MORE HUMAN THAN HUMAN:
THE ETHICS OF ALIENATION IN
OCTAVIA E. BUTLER AND GILLES DELEUZE

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Since Octavia E. Butler published her first novel *Patternmaster*, in 1976,[1] her science fiction and fantasy novels have attracted interest from a range of perspectives, including feminist literary studies, postcolonial theory and posthumanism. Across the *Patternmaster* and *Xenogenesis* series, Butler's engagement with the gendered dimensions of ethical and social obligation has intersected in striking ways with ongoing discussions in feminist and postcolonial critical theory, while being criticized for its recuperation of normative family values and its naturalization of gendered social behaviours.[2] In this paper, I will explore her complex ethical responses to developments in genetics and sociobiology in the 1970s, with a focus on the ethics of filiation and altruism in Butler's works, and drawing upon celebratory and critical readings of Butler from the feminist perspectives of Donna Haraway, Nancy Jesser and Michelle Osherow. Butler's speculations about the possibilities of futures based on very different "humans" will then be compared with those of French philosopher Gilles Deleuze, whose philosophies of biology and human agency, especially those developed with Felix Guattari in *Anti-Oedipus*, reflect similar anxieties around the normative definitions of human behavior implicit in both sociobiology and psychoanalysis. While it is difficult to place philosophical texts in conversation with literary works, especially when both authors and their imagined audiences are separated by linguistic, cultural and geographical divides, this analysis teases out some of the overlapping challenges faced in mapping out utopian (or revolutionary) thought beyond the limits of the human.

For both Butler and Deleuze, the relationships between biology, the family and interpersonal ethics are always embedded in political problems: what are the basic human needs that currently underpin, or *should* underpin, forms of social organisation? What sorts of personal relationships are valued or ignored by dominant discursive regimes of social representation? In answering these questions, Butler and Deleuze diverge significantly in the emphases they place on care, interpersonal dependencies and intimacy, but they do share a common rejection of "top down" structuralist explanations of human behavior and cultural norms. Instead, the immanent and variable necessities of creation and survival, shaped by the urgencies and traumas of lived experience, come to the foreground as starting points for ethical thinking and living.

However, this focus is not intended to minimize the importance of the racial politics and colonial "resonances" in Octavia Butler's work.[3] In an interview, Butler offers her Nebula award-winning short-story "Bloodchild" as a re-scripting of the early science fiction scenarios that modeled themselves on the colonial venture (Kenan 498), and a similar case could be made for the *Xenogenesis* series: the key narrative revolves around migrating aliens seeking a new planet, but needing to negotiate with disempowered local inhabitants, sometimes through force or coercion, the terms of their occupation. Nevertheless, an overly allegorical treatment of Butler's novels risks obscuring her deliberate use of the science fiction genre to distill ideas around familial and interpersonal ethics that underpin her broader critiques of hierarchical, patriarchal and racist social institutions. This paper's focus on gender difference as an organizing ethical trope in Butler's work is thus intended as a complement to broader discussions around the function of "race" and "culture" in naturalizing and reproducing (sometimes literally) wider forms of social injustice and inequality.

For *Wild Seed,* published in 1980,[4] much of which is set in nineteenth-century Louisiana, Butler drew on both her own family history and on African myths, most prominently the myth of Atagbusi, which she creatively works into the overarching narratives of the *Patternmaster* saga.[5] Although the third written in the series, *Wild Seed* acts as a prequel, introducing us to the ancient spirit Doro who kills by taking over human bodies and consuming their souls. In *Wild Seed* and then *Mind of My Mind,*[6] Doro engages in a social engineering project, collecting strangely gifted individuals, usually telepathic but sometimes shape-shifting or telekenetic, and breeding them to amplify their abilities. Doro meets Anyanwu, a 300 year old woman with the ability to shape-

shift into any living being, and who like him, is the parent of numerous kinship lineages, also fulfilling the role of doctor and, if necessary, protector. But her interest in her extended kin is entirely altruistic—while Doro seems to value his progeny only insofar as they contribute to his prized gene pools and exploits his role as demi-God by taking women at his choosing, Anyanwu is her peoples' oracle and healer, a maternal guardian who frequently sacrifices her personal autonomy and happiness for her kin. While Doro breeds his people like "cattle," as Butler puts it (*Wild Seed* 200), Anyanwu intends to build a family.

After their first meeting, Doro takes Anyanwu as his wife, with threats that if she is not willing to produce children for him, he can always pursue and possibly kill her own living kin. Anyanwu is further bound to Doro through the children she has with him: like the female characters in Butler's *Kindred*,[7] Anyanwu's devotion to her children forces her into patriarchal subservience. Most surprisingly, *Mind of My Mind* delivers a plot twist in which Anyanwu commits suicide shortly after Doro's own death, with the suggestion that her long-term enslavement to him has grown into genuine feelings of affection.

While their respective shape-shifting abilities could have facilitated a narrative unfettered by issues of biological sex difference,[8] Butler uses Doro and Anyanwu to provide seemingly normative examples of male and female behaviour that transcend historical or social contexts. Over the hundreds of years that *Wild Seed* and *Mind of My Mind* take place, and throughout numerous sex and body changes, Doro and Anyanwu's essential tendencies towards "masculine" and "feminine" behaviours subsist. For different people, Anyanwu can become a mother, an older sister, a teacher and a lover, but never a master, trader or business entrepreneur. These are roles reserved for Doro and his male offspring , like Karl (in *Mind of My Mind*), who attend to their various investments and control people as if they were "robots" (*Mind of My Mind* 291). Butler's gender roles thus frequently conform to well-established patriarchal divisions between the public (masculine) and the private (feminine), or between social production, associated with the "industrial man," and social reproduction, associated with feminine domesticity and the "maternal instinct."

Nevertheless, these worlds are rarely mutually exclusive in Butler's novels: a key tension throughout *Wild Seed*, but also 1978's *Survivor*,[9] is around the uses of the "political sphere" itself, which is usually administered by men but always impacts upon, and is

necessarily negotiated by, the female protagonists. Butler keenly explores the power relations between these gendered domains, through Alanna's pleas for cooperation between her husband and her father in *Survivor*, and in Anyanwu's demands for compassion from Doro in the management of his enslaved peoples.

These tensions find their parallel in the *Xenogenesis* trilogy, beginning with *Dawn* (1987) and followed by *Adulthood Rites* (1988) and *Imago* (1989).[10] *Dawn* introduces a strong female character called Lilith,[11] who is charged with the task of building and sustaining new human families in a post-apocalyptic world. The novel begins with her awakening on an alien spaceship, home to the Oankali, who have rescued a handful of human survivors from a nuclear war that has ravaged the Earth. The Oankali themselves are motivated by their innate and irrepressible desire to mix their genes with those of other species: they "consume difference" by producing offspring with mixed-species parenthood (literally, "xenogenesis"). The Oankali offer the humans little choice but to breed with them, having altered the human survivors so they can no longer breed with each other. In this respect, the Oankali are highly manipulative, using humans only insofar as they further the aliens' own ends, and forcing them to make an impossible choice: co-operate or become extinct.

The situation of the humans in the *Xenogenesis* trilogy parallels that of Anyanwu in her relationship with Doro—because of her desire to have children and have a family, she is forced to accommodate Doro's tyrannical power over her and her progeny. In both these scenarios, there is an underlying tension between individual autonomy and familial (and, more generally, social) obligation, with the latter invested in primarily by female characters. And again, Lilith's commitment to ethical personal relationships and family are complicated by the political resonances of her position as the builder of the new human population, both through her enhanced strength (a gift from the Oankali) and political leadership, and through her role (literally) as mother of a new generation. In this way, the constitution of a new political community intersects directly with issues around reproductive rights and the role of the family: Lilith is persuaded, if not entirely coerced, to have a half-Oankali baby as part of a "nation-building" project.[12]

The dependence of political and community projects on the familial sphere is most clearly articulated in *Dawn* and *Adulthood Rites*, when the Oankali decide to repopulate the earth by breeding with humans, the aspiring alpha-male Gabe takes his wife Tate and

a handful of humans to start a Resister community called Phoenix, in which, without Oankali assistance, families will be infertile. The reader later discovers that Tate wanted to stay with Lilith, who chose the option of family—even a mixed-species one—over the individual autonomy desired by the men. Phoenix, while initially prosperous, is torn apart by a combination of constant attacks from male marauders, intent on capturing women to rape and to sell to other villages, and their own boredom and despair. Tate describes theirs as a "pointless" existence: "We don't have kids, and nothing we do means shit" (*Dawn* 185). The meaning Butler thus ascribes to human life is thus directly tied to familial relationships and, in particular, the kin altruism displayed by female characters.

Here Butler's humanism also reaches a paradox: by fullfilling the basic human imperative to reproduce and raise a family, the humans in *Xenogenesis* must reproduce with other species, thus precluding the reproduction of an exclusively "human" biology. Being "human" in Butler's moral sense, then, involves abandoning narrow conceptions of the human as a stable (or desirable) biological category. This is a major theme in the *Xenogenesis* trilogy, when the so-called "humanization" or acceptance of the Oankali takes place through the forging of family ties. To put it simply, being "human" has little to do with ontology (what one "is") and everything to do with altruistic behaviours (what one "does"), which are in turn presented as the domain of the feminine.

An influential reading of Butler's gender politics is that suggested by Donna Haraway in "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century." She suggests that alongside acclaimed sci-fi writers like Joanna Russ and Samuel Delany, Butler is a story-teller "exploring what it means to be embodied in high-tech worlds. They are theorists for cyborgs".[13] Cathy Peppers follows Harraway's reading, suggesting that the mixed-species offspring in *Xenogenesis* provide an image of the human being's basic cyborg condition, its potential to become something else and blur the distinctions between the human and the alien.[14] In turn, human identity is rendered porous, as different conceptions of self outside those naturalised by biological differences come into being: children without determinate sex, for example, or children with the ability to control their sexual biology, as is the case with some Oankali and their mixed-species offspring. Like Haraway, Peppers conceives Butler's post-human imaginary as a challenge to social assumptions about race and gender, exploring the potential for differences beyond those recognized by current epistemologies and ultimately leading towards a xenophilia—the

love of the Other, or in this case, the alien—rather than xenophobia.[15] This reading is supported by the centrality of unexpected interpersonal relationships and family structures in Butler's novels, from incest to interspecies relationships to (biological) parenthood shared between three or even five adults. Butler forces us to confront normative assumptions about what the human body can do and critiques hierarchical, and specifically patriarchal, social arrangements as (literally) dead ends for the human species.

Furthermore, *Dawn*'s Lilith is highly reluctant to take on a maternal social role expected of her by both human men and the Oankali. The "maternal" identity forced upon Lilith, as the prospective "mother" of the new human population, is shown to be impossibly compromised, insofar as Lilith must negotiate between jealous women, domineering men and the omnipotent Oankali. Butler is less concerned with whether women should adopt maternal roles than with the strategies women develop for surviving the demands of a (seemingly inevitable) gendered division of labour. For this reason, Nancy Jesser argues that "Butler proposes a world of interaction between the female body and the world it is situated within," and links Butler's feminism to her discussion of Simone de Beauvoir's "situated body."[16]

However, in the course of the *Xenogenesis* series, Lilith not only adopts, but eventually embraces, what Michelle Osherow describes as the "Eve" function, the mother of all (76). Anyanwu and *Dawn*'s Lilith and Tate all exhibit "maternal instincts" and a need for family rarely found in Butler's male characters, and not entirely explained by their "situatedness" in their social worlds. Rather, many of the key struggles that animate Butler's texts are not just between the "sexes" as biological constructs, but between explicitly gendered psychological dispositions: violence against healing, individuality against family, social ambition against domestic harmony, the latter values held exclusively by women.[17]

As Jesser points out, Butler's stories of women displaying or adopting certain behaviours in order to ensure the survival of their children places her novels in conversation with the sociobiology of the 1970s and, more recently, evolutionary psychology.[18] In interview, Butler says that "I don't accept what I would call classical sociobiology. Sometimes we can work around our programming if we understand it."[19] Jeffrey A. Tucker characterises this as a hardware/software approach, corresponding to biology and culture, respectively (179–80). In *Wild Seed*, the challenge faced by the offspring of Doro, hardwired to be telepathic and sometimes

shapeshifting, is to live functional and responsible lives alongside other human beings. Those of Doro's progeny with the telepathic ability to feel someone else's pain become their own worst enemies, insofar as biological determinations conflict with personal or emotional interests. In the *Xenogenesis* series, Butler provides examples of characters "working around" their hardwiring: much of *Dawn* finds both Oankali and Lilith herself preoccupied with ways to minimize male aggression and destabilize those hierarchical social divisions to which humans' own genes have naturally predisposed them.

Haraway and Peppers' alignment of Butler with a social constructivist feminist theory overlooks Butler's dependency on genetically transmittable "feminine" biological traits. Across both the *Patternmaster* and *Xenogenesis* sagas, Butler naturalises parenthood—and especially motherhood—as an essential, if highly rewarding, feminine activity. In this respect, Butler's position differs markedly to that of Haraway, who argues that "Ideologies of sexual reproduction can no longer reasonably call on notions of sex and sex role as organic aspects in natural objects like organisms and families" (61). For Butler, the centrality of "family" is rarely questioned, but the political dynamics of reproductive power are constantly placed under scrutiny, especially when family projects become tied to community building and larger structures of patriarchal domination.

So far, I have outlined some of the key ethical themes in *Wild Seed*, *Mind of My Mind* and the *Xenogenesis* series. On the one hand, like Haraway and Peppers, Butler is highly critical any humanism that would posit the human body as a stable entity, or that would overlook the role of social practices in negotiating the ways in which we understand our bodily experiences. On the other hand, she commits her protagonists—whether human, shape-shifting or alien—to the basic imperatives of family building and reproduction, while unambiguously suggesting that those values most useful to this endeavour are almost exclusively held by women. In this way, she re-instates a familiar dichotomy of maternal kin altruism pitted against an almost Hobbesian male individualism. In the following section of this paper, I will discuss French philosopher Gilles Deleuze's ethical engagement with what he has sometimes described as "vitalism."[20] In doing so, I will point to some of the parallels between the Deleuzian and Butlerian critiques of humanism and human identity, while also drawing attention to their conflicting accounts of morality and, in particular, family.

Like Butler, Deleuze (and his collaborator, Felix Guattari) was

interested in the place of biological development, in particular neurobiology, in philosophical thought, while careful not to reproduce the normative principles of "social engineering" that frequently accompany discussions of biology and human behavior. Deleuze's fascination with non-human becomings and non-organic life is motivated by an impulse (inspired by Baruch Spinoza, Henri Bergson and Friedrich Nietzsche, among others) to explore and experiment with what the human body can do, the unfamiliar excitations that affect it and that connect with the non-human: "To open us up to the inhuman and the superhuman (*durations* which are inferior or superior to our own), to go beyond the human condition: This is the meaning of philosophy."[21] In *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze and Guattari focus on the ways in which normative understandings of the human psyche (through psychoanalysis in particular) intersect with wider socio-economic structures, turning the body, the family and the wider community into resources for ever-expanding cycles of capitalist production. The concept of the 'human', as it is used normatively in legal, political and philosophical discourses to organise social behaviours, is from the authors' perspective a restriction on the possibilities for social, even revolutionary, change.[22]

Moving away from functionalist or utilitarian understandings of human needs, Deleuze explores the internal difference of the biological organism from itself, its constitutive capacity for transformation and infinite variation. This human is defined not by what it lacks, but by how it produces its own conditions of existence: "what is missing is not things a subject feels the lack of somewhere deep down inside himself, but rather the objectivity of man, the objective being of man, for whom to desire is to produce."[23] For Deleuze and Guattari in *Anti-Oedipus*, human desires are not tied to pre-existing goals, like reproduction, altruism, or even self interest, but are themselves productive: what we "want" is immanent to the act of "wanting." Human "needs" are thus immanent to processes of biological and social becoming, in which the terms and limits of human existence are constantly renegotiated and rearticulated. In this respect, one might consider Butler's Anyanwu a surprisingly Deleuzian protagonist, insofar as her basic identity is ensured only through her ability to transform, to become other than what she is. The Oankali of the *Xenogenesis* series are also prime candidates for a Deleuzian reading, insofar as their consumption of difference and commitment to xenogenesis makes them explicitly products of difference and alterity, rather than identity or species unity.

However, while a central theme across both Deleuze and Butler's work is the embrace of difference, and the ethical possibility of going beyond the human to imagine new social modes of being, the key moral imperatives at the heart of their writings contrast sharply. For Deleuze, the imperative towards exploring "new modes of existence" does not describe new biological entities or family formations, but rather corresponds to the possibility of new ways of thinking, with a particular emphasis on the rejection of all moral codes dependent on "recognisable" social identities. While, like Haraway and Butler, he displays a fascination with the possible permutations of the human body, this is intrinsically tied to a critique of social or biological identities (whether defined in terms of race, gender or sexuality) as the sites of genuine political struggle. Butler's empowered Earth Mother figures like Anyanwu, for example, might be critiqued for their subordination to oppressive structures of familial obligation, contingent on narrowly defined gendered identities. In Bulterian narratives the feminine Self is defined in relation to its Other (either kin or lover), while Deleuze insists that revolutionary movements exist outside or beyond any fixed categories of selfhood or otherness, which serve to create "internal colonies" in the psychic unconscious.[24]

Most importantly, Deleuze and Guattari strongly argue that the family unit, far from being the fundamental interpersonal structure from which social relations are derived, (the "founding" familial Oedipal horde is, in this respect, as suspicious as the "Earth Mother" narrative of Lilith), is itself symptomatic of capitalism's re-territorialisations on private property and the familial household or "domestic sphere."[25] The moralisation of familial relations thus implicitly validates the ideology of "private persons" (*Anti-Oedipus* 286) necessitated by relations of private property ownership:

> it is through a restriction, a blockage, and a reduction that the libido is made to repress its flows in order to contain them in the narrow cells of the type "couple," "family," "person," "objects" ... The persons to whom our loves are dedicated, including the parental persons, intervene only as points of connection, of disjunction, of conjunction of flows whose libidinal tenor of a properly unconscious investment they translate. (323)

From this perspective, the scenario presented in the case of the failed Phoenix project seems to suggest that liberty and individual fulfilment can be attained only through that altruistic bond with an

Other particular to familial relations. Butler's characters are arguably required to recognise the "human" in familial figures, even the alien or the unborn, in the case of precarious pregnancies (see *Kindred* and *Dawn*, in particular). For Deleuze and Guattari, these anthropomorphic co-ordinates of ethical meaning are themselves functions of politico-economic relations that seek to reinvest desire in oppressive social institutions. Thus, Anyanwu's commitment to family building could be read as benefiting, rather than resisting, Doro's financial economies of human production.

So what might escaping from closed "familial" (or Oedipal) investments involve? Here Deleuze and Guattari's narrow understanding of the "nuclear family" becomes more transparent. Behind the psychoanalytic "theatre" of the family the authors locate "an economic situation: the mother reduced to house-work, or to a difficult and uninteresting job on the outside; children whose future remains uncertain; the father who has had it with feeding all those mouths" (*Anti-Oedipus* 390). One might ask what changes might need to be made, economic or otherwise, to dismantle these "fascisizing, moralizing, Puritan, familialist territorialities" (305). But Deleuze and Guattari do not put forward an economic argument for a re-organisation of the household division of labour; rather, Deleuze seems to advocate the abandonment of the family altogether. In his *Essays Critical and Clinical,* Deleuze finds Franz Kafka in "combat against the castle, against judgment, against his father, against his fiancées,"[26] as if fiancés or fathers are so inevitably and inescapably "Oedipal" that no re-negotiation of power relations within the family (nuclear or otherwise) could be conceived as possible or desirable.

The bind inevitably faced by Deleuze and Guattari's critique of psychoanalysis is that, while de-naturalising Oedipus, Oedipalisation remains the only lens through which the family is understood. This leads to a fetishisation of the "nuclear family" as the only relevant familial structure in the operation of Western capitalism,[27] and ultimately depends on the indirect "evidence" provided about the nuclear family by psychoanalysts, who—as Deleuze and Guattari themselves argue—cannot move beyond symbolic accounts of familial structures. While Deleuze and Guattari argue against a reading of human pathology in terms of the Oedipal daddy-mummy-me triangle, the both the variability of family structures and their potential social benefits are given only a cursory mention.[28] The authors' brief discussion of the household division of labour involves no reflection on how domestic and non-domestic labour might be re-imagined and re-organised without

appeals to essential gender roles or "naturally" gendered instincts, so their critique remains at the level of the symbolic—"escaping" the Father, the Family—rather than at the level of political economy, despite their protestations to the contrary.

In contrast, Butler's characters' relations to family are conceived more in terms of emotional and corporeal needs than in terms of symbolic struggles. In *Wild Seed*, Anyanwu is both a guardian and a healer, possessing special abilities to mend injuries and produce antidotes to poisons. In the *Xenogenesis* series, one of the primary interventions that the Oankali make into human social life is via their bodies themselves—while partially sterilizing the humans, they also provide them with immunities to certain diseases, and remove tendencies towards cancer. While Butler's attribution of healing powers to female characters is frequently problematic in its naturalization of gendered "psychologies" and consequent divisions of labour, it is powerful in its recognition of care-giving as constitutive social practice, one that cannot be simply dismissed as historically or "ideologically" contingent. To treat Butler's familial scenarios as "symbolic," or even "determined" by political economy, would be to overlook the ethical centrality of co-dependency and altruism in the *Patternmaster* saga and *Xenogenesis* series.

Furthermore, for Butler the distinction between "nuclear" and "non-nuclear" families is much less relevant than the reproductive politics of social organization, whether this be imbedded in hierarchical and normative familial structures, like Rufus' patriarchal and rigidly traditional Southern family in *Kindred*, or more open-ended kinship arrangements, like the communal living arrangements of Doro's "gifted" offspring in *Mind of My Mind*. If both Butler and Deleuze are interested in what the body can "do," Butler is more focused on what the body might "need" across a range of diverse familial and social arrangements. So when Deleuze and Guattari claim that "desire 'needs' very few things,"[29] it is worth considering what these "very few things" might be, and whether the "objective being of man," as the precondition to desiring production, might already involve basic elements of care and emotional support, whether accessed through the nuclear family or less "traditional" familial structures.

While Butler's novels are limited in their dependencies on traditional gender dichotomies, she uses her strong female characters to highlight issues around personal relationships and the practicalities of family and community building. Butler's refusal of social constructionist accounts of social identity enables the

exploration of problems that frequently remain invisible within poststructuralist epistemologies. In contrast, while giving lip-service to "family" and "community" in their collaborative writings,[30] Deleuze and Guattari tend to elide the wider spectrum of social and interpersonal work done between family members, or members of a close community, that do not fall comfortably into their analyses of the capitalist axiomatic and its familial overdeterminations. The crucial task, from Butler's perspective, is less to critique the moral baggage of "familialism" than to investigate the ways in which established social structures and parameters might be reused in more ethical, and ultimately more compassionate, ways.

NOTES

[1]   Octavia E. Butler, *Patternmaster* [1976], in *Seed To Harvest* (New York: Warner Books, 2007).

[2]   See Charles H. Rowell and Octavia E. Butler, "An Interview with Octavia E. Butler," *Callaloo* 20 (1997): 51.

[3]   Butler extensively researched African slave narratives from the antebellum South for her novel, *Kindred*. See Randall Kenan, "An Interview with Octavia E. Butler," *Callaloo* 14 (1991): 496–97. She has also reflected on the *Patternmaster* saga as retrospectively suggesting a comment on leadership in black America (Rowell 63). For discussions of race in Butler's work, see also Angelyn Mitchell, "Not Enough of the Past: Feminist Revisions of Slavery in Octavia E. Butler's *Kindred,*" *MELUS* 26 (2001) and Elyce Rae Helford, "'Would You Really Rather Die Than Bare My Young?': The Construction of Gender, Race and Species in Octavia E. Butler's 'Bloodchild'," *African American Review* 28 (1994).

[4]   Octavia E. Butler, *Wild Seed* [1980], in *Seed To Harvest* (New York: Warner Books, 2007).

[5]   See Rowell and Butler 50

[6]   Octavia E. Butler, *Mind of My Mind* [1977], in *Seed To Harvest* (New York: Warner Books, 2007)

[7]   Octavia E. Butler, *Kindred* [1979] (Boston: Beacon Press, 1988)

[8]   A case in point is Ursula Le Guin's *Left Hand of Darkness*, which engages with feminist "utopias" insofar as it erases fixed gender difference altogether. See Kathy Rudd "Ethics, Reproduction, Utopia: Gender and Childbearing in *Woman on the Edge of Time* and *Left Hand of Darkness*" *NWSA Journal* 9 (1997).

[9]   See Octavia E. Butler *Survivor* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1978)

[10]   Octavia E. Butler, *Dawn* (New York: Warner Books, 1987), *Adulthood Rites* (New York: Warner Books, 1989) and *Imago* (New York: Warner Books, 1997).

11   For a discussion of the significance of "Lilith" in feminist myth-making, see Michele Osherow, "Dawn of a New Lilith: Revisionary Mythmaking in Women's Science Fiction" *NSWA Journal* 12 (2002).

12   See "The Theory of Infantile Citizenship" in Lauren Berlant, *The Queen of American Goes to Washington City: Essays on Sex and Citizenship* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), 25–54.

13   Donna Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century" in *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 170.

14   See Cathy Peppers, "Dialogic Origins and Alien Identities in Butler's Xenogenesis", *Science Fiction Studies* 22:65 (1995)

15   Critiques of the "love of the Other" are by now very familiar, and are already implicit in Butler's ambivalent characterisation of the Oankali's consumption of difference as potentially destructive, especially if executed without consultation from their human captives.

16   Nancy Jesser, "Blood, Genes and Gender in Octavia Butler's *Kindred* and *Dawn,*" *Extrapolation* 43 (2002): 55–6.

17   See also *Kindred*, *Survivor* and *Bloodchild and Other Stories* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 1996).

18   The classic texts of sociobiology are Edward O. Wilson's *Sociobiology: The New Synthesis* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1975) and *On Human Nature* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1978). The field of evolutionary psychology has distanced itself from sociobiology, but presents similar ethical problems around ethical agency and biological determinism. See Daniel C. Dennett, *Darwin's Dangerous Idea: Evolution and the Meanings of Life* (New York: Simons & Schuster, 1995).

19   Butler, quoted in Jeffrey A. Tucker, "'The human contradiction': identity and/as essence in Octavia E. Butler's Xenogenesis trilogy," *Yearbook of English Studies* 37 (2007): 180.

20   For their discussion of two "sorts" of vitalism, one belonging to Kant and the other developed by Raymond Ruyer, see Deleuze and Guattari *What Is Philosophy?* trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchill (London: Verso 1994), 212–14.

21   Gilles Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (New York: Zone Books, 2006), 28.

22   For a defense of Deleuze and Michel Foucault against accusations of anti-humanism, see Felix Guattari, *Chaosmosis: An Ethico-Aesthetic Paradigm*, trans. Paul Bains and Julian Pefanis (Sydney: Power Publications, 2006), 9.

23   Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem and Helen R. Lane (London: Continuum Press, 2004), 29. The gendered use of language in Deleuze and Guattari is the

matter for another paper entirely. As a starting point, see Alice
Jardine, "Woman In Limbo: Deleuze and His Br(others)", *Substance*
44/45(1984).

24   Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus,* 185-186

25   See Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 286–87.

26   Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical,* trans. Daniel W. Smith and
      Michael A. Greco (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press,
      1997), 132.

27   An excellent example of non-nuclear familial structures still
      embedded in the political economies of Western capitalism is given
      in Carol Stack's *All Our Kin: Strategies for Survival in a Black Community*
      (New York: Harper & Row, 1975)

28   In *Anti-Oedipus*, the authors initially state that "It is not a question of
      denying the vital importance of parents or the love attachment of
      children to their mothers and fathers" (51), but fail to elaborate on
      this important qualification to their arguments.

29   Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus* 29

30   The notion of "communities" to come is developed, albeit in a
      consciously a-historical way, in Deleuze and Guattari *Kafka: Toward A
      Minor Literature,* trans. Dana Polan (London: University of Minnesota
      Press, 1986) 17, 91.