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**SINZANG**

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COMMUNICATION AND EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES

**Peleforo GON COULIBALY University**

**Côte d'Ivoire**

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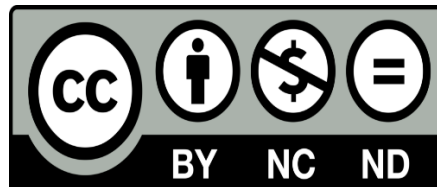
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## EDITORIAL

Among the Senufos from the north of Côte d'Ivoire, the sacred grove is called "Sinzang". The first of these would date from the time of the patriarch and leader of Korhogo SORO Zouakagnon (1840-1894). It is the tutelary space of the initiatory institute of the secret society: the Poro. These sacred forests exist in all the villages of the region and are highly protected and managed. The proof is that in their midst, adolescents perform the rite of passage leading them to the age of maturity. The "Sinzang" is also the centre of intergenerational knowledge transmission. Thus, the teaching of ancestral knowledge, ontology and cosmogony-contributing to the future spiritual, moral and social formation of the Senufo elite-is associated with this pantheon.

In line with this pedagogical and academic logic, the SINZANG Journal aims to promote African and Western humanities in Literature, Language, Communication and Education Sciences. To do this, it is part of a process of promoting the reflections and studies conducted by Teachers-Researchers and Researchers for the sustainable development of society.

As distinctive signs of "Sinzang", Jacqueline DELANGE, in *Arts et peuple Sénoufo de l'Afrique noire*, identifies among others the huts, earth cones and statues (masks). The visual identity of this magazine presents two masks, one symbolizing ancestral knowledge and the other Western science. The two facing the entrance of a sacred hut express the encounter of diverse knowledge put at the service of humanity. *In fine*, they export to other horizons, hence the idea of huts in perspective.

SINZANG is a pluridisciplinary and biannual peer-reviewed scientific journal. It is published in English and French but also accepts work written in German and Spanish. Moreover, depending on the requests made at the discretion of its review committee, it may issue special thematic publications and conference proceedings.

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## ÉDITORIAL

Chez les Sénoufos du nord de la Côte d'Ivoire, le bosquet sacré est communément appelé « Sinzang ». Les premiers du genre dateraient de l'époque du patriarche et chef de Korhogo SORO Zouakagnon (1840-1894). C'est l'espace tutélaire de l'institut initiatique de la société secrète : le Poro. Lieux fortement protégés et aménagés à l'envi, ces forêts sacrées existent dans tous les villages de la région. La preuve en est qu'en leur sein, les adolescents effectuent le rite de passage les amenant à l'âge de la maturité. Le « Sinzang » est aussi le haut lieu de la transmission de la connaissance intergénérationnelle. Ainsi, l'enseignement du savoir ancestral, de l'ontologie et la cosmogonie- contribuant à la formation spirituelle, morale et sociale de l'élite Sénoufo de demain-est associé à ce panthéon.

S'inscrivant dans cette logique pédagogique et académique, la Revue SINZANG ambitionne de faire la promotion des humanités tant africaine qu'occidentale dans le domaine de la Littérature, des Sciences du Langage, de la Communication et de l'Éducation. Pour ce faire, elle s'inscrit dans une démarche de vulgarisation des réflexions et des études menées par les Enseignants-Chercheurs et des Chercheurs pour le développement durable de la société.

Comme signes distinctifs du « Sinzang », Jacqueline DELANGE, dans *Arts et peuple Sénoufo de l'Afrique noire*, identifie entre autres les cases, les cônes en terre et les statues (masques). L'identité visuelle de cette revue présentant deux masques, l'un symbolisant le savoir ancestral et l'autre la science occidentale. Les deux se faisant face à l'entrée d'une case sacrée expriment la rencontre de connaissances diverses mis au service de l'humanité. In fine, elles s'exportent vers d'autres horizons ; d'où l'idée des cases en perspective.

SINZANG est une revue pluridisciplinaire à comité de lecture et scientifique. Elle est bilingue : éditée en anglais et en français. Mais elle accepte également les travaux écrits en allemand et en espagnol. C'est une revue semestrielle, tenant deux parutions l'an. Au demeurant, elle peut

procéder, selon les demandes ou les sollicitations formulées à l'appréciation de son comité de lecture, à des parutions spéciales thématiques et à la diffusion d'actes de colloque.

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## MAN AND NATURE: THE ECOCRITICAL READING OF A CONTINUUM IN ANDRÉ BRINK'S FICTION

**Souleymane TUO**

English Department

Université Peleforo GON COULIBALY, Korhogo (Côte d'Ivoire)

Email: soultuo@yahoo.fr

### ABSTRACT

Through the lens of ecocriticism, this paper throws light on man and nature's continuum framed in stimulus-response mode. More importantly, it shows that though they are of different species, man and nature may still have some strong bonds. In a comparative study of Brink's *An Instant in the Wind* and *Cape of Storms: the First Life of Adamastor: a Story* ecocriticism helps to emphasize man's green attitude towards faunal species. Animals' welcoming response to man's ecocentric ways. Beyond this stimulus-response paradigm, this insight aims to show that the protection of the universe depends on the commonality between man and nature.

**Keywords:** *ecocentric, continuum, man, nature, welcoming.*

### L'HOMME ET LA NATURE: LECTURE ECOCRITIQUE D'UN CONTINUUM DANS LA FICTION D'ANDRÉ BRINK

### RESUME

À travers le prisme de l'écocritique, cet article met en lumière le continuum de l'homme et de la nature exprimé en mode stimulus-réponse. Plus important encore, cela montre que bien qu'ils appartiennent à des espèces différentes, l'homme et la nature peuvent encore avoir des liens forts. Dans une étude comparative de *An Instant in the Wind* et *Cape of Storms : the First Life of Adamastor : a Story* d'André Brink, l'écocritique aide à souligner l'attitude verte de l'homme envers les espèces fauniques. La réponse accueillante des animaux aux comportements écocentriques de l'homme. Au-delà de ce paradigme stimulus-réponse, cette réflexion vise à montrer que la protection de l'univers dépend de la communauté entre l'homme et la nature.

**Mots-clés :** *écocentrique, continuum, homme, nature, accueil*

## INTRODUCTION

From the outset of his existence, and with a growing intensity, human society has always kept strong bonds with the environing natural realm. Not only is man a dweller in nature, but he also interacts with the forces that configure the ecosystem. In the articulation of this interplay, he takes to the surrounding world by displaying an all-embracing affirmation of care and congruence with it. This biophilial disposition of humankind is labored at length in significant fictional outputs by the U.S writer Ernest Hemingway. His 1986 work *The Garden of Eden* (1986) speaks volume about man's overestimated commonalities with natural essences, his preoccupation for the maintaining and the safeguard of other species. In the book, Hemingway puts to the fore the boy narrator's intense dislike at the excesses of elephant killing in Africa by his father. In this, the lad's loyalty shifts from his father to the elephants. This awareness continues in *Death in the Afternoon* (1932) where the writer essays a new relationship – less destructive forms of human character – with an enduring earth, so also, to the credit of his genius, he had already anticipated that his followers would move beyond him in a continuing development of consciousness.

The South African writer André Philippus Brink is also concerned about ecological matters in his works. Similarly to Hemingway and Okri whose works are set in a physical world including humans, Brink's ecological narratives are sometimes located in wilderness and in nature as an organic part of the world. The specificity of Brink's *An Instant in the Wind* (2008) and *Cape of Storms: the First Life of Adamastor: a Story*<sup>3</sup> (2007) lie in that they epitomize a laudatory affirmation of mankind's attention and thoroughness for the maintaining of natural species. Thus, the thrust of this paper is to throw light on man and nature's interplay framed in stimulus-response mode. More importantly, it shows that man's eco-friendly behavior towards nature triggers off the environing world's welcoming reaction towards him. In a comparative study of the two novels, resort to ecocritical studies is used as the baseline for our argumentation. Viewed as the relationship between literature and the physical environment, ecocriticism will take on a main variant. The American ecocriticism with its celebration of natural organisms and species – called «tree-hugging» by harder-left critics – will be of help in showing nature's positive response

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<sup>3</sup> For sake of brevity, André Brink's *Cape of Storms: The First Life of Adamastor: A Story* will be shortened to *Cape of Storms* in the body of the text.

to man's ecologically accepted behavior (P. Barry, 2002, p. 251). To be specific, man's ecofriendly attitude towards nature will be explored in the first section of this study. In a second instance, nature's welcoming reaction to man's biophilia will be highlighted.

### **1. MAN'S GREEN ATTITUDE TOWARDS FAUNAL SPECIES**

In André Brink's ecocritical novels, the evidence of humans close linkage to the fauna is blatant in their affective and caring consideration for animals. In the view of ecocritical scholars, Brink stands out as a true green novelist due to his deep concern for faunal species. His *An Instant in the Wind* advocates Larsson's biophilia, his care for pleasure-garden animals in his house of the Cape of Good Hope. In the area reserved for his pets, one can readily be taken with the lovely «ostriches, casuarines, zebras, and sometimes different sorts of antilopes, and other smaller quadrupeds» (A. Brink, 2008, p. 44). This quote, which is loaded with an all-embracing aura, emphasizes the Swedish explorer's biophilial attitude. For Brink, Larsson's side-by-side peaceful life with both bipeds and quadrupeds in spite of their biological differences is first telling of his love of and empathy with nature and living things.

The point being raised is that he does not make any discrimination between humanness and animality nor does he look down on these pleasure-garden animals thinking that he is superior to them. As a human being, he even does not regard the faunal species in his care with «speciesism», that is, the «prejudice in favour of one's own species» (G. Garrard, 2004, p. 183). In return, Erick Alexis Larsson displays a profound and caring affection towards the bionomic essences under his aegis without binarisms, what C. Manes terms «ecological humility» (1996, p. 17). W. Whitman has a congruent view with Brink on biophilia. For, the American humanist and poet celebrates man's inborn attraction towards different living forms in his poem "Song of Myself". In this versified literary production, the speaker solemnly proclaims that «I think I could turn and live with the animals, they are so placid, / I stand looking at them long and long» (W. Whitman, 1973, p. 60).

As it appears, Whitman's speaker's ecocentric tendency is on a level with Larsson's eco-friendly attitude. As a proof, the way he wholeheartedly announces that he thinks he could turn and live with animals because they are placid, the same way the Swedish explorer's strong amenability to lovingly care for his pets underscores the goodness the quietness of these ecospecies provide him with. L. Daston and G. Mitman

(2005, p. 6) evidence this assumption through their allegation that «pets enhance the health and happiness of their owners». And what is more important is that both the poetic figure and the fictional protagonist are so taken to animals that they can even spend long hours looking admiringly and thoughtfully at them again and again; the sentence «I can stand looking at them long and long» convincingly confirms this. From what has been said above, Larsson is akin to a true green activist due to his attachment to animals and his commitment to maintaining them in life. To G. P. Love (2003, p. 127), such an ecologically accepted tendency comes into alignment with what is assumed as «biophilial awareness».

Second, Brink admits that Erick Alexis Larsson's cherishing and coddling of animals in his companionship alludes to his will to protect them. He is attached to these pleasure-garden beings because he intends to shield their species from the harmful deeds of poachers and safeguard them against all forms of biocide. Likewise, Elisabeth displays a favorable inclination for the maintaining of animals not only in life but off biocidal maneuvers. And she soldierly exhibits a biocentric resistance when Adam doggedly kills a snake that ventures to pass at a very short distance from her kaross. Deeply hurt by such an anthropocentric attitude she protests. The following argument comes in:

You shouldn't have killed it  
And if it bit you?  
It was on its way into the bush  
A snake is a snake (A. Brink, 2008, p.117).

The commitment of Larsson's wife to the snake's cause, her complaint of Adam's biocidal tendency highlights her will to shield all ecospecies from anthropogenic harms. Moreover, her argument with the man over the killing of the serpent stands as proof of her frustration for not being able to save its life in time: she blames herself for doing nothing to save the reptile and wishes she had the opportunity to do something about this ecocide. Her stern reprimand «You shouldn't have killed it» to Adam illustrates her feeling of great displeasure. Taking a cue from both Larsson and his wife's protection of animals, one can hasten to posit that they are felt to be deep ecologist figures: they do not hold nonhuman essences in compliance with an anthropocentric system of belief but rather through the prism of an all-encompassing ontology. Fritjof Capra's definition of 'deep ecology' is on a parallel with the two characters' eco-friendly traits. The green critic pens:

Deep Ecology does not separate humans from the natural environment, nor does it separate anything else from it. It does not see the world as a collection of isolated objects, but rather as a network of phenomena that are fundamentally interconnected and interdependent. Deep ecology recognizes the intrinsic values of all living beings, and views humans as just one particular strand in the web of life (F. Capra, 1995, p. 20).

Taking Capra's insight as the main support to highlight Larsson and Elisabeth's eco-friendly behavior, it is worth noting that they are active aficionados of deep ecology. They are considered as deep ecologist characters because they do not separate humans from the biosphere; nor do they separate anything else from the ecosphere. Moreover, instead of seeing animals as ecotypes at the mercy of man's unquenched and unquenchable thirst for the kill, the Swedish explorer and his wife have a holistic conception of man-nature interaction. For Brink, these characters side with nonhuman essences against anthropogenic threats because they believe that all living things are engaged in a network of correlative and interlinked manifestations. For the South African novelist, Larsson and Elisabeth are deep ecologist personages in that they recognize the intrinsic value of all living species, and consider mankind as belonging in «the web of life». On this account, the two characters comply with what Martin Heidegger terms «Dasein», that is, «being-in-the-world» (B. Hemminger, 2001, p. 68). A scrutiny of this concept reveals that Heidegger emphasizes that humans cannot be excluded from the other living beings of the biosphere. What he is intent up evidencing is to attain an assumption which holds man as imbedded in a giant world of symbiosis.

Brink discriminates between Larsson and his wife's nature-centered attitudes. If the two of them are viewed as deep ecologist people, the novelist admits that, alone, the woman's femaleness and her commitment to the protection of animals, grants her an ecofeminist inclination. It is good to know that in the dominant patriarchal cultures, «women have historically been seen as closer to the earth or nature (perhaps due to childbirth and menstruation) », according to J. Birkeland (1993, p. 18). Taking heed of this quote, the woman's concern for the snake is ascribed to her natural bond with nature and ecological species. The reason for this allegation lies in the fact that Larsson's wife, as a woman, is endowed with procreation abilities. And given that she is pregnant with a child – she ponders «I'm bearing your child» (A. Brink, 2008, p. 57) at the sight of the dead body of her husband – she readily develops a liking for life, for nonhuman existence. And this is precisely what urges her to tell Adam off as he kills the snake.

What has been said above brings to fore the deep ecologist and ecofeminist considerations of André Brink's fictional writing. For sake of argue, to tell the truth Brink's *An Instant in the Wind* does not break the connection between man and nature; nor does it view interspecies interplay, humans and other ecotypes, as a dialectical reality. What the novel champions at is to establish a strong bond between human beings and the environing nonhuman world. In the novel, man is not superior to other ecospecies; but he is part and parcel of a whole system in which all beings are joined together. And in the name of this connectedness, neither man nor animals should do harm to their peers. In truth, Larsson's care for his pleasure-garden animals and Elisabeth's eco-friendly attitude toward the snake, their carefulness for both domestic and wild ecotypes in an all-encompassing fashion, are evident proofs of *An Instant in the Wind's* categorization as a deep ecologist work. Likewise, the novel is also considered as an ecofeminist work of fiction. This is due to the central position it grants women in ecological advocacy. The ecofeminist dimension of the novel lies in that in it women crystallize all ecological attentions and interests. They are the epicenter of all actions deployed for the protection of ecospecies. This is clearly seen in the woman-centered upbraid geared against Adam subsequently to his killing of the snake.

Contrary to *An Instant in the Wind* which recommends a green activism through a concern for animals' sake, *Cape of Storms* suggests an agency by means of ecological language. Among the indigenous people led by T'Kama, the means of communication does not exist in vacuum. But, it is the outcome of an adaptation with the people who speak it and the environing milieu in which it is used. This is what transpires though the metaphor of bird the language of this indigenous population is strongly rife with. The point being raised is that many of their linguistic utterances are loaded with the imagery of this animal; the metaphor of the bird serving to allude to a wide range of linguistic realities. For sake of argue, in his community, T'Kama is nicknamed «Big Bird» (A. Brink, 2007, p. 4). Assumed to stand for an ostrich, the chief's pet name also induces his big penis which never gets to a downright position once it has entered a process of permanent erection. Illustratively, the novel reveals that «in Khoi language "bird" is also a slang word for the male member» (A. Brink, 2007, p. 4). As it can be noticed, these quotes highlight the nexus existing between humanness and animality. This consideration leads us to recognize not only the interaction that exist between language and nature but also the way the surrounding world shapes and configures it.



On this account, the medium used by T’Kama’s people seems to be a moving paradigm which is permeable with respect to the ecosphere.

André Brink seems to advise that the Khoi are a primitive people who have long lived far from Western contact. In this framework, the lifestyle they have always experienced is the one in connection to the natural realm, its laws and essences. And no wonder if their language is strongly tinged with the aura of animality. Moreover, to the mind of the author, if the Khoi language cannot do without the imagery of birds, it is because the speakers of this medium have a concern for the natural world. The manifestation of this consideration is seen in the nickname «Big Bird» bestowed on the chief of the Khoi tribe. Likewise, they deem to name the male sex in connection to the symbolism attached to the bird, in their language, because they are willing to preserve the continuation of the cycle that involves both man and nature. What can be understood from this is that when the Khoi people speak, one has the impression that they are voicing out their intimacy to the physical world which needs to be safeguarded. As they set about speaking their mother tongue, it dawns on one that T’Kama’s people not only express their devotion to nature (due to its sacredness) but that they also regard it with deep and solemn respect. R. Harré et al. are authors who have perfectly understood the link prevailing between a means of communication and the natural environment in which its speakers dwell. To evidence their assumption, they rightfully pen this: «The uses of language have an ecology» (R. Harré et al., 1999, p. 162). Taking this quote as a baseline for the analysis of Brink’s ecological language, it comes out that the uses of Khoi language have ecology because they are deeply rooted in the symbolism of animality; better, they are grounded in the metaphor of birds. What is at issue here is that in André Brink’s eyes, T’Kama’s people’s language does not exist in the void, but that it is in full compliance with the ontological assumption that they have constructed from birds. The uses of T’Kama’s people’s medium have ecology since they are penetrated with the system of knowledge that are framed in connection to birds, the metaphors «Big Bird» and «two birds» (A. Brink, 2007, 1) – to indicate two planes – being illustrative enough. And in addition to this, this language has ecology because it makes the promotion of the well-being of the nonhuman realm. In corroboration of this stance, the authors produce the following posit: «Many languages are located in physical space» (R. Harré et al., 1999, p. 170).

In the articulation of his ecological activism, A. Brink suggests zoomorphism. He propounds that at times; man should strip himself of all his human features and be

able to embody some animals' traits. It is akin to a superhuman effort that human beings deploy so as to incarnate a nonhuman attribute, behavior or capacities. In this framework, things seem to be shaped in such a way that man wittily turns his back on his privileged human stature and becomes amenable to the downgrading status of animals. In *Cape of Storms*, *chu'que* (chief) T'Kama (Big Bird) does not shame into aping the cries of some animals of his natural neighboring world in his courting of an intended soul mate, the first European woman to have ever stepped on their shore. As he falls in love with the Portuguese human female, he names *khois* (woman in Khoi language), the inamorato shamelessly and proudly reveals that:

I began to coo like a dove, I called like a *bokmakierie*, twittered like a weaver bird, warbled like a *piet-my-vrou* [in Afrikaans, an onomatopoeic bird name<sup>4</sup>]; I imitated the cries of the jackal and hyena, I grumbled like a lion (A. Brink, 2007, p. 21).

As it is given to notice through his apery of these sounds, T'Kama seems to have voluntarily consented to come into alignment with wild animals. When he imitates the cooing of a dove, the twittering of a weaver, he intends to charm the white woman into melodious tunes. Since he feels uncertain about her willing to give in to his courting, he admits that resorting to melody may work things out for his benefit. Then, when he apes cries of jackals and hyenas, the tribal leader is intent upon displaying his masculinity. He seems to tell her that if she ever consents to be his lover he will not fail to meet her sexual desires. Through these guttural sounds, T'Kama also seeks to exhibit the strong sexual interest and attraction as he sets eyes on her.

Moreover, as the *chu'que* imitates animals' singings and sounds, he does not do anything to be singled out from these nonhuman beings; but conversely works to make the gap between him and the animal realm become narrow. In this approach, he does not assume himself as a superior being to other ecospecies, but rather as a person who is endowed with some animal features necessary for the attainment of his objectives. For ecocritical scholars, such a borrowing of animal features by man is akin to «zoophormism». This concept is better evaluated through this: «Thinking with animals can take the form of an intense yearning to transcend the confines of self and species, to understand from the inside or even to become an animal» (L. Daston and G. Mitman, 2005, p. 7). The idea central to this insight is that man thinks with animals

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<sup>4</sup> See glossary to André Brink's *Cape of Storms : the First Life of Adamastor : a Story*, page 131

when he is amenable to the animal status, when he freely agrees, still being a human, to symbolically take on animal features.

For Brink, the same applies to T’Kama. The tribal leader, by imitating bird, jackal and hyena sounds and cries, thinks with animals. This implies that he intensely yearns to go beyond the limits of his humanness and wholeheartedly embrace features of some other ecospecies. From the aforesaid, it clearly comes out through his apery of guttural sounds and strident cries of animals, his zoomorphism-oriented attitude, the author of *Cape of Storms* admits that T’Kama displays his concern for the ecology: his green activism. It is true zoomorphism establishes a strong nexus between humanness and animality, contributing to «animalizing humans» (2005, p. 8) according to L. Daston and G. Mitman. Likewise, in the analyses that will emerge, another aspect of this interspecies congruence is of relevance. Since man thinks with nonhuman beings, in return animals are also amenable to think with people.

## **2. ANIMALS’ WELCOMING RESPONSE TO MAN’S ECOFRIENDLINESS**

In Brink’s ecological narratives, nonhuman beings positively communicate with human beings in response to anthropocentric behavior. In the two novels under study, animals transmit coded messages to people in premonition of some forthcoming events in reaction to their ecocentric attitudes. In *An Instant in the Wind*, as they intend to show their gratitude to the people’s good ways towards the whole ecosystem, birds inform them of the occurrence of happy upcoming news. And they do it by flying in the sky for show or purposely singing out. This is what happens in the novel where vultures tacitly communicate with Adam by showing him the right direction or by providing him with the necessary clue to decode a puzzling issue. In an episode, as the man is in search of some of his oxen which are taken away by some neighboring famished lions, he is timely informed by the presence of vultures flying over the right whereabouts: «Not far from the camp he notices the presence of vultures and climbs a tree from where he can look out» (A. Brink, 2008, p. 83). As he follows the track, in a patch of grass among the sparse trees he «spots the carcass of the [first] ox, two legs jutting stiffly, ridiculously upward» (A. Brink, 2008, p. 83), and as he proceeds on, he unexpectedly «comes upon the [second] ox grazing on the far side of a clearing among the hills in a small thicket *kierpersol*» (A. Brink, 2008, p. 84). Moreover, some large carnivorous birds of the same type are of service to Adam and Elisabeth when they set

out to look for the dead body of Erik Alexis Larsson, the woman's Swedish husband lost in the veld. Failing to find the right position of the European explorer's corpse, they have been aimlessly roaming through the wide grassy plane for hours. It is only when they look up in the sky that the presence of some vultures instructs them: «If it hadn't been for the vultures they would never have discovered the body at all» (A. Brink, 2008, p. 55).

What is at issue here is that through this interspecies communication, through the commonality between animal and human psychologies, vultures seem to thank Adam in response to the biophilial attitude Larsson and Elisabeth have once displayed toward feral and wild animals. Brink seems to be suggesting that when humans behave well towards nature, this act subsequently triggers off a welcoming reaction of natural beings in their relationships with people. The author indirectly suggests that to anthropic eco-friendliness the vultures display an all-encompassing attitude by showing people the right spots they search for or warn them in advance of dangers once they are in the bush. Something to be noted is that animals' response to man's stimulus is decoded by him. They seem to make out the true motivation of these animals as they render them a service. In *An Instant in the Wind*, Adam is quick to understand the message the big birds have imparted to him. He has successively understood that the flying of vultures high in the sky is meant to show him the way to his lost oxen or to the body of Erik Alexis Larsson.

One can say that for Brink, in the man's cultural background, seeing these long broad winged-birds moving through the air as one is searching for something can readily be interpreted as portent of a happy signal. It is as if without even having an explicit word with the man, the birds nevertheless succeed in imparting to him a sign of a future hopeful event like it occurs in many human communities. What the author specifically wants to express is that among the black community in South Africa, the sight of these animals is understood as a portent to humans. The following statement tellingly echoes this:

Every society or culture has its own folk understanding (cultural classification or attitude) of various animals. [...]. Some animals may have positive [...] reputations, and [...] these traits may be superimposed on the humans the animals represent" (S. Mthatiwa, 2012, p. 97).

The quote reveals that in the Ontong community, people are aware of the fact that nature is full of riddles, rife with coded messages to be decoded for the good of

humans. If man is only attentive to the wide range of information disseminated through the biosphere, he can always profit from the good knowledge in store for him as a token of nature's thankful reaction to his eco-friendly attitude.

One can credit Brink with the insight which whereby in Adam's society the associations of animals with people tend to convey optimistic evaluations. And this is possible because of Adam's predisposition to be on good terms with the environing realm. For sake of argue vultures, which are believed to have positive reputations, have a way with humans; they are good at dealing with human beings. Taking heed from this observation, one can posit that there is no gap between the psychologies of nonhumans and humans. The continuum between Adam and the voracious birds alludes to a kind of interspecies language. G. P. Love (2003, p. 133) evidences this through the contention that there is «contact between human and nonhuman minds». In *An Instant in the Wind*, the contact between nonhuman and human minds; the strong bond between animality and humanness is once more reverberated when, in the height of winter, Adam and Elisabeth were cornered and had to stay secluded in a sheltering cave. A dove cooing with heartrending urgency, announces the end of the most rigorous and coldest season. Right after the bird singing, the man stands looking out over the valley, and then turns to call her out to him: «The winter's past», he says. «We can go on. We have survived» (A. Brink, 2008, p.169). What should be established is a display of the benefits of man and nature's nexus: the vultures' episode, the dove in the cave. It is as if the author were demonstrating the advantages of being in perfect congruence with nature, with both feral and wild animal species.

In *Cape of Storms*, nature's welcoming response to man's biocentric attitude is not outspokenly known to him. It is rather simply rendered through a nexus between animality and humanness by which wilderness portends evil. In opposition to *An instant in the Wind* where animals are conjoined with the power of telling fortune, Brink's 2008 novel emphasizes the telling of bad fortune. In this book, the commonality between nonhumans and humans has the aura of a jeremiad: a discourse of warning, a caution against danger. What one must admit is that in *Cape of Storms*, some animals champion at prophesying future bad news; they seem to be deeply committed to the foretelling of evil happenings held in store for people in response to their nature-centered attitudes. In an episode in the novel, a violent confrontation breaks out between the tribal community led by T'Kama and the white intruders

subsequently to the African chief's kidnapping of the first white woman to hit in the coast of South Africa, taking a huge toll of human lives. After the incident, the indigenes decide to leave the beach for the interior to avoid probable reprisals from explorer Vasco da Gama's people. But contrary to all expectations, some strange happenings occur, driving the leader to want to remain on the premises. Yet, old Khamab, the witch doctor who is endowed with a higher consideration of facts, warns T'Kama: «But my advice is to pack up. Look, even the ants are moving on» (A. Brink, 2007, p. 49). Through his caution, the mystic man seems to be perfectly quick to make out the harbinger which is irradiated through the movement of these social insects. He seems to be quick to realize that the hymenopterans' retirement from the premises is an ill-omen portent. Truly speaking, the wise man is convinced that the formic insects take to flight from the theatre of war because they are forewarned of an imminent raid perpetrated by the Portuguese explorers. And since they fear that any harm should happen to them, these ants prefer to leave the spot in anticipation. To old Khamab's mind, if these nonhumans take flight, his people should not await on the locus because they run the risk of being butchered by the vengeful and spiteful Portuguese adventurers.

The attitude of the wise man is not a pointless agenda, Brink seems to suggest. Through the author's writings, one can postulate that the witch doctor predicates their decampment upon the flight of the ants because following the popular wisdom of their tribe, the sight of hymenopterans is always put in a straight line with misfortune. The idea is that through their positive reaction to man's biocentric ways, these ants are believed to portend evil. I. Lopez (2009, p. 80) sees eye to eye with this stipulation through her posit that «the attitudes held by the members of a community towards particular animals may be responsible for endowing the animal with their [...] negative implications». What needs to be noted is that these insects are cursed themselves. But it is only their sight which herald a bad omen. But to better understand it in this context, it is vital to note that ants are seen by people, it is only a harbinger of evil. When they are seen on a spot, it is way for them to warn humans of bad upcoming events in response to their anthropic eco-friendly attitudes.

Basing on the ant episode in *Cape of Storms* and Lopez's insight, one can admit that among Heitsi-Eibib's people, nonhuman species are on a continuum with human beings. In wilderness, people need the support of animals to find their way. According

to Brink, in spite of the intelligence and the reason they are favored with (as human beings), people still need the help of some animals to escape some lurking misfortunes in store for them. On that score, one avails oneself of the following posit: «Reason is thus not an essence that separates us from other animals; rather, it places us on a continuum with them» (G. Lakoff and M. Johnson, 1999, p. 4). By the sight or the action of some nonhuman beings which are endowed with negative implications, humankind can psychologically get ready to cope with some bad upcoming events. This enables them either to get forearmed against difficult times or to make the necessary decisions to escape a trouble in advance. And this is precisely what takes place in the South African writer's novel where the twittering of birds informs a young lady of a trouble which was in the offing. The prefiguration of such incident permits her to rush to the fields to discover that her buffalo, which was grazing in the fields, was being slaughtered by the village who had previously set out on a hunt (A. Brink, 2007, p. 57).

In light of the abovementioned considerations, Brink's ecocritical discourse seems to overestimate the commonality between humankind and other ecotypes because of man's eco-friendly attitude. It does not consist in opposing the two living species or showing a conflicting relationship between man and the biodiversity. Brink's green epistemology rather consists in highlighting an interspecies bond in which humans are assumed to be some fragile essences which are strongly dependent on the environing ecospecies. For the South African ecological writer, wilderness being on a continuum with man entails and implies the commonality between their psychologies; which makes way for an intelligible form of communication binding them.

Given that nonhumans and people are purported to be considered as interlocutors engaged in an intelligible communication, human beings should be able to make out signals or coded messages imparted to them by vultures, birds or ants such as exposed in André Brink's ecological novels *An Instant in the Wind* and *Cape of Storms*. The idea central to this observation is that in these books, animals warn human beings response to their eco-friendly attitudes. In these works, the writer has successfully rendered the tacit exchange between both Adam and T'Kama's people with animals, the striking idea being that every time a message is transmitted to him, man shows his capacity of understanding it by being quick on the uptake. Frederick Turner is consistent with this monism such as propounded by Brink. In his explanation of this interspecies commonality, Turner is of the opinion that the hypothesis of a sensory

medium did precede the development of spoken language. According to his approach, within such a perspective our relationship with animals reacquaints us with «a larger kind of sensing», «an ur-language we share with other parts of nature than ourselves» (F. Turner, 1999, p. 135-36).

Central to this quote is an instinctive means of communication which used to allow all beings to get in touch in an intelligible way since time immemorial. At these moments, man used to revere the ecosphere, and he also habitually paid close attention to natural laws. The noun «ur-language», which suggests a basic or original language, gives grounds to the view that in the old times animals and human beings seemed to exchange through a natural language because man was respectful of nature and natural phenomena. Moreover, the idea is evidenced through the gerund «sensing» which alludes to the detection of a stimulus by means of any of the five main senses. Left at this point, the parallel drawn from these two terms tellingly suggest that if Adam and old Khamab's people are able to understand the signals passed onto them by animals, and communicate by means of a protolanguage, it is because in the olden times the environment used to be on a commonality with man, through the five sensory organs, because he used to revere the ecosystem. Respecting nature granted him the possibility to make out some secrets held by animals and the surrounding world. And as stated above, A. Brink's work is a high point of awareness on the commonship existing between nonhumans and humans, which is strongly conditioned by people's ecological ways. It means that if humans are eco-friendly, they will find nature placid. But under other circumstances, when human beings are inclined to perpetrate all kinds of anthropocentric actions in contempt of the interspecies continuum, they consequently endure the physical world's revenge.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study which emphasized the commonality between man and nature shows human beings' green attitude towards animals. It also focused on animals' welcoming reaction in response to ecocentric ways. This insight also showed that man is capable of stripping himself of his hegemonic positions and have some bonds with his envioning world. The idea is that man has understood that nature is part of the universe in which he lives. To lead a peaceful life man needs to maintain friendly relationships with nonhuman species because his survival depends on that commonality. Yet, the day man adopt anthropocentric ways, nature may turn a threat



to him. Commenting upon the revengeful character of nature, Mark Maslin talks of 'nature capricious'. He suggests that nature is unpredictable, and since nobody can predict their reactions, M. Maslin (2004, p. 37) contends that species of the surrounding world can display attitudes that are «beyond any human control».

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