

Research paper

Mapping some Linguistic Features Sustaining the Transatlantic Slave Trade Portrayal in Amma Darko's *Beyond the Horizon* (1995).

¹Koumagnon Alfred Djossou and ²Ashani Michel Dossoumou

¹Laboratoire du Groupe de Recherche sur l'Afrique et la Diaspora (GRAD)¹, University of Abomey-Calavi / Republic of Benin. E-mail: djossou.alfred@gmail.com

²Laboratory for Research in Linguistics and Literature (LabReLL), Faculty of Arts and Humanities, University of Abomey-Calavi. E-mail: dossoumoumichel@gmail.com (Corresponding author)

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Centuries ago, Africa witnessed one of the most shocking traffic in human beings ever to happen in the world. The traffic stripped millions of young, brave and strong African people from their fatherland for free labour beyond the horizon. The traffic set commercial opportunities for the perpetrators providing them with wealth and fame. The Contemporary pro-female literature triggered by the need for a *devoir de memoir* for future generations is the emerging battle field ignited and dragged along by some African female writers including Amma Darko. The paper seeks to show that Amma Darko's novel is not just written for aesthetic purposes alone, but can be approached as part of the continuous struggle against the force of any sort of slavery in the past and its persistent effect in contemporary society. In the present paper, we will demonstrate the relationship between the past Transatlantic Slave Trade and Amma Darko's fictional female body transaction as surging from past collective memories. Mara's body represents a way to make money for her different masters, as did the slaves in a different context. Eventually, the mapping and spotting of some linguistic features such as de-verbalization, de-modulation and de-modalization, on the one side, and the preponderant use of some mental process including perceptive, cognitive and affective with Mara and other slaves in position of recipient, and beneficiary of sufferings, inhuman and degrading ill-treatments have significantly contributed to illustrating the dehumanized and heartless brutality, trauma and wildness fictionalized by Darko.

Keywords: Africa, Transatlantic Slave Trade, de-Modulation and de-Modalization, Trauma, Mental Process, de-Humanized, History.

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INTRODUCTION

No African writer is ready to stop mentioning the traumatic past of the continent in his/her fictional works because narrating this past is therapeutic. As the female Kenyan 2004 Nobel Peace Laureate Wangari Maathai, environmental activist and writer rightly points out "if

Africa is to build for the future it must first face its past." Thus, books written to display the African traumatic history enumerate many of the problems faced by its people today stem from that past. These books tell of Africa's loss of identity under the transatlantic slavery, the

colonial occupiers and the disintegration of societal hierarchies that had developed over centuries. All these past vents siphoned off the best of the human resources and dried off its energy. This is what the Ghanaian matriarch writer and playwright tries to show in *Anowa* (1970). The play shows evidence of Fante as well as Asante people's implication in the slave trade. Such writing calls for consciousness from African people and the taking of actions to mend the wounds ever that have plagued Africa since 1492. In fact, Christopher Columbus landed on a new and mighty land on which started the contact with other continents. The land needed workers to be built in the image of Europe and even more. The land needed adapted hands to farm for free. The choice had definitely been made on the 'savages', cannibals, uncivilized people living in a profound darkness as described in Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) and Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1899). That major and historical discovery provoked the massive human population displacement in the world. The Transatlantic Slave Trade which is defined as a

segment of the global slave trade that transported between 10 million and 12 million enslaved Africans across the Atlantic Ocean to the Americas from the 16th to the 19th century. It was the second of three stages of the so-called triangular trade in which arms, textiles, and wine were shipped from Europe to Africa, slaves from Africa to the Americas, and sugar and coffee from the Americas to Europe¹.

Slavery is as old as the world. Perhaps it is born at the same time when the idea of civilization was born. Hunters-gatherers had no use for a slave. They collected and grew just the quantity they needed. One more pair of hand means one more mouth to feed, which was quite a hard work. There was no economic result to capture another human being. Once these people thought of keeping a wide range of resources for themselves made possible the idea of slave and slavery. Every civilization uses slaves. Egyptians, Spartans, Greeks², Romans and Semitic tribes had slaves. The term was born from the Latino word *sclavus* meaning slave to replace *servus*. Alain Testart is sure that "From 1263 to 1265 regions

administered by King Alphonse X, the Wise in Spain had already started enslaving the neighbouring populations according to the law in force"³.

Then, a pagan's enslavement occurs to deliver him from his profound darkness. The merit of the slave owner is to save a soul from being burnt by hell fire in the judgement day. In this respect, Christianity was set to facilitate that pagan's divine ascension. Christianity was not the only one to promote slavery. Islam also did. The Islamic spread to Christian territories in the West and East Africa, Spain and the Mediterranean areas yielded many cases of slavery, massive torture and "castration among the male slaves to stop any biological transmission"⁴. Africans converted to Islam essentially because of the terror that prevailed from the North region to the ancient and famous places like Timbuktu, Gao, Sijilmasa, Awdaghost to other regions like "Mauritania, the historically home of the Soninke, Malinke, and in the farther East including the Hausa city-states the Kingdom of Kanem, Yoruba and Hausaland"⁵. The prophet Muhammad (SAW) owed many slaves and servants before though he wrote a *Hadith* which qualifies the action of selling a man as slave as being the most disdainful act a man can do. The *Hadith* says: "the most disdainful of men is he who sells another man"⁶. Therefore, freeing these slaves and captives must be an act of one's cleansing, yet people needed slaves at that very time for mine works, domestic and other debasing tasks. The Arabian Peninsula was one of the places highly engaged in that trade before and during the rise of the Ottoman empire.

Yet, the slavery against the African continent also called the triangular slave trade was thought in a larger scale including many people with many strategies during five centuries and with greater profits to make. A. Testart states that « *L'esclavage noir aux colonies fut un phénomène unique et sans précédent dans le monde. Il résulta de la rencontre singulière entre la volonté de puissance des états occidentaux, désormais détenteurs de formidables empires coloniaux, et de l'omniprésence traditionnelle de l'esclavage sur la terre africaine* »⁷. Westerners got the largest part of the resources from Africa to build their own countries, whereas, the African

¹ <https://www.britannica.com/topic/transatlantic-slave-trade>

² Aristote, *Constitution d'Athènes*, II, 2 « Toute la terre était dans un petit nombre de mains ; et, si les paysans ne payaient pas leurs fermages, on pouvait les emmener en servitude, eux et leurs enfants ; car les prêts avaient tous les personnes pour gages jusqu'à Solon ». My translation: « all the earth was detained by a handful ; and, when farmers did not pay their debt, they could be enslaved with their children; because people took themselves as mortgage even during Solon's era ». During the 7th century, these markers proliferated. The poorer wheat farmers lost their land. Laborers were free men who paid out 1/6th of all they produced. In the years of poor harvests, this wasn't enough to survive. To feed themselves and their families, laborers put up their bodies as collateral to borrow from their employers.

³ Testart, A. (2018). *L'Institution de l'Esclavage: une approche mondiale*. Paris : Gallimard, p. 25.

⁴ N'Diaye, T. (2008). *Le Génocide voilé: Enquête historique*. Paris: Gallimard, p. 79-80.

⁵ Robinson, D. (2004). *Muslim Societies in African History*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

⁶ My translation.

⁷ Testart, A. (2018). *L'Institution de l'Esclavage: une approche mondiale*. Paris: Gallimard, p. 328. My translation: "Black slavery in the colonies was a unique and unprecedented phenomenon in the world. It resulted from the singular encounter between the will power of Western states, now holders of formidable colonial empires, and the traditional omnipresence of slavery on African soil".

continent remains devastated and desolated. Empires, kingdoms, ships owners and slave-drivers were the most invested in the trade. Much from this dramatic era of human's history helped the United States of America become what they are today. The American dream lies in that sort of contradiction which continues to be. The evocation of some European and American family names gives clue to their thick connection with the trade in the past and their present unnumbered wealth and notoriety were drawn from that trade.

Transatlantic Slave Trade's fictionalization in Amma Darko's *Beyond the Horizon*

The end of the Transatlantic Slave Trade resulted in a new plight to Africa. It was also cleverly prepared and inhumanely executed: **colonization**. The era of colonization led to African economic retardation and provoked its sudden decline from all parts. Prior to this second unfortunate encounter, some European sailors' trips were important. On the account of Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1899), one of his characters shares some particularly racist views about the people they met. Charlie Marlow says: "It was unearthly, and the men were—No, *they were not inhuman*. Well, you know, that was the worst of it—this suspicion of *their not being inhuman*. It would come slowly to one. They howled, and leaped, and spun, and *made horrid faces*; but what thrilled you was just the thought of their humanity—Ugly. Yes, it was ugly enough". (2.8, italics mine)

Besides, there seems to have a racial predisposition to slavery and all sorts of alienation according some writings and even in some holy scriptures. For example, in the Bible, the covenant of creation dictates a certain order, a relation of priority and posterity among Noah's children Japheth (the first born), Shem (the second) and Ham (the youngest)⁸. The priority is then clearly established when Ham, Noah's son of dark skin fled from his father's country and settled in the region of Cush, present-day's Ethiopia after having been cursed by his father. Since he was the ancestor of Africans, his descents carry on the spell to present days. The curse made Ham's descent inferior to that of his other brothers'. White supremacists claim that Japheth's descent (white skinned) and Shem's descent (also white skinned) are superior to Ham's. This hierarchy has no scientific proof foundation, but it has widely been used by colonizers to attain their goal which was to subjugate other people. This is what guided Robert Lewis Dabney (1820-1898) to defend that

It was part of God's natural order in a fallen world that 'superior' races should enslave 'inferior' races for their own spiritual, moral and material good, and for the social stability of everybody else. 'While we believe that 'God made of one blood all nations of men to dwell under the

⁸ Genesis chap. 9 to 10

whole heavens,' we know that the African has become, according to a well-known law of natural history, by the manifold influences of the ages, a different, fixed species of the race, separated from the white man by traits bodily, mental and moral, almost as rigid and permanent as those of genus⁹.

For some reasons, men have also started using this concept of stratification to build their gender-oriented society since then. Social stratification is a trait of society, not simply a reflection of individual differences. It persists over generation and is based on religious or spiritual beliefs and is more and more universal. Thus, men must be the first as having been created first and women, the second as having been the next. Men must stay in their place and women must also stay in theirs. Women must accept this natural order even if abused, wronged, torn apart and humiliated. Women must totally live a slave life in society. Social stratification also persists because men like Kingsley Davis and Wilbert E. Moore think that it has a beneficial consequence for the operation of society. This is why some people should be more respected than others because of their function, their power and their race, maybe. This final theory fuels also slave trade, colonialism and neo-colonialism. As a matter of fact, driven by that strong power to exercise, men from beyond the horizon scrambled for other peaceful men and dispossessed their land and their pride. Thus, when powerful and rich men want their farms to be cleared and seeds correctly planted, they can go and purchase slaves (his labourers) as they buy horses in markets. If they lose their slaves, they lose their capital¹⁰. In Amma Darko's fiction *Beyond the Horizon*, we have a similar chart about the investment, the investor and the capital. The three in one justifies our analysis. For the purpose of our paper, emphasis is placed on passages which resemble slave trade mapping as we know from K. Agyekum's definition that "literature is not simply about imagination and creativity but it also deals with the realities of this life"¹¹. Literature then helps narrate past trauma and keep its reader alert. In this sense, literature does not fail in fulfilling one of its aim which to gives true knowledge to the reader.

At the most general, many narratives write about the Transatlantic Slave Trade and its traumatic results on Africans. To David Eltis, it is "the largest long-distance coerced movement of people in history and, prior to the

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http://archive.churchsociety.org/crossway/documents/Cway_104_AfricanSlavery.pdf

¹⁰Karl Marx, "The Life-Destroying Toil of Slaves," in *The Karl Marx Library, Vol. II: On America and the Civil War*, edited by Saul K. Padover (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1972), 21.

¹¹ Agyekum, K. (2007), *Introduction to Literature*. Accra: Media DESISGN, p. 162.

mid-nineteenth century, formed the major demographic well-spring for the re-peopling of the Americas following the collapse of the Amerindian population¹². It was not much cheaper to Europe to launch vessels, to risk boats sinking or capsizing and to purchase slaves on the coasts in Africa, but because it was risky to continue the enterprise with the indigenous Amerindians and some Europeans social deviants. This is how the dramatic trade in human beings started. Thousands of slaves-merchants' ships coasted to fill in their cargos and left the coasts to Americas¹³. Strikingly, a similar image is portrayed in the novel. The homodiegetic narrator shares: "I was given away to the man who paid two white cows, four healthy goats, four lengths of cloth, beads, gold jewellery and two bottles of London Dry Gin to my family and took me off as his wife from my little village, Naka, to him in the city"¹⁴.

From the above excerpt, three important elements must be raised. The first is the imprecision about the name of the person who comes to take off the narrator, the second is the material with which he exchanges the narrator and the third is the imprecision of the place they go. In the past, the slave-drivers came to African coastal villages to fetch human beings as commodities. They came with useless items like mirrors, guns for wars and raids, alcohol, horses, pans, coats and useless shoes. The sexes were separated, kept naked, packed close together, and the men were chained for long periods. Merchants forced the slaves to walk miles and miles away from their villages underfed and shackled, if they entered hinterlands for the business. Therefore, we find the name of the merchant, Akobi, a name used from Ghana to Nigeria. This male character's name is purposely chosen to justify the probability that he can be from any these former slave hawkers' coasts. Life by slaves is less than that of mere animals since slaves are not considered as having soul, mood and emotion because of their skin colour. This is confirmed in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1899) through the sailor Charlie Marlow:

Six black men advanced in a file, toiling up the path. They walked erect and slow, balancing small baskets full of earth on their heads, and the clink kept time with their footsteps. *Black rags* were wound round their loins, and the short ends behind wagged to and fro *like tails*. [...] They passed me within six inches, without a glance, with that complete, deathlike indifference of *unhappy savages*. (Conrad, 80 emphasize mine)

The passage above describes the unhappy savages as

¹² Eltis, D. (2007). "A Brief Overview of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade". Emory University.

¹³ Here we refer to Americas any destination of slaves taken from their motherland, Africa, to new geographical positions.

¹⁴ Darko, A. (1995). *Beyond the Horizon*. Edinburg: Heinemann, p. 3.

animals especially when he compares their black rags like tails as if they were abandoned dogs or any animal with tail. Nothing proves that men Marlow was describing were human beings. He went further and depicted that "their meager breasts panted together, the violently dilated nostrils quivered". This is in fact how we can portray an abandoned and starving dog in the street today. Charlie Marlow continued in his cynical portrayal:

They were dying slowly, it was very clear. [...], they were nothing earthly now, nothing but black shadows of disease and starvation, lying confusedly in the greenish gloom. [...] The black bones reclined at full length with one shoulder against the tree, and slowly the eyelids rose and the sunken eyes looked up at me, enormous and vacant, a kind of blind, white flicker in the depths of the orbs, which died out slowly. The man seemed young almost a boy but you know with them it's hard to tell. (Conrad, 82)

Finally, when he was about to save one of the men from dying, he thinks that it was black shadows of disease and starvation. This takes again his idea of dying and abandoned dog whose sex cannot be determined unless he seeks it. If the Africans in question are just commodities in the eyes of the sailor, Marlow cannot insist so much this way. By the same token, slaves are what plantations' owners go and purchase in the market. This is why Akobi or his father come with "two white cows, four healthy goats, four lengths of cloth, beads, gold jewelry and two bottles of London Dry Gin to my family" (Darko, 3) to buy her for his plantation in the city. Choices are usually made by merchants and it is Mara who is the one to go. The narrator shares: "But I soon learnt that, yes, Akobi chose me" (Darko, 4). This sort of human being merchandizing, a capitalistic idea, has been denounced by Karl Marx in these terms: "but the slavery that paved the way for the emergence of Western capitalism had a unique and aberrant quality that contrasted it from slave systems in other societies of the past. In previous slave societies, people became slaves when they were taken as prisoners of war. It was a humane alternative to killing the vanquished"¹⁵.

More to the point, here the vanquished is Mara and her name reveals it. The author subverts a biblical woman's name in Old Testament which is explained as 'bitterness'. The biblical narrative goes this way: "So they two went until they came to Bethlehem. It happened, when they were come to Bethlehem, that all the city was moved about them, and [the women] said, Is that Naomi? She said to them, "Don't call me Naomi, call me Mara; for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me"¹⁶ (Italic is mine). Amma Darko's fiction and the above narrative describe

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Marx, "From letter written in French to Pavel Vassilyevich Annenkov," in Padover, 36

¹⁶ Bible International Version, Ruth 1 : 19-21

the life of a unique woman. In the biblical passage, the woman's name Naomi was once fortunate with two male children before moving to another town for a greener pasture. Unfortunately, she loses both of them. When we implicitly interconnect both texts, we realize that the writer subtly alters the original text by mixing up her own fiction. This is what the Bakhtin calls intertextuality and the first to use it is Julia Kristeva in her *Word, Dialogue and Novel* (1966). She describes the Bakhtinian idea as "any text constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another"¹⁷. In other words, intertextuality is then "a universal phenomenon that elucidates the communicative interconnections between a text and the other text and context"¹⁸.

Further, in her *Bound-Text* (1967) Julia Kristeva deals with the process of creating a text outside the already present discourse. For her, "a text is a practice and productivity. Therefore its intertextual position symbolizes its configuration of words and utterances that already existed making a text 'double voiced'¹⁹. This process allows us to discover the concealed choice of Amma Darko to give that pseudonym to her principal character in the storyline. The pseudonym 'Mara' that means bitterness makes the character lives the harshness of life as slave in a full dimension.

Actually, we can pick out that the first biblical text has been transformed in Amma Darko's novel. In the plot, Mara has also two, yet too young to marry. However, she loses them in the sense that she cannot return home to see them. The probability of a slave to return home at the time is very tiny or even did not exist. Olaudah Equiano's narrative confirms this: "I now saw myself deprived of all chance to return to my native country, or even the least glimpse of hope of gaining the shore" (Equiano, 53-54). Likewise, Mara is contented in sending money and "material things are all I can afford them. As for myself, there's nothing dignified and decent left of me to give them" (Darko, 140). Mara's only hope lies in her two children's life out there in Accra with "all the things" (Darko, 139) she sends to her family. Mara's motivation is the love for her children just like that of Naomi. The latter's feeling to have her children's wives beside feeds her *raison d'être* and the former's joy is to see her young children growing and going to school. Naomi is full of bitterness as she loses her most valuable beings just like Mara loses the greenness of her black body, the beauty of her kinky Just like a female slave is offered to one man after another, Mara experiences it in Germany, a place

we call here 'Akobi's plantation'. The narrative unfolds:

Briefly, when they opened the door to the other room, I heard voices, many male voices. Akobi returned some minutes later and brought me a glass of wine. Then I was left on my own again for a long, long while during which I finished off my wine and waited. Then something started happening to me. I was still conscious but I was losing control of myself. Something in the wine I had drunk, [...]. I felt strange and happy and high... Then they were all around me, many hairy bodies and they were stripping me, fondling me, playing with my body, pushing my legs apart, wide, wide apart. As for the rest of the story I hope the gods of Naka didn't witness it (Darko, 111).

Mara cannot fully enjoy her relation with her master in the working ground plantation, even though she really wants the situation to change in her advantage. But, this joy and motivation have been removed when the slave owner, Akobi, for the sake of his money greed, allows other men to have sex with her. Her pseudo happiness breaks. Mara may think that she falls in the hands of wicked spirits like Olaudah Equiano (1745-1797) thinks in his *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano or Gustavus Vassa, the African* (1789). He puts:

When I looked round the ship too, and saw a large furnace of copper boiling, and a multitude of black people of every description chained together, every one of their countenances expressing dejection and sorrow, I no longer doubted of my fate; and, quite overpowered with horror and anguish, I fell motionless on the deck and fainted. [...]. One of the blacks, therefore, took it from him and gave it to me, and I took a little down my palate, which, instead of reviving me, as they thought it would, threw me into the greatest consternation at the strange feeling it produced, having never tasted any such liquor before. Soon after this, the blacks who brought me on board went off, and left me abandoned to despair²⁰.

Considering the quotation above, a systemic functional, and more specifically the experiential analysis of the passage reveals the existence of seven Mental processes including perceptive [looked around, saw, hope], cognitive [doubted, thought, 'fainted'] and affective [felt, feel, feeling]. All these processes are being used by the same enslaved narrator acting as *Senser*. Those mental process sub-types are used here to voice the psychological emotion, dismay and everything likely to create goose pimples. Besides, the liquor or the glass of wine given to Equiano is also used with Mara. The slaves-merchants have the same *modus operandi*. And

¹⁷ Hodges, A. (2015). "Intertextuality in Discourse". UK: Carnegie Mellon University, p.44.

¹⁸ P. Prayer, ElmoRaj (2015). "Text/Texts: Interrogating Julia Kristeva's Concept of Intertextuality", In Research Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences. Vol 3, pp. 77-80.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 78.

²⁰ Source: *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano* by Olaudah Equiano. Reprinted in *Africa Remembered: Narratives by West Africans from the Era of the Slave Trade*, edited by Philip D. Curtin (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1967).

instead of reviving her, throws her in a very dizzy state to be sexually molested by her new owners. In Equiano's case as well as Mara's, the slaves' captors do not want the slaves to be in good state of mind before reaching the ships. Equiano reveals it: "I was soon put down under the decks, and there I received such a salutation in my nostrils as I had never experienced in my life: so that, with the loathsomeness of the stench, and crying together, I became so sick, [...]".²¹ The slaves' traders demoralize the slaves by beating and whipping them. Here rape and physical humiliation are allowed as the best weapon against the female captives. Violence and rape are tools to mentally destroy slaves and facilitate the subjugation. The homodiegetic narrator shares:

When I didn't bring him the bowl of water and soap in time for washing his hands before and after eating, I received a nasty kick in the knee. When I forgot the chewing stick for his teeth, which he always demanded be placed neatly beside his bowl of served food, I got a slap in the face. And when the napkin was not at hand when he howled for it, I received a knuckle knock on my forehead. [...] *He grabbed my left ear between his thumb and forefinger and, with my body slanted halfway towards him, my ears burning hot in pain, walked slowly and steadily with back into our room. By the time he released me my left had gone numb.* (Darko, 19, italics mine)

The extract above enables us to infer the ordeals of slaves in the hands of pitiless masters. There is no hint of love or respect flickering in that excerpt. Slaves are hated and dishonoured by the masters. The permanent mistreatment mentally conditioned the slaves. The first person narrator in the excerpt above recounts how she suffers from the hand of the master. The profuse use of recoverable reference "I" "my, me," not as *Actor* and *Senser* but as *goal*, *recipient*, *Range* or *beneficiary* of the ill-treatments is highly evocative of the lopsided and imbalance human relationship portrayed in the novel. All the same, the derivatives of the recoverable reference "I" accounts for the avowal and confession of the suffering incurred by the homodiegetic narrative told by the overt narrator.

Mara works to survive by throwing people's "rubbish dumping, serving him still to the full which meant still being the first to get up mornings to make fire and warn water for him and stand by while he bathed" (Darko, 17) and any lack is met by beatings: "Wham, first slap...wham! Wham! Wham! Three more in succession" (Idem). This permanence violence serves to demoralize the slave and put her in permanent fear and psychosis. Mara also does not that towards Akobi. She never accepts that Akobi beats her even when the neighbours Akobi's beating her. Or when he beats her, she never cries to express her bitterness. Much work has been

devoted to the slave trade to shed light on the trauma and the representation of the violence prevailing at that time.

Violence acts here as a dissuasive tool to the slaves from reacting or fleeing away. In agreeing with this, we see in other scenes of violence, Mara paradoxically copes with the thrashings and her master thinks she is the naive. One of them is when she vows that she was not expecting to be beaten, but it comes: "I mean, Akobi was not beating me for the first time and this was not going to be the last beating, but most times in the past I had expected the beating, or event if I hadn't expected it, I hadn't expected love either" (Darko, 20-1). When a master decides to punish a slave, he does it irrespective the slave does wrong or not. What is then important to emphasize is his expression power over the enslaved. The expression is also conveyed through forced sex with a female enslaved. Mara confirms this:

He was lying on the mattress, face up, looking thoughtfully at the ceiling when I entered. Cool, composed and authoritative, he indicated with a pat of his hand on the space beside him that I should lie down beside him. I did so, more out of apprehension of starting another fight than anything else. Wordlessly, he stripped off my clothes, stripped off his trousers, turned my back to him and entered me. Then he ordered me off the mattress to go and lay out my mat because he wanted to sleep alone (Darko, 22).

Two important aspects are to be raised in the passage above. The first is about the master's physical and psychological mood of the moment and the second about words like 'with a pat, 'wordlessly' 'entered me' and 'ordered me'. Words are chosen to draw our attention on the relationship that exists between both the master and the enslaved woman before, during and after the sexual act and why the maintaining of violence is so crucial. In fact, Akobi does not want to make love with Mara, but to have sex with a slave. It is when a sexual act is made with all the protocol that surrounds it that we refer it as being 'to make love'. What the narrator describes here is denuded of respect and love. In this precise passage, the master does not want to undermine his full authority over her. Mara knows that he has the right to have sex with her in any condition he wants as the slave is prepared throughout regular beating, knocking and scorning. Stanley Felstein's *Once a Slave: The Slaves' View of Slavery* (1971) creates a representation of experience throughout unflinching images of slave torture, suffering and lingering on the scene of brutality. The narrative transfers the suffering of a slave while being wrongly accused. In the context of slavery, this exposes the vulnerability of a slave of both sexes because sometimes males are also raped or undergo sexual abuse from their masters. In fact, many slaves die after being transhipped because of the cold-hearted conditions in which they worked. Apart from being house workers, most of the

²¹ *Ibid.*

males worked in gold mine, sugar, coffee and tobacco plantations in Cuba, Jamaica, Brazil, New Granada and in French Caribbean. In Germany, Mara finds other female working for African slaves' owners. There is Kaye, Osey's female slave who works night and day for him to get money. Osey, like Akobi, beats and rapes their slave after a long fight. The commodification and objectification of a slave is described in these lines:

They got into a fight, him beating her with anything that came to hand: coat hangers, books, cushions, bags, while she unsuccessfully tried to hit him back with one hand, and so shield her face with the other. [...]. The beating over, Osey pushed his wife into the bathroom taking with him the cassette player with they turned very loud ...and left me wondering, alone in the room (Darko, 73-4).

A punished slave in a bathroom quite reveals the master's sexual impulse over the naked body of a defenceless slave. This image captures not only compassion, but also resentment against any master. A female slave sighing, panting or crying under her master's libidinal desire depicts a desperate attempt to escape or more cynically the slave hidden desire to be loved since there is no attempt of rejection from Mara in the text. In fact, the slave has no option. The lexicogrammatical choice made by the narrator also says long about the heartlessness of the slave master. Indeed, the linguistic choice of some *de-modulated* and *de-modalized* passages is highly illustrative of the brutality and inhuman treatments inflicted to the slaves by the slave masters. Indeed, both Modulation and Modalization stand as the linguistic properties falling under the realm of modality. These are some interpersonal features enabling to express commitment, possibility, obligation and inclination in interpersonal negotiations. In the passages culled from the narrative under study, most of the clauses show a total lack of humanity in the treatment the slave master inflict to the slave. Most of the verbs used in the quoted paragraph are de-verbalized. The verb stands as the heart of the action in a sentence or clause. The absence of verb or the removal of any verbal patterns is synonymous of heart ablation in the sentence or clause under consideration. By de-verbalizing some of the clauses, the writer highlights the heartlessness characterizing the perpetrators of slave trade. Once in her master's plantation, she becomes part and parcel of the master's belongings. Therefore, she has to comply with the prevailing rule which to let herself sexually molested and raped. It means that the ultimate act of possessing a female slave is to rape her. Furthermore, Olaudah Equiano's narrative gives an insight about cares surrounding the slaves' arrival:

When we arrived in Barbados (in the West Indies) many merchants and planters came on board and examined us. We were then taken to

the merchant's yard, where we were all pent up together like sheep in a fold. On a signal the buyers rushed forward and chose those slaves they liked best²².

Planters, being capitalistic businessmen "used force for exactly the same purpose as they used positive incentives — to achieve the largest product at the lowest cost. Like everything else, they strove to use force not cruelly, but optimally"²³.

In *Beyond the Horizon*, the highlighting of her hair is put to mean the character's cultural authenticity while living in her village, Naka. She stops plaiting her hair while in Hamburg as she becomes a slave. But, African women's plaiting hairstyle represents a symbol of identity especially when they are abroad. This is one of the reasons why slaves were shaved and told to cover their bold head. What is interesting is that African women's hair is braided naturally to show the beauty of being in contact with nature and history. In the ancient time, in Africa braiding one's hair is made to encourage healthy hair growth by minimizing damage and breakage from everyday activities. During an interview in April 2013, the Award-winning African author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie tells during a show why her latest book *Americanah* (2013) mirrors some of the central issues of her own life: race, immigration and the power of hair. The novel's cover page portrays that power of hair so much. Then, she adds that hair has a political power on its wearer's head and implicitly to the environment where that African lives. According the writer, hair is a woman's life, love and expectation. If she feels rejecting her culture, then she may attempt to acquire a new identity as the environment dictates.

Thus, Mara decides to shave her hair or to transform it and she loses her African and authentic identity. She takes on then a new name as Olaudah Equiano becomes Gustavo Vassa. Life in plantations in the Americas was not too far from Mara being put into prostitution. Slaves worked for more eighteen hours a day. Mara prostitutes herself just like Africa does in front of Bretton Woods institutions to have his annual budget balanced. Deeply dived in their works in plantations, some slaves would be forced to change their husband and have another. This happens when mating's result does not make a strong child like the master supposed it would be. The master gives them another husband, giant, brave and strong. All this going, some slaves would strip out of their mind any idea to rebellion which could lead them to liberty because those who rebel flee to nowhere. They have been taken

²² SOURCE: *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, Or Gustavus Vassa, the African* (London, 1789).

²³ Stamp, K. (1956). *The Peculiar Institution: Slavery in the Antebellum South*. New York: Alfred Knopf, p. 232.

back and one of their legs cut off or an eye burnt off. These slaves capitulated and thought like Mara does: "I was beginning to consider this situation as my karma. I resigned myself but at the same time I began to wonder" (Darko, 118). In her inner thoughts, she lives up her trauma in the hand of her merciless master.

On the one hand, Akobi and Osey can live in nice and well-furnished apartments and driving their dreamt cars thanks to Mara's hard work. In this regard, what revolts is the mocking name given to the African countries: poor and highly indebted countries. Yet can it be poor if it is from her ground that pours out manganese, cobalt, iron, gold, silver, oil, diamond, wood to cite just these few? The role of Bretton Woods' Institutions is somehow tricky in the simple reason that budgets to reduce African countries' poverty do not often meet the agreement of this institution. Instead, African countries meet sometimes the 'No go' from the institution to enhance their monetary activities because of invisible financial red lines. Heavy loans are usually accompanied by structural adjustments to cripple and cramp any development steps from Africa. This reminds us of Akobi's rejection to allow Mara to continue selling her boiled eggs at the bus station. When he realizes that the cooked eggs business starts flowing cash for her, he asks her to stop immediately and come back to ground zero. Akobi "howled, growled and bawled" (Darko, 27), but accepts to "resume giving me money for our daily meals" (Darko, Idem), knowing exactly that it will not suffice and will maintain her in dependence. This attitude of Akobi exactly characterizes Bretton Woods' institutions and any other enslavement institution. Subjugation is the weapon by which they control people. The more people are subjugated, the more they are controllable and flexible to tolerate submission and any down treading. It is easier to brainwash someone who is in need of food and protection than someone who has all this.

In fact, capitalism feeds slavery with its ideology that considers that some men should be subjugated to others and to denounce it, in the 1930s and 1940s, C.L.R. James and Eric Williams argued for the centrality of slavery to capitalism. But their findings were largely ignored. Nearly half a century later, two American economists, Stanley L. Engerman and Robert William Fogel, observed in their controversial book *Time on the Cross* (1974) "the modernity and profitability of slavery in the United States"²⁴. Some European, American and even African families moved from their low ranking status to nobility thanks to their active or passive implication in slavery. According to these scholars, slavery is not an integral of American capitalism, but its very essence. A fugitive slave, John Brown, once divulged in 1854: "When

the price [of cotton] rises in the English market, the poor slaves immediately feel the effects, for they are harder driven, and the whip is kept more constantly going"²⁵. This interpretation is also echoed in Solomon Northup's *12 Years a Slave*: "Ten years I toiled for that man [Epps] without reward. Ten years of my incessant labor has contributed to increase the bulk of his possessions"²⁶. A slave works for years for his master and gains nothing if not beatings, abuses and mental and physical mutilations.

Others invested in banking, luxurious commodities and fertile lands. Yet, the most beneficiaries are from the West. Out of this has grown a new social stratification in the Americas where money and material possession determine individual social position. The great inequalities both nationally and internationally rise particularly from the Transatlantic Slave Trade and later colonialism since some are dispossessed and others have. As Terry Eagleton insightfully states: "From this economic base, in every period, emerges a superstructure, certain forms of law and politics, a certain kind of state, whose essential function is to legitimate the power of the social class which owns the means of economic production"²⁷. Now a flurry of books and conferences are building on those often unacknowledged foundations. They emphasize the dynamic nature of New World slavery, its modernity, profitability, expansiveness, and centrality to capitalism in general and to the economic development of the United States in particular.

The Consequences of the trade on Africa

The profits accumulated through the slave trade had lasting impacts both on Africa, Europe and the New World. Slavery was the very fabric of American economy, the Southern America having been the 'holy place par excellence'. The tragic consequences of slavery continue to hunt its victims even in the twenty-first century (Whyte, 2006). From the standpoint of migratory movement, the Transatlantic Slave Trade came after that led by the Arab-Muslims for thirteen centuries which surprisingly is not much mentioned. Thanks to some recent investigations, an attempt lastly comes from the insightful report made by Tidiane N'Diaye in *Le Génocide voilé: Enquête historique* (2008). This polemical book maps up the bloody contribution of Arabs while spreading their religious beliefs in the Western, Central and Eastern parts of Africa. Apart from being snatched from their

²⁴ Fogel, R. W. & Engerman, S. L.. (1974). *Time on the Cross: The Economics of American Negro Slavery*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1974. xviii + 286 pp.

²⁵ Brown, John. 1855. *Slave Life in Georgia: A Narrative of the Life, Sufferings and Escape of John Brown, a fugitive slave, now in England*. London: L. A. Chamerovzow.

²⁶ Northup, S. (1853) *12 Years a Slave*. Los Angeles: Graymalkin Media, 2014.

²⁷ Eagleton, T. (1976). *Marxism and Literary Criticism*. London: Methusen and Co Ltd, p. 5.

families, their land and their belief, the captives met more scornful actions from their captors.

Talking about religious beliefs, it is important to note that mostly Africans have, before the arrival of Islam and Christianity, three religious stratifications. Firstly, it is their immediate environment composed of human beings, water, wind, animals and forest. Second is associated with the ancestors. Africans refer to their ancestors' spirits when confronted to great and unsolved problems. This is why they celebrate the dead people who are not really dead according to them. Finally, there are the gods, the unseen who cap all the others. This reality is in accordance with Tidiane N'Diaye's finding: "L'africain n'a jamais cherché à dominer la nature, mais à vivre avec. Les hommes exploitaient ses richesses, uniquement pour les mettre au service de leur survie. Ils maîtrisaient l'agriculture sur laquelle s'étaient bâties leurs civilisations multiséculaires »²⁸. All this is revered and worshiped as being their ancestors' legacy. Therefore, when imported religions set up, the Africans former religion was erased, destroyed and replaced by new one. This is what resulted out of the clash of cultures. African former powerful Ogun, Shango, Orunmila, and others now represent evil spirits to be combatted and insulted. Those powerful spirits' statues were removed and others such as those of roman saints names were settled. All this changes Mara's life everlastingly to bitterness and anger. She exchanges her peaceful life to another more unstable one. Mara's new life is full of 'snow sniffing and continuous whoring'.

The Transatlantic Slave Trade and African Economic Dependency

The impacts of the Transatlantic Slave Trade on African are still visible to present-day. When asked a question like: did the level of slaves' demand alter the human and economic development of the African continent? The answer is naturally an emphatic YES. The foreign demands in slaves impacted the economic activities of coastal villages as well as hinterlands. Five hundred years of slave trade necessarily have serious consequences on the continent. While the African continent was set in fire and total destruction, others were building themselves economically: the more the demand from sugar, cotton and tobacco plantations, the more the raids and African villages siphoning from everywhere. Following historical reports from Eltis and Curtin, Graziella Bertocchi's paper submits that

Over the five centuries running from 1400 to 1900, it encompassed four distinct waves: the trans-Saharan,

Indian Ocean, Red Sea, and trans Atlantic slave trades. The last one was by far the most significant in terms of volume and duration: over the 1529-1850 period over 12 million Africans were embarked, mostly along the coasts of West Africa, and forced to undertake the Middle Passage across the Atlantic Ocean (see Berlin, 2003 for a historical account, and Eltis et al., 1999 and Curtin, 1969 for data). The peak was reached between 1780 and 1790, with 80,000 slaves per year being transported, but the traffic remained very intense during the nineteenth century, when between 3 and 4 million people were embarked. Throughout the period, the Portuguese were always at the center of the trade: they were the ones that initiated it and they continued it long after Britain outlawed it in 1807²⁹.

The above passage proves the extent to which the African continent has been stripped of his active population due to the trade for many years. Tribal wars and raids from coastal parts to the hinterlands have caused much havoc such as the destruction of infrastructures and crops. The destruction of crops led to famine in many villages. According to historical literature, fifteen millions of bodies were exported apart from those who died on the way or committed suicide before reaching the Americas. Olaudah Equiano argues in his narrative that testimony or bearing witness to end their atrocity occupies a particular range:

preferring death to such a life of misery, somehow made through the nettings and jumped into the sea: immediately another quite dejected fellow, who, on account of his illness, was suffered to be out of irons, also followed their example; and I believe many more would very soon have done the same if they had not been prevented by the ship's crew, who were instantly alarmed [...] two of the wretches were drowned, but they got the other, and afterwards flogged him unmercifully for thus attempting to prefer death to slavery³⁰.

If the memory of a slave is irrecoverable and her trauma cannot be entirely represented, then embedded in her struggle to have justice on her side, then Mara's body claims for justice. She makes money from her thighs' sweat like the enslaved made throughout their hard labour into the private account of the United States of America and Europe. As they say "money has no colour and it does not smell", yet some people suffer before it can flow in bank accounts. As a result, Mara's body changes its shape to oval because of her whoring activities, but she never thinks of suicide. The act of suicide ends the life of a person, which is accomplished intentionally and purposely by the hand of the person.

²⁸ N'Diaye, Tidiane, 2008. *Le Génocide voilé : Enquête historique*, p. 81. My translation: "The African has never wanted to dominate the nature, but what he needs for his survival. They mastered agriculture around which is laid their multisecular civilization".

²⁹ Bertocchi, Graziella, 2015. *The Legacies of Slavery in and out of Africa*, p. 2.

³⁰ Equiano, O. (1789). *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, Or Gustavus Vassa, the African* (London: Equiano O.

This does not surprise for a system like this finds many enslaved deciding to end their life, but Mara has no idea like that to the end of the story. She hangs on and struggle to be atop, but the result is that she “began to please less [her] men. And that nearly landed [her] in trouble with Oves” (Darko, 138). This surely implies the physical degradation of the African continent in the 21st century. The overuse of the highly key resources of African countries in an unbalanced trade results in what becomes of the continent in present-day. The African is highly indebted to its marrow. Poverty, distress and pain become the continent’s common lot. “I fear what I see when I look at myself. I shiver at the sight of my sore cracked lips which still show through the multiple layers of the glossy crimson pain I apply to hide them” (Darko, 2). This is what remains of the greenhorn and naïve. This passage intentionally placed at the beginning of the novel creates a claustrophobic feeling that calls for the reader’s discomfort and his desire to finish his reading. All this physical wreck does not “render [Mara] emotionless” (Darko, 1). The beginning of the novel gives much space to melancholy and mournful instances from the protagonist. This may be because she represents a whole continent whose hope to gain back her past glory is vanishing. Today, all that she has for her children is: “video set and television. And from time to time I record ‘Sesame Street’ and ‘Tom and Jerry’ and send the video tapes to him for my two sons. [...]. I am also financing a cement-block house for my mother in the village. They say it has raised the esteem so much that it has even won her back my father” (Darko, 140). Each of these hanging images holds the reader’s attention and compassion for so long period of time. It renders to audience as uncomfortable as possible. This reflects the realism of the female writer to revive the traumatic past which embarked Africa, its land and its people for so long a period. African present-day problems are tributary to what happened to the continent years ago. Then, when the continent was about to turn the page, colonialism, imperialism, wars and globalization pour down their vicious claws to taste its gorgeous flesh. The prospect of facing her people back on her forefathers’ land is impossible for Mara as “I am so much a whore now that I can no longer remember or imagine what being a non-whore is. I have problems recollecting what I was like before I turned into what I am now” (Darko, 139). What Africa was, none remembers. In the collective memory, the image drifts as if it were a legend and her remaining people tell to younger generation the stories and tales of its great and brave warriors.

Thus, throughout the narrative, we see that there is no respite for Mara, the slave and surely her absence will impact her children’s psyche. Africa has lost many of its children so losing one or two has no real impact. Mara unfortunately is not rescued by any ambassador of good will as it has been for Solomon Northup in *12 Years a*

Slave (1854). It is so important in the sense that Africa becomes the continent which belongs less to Africans than any other people. If we finally conclude that Amma Darko’s novels is somehow realist and uses art to depict past events, we therefore agree with that “fiction thus mirrors, in microcosmic form, the complex totality of society itself. In doing this, great art combats the alienation and fragmentation of capitalist society, projecting a rich, many-sided image of human wholeness. Further, the way Amma Darko’s narrative is constructed, it hides a particular ideology which not necessarily feminist. Amma Darko’s *Beyond the Horizon* used a Marxist perspective to reflect and qualify African economic desolation after the Transatlantic Slave Trade and the other issues plaguing it. For Mara as for any reader time passes too slowly for the long suffering to end. In many African countries, the populations wait for all this to end, still it never ends. It becomes tougher and tougher by the introduction of economic and misleading concepts like globalization and urbanization which are not as harmless as their Europeans inventors think. In that lens, Africa will become a great village of abundance that belongs to none, not even Africans.

Africa for everyone, but not for Africans

Important biases have hindered the African continent’s development since a long time. One of them is that outraged capitalism which stands for the individuals’ profits making before any other concern. This breaks from inside African communities’ self-reliance added to slave trade which brought mistrust and fear for each other. The continent is lavished with problems which slow down its development. Thus, its former exploiters, in return, accuse the continent of lagging behind. The continent now depends on Europe and the United States good will to move forward, the same way Mara is now “stuck with Oves for the rest of her life” (Darko, 139).

They treat the continent as if not knowing what had happened in the past and which still prevails today inside and outside the continent. Mara’s body is for the best expender like Africa is for the European country that offers the more and then is injured from everywhere. Mara narrates “The injury was done to me by one of my best exponders, a giant of a man but who always, when he comes to me, cries like a baby in my arms, telling me about his dictator wife whom he loves but who treats him so bad she makes him lick her feet at night” (Darko, 2). If according to Frantz Fanon “the black man is defined by his sexual organ, solely as penis”³¹, then the black woman should also be defined by her vagina. It means that there should an uncontrollable attraction of the

³¹ Fanon, F. (1967). *Black skin, white masks*. New York: Grove Press, pp. 135-136.

master to his female slave. The master cannot retract himself from having sex with her. Mara is scarred from everywhere because she is rich. Then, her exponents come to fetch what they think is the most important. The making love here is metaphorical and has nothing to do with simple sex. The male genital organ has always been regarded as an object of oppression. A penis has always been taken as a gun pointed ready to destroy. The most devastating use is when it is erected forcefully against the sex object that is a woman. The masculine fulfilment of libidinal urge without the female consent is a rape and Amma Darko's novel is replete of scenes of rape as we have stated in the beginning of our analysis. Seen from a political angle, rape is then a metaphor and the victim is always presented as a victim of imperialism or colonialism. Mara symbolizing the African continent is one the victim.

In present-day the continent hosts war zones especially in countries where ground resources are highly concentrated. These resources are exploited by what the late Nigerian activist and musician Fela Kuti Anikulapo³² called 'International Thieves Companies'³³. These international enterprises operate by the help of European governments to exploit oil, forestry, gold, bauxite, diamond, cobalt, uranium, and other ground resources out of Africa with menial economic gain to the populations. In terms of resources, Africa is the most endowed region of the world, yet it is one the least developed. The politically engaged and popular singer denounced the rampaging nature of multi-national companies operating on the continent as well as Africa's dependency on aid, its huge debts and its increasing poverty in the absence greater economic and political policies. Added to these severe economic issues raised by Mara's body's enslavement, we have also cultural ones. Mara now sniffs snow which is a psychotropic product linked to prostitution and to European ways. When sex-workers start this ill-fated business, they become physically and psychologically vulnerable.

Mara, the enslaved young African woman is now brainwashing her children's mind to like Europeans' way of life. Tom and Jerry's cartoons are what her children watch to entertain themselves instead of listening to traditional tales about Yaa Asantewa and Kweku Ananse, the spider-man. These swindler anecdotes of Ananse are folktales children of their age group must listen to build up their *Africanity* in the growing world of globalization full of

³² Fela Kuti was born Olufela Ransome-Kuti. He was a musician and political activist in Nigeria during the 1970s and 1980s, writing and performing songs with political messages. On numerous occasions he was detained and harassed by the authorities and in 1984 he was sentenced to five years' imprisonment. He died in August 1997.

³³ From his song in 1970s, ITT which is defined as International Thief Thief. He referred to international companies which settled in Nigeria to exploit the country's ground and off shore resources without giving the right share to the nation. This stirs poverty and misery in Nigeria.

European ways of life. The sort of education Mara is giving her children is exactly the form of education wanted by colonialists but contested by Frantz Fanon's *Black skin, white masks* (1967). This is Fanon's way to decolonize the Africans' mind that have longtime been subverted. By re-appropriating their own culture, Fanon helped depathologize his fellows Africans and its political leaders. Amilcar Cabral³⁴ understood the process of the therapy to apply. The struggle suggested in Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963) must "use the past with the intention of opening the future, an invitation to action and a basis of hope. But to ensure that hope and to give it form, (we) must take part in action and throw (our) body and soul into the national struggle" (Fanon, 232).

In this regard, Mara's call for Africans to cope with it: "But I bear it because it is part of my job. I listen attentively to his talk and comfort where I can. And even when he puts me in pain and spits upon me and calls me a nigger fool I still offer him my crimson smile" (Darko, 3) should not be taken as granted, but rejected. Mara suggests it because she is body and soul pathologized and full of desolation.

CONCLUSION

In *Beyond the Horizon*, Mara's representation unfolds two principal realities. The first is that Amma Darko reinvents by the interposition of characters the history of the Transatlantic Slave Trade. The enslaved represented cheap and dumb hand labour which worked day and night in plantations for the economy of the New World. This part of the world becomes the first military force and economic force thanks to African enslaved for five centuries. The slave's ordeals and daily violence inflicted on his or her mind an unimaginable and unbearable trauma which repeatedly appears in most African literature. The African continent represented here by Mara is siphoned off from everywhere for her ground resources to satisfy other nations. Mara like Africa is raped by her best exponents to fulfilment their libidinal desires. What is leftover to Mother Africa is basic and menial for her children's survival. This is why her shape is totally devastated, yet she does not fear her forthcoming end. The present shape of Mother Africa does not predict any hope. Like a zombie and a seriously wounded, what maintain her desolated carcass alive are pain-killers and amphetamines.

The linguistic leg of the analysis has revealed that the novel is packed with passages highlighting the overuse of mental processes of perception, cognition and affection even though the slave master portrays the voidance of

³⁴ Cabral, A. (1970). *National liberation and culture*. New York: Syracuse University Press.

clear perception, affection and cognition. He rather stands as the true symbol of inhumanity and hatred. That is materialized in the passages by the definitely deliberate use of de-modulation and de-modalization in some illustrative passages. This characterizes the heartlessness of the slave master. Besides, the writer has lopsidedly and unequally used of recoverable references "I, my, me" not as *Actor* and *Senser* but as *goal*, *recipient*, *Range* or *beneficiary* of the ill-treatments and inhumanity from the slave master. Those inhuman treatments are reinforced by the linguistic choice made by the writer which consists in systematically de-verbalizing some passages in the novel.

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