that under the colonial rule, the dominated man is so subjected that he becomes "the most obedient and dignified of servants". Comparatively, in *An Instant in the Wind*, Adam bends down under the weight of humiliation and contradiction so that he becomes the most obedient and dignified servant, in his master's hold. Undeniably, this obedience gets him to comply with other commands from his master.

In addition to political pressures, *An Instant in the Wind* also reveals that a good way for slave masters to exert their authority over their bondsmen is to impose Western cultural codes on them. In slaveholding South Africa, slaves are compelled into abandoning their tribal names for Europhone onomastic designations. This is the case of Adam in Brink's novel. The servant's boss humiliates him by effacing his original name for a Western predicate. In the following lines, he complains of the brutal loss of his Ontong (his father's ethnicity): "Adam belongs to other people. Will you remember that? My name is Aob" (Brink, 2008, p. 130). In postcolonial studies, such imposition of foreign norms is an articulation of cultural imperialism on black slaves. In fact, by birth, the slave was named Aob by his mother. Yet, when he became Willem Lowrens Rieckert's servant, this name was replaced with Adam. This cultural dictatorship needs explaining. First, for Brink, this hegemonic posture of the slaveholder rides on the fact that he finds indigenous names barbaric and downgrading. He is not familiar with Ontong names. And since he finds the phonality of the vocable Aob strange and misfit to Western phonology, the master call his slave Adam; a way for him to coin a new code in replacement of the indigenous cultural paradigm. For Michel Foucault (1973, p. 72), such a codification is tantamount to "the arrangement of identities and differences into ordered tables". This means that in processes of subjectification and the articulation of cultural imperialism as portrayed in Brink's novel, the name Aob is arranged into the ordered Europhone name Adam.

Second, the author of *An Instant in the Wind* posits that the substitution of the African name by the Western onomastic paradigm occurs owing to the existence of stereotypes that circulate in the Cape. According to this stereotypical discourse, the slave owner constructs a good image of himself and in the meantime he misconstrues the image of the slave. This Manichean division is in step with the insight by Sander Gilman (1985, p. 20) whereby "[t]he "bad" Other becomes the negative stereotype; the "good" Other becomes the positive stereotype" in the process of subjectification. This premise holds that since the boss views himself as the good 'Other' he takes it upon himself to change his bondsman's indigenous name for the Judeo-Christian name. Trinh T. Minh-Ha (1995, p. 216) views such a practice as a way of "'baptizing' [the slave] through logocentric naming". Being a slave, Adam cannot but accept the logocentric naming Willem Lowrens Rieckert has chosen for him. His status of a subaltern does not grant him the possibility to protest about the cultural estrangement his boss imposes on him. Against his will, Adam only has to make do with this new identity. In fear of reprisals he is liable to if he dares stand against this cultural imperialism, the indentured slave simply acquiesces to this identity. As if in illustration, G.W. F. Hegel (1977, pp. 117-8) evidences that "[f]ear of the lord is [...] the beginning of wisdom" for bondsmen in a master-slave dialectics.

A reference to Frantz Fanon's master-slave dialectic reveals that in the bondage system, the superiority complex of the slaveholder and the inferiority complex of the black bondsman affect race relations. This binary opposition is also conjoined with an oppressive cultural alienation imposed on the slave. In his analysis of this Fanonian Manichean delirium, Hussein Abdilahi Bulhan (1985, p. 115) pens: "The white master imposed his [...] culture on the black slave. The latter subsequently strove to adopt the master's direction, outlook, and behaviour". Bulhan can be credited with the opinion that black slaves happily accept foreign values. On this, Brink seems to concur with him. The South African author seems to posit that when the master baptizes Adam anew, the latter does not even make a fuss over this cultural encroachment. He is even thought to have hastily and enthusiastically welcomed the Europhone name, effacing all traits of the "name his [mother] brought with her from that nameless land across the many mountains" (Brink, 2008, p. 24). Hilariously enough, through this bondsman's attitude, the agreed servitude of oppressed people transpires. But could it be otherwise basing on Hegel (1967, p. 234) who suggests that the slave is dependent, and that his life depends on that of his master?

Taken together, both Adam's yield to his master's political domination and his compliance with the cultural codifications lead to his symbolic death. By accepting without complaint the injunctive discourses of his master, the bondsman finally loses his own self. He can metaphorically be likened to someone who has ceased to exist. This is what Adélékè Adéèko (2005, p. 17) suggests when he pens that "the slave is an "interim" person kept alive literally but treated as if he were dead". The slave is not a full person, but only a 'temporary' man. Relatively in *An Instant in the Wind*, Adam is treated as an interim person: he is compared to a dead man subsequently to his cultural severance. He is liable to ethnocide because of his cultural rootlessness. However, to free himself from the slaveholder's grips, the slave necessarily needs to subvert the master's volition.

2. The Subversion of Slaveholding Epistemology: Slave Rebels as Postcolonial 'Others'

In his novel, Brink establishes that by taking a telling without resisting against the slaveholding apparatus of the Cape, black slaves finally get fed up with such their enslavement. Their legendary submissive attitude soon gives way. This therefore makes way for forms of rebellion. Such revolts seek to subvert restrictive legislations that constrain slaves. First, in *An Instant in the Wind*, peaceful rebellion predicates black slaves' refusal to comply with the exclusionist epistemologies of slavery. This can be seen in slaves' verbal confrontations with their masters. In the novel, Adam, the slave headman,

peacefully disobeys his master who asks him to whip his own mother Seli who had joined a funeral scene without permission. He relates how his master prepared her punishment: "He had her taken to the backyard, to the post. And he gave me the sjambok and told me to flog her" (Brink, 2008, p. 94). To the master's surprise, Adam refuses. He confesses that "I pleaded with him. He refused to listen. I kept on" (Brink, 2008, p. 94). Not only does the slave refuse to thrash his mother with the "sjambok" (Ross, 1983, p. xi) or the rawhide whip when the master urges him on, but he also engages in an impervious negotiation with Willem Lowrens Rieckert on behalf of his mother.

For Brink, this rebellion, which is a peaceful form of resistance, is a strategy for Adam to show the master that even though he is still a bondsman, he is not amenable to parent punishing. Though a slave, Adam believes he still needs consideration from his master. He thinks that had his master been a good person, he would not have asked him to do the slightest harm to his own mother. The slave realizes that even though black people's rights are trampled underfoot by white people, he should not let his boss make a fool of his community. This is the reason he stands up in defiance. And if Willem Lowrens Rieckert should keep on asking him to flog his genitor, he will keep stepping out of line. We clearly see that this master-slave dialectics has a conflicting evidence. The reason is that the master recognize black people as human beings. In a comment upon the Hegelian master-slave difference, Hussein Abdilahi Bulhan (1985, p. 102) illustratively pens that "when the desire of the oppressed for recognition is frustrated, there is a struggle, a conflict".

As he sets his resistance into motion, Adam stands out as a cunning rebel. In fact, instead of peremptorily saying no to the order he receives, the slave headman undertakes to negotiate with a strong belief in the persuading power of this parley: "I pleaded with him. He refused to listen. I kept on" (Brink, 2008, p. 94). Left at this point, rebellion is viewed as a humble and peaceful asking for forgiveness on behalf of a mother who is in the center of the cyclone. More importantly, rebellion is not a static opposition, but a dynamic resisting strategy. It is renewed over and over again as long as the slaveowner's authoritative attitude to persuade Adam still remains unflinching.

To stick to the postcolonial imagination, one can contend that Adam's refusal to flog his mother goes beyond a frustrated desire for recognition. His unwillingness to comply with this inhumane order is likened to the colonized writing back to the colonizer. In pleading with his boss, he stands against slaveholding discourse in the same proportion as the postcolonial subject subverts colonial imperium. Adam's untamed posture amounts to not only voicing out his indignation, but also to letting the white slaveholder understand that he is not lenient to his political volition. Thus, according to Stuart Hall (1992, p. 314), is believed to be a postcolonial "Other" who is "constructed as the

absolute opposite, the negation of everything the West stood for". In *An Instant in the Wind*, Adam is admittedly is anti-imperial Other who acts in disobedience without necessarily disclosing his displeasure. As a postcolonial slave, Adam subverts the master's political hegemony with a diplomatic strategy: pleadings. In this impervious resistance for his mother's liberation, the rebel slave seeks to overturn the trend. In so doing, not only does he expect to urge his owner to sweeten both his temper and firmness, but he also intends to show him that he is not to be intimidated so as to give up the rebellion he has engaged. In adopting such an anti-imperial posture, the rebel bondsman wishes to impose his counter-hegemonic view on the master. Thus, he appears to be a valid representative of the periphery that writes back to the center. Adam seems to want to tell the other side of the story in breaking the silence that has long oppressively muzzled the oppressed people.

Another form of peaceful rebellion is slaves' repudiation of the master's cultural identity. Slaves rebel peacefully when they object to the master's desire to impose Europhone names on them. Through his loud rebuttal to the transformative agenda of the slaveholding system, the postcolonial Other remains true to his original cultural identity. As an anti-imperial 'Other' Adam does not want his identity to be calibrated within the framework of Western norms. On the contrary, the rebel slave intends to stick to Ontong ways. "Adam belongs to other people. Will you remember that? My name is Aob" (Brink, 2008, p. 130). In his process, he is at odds with postcolonialists who view identity in terms of cultural negotiation. Truly speaking, Adam is a radical postcolonial subject who recommends the rejection of European paradigms to the benefit of black African realities which should be extolled. Brink seems to posit that, as an Ontong, this bondsman does not think that the name Adam can 'bear the burden' of his cultural background. The rebel slave does not believe that this Europhone name can faithfully respond to the existential questions raised by Adam's birth in the Ontong cultural environment. Accordingly, for black Africans not to be uprooted or get assimilated into the culture of the white man, Adam, basing on Frederic Jameson (1996, p. 290), seems to consider everything standing for the West as an 'Other', which alludes to "a dangerous category, one [they] are well off without". This amounts to saying that in the slaveholding system, the periphery that was cast aside and conjoined with pejorative attributes is the one which now resists the center: a truly postcolonial project of 'writing back' to the patronizing discourse of the master.

From the foregone, it comes into clear view that peaceful rebellion as fictionalized in *An Instant in the Wind* is not a struggle for liberation in which bondsmen get rid of a constraining serfdom. It is neither a struggle aiming to overthrow the whole slavery system nor a combat meant to take hold of production forces of the Cape. Yet, peaceful rebellion is just a non-violent way of

protesting against slaveholding discourses. Unfortunately, its lack of poignancy handicaps it to the point of obsolescence when it comes to confront the master's violent ways.

Second, in André Brink's *An Instant in the Wind*, violent rebellion is seen as the slave's response to the brutality the master uses against him. This comes into being when the slave's verbal and peaceful negotiations channel into the master's irritation. In fact, Adam's incessant appeals to mercy for his mother's sake do not yield fruit. Contrariwise, instead of tempering the master's anger, the slave headman's pleadings rather worsen things. Such negotiations get the master to decisively engage in a physical attack. Adam recounts: "He grabbed a piece of wood [...] and hit me in the face with it. I wrenched it from him. And I only stopped beating him when he was lying on the ground" (Brink, 2008, p. 94). The slave's confession reveals that the master, afraid to succumb to the might of the pleadings and the obstinate attitude of the slave, preferably assaults him in reprisal. Yet, seeing that the white master has ventured too far and that he can on no account bear such an untenable humiliation, Adam hits back; he violently writes back to violence.

In *An Instant in the Wind*, Brink opines that Adam's violent postcolonial retaliation induces two kinds of understanding. On the one hand, violent rebellion is a violent postcolonial action that frustrated subjects launch against white oppressors. By knocking the master out, Adam is the like of postcolonial rebels who are not intimidated by the brutal ways of the slave regime. He defiantly shows that once attacked, anti-imperial slaves not only write back to the center proportionately to the offence administered against them but that they are also able to bring the offender up short. In a violent postcolonial context, this unruly way of writing back reveals that the only language that the colonizer or the slaveholder understands is that of violence. By extension, counter-violence seems to be a good action that actually knocks on the slaveholding regime of the Cape in Brink's novel. Bulhan (1985, p. 117) corroborates this in pithy terms: "The oppressor, having become the oppressor through the practice of violence, only understands and yields to counterviolence". The capacity of the colonized subjects or the enslaved people to not only subvert the political volition of the colonizer or the slave master but also to turn the fright round on the persecutor is emphasized here. Thus, when faced with insitutionalized barbarism, postcolonial rebel slaves respond with equal means.

On the other hand, postcolonial slaves who write back to violence view the oppressing master as a dangerous Other one should get rid of. In *An Instant in the Wind*, Adam who hits back in reply to Willem Lowrens Rieckert's brutality views his master as an unsafe Other he is easy without. Khair (2009, p. 4) describes this unpleasant counterpart with acuteness: "The Other is cast as the purely negative image of the European Self, the obverse of the Self". In the novel,

Adam wrenches the piece of wood his boss has used to give him a first blow, and finally turns the weapon against his master because he deliberately considers the latter as an oppressive 'Other'. Through his violent showdown, the slave constructs a demystified image of the white slaveholding regime. This is a reversal of paradigm whereby the oppressor falls from grace. In fact, the slave master who used to be blindly revered and obeyed is finally held in contempt by the slave. Worse, the latter even views the master as a 'pariah': someone to be rejected and oppressed in return. Thus, in the eyes of the subaltern, the boss is stripped of most of his hegemonic stature who is now viewed as a mere human being. In this context, the master is nothing more than just a self which may be challenged, antagonized and eventually defeated by slaves.

In fine, Brink contends that when slaves ascend to such heights, their rebellion has borne fruit. Even though their postcolonial struggle has not shuddered the slaveholding apparatus, it can still be assumed as a successful undertaking for reasons that will emerge.

3. The Hopeful Sequel to Slave Rebellion

In Brink's postcolonial writing, slave rebellion does not remain a dead letter in *An Instant in the Wind*. In the novel, the outcome of the revolt is hopeful. The peaceful and violent forms of rebellion led by rebel slaves has triggered the advent of a new era in the master-slave dialectic. Now that the white master has understood that the balance of terror is established, things are bound to change. Thus, master and slave vow to overcome their political, cultural and racial differences. The conciliatory posture of Elisabeth and Adam epitomizes the master and the slave desire to overcome their binary opposition. To transcend dichotomies, she starts by calling into question the whole slaveholding system that once cradled and shaped her childhood and upbringing. Now that the white woman is inclined to call into question the slaveholding discourse of the Cape, she now learns to cope with the nascent all-embracing social deal that is to take over South Africa. Thus, Brink's novel stands out as a postcolonial work which seeks to excoriate hegemonic articulations of otherness. Elisabeth's reflection is actually edifying: "To transcend the thou-shalt-not of a lifetime, to discard an entire education, a way of life, as if it were irrelevant" (Brink, 2008, p. 118). The white woman has understood that the logocentric ideas coupled with stereotypes against black slaves she has been spoon-fed with need to be contravened. They are no more relevant for an all-inclusive South African society. The "thou-shalt-not" Manichean principle, taught by her father Marcus and mother Catharina, which fosters racial and social division should be put aside, she finally realizes. In fine, she definitely turns her back on the slaveholding epistemologies of the dominating white society. As a consequence, Elisabeth is thought to display a

postcolonial posture vis-à-vis the system of thought that governs the slaveholding society. She is now engaged to get her former education down to the lower status of an “Other”, that Andrew Cole (2004, p. 578) defines as “that against which you define yourself”. Admittedly, as she is now a postcolonial character, Elisabeth now defines herself against her culture-of-origin which once fostered social division.

The South African novelist also brings to light that in transcending the slaveholding logic of cultural and racial difference, Elisabeth now agrees to the encounter of peoples, which was once intolerable by the principles of her Western education. The text by Brink establishes that following her conciliatory attitude, the white woman finally realizes that the contention whereby “[i]t was impossible to accept that everything was really permissible” (Brink, 2008, p. 119) is now obsolete. Here, ‘impossible’ does not necessarily underscore something that is not likely to happen. It also hints at the woman’s surprise at the latest development in the slaves’ representation; from rejected subjects, slaves are now accepted with their differences by the white community. *An Instant in the Wind* rightfully suggests that Elisabeth is unexpectedly astonished to see herself pondering over “all the impossible possibilities” (Brink, 2008, p. 96) in the Cape. In this contrast-laden wordplay, the noun ‘possibilities,’ succeeding the adjective ‘impossible’, annihilates any idea of a return to exclusionist discourse in the new South Africa. Thus, all ‘impossible possibilities’ means that former strictures that used to restrict blacks have now collapsed, paving the way for new meanings.

Through Brink, one may assume that once Elisabeth is now fully aware of the treachery she has been lured into (by despising the black slaves), she may be driven to seethe with anger and to hold the Cape in contempt. In her attempt to adjust to the era of reconciliation that is dawning on South Africa, the white woman may be inclined to acknowledge mistake and offence perpetrated against black slaves. Hence, she might express regret for it. Now that she realizes the flaws of the Western logic of binarism, she makes out how slaveholding discourse advocates wrongdom. Admittedly, Elisabeth now understands the rightness of Adam’s rebellion against Willem Lowrens Rieckert. She now understands that slave rebellion is grounded on valid incentives; and that Adam’s revolt is not just the manifestation of an emotional displeasure. Now that Elisabeth realizes that Adam’s writing back to the center typifies a fight against injustice, she gets involved alongside him to put an end to binarisms in the Cape. In taking a stand against slaveholding discourse, she seems to be resolutely steadfast in searching for a new tomorrow for her country. By Adam’s side, she feels vested with a divine mission. For Hall (1992, p. 314), it consists in righting the slaveholding wrongs by becoming activists who praise the “negation of everything the West stood for”. Stripping herself of her Western traits, Elisabeth now rejects slave-owners’ logocentric discourses. For Brink, this is the essential

condition for her to be born anew. He also assumes that this is a rite of rite of passage that may lead to her rebirth. Elisabeth's writing back to the Western system of thought¹ alludes to the collapse of the slave-owning apparatus along with its abetting discourse. This idea is amusingly caricatured by Frantz Fanon (2008, p. 173) through his metaphor of the curtain which fells like a burst balloon. Admittedly, Elisabeth's repudiation of Western slave-owning system leads up to its fin de siècle. Now that sides with the black slave Adam, turning her back on European epistemologies, there should therefore be no room for racial and cultural binarisms in the Cape.

The collapse of boundaries is also an epitome of the positive outcome of slave rebellion in Brink's novel. In step with this embracing dynamics, Elisabeth joins voice with Adam and together they work for the symbiosis of racial identities. In *An Instant in the Wind*, Brink posits that the blur of racial differences in South Africa suggests a positive outcome the slave rebellion as fictionalized in Brink's work. Either of these iconoclastic figures decides to let bygones be bygones and commits himself or herself to the encounter of races. This is for the good of the whole community of the Cape. This resoluteness entails that Elisabeth definitely decides to turn her back on the hegemonic discourses maintained by the regime of the Cape. For her, color specificities do not count much, but only community interests should prevail. This existentialist humanism hers is reiterated through this: "Look: I'm nearly as brown as you" (Brink, 2008, p. 193). The milestone of Elisabeth's insight encapsulates her will to blur the color line that used to maintain the slave and the master in a binary opposition, in which two opposed categories cannot be conjoined. Interestingly, Brink argues that Elisabeth's stance irradiates a remarkable contention that is worth noting. In fact, out of telling Adam that she is as brown as him, the woman does not purport to show her sun-burnt skin due to ultraviolet rays. What she emphasizes is the symbolic transformation she has undergone. She insists on the change that has stripped her of her hierarchical position, paving the way for reconciliation between blacks and whites in the Cape.

From the foregone, Brink is viewed as a postcolonial writer. This doxa rides on his denunciation of Western demands to Universalism in terms of race and identity. In this rebuttal, he tries to show the limitations of the European outlook. Through his philippic against slave-owning discourse, the writer wishes for the effacement of center and periphery unfruitful dichotomies. Such a postcolonial agenda is echoed by Arif Dirlik (1994, p. 294) who writes against othering:

¹ As the daughter of Marcus, a slaveholder himself, Elisabeth seems to be fighting against a system that made her. Turning on the Cape (her system) symbolizes an ouroboric movement for Elisabeth. In the Greek mythology, ouroboros represents the serpent that eats its own tail. In this context, ouroboros or ouroboric hint at self-flagellation

To abolish all distinctions between center and periphery as well as other 'binarisms' that are allegedly a legacy of colonial(ist) ways of thinking and to reveal societies globally in their complex heterogeneity and contingency.

(A. Dirlik, 1994, p. 294)

Basing on Dirlik, Adam and Elisabeth, as icons of their respective racial particularities, are assumed to act with the view to abolishing all distinctions between the black and the white in the Cape. The point of orientation is the communal life they lead, isolated in the South African veld. Elisabeth's amenability to Adam and her effort to settle in despite all previous misunderstandings between them suggests a desire to abolish binarisms. Adam's willing to forgive all wrongs done against him by the Cape² indicates his commitment for reconciliation. His protecting Elisabeth against a snake in the veld (Brink, 2008, p. 117) is illustratively enough. As a sequel to this mutual commitment, Adam and Elisabeth may succeed in silencing center and periphery oppositional and coercive relationships. When they wholeheartedly agree to join voice to ward off otherness, they surely pave the way for the emergence of societies globally in their complex heterogeneity and contingency.

In *An Instant in the Wind*, interracial sex is a perfect token of the collapse of racial boundaries. In the articulation of racial negotiation, Brink seems to put forward miscegenation as a cure-all for the asymmetrical relationships between master and slave. Through this he opines that racial blending, in couple life, has a knock-on effect on color line that divides up the population into racial specificities. For that, the novelist suggests that a good way to attain a true reconciliation is to promote interracial romantic relationships. His approach is to be perceived in his acclaim for black male slaves and white women being engaged in couple lives. Adam and Elisabeth's affair is the perfect epitome of the like. "I love you. I have no explanation to offer. I love you" (Brink, 2008, p. 119), she declares her love to him

The power of love over racial dichotomies is emphasized here. Owing to this, Elisabeth is amenable to Adam's courtship and finally agrees to carry on with him (Brink, 2008, p. 195). And now that she grows to become his inamorata, racial hindrances and distrust subsequently collapse, making way for "all the impossible possibilities" (Brink, 2008, p. 96). Following this paradigmatic change, the white woman and the black slave take to each other as if their respective communities had never been through strong disagreements before. Besides, the mixed-blood child issued from their breeding (Brink, 2008, p. 107) promises well.

² Here, the Cape is the political system of South Africa

It gives grounds for hope, for better tomorrows. The mulatto child born suggests what Homi Bhabha (1994, p. 37) calls the "Third Space of enunciation" (1994, p. 37). As the progeny of an interracial negotiation, the baby-boy is the point where not only two seeds meet but also, and more importantly, where two conflicting identities cancel each other out and vow to make common cause for an appeased and peaceful racial relationships.

For a good grasp of the third space in the postcolonial expression of the collapse of boundaries in *An Instant in the Wind*, the previous developments worth elaborating on. One can unmistakably lay down that Brink is an anti-imperial writer whose writing, through its celebration of miscegenation, abrogates the privileged centrality of slaveholding ways. For the author, interracial couples or mixed-blood childbirth stands for a third space of enunciation which aids in silencing racial differences, blurring dichotomies and hierarchies once fuelled by the dominating discourse of slave masters. What the novelist wishes for is the disappearance of all forms of discrimination in a South Africa which off and on copes with racial unrests. His plea is on a par with Aimé Césaire (1972, p. 2) who dreams for a (re)conciliation of races: "I admit that it is a good thing to place different civilizations in contact with each other that it is an excellent thing to blend different worlds". By using this insight as the baseline for our reasoning, we could say it is a good thing Brink's novel places Adam and Elisabeth in a harmonious relationship. The reason for this social adherence rides on the fact that the emergence of spontaneous interracial couples can strongly participate in the collapse of hierarchies and hegemonies in the rainbow nation. When center and periphery agree on a common ground (because of love or mixed-breed child), the chances are the society they live in may experience social stability and cohesion. To stick to the spirit of the aforementioned locus, one can contend that the rebellion led by Adam has turned out successful. The reason is this. Though isolated and unplanned, the slave's actions have still helped to fight against color bar and slavery to some extent, giving the hope of a possible disappearance of all racial hierarchies. This is in perfect sync with Adélékè Adéèko (2005, p. 21) who strives for the emergence of "a realm without masters and slaves".

Conclusion

At the twilight of this paper, it comes to light that advocating (slave) rebellion is sometimes necessary in societies where the reign of terror is the norm of governance. This work confirms this through slave masters' processes of subjectification, slaves' peaceful and violent rebellions, and the hopeful outcome of slave rebellion. Given that the collapse of boundaries silences mistrusts, the world today also needs acts of tolerance and acceptance between conflicting

communities and political organizations. But for a sustained peace to emerge in the world, what diplomatic strategies still remain to be used?

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