

Voice For Identity In The Novels Of Octavia Butler

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ABSTRACT

The African American literary customs connote the conventional heritage of silenced people, stifled, and crushed. The community of blacks which are implanted in belletristic of the writers. It was emerged in 1970s that have recourse to nonfigurative apparatus similarly going forward in time and supernatural proprietorship readdressing the feudalism. In Black Literature, slavery and racism has been the cardinal subject in which black writers dissertate about the sufferings of black people. The illustrious American Science Fiction author named Octavia E. Butler, who has stood out in a genre among all African American women. She was one of the countless feminist writers who did a prodigious job in presenting the struggle of a woman in racial issues, political, and sexual stratum.

The principal stalking in this regard to explore the novels of Butler named *Kindred*, *Wild Seed* and *Mind of My Mind* to talk about the harshness of slavery and anguish done to the women during enslavement whose consequences can be seen in the present society. Butler further laid bare certain predicaments of those sufferings and highly obtrusive example of liberating the suppressed black voices midst the colonial waves of the time. It holds Butler's visionary perspective on the transient position of the exploited blacks at the hands of the white's suppression. This paper explores the configuration of slavery, oppression, and sexuality in the novels of Octavia Butler.

Keywords: Black Literature, Oppression, Racism, Slavery, Sexuality

Introduction

C. Lee (1993) attests, "One cannot adequately read the literature of a people without knowing something of the culture and the historical circumstances of that people" (p.4). The history of African American (1619-1865) is distinguished by ethnic isolation, degradation, mortification. The African American literature at the outset of scrutiny of Afro-American lore that additionally folk tales, rhymes, barcarolle where about solitary reflects at the same time incarcerate classification. It has provoked critical self reflection about the demands for racial representation that have historically been placed on black writers. The people of African American contemplated with no culture, tradition, and identity among white races. Many Europeans and Americans had breakthrough assumptions of inferiority which accredit Afro-Americans to the curtailed species and disregarded. In a conference, the outstanding Black American author Toni Morrison avers that 'prejudice and racism against African Americans had two purposes: It has been a distraction against recognizing the unfair class difference in the country, and it has united as Americans all other immigrants, who can claim to be white and therefore a part of mainstream simply because they are black'. (Morrison, 2008, 53) The Afro-American writers proceeded with the socio-ingenuous art which is the collection of communal situations whither African American initiated. It's association facing ancient, lucrative, pedagogic, and social development of ethnic group that carries a distinctive place in the literary world. Black writers are part of black community; they express the life and needs of their community. The socio-creative art is what black writers reflects struggle and tragic circumstances and ruminate on their grudge situation.

The historical mutilate that persevere into and out of history is evident the course of 1960s and 70s, explicitly because of the freedom of citizens action and what it failed to accomplish. The novella of Butler incorporates such matters and arguments they caused in both past and present, relating the two times to one another to show the reader where the problem lies. Butler's Patternist series *Wild Seed* preliminary lay hold of Flaugh's

aforesaid adaptability speculation in addition with characters who are proficient of altogether changing their biological sex at anatomical level. The text offers continuous disclosure directed toward intricate of power relations- how power affects gender identity, and how gender identity is influenced by power.

Manifestation Thralldom

The novel *Kindred* (1979) muster the representation of a slave community to express skepticism in respect of reappraise slavery. Butler was enchanted to the dystopian category as it allowed her freedom as a writer and, she was a feminist writer who always strived for women's freedom and equality. She has brought a big change in the world of science fiction as it was a traditional complaint or rather a myth that science fiction is a male genre, which creates male heroes. Her personal life has given herself the first awareness rather evidence for issues of race and class in America. She was born in Pasadena in 1947 and belongs to a common labor family. In her early life she has experienced a lot and seen her family going through a hard time. Her father was a shoe polish man, and her mother was a maidservant, her bitter experience in life can be seen as Butler lost her father at a very early age.

In this work piece, Butler has employed the science fiction devices to explain slavery and racism to establish African American women's history and to have a rapport with various veracity as well as misapprehension with reference to the antebellum South. Themes like racial inequality, white dominance, and gender equality conclude antecedently in the directly of subsequently senility. She cultivated in the company of the difficult experiences of her life that reflects some of the raucous actuality of Afro-American people and ultimately, Octavia succeeded to create a new identity in the field of science fiction.

Kindred present the conception that nuptials betwixt the two clans would be riotous ascribable to miscellaneous affection of gratification in one's race and the collective consciousness of the slave era. In this fine piece of Butler, one can clearly see with a black woman named Dana who got married with white man named Kevin living in Los Angeles in 1976 and Dana time travelled to antebellum south without any awareness to Kevin. After time-travelling solitary and with Kevin observed the past for them. The field of vision for Dana and the reader convolute present day panorama in what manner or way humankind subsist at that point in time. Racist are set apart by gender norms, are additionally circumscribed in conjunction by affection, savagery moreover other are all human. While time-travelling Dana gets wind of her plummeting from Rufus Weylin, the boy she saved on her first trip who would grow to be a white slave owner, and Alice Greenwood, a girl of dark skinned in due course enslaved on the Weylin plantation. From start to finish engagement in the days of yore of her white and black ancestors, she could comprehend and is much more conscious enough what society is incapable of. The mental trauma which they have dealt with and all the sentimental and cicatrix which they have return with lingers on to the antebellum South. To refrain alienation and adjudicate issues on human level these fictional stories always look for an understanding of a very real past to the modern reader. Sandra Y. Govan delve into *Kindred* and *Wild Seed* as benefaction to historical fiction, as pieces that reform the genre by sitting at the intersection of historical fiction, slave narrative, and science fiction. The two Patternist novels imprints the procreations cadence empire constituted by Doro, a metaphysical intrinsic who assume to have control on other bodies and employ them as hosts to survive in Africa. Doro also represents leechlike merger of oppressive forces that obstruct change through emphasis on reproduction within families adhere to only prescribed gender roles.

Repressiveness

He aims to create and control a race of supernatural beings through an elaborate breeding empire. One of the finest masterpieces, 'Wild Seed' through which one could see how Antebellum slavery left racist mark on family who were already gestate for both slave trade and free individual as heteronormative. This often feels representative for how people feel with those who rule them but often the consequences of oppression have already happened- we rarely feel it. The character, Doro becomes one of the most disturbing because for him humans are breeding stock. He wanders the populations of the world looking for those with talents be it telekinesis, empathy, telepathy etc and it also slowly forces people to live together and to have sexual intercourse. Generally, anyone who disobey, or he feels are no longer valuable he will kill by taking over their bodies. Doro makes pains and views everyone else as inferior to him and creating conditions where people do what he wished for, and resistance is quashed often murdered.

The memory played an important role in the liberation of people which is clearly revealed in one of the finest works of Butler's *Mind of My Mind* and *Wild Seed*. This book centers on Mary's orchestrated overthrow of Doro, a being who has spent millennial breeding and feeding on "psychically sensitive" people. It is modern America and in a part of California the body swapping psychic vampire Doro has continued his breeding programmed of using people with some form of telepathic ability. In 1970 Mary an American descendent who becomes a Pattern master and destroys Doro. Both novels include emphasis on race, gender, and sexuality, particularly as Doro's breeding empire closely resembles the Antebellum slave trade. Doro looked down upon blacks treat them as inferior and see himself as superior to humanity and superpower among humans manifesting racism akin to white slave traders and slave owners which also ill-treat blacks. One of the

powerful consequences of the post colonialism is slavery where the colonized people are treated with acute inferiority. Post-colonialism moves towards many complex issues concerning the position of the colonized nations and it also represents bitter experience in the light of the hegemonic power used by the colonizers for domination. Hegemony is considered as one of the most powerful tools for colonial dominance used to explicate a “sufficient explanation of colonial powers to dispel the hegemonic nature of suppressed voice itself. Suppressing of other nations is one former metropolitan power instead of another automatically relocates the role of postcolonial literature in the global marketplace” (Laitin, P. 69). Similarly, Doro exemplifies this oppressive hegemony in the novel: “Should she break her tradition now simply because this stranger asked her to? Nothing” (P. 8). Doro’s natural powers are like supernatural unusual powers: “He was like an Ogbanje, an evil child spirit born to one woman again and again, only to die and give the mother pain. A tormented by an Ogbanje could give birth many times and still have no living child. But Doro was an adult, and he did not enter and re-enter his mother’s womb. He did not want the bodies of children. He was preferred to steal the bodies of men” (P. 8) and this powerful hegemony enable Doro to be a master of blacks. It also makes him breed hybrid black people because he is married to Anyanwu.

Lisa Long (2002, 477-78) brings to our notice, “Butler herself, in an interview with Sandra Govan, admits to tempering the ‘harshness’ of the ‘real experiences’ because the slave narratives proved such ‘grim reading’”. In *Kindred*, ferocity if ever Dana has given reappearance chance rather if she comes back again, she would escape the ancestor slavery and try to restore the things back. One of her past recall which shocks Dana tops to bottom while a man was brutally beaten up and hanged on a tree which later she came to know that the same man was Alice’s father. The reality of violence shocks Dana as she describes:

“I had seen people beaten in television and in the movies. I had seen the too-red blood substitute streaked across their backs and heard their well-rehearse screams. But I hadn’t lain nearby and smelled their sweat or heard them pleading and praying, shamed before their families and themselves. I was probably less prepared for the reality than the child crying not far from me. (Butler 1988, 36)”.

Sexual Harassment

Many narratives give one’s testimony to the horrors of serfdom; this novel contains conventional scenes of bodily revelation. *Kindred*’s Dana, excessively, is met with her blemish body a contemporary substantiation directed toward realities of slavery. Antipodal of the novel she gets back to 1976 and to the site of her ancestor’s plantation only to find no house, no legal records of slaves or slave-owners. Finally, though, she “touch[es] the scar Tom Weylin’s boot had left on [her] face, touch[es] the empty left slave” missing her arm, which had been consumed by the supernatural jaw of time when she murdered Rufus and returned to the present (P. 264). All these women’s bodies attest to the reality of slavery. However when the novel touches the opposite side of the earth where the arrow of times took back her to the past where she finds no house and no legal evidence of slavery but as soon the arrow of times strikes the present knock the pain revives like how she had been a prey and how she had missed her arm which was amputate by the supernatural jaw and she also fearfully recalls how she executed Rufus and returns back to the present. Such a purely traces evacuated shells representing a wordless, imageless physical experience that is the core of history according to the novel. Predictably, Butler points to the unrepresentability of the historical rape even as they attempt to depict its realities. In *Kindred*, Dana tells her ancestor, Alice, not to succumb to Rufus’s sexual advances. “It’s your body,” she insists. “Not mine” Alice responds. “Her voice had dropped to a whisper. ‘Not mine, his. He paid for it, didn’t he?’” (P. 167), the scenes hovers around the edges of the inarticulable physical trauma of rape, marking both rape’s (and by extension history’s) shadowy presence and its inevitable absence. The sexual racial hierarchies these rapes reinscribed do not challenge cultural norms that persist to the present. The novel clearly depicts the incidents (rapes) which happened in the past rather in history of Africa are not the only or alone incidents of sexual events but are inerasable memories liked to the in American heterosexuality race in the novel.

Conclusion

It is explicit that the history of sexual violence or trauma might have endowed but the sexual exploitation still prevails in African and American women. Butler makes no distinctions between the literal sexual relations that thread through their protagonists lives past and present, relying on the assumedly a historical nature of sexual acts and sexualized relationships-including rape-to substantiate history.

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