

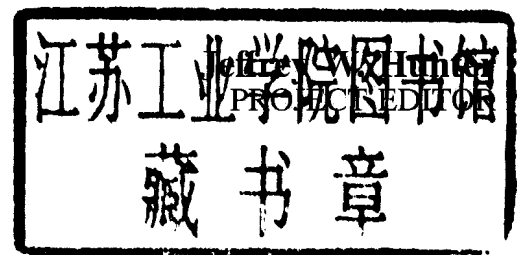
☐ Contemporary
Literary Criticism

CLC 230

Volume 230

Contemporary Literary Criticism

Criticism of the Works
of Today's Novelists, Poets, Playwrights,
Short Story Writers, Scriptwriters, and
Other Creative Writers



THOMSON
★
GALE



Contemporary Literary Criticism, Vol. 230

Project Editor

Jeffrey W. Hunter

Editorial

Kathy D. Darrow, Jelena O. Krstović, Michelle Lee, Thomas J. Schoenberg, Noah Schusterbauer, Lawrence J. Trudeau, Russel Whitaker

Data Capture

Frances Monroe, Gwen Tucker

Indexing Services

Laurie Andriot

Rights and Acquisitions

Lisa Kincade, Timothy Sisler, Andrew Specht

Imaging and Multimedia

Randy Bassett, Lezlie Light, Mike Logusz, Dan Newell, Christine O'Bryan

Composition and Electronic Prepress

Gary Oudersluys

Manufacturing

Rhonda Dover

Associate Product Manager

Marc Cormier

© 2007 Thomson Gale, a part of The Thomson Corporation. Thomson and Star Logo are trademarks and Gale is a registered trademark used herein under license.

For more information, contact

Thomson Gale
27500 Drake Rd.
Farmington Hills, MI 48331-3535
Or you can visit our internet site at
<http://www.gale.com>

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

No part of this work covered by the copyright herein may be reproduced or used in any form or by any means—graphic, electronic, or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, taping, Web distribution, or information storage retrieval systems—without the written permission of the publisher.

This publication is a creative work fully protected by all applicable copyright laws, as well as by misappropriation, trade secret, unfair competition, and other applicable laws. The authors and editors of this work have added value to the underlying factual material herein through one or more of the following: unique and original selection, coordination, expression, arrangement, and classification of the information.

For permission to use material from the product, submit your request via the Web at <http://www.gale-edit.com/permissions>, or you may download our Permissions Request form and submit your request by fax or mail to:

Permissions Department

Thomson Gale
27500 Drake Rd.
Farmington Hills, MI 48331-3535
Permissions Hotline:
248-699-8006 or 800-877-4253, ext. 8006
Fax 248-699-8074 or 800-762-4058

Since this page cannot legibly accommodate all copyright notices, the acknowledgments constitute an extension of the copyright notice.

While every effort has been made to secure permission to reprint material and to ensure the reliability of the information presented in this publication, Thomson Gale neither guarantees the accuracy of the data contained herein nor assumes any responsibility for errors, omissions or discrepancies. Thomson Gale accepts no payment for listing; and inclusion in the publication of any organization, agency, institution, publication, service, or individual does not imply endorsement of the editors or publisher. Errors brought to the attention of the publisher and verified to the satisfaction of the publisher will be corrected in future editions.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CATALOG CARD NUMBER 76-46132

ISBN-13: 978-0-7876-8000-8

ISBN-10: 0-7876-8000-1
ISSN 0091-3421

Printed in the United States of America
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Preface

Named “one of the twenty-five most distinguished reference titles published during the past twenty-five years” by *Reference Quarterly*, the *Contemporary Literary Criticism (CLC)* series provides readers with critical commentary and general information on more than 2,000 authors now living or who died after December 31, 1999. Volumes published from 1973 through 1999 include authors who died after December 31, 1959. Previous to the publication of the first volume of *CLC* in 1973, there was no ongoing digest monitoring scholarly and popular sources of critical opinion and explication of modern literature. *CLC*, therefore, has fulfilled an essential need, particularly since the complexity and variety of contemporary literature makes the function of criticism especially important to today’s reader.

Scope of the Series

CLC provides significant passages from published criticism of works by creative writers. Since many of the authors covered in *CLC* inspire continual critical commentary, writers are often represented in more than one volume. There is, of course, no duplication of reprinted criticism.

Authors are selected for inclusion for a variety of reasons, among them the publication or dramatic production of a critically acclaimed new work, the reception of a major literary award, revival of interest in past writings, or the adaptation of a literary work to film or television.

Attention is also given to several other groups of writers—authors of considerable public interest—about whose work criticism is often difficult to locate. These include mystery and science fiction writers, literary and social critics, foreign authors, and authors who represent particular ethnic groups.

Each *CLC* volume contains individual essays and reviews taken from hundreds of book review periodicals, general magazines, scholarly journals, monographs, and books. Entries include critical evaluations spanning from the beginning of an author’s career to the most current commentary. Interviews, feature articles, and other published writings that offer insight into the author’s works are also presented. Students, teachers, librarians, and researchers will find that the general critical and biographical material in *CLC* provides them with vital information required to write a term paper, analyze a poem, or lead a book discussion group. In addition, complete bibliographical citations note the original source and all of the information necessary for a term paper footnote or bibliography.

Organization of the Book

A *CLC* entry consists of the following elements:

- The **Author Heading** cites the name under which the author most commonly wrote, followed by birth and death dates. Also located here are any name variations under which an author wrote, including transliterated forms for authors whose native languages use nonroman alphabets. If the author wrote consistently under a pseudonym, the pseudonym will be listed in the author heading and the author’s actual name given in parenthesis on the first line of the biographical and critical information. Uncertain birth or death dates are indicated by question marks. Single-work entries are preceded by a heading that consists of the most common form of the title in English translation (if applicable) and the original date of composition.
- A **Portrait of the Author** is included when available.
- The **Introduction** contains background information that introduces the reader to the author, work, or topic that is the subject of the entry.

- The list of **Principal Works** is ordered chronologically by date of first publication and lists the most important works by the author. The genre and publication date of each work is given. In the case of foreign authors whose works have been translated into English, the English-language version of the title follows in brackets. Unless otherwise indicated, dramas are dated by first performance, not first publication.
- Reprinted **Criticism** is arranged chronologically in each entry to provide a useful perspective on changes in critical evaluation over time. The critic's name and the date of composition or publication of the critical work are given at the beginning of each piece of criticism. Unsigned criticism is preceded by the title of the source in which it appeared. All titles by the author featured in the text are printed in boldface type. Footnotes are reprinted at the end of each essay or excerpt. In the case of excerpted criticism, only those footnotes that pertain to the excerpted texts are included.
- A complete **Bibliographical Citation** of the original essay or book precedes each piece of criticism. Source citations in the Literary Criticism Series follow University of Chicago Press style, as outlined in *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 15th ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2003).
- Critical essays are prefaced by brief **Annotations** explicating each piece.
- Whenever possible, a recent **Author Interview** accompanies each entry.
- An annotated bibliography of **Further Reading** appears at the end of each entry and suggests resources for additional study. In some cases, significant essays for which the editors could not obtain reprint rights are included here. Boxed material following the further reading list provides references to other biographical and critical sources on the author in series published by Thomson Gale.

Indexes

A **Cumulative Author Index** lists all of the authors that appear in a wide variety of reference sources published by Thomson Gale, including *CLC*. A complete list of these sources is found facing the first page of the Author Index. The index also includes birth and death dates and cross references between pseudonyms and actual names.

A **Cumulative Nationality Index** lists all authors featured in *CLC* by nationality, followed by the number of the *CLC* volume in which their entry appears.

A **Cumulative Topic Index** lists the literary themes and topics treated in the series as well as in other Literature Criticism series.

An alphabetical **Title Index** accompanies each volume of *CLC*. Listings of titles by authors covered in the given volume are followed by the author's name and the corresponding page numbers where the titles are discussed. English translations of foreign titles and variations of titles are cross-referenced to the title under which a work was originally published. Titles of novels, dramas, films, nonfiction books, and poetry, short story, or essay collections are printed in italics, while individual poems, short stories, and essays are printed in roman type within quotation marks.

In response to numerous suggestions from librarians, Thomson Gale also produces an annual cumulative title index that alphabetically lists all titles reviewed in *CLC* and is available to all customers. Additional copies of this index are available upon request. Librarians and patrons will welcome this separate index; it saves shelf space, is easy to use, and is recyclable upon receipt of the next edition.

Citing Contemporary Literary Criticism

When citing criticism reprinted in the Literary Criticism Series, students should provide complete bibliographic information so that the cited essay can be located in the original print or electronic source. Students who quote directly from reprinted criticism may use any accepted bibliographic format, such as University of Chicago Press style or Modern Language As-

sociation (MLA) style. Both the MLA and the University of Chicago formats are acceptable and recognized as being the current standards for citations. It is important, however, to choose one format for all citations; do not mix the two formats within a list of citations.

The examples below follow recommendations for preparing a bibliography set forth in *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 15th ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2003); the first example pertains to material drawn from periodicals, the second to material reprinted from books:

Miller, Mae. "Patterns of Nature and Confluence in Eudora Welty's *The Optimist's Daughter*." *Southern Quarterly: A Journal of the Arts in the South* 35, no. 1 (fall 1996): 55-61. Reprinted in *Contemporary Literary Criticism*. Vol. 220, edited by Jeffrey W. Hunter, 304-09. Detroit: Thomson Gale, 2006.

Aronoff, Myron J. "Learning to Live with Ambiguity: Balancing Ethical and Political Imperatives." In *The Spy Novels of John le Carré: Balancing Ethics and Politics*, 201-14. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999. Reprinted in *Contemporary Literary Criticism*. Vol. 220, edited by Jeffrey W. Hunter, 84-92. Detroit: Thomson Gale, 2006.

The examples below follow recommendations for preparing a works cited list set forth in the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 5th ed. (New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 1999); the first example pertains to material drawn from periodicals, the second to material reprinted from books:

Miller, Mae. "Patterns of Nature and Confluence in Eudora Welty's *The Optimist's Daughter*." *Southern Quarterly: A Journal of the Arts in the South* 35.1 (fall 1996): 55-61. Reprinted in *Contemporary Literary Criticism*. Ed. Jeffrey W. Hunter. Vol. 220. Detroit: Thomson Gale, 2006. 304-09.

Aronoff, Myron J. "Learning to Live with Ambiguity: Balancing Ethical and Political Imperatives." *The Spy Novels of John le Carré: Balancing Ethics and Politics*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999. 201-14. Reprinted in *Contemporary Literary Criticism*. Ed. Jeffrey W. Hunter. Vol. 220. Detroit: Thomson Gale, 2006. 84-92.

Suggestions are Welcome

Readers who wish to suggest new features, topics, or authors to appear in future volumes, or who have other suggestions or comments are cordially invited to call, write, or fax the Associate Product Manager:

Associate Product Manager, Literary Criticism Series
Thomson Gale
27500 Drake Road
Farmington Hills, MI 48331-3535
1-800-347-4253 (GALE)
Fax: 248-699-8983

Acknowledgments

The editors wish to thank the copyright holders of the criticism included in this volume and the permissions managers of many book and magazine publishing companies for assisting us in securing reproduction rights. Following is a list of the copyright holders who have granted us permission to reproduce material in this volume of *CLC*. Every effort has been made to trace copyright, but if omissions have been made, please let us know.

COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL IN *CLC*, VOLUME 230, WAS REPRODUCED FROM THE FOLLOWING PERIODICALS:

African American Review, v. 33, spring, 1999. © 1999, Scott MacPhail. Reproduced by permission.—*Artforum*, v. 42, February, 2004 for “Twin Bills” by Theresa Duncan. Copyright © 2004 by *Artforum*. Reproduced by permission of the publisher and the author.—*Black Issues Book Review*, v. 2, September-October, 2000; v. 4, September-October, 2002. Both reproduced by permission.—*Callaloo*, winter, 1986; v. 25, 2002. Copyright © 1986, 2002 The Johns Hopkins University Press. Both reproduced by permission.—*Children’s Literature*, 2002. Copyright © 2002 The Johns Hopkins University Press. Reproduced by permission.—*CLA Journal*, v. 47, 2003. Copyright, 2003 by The College Language Association. Used by permission of The College Language Association.—*College English*, v. 55, February, 1993. Copyright © 1993 by the National Council of Teachers of English. Reproduced by permission of the publisher.—*Cross Currents*, v. 54, spring, 2004. Copyright 2004 by Cross Currents Inc. Reproduced by permission.—*English Education*, v. 37, 2005. Reproduced by permission.—*English Journal*, v. 92, July, 2003. Copyright © 2003 by the National Council of Teachers of English. Reproduced by permission of the publisher.—*Extrapolation*, v. 39, fall, 1998; v. 43, spring, 2002; v. 46, spring, 2005; v. 46, fall, 2005. Copyright © 1998, 2002, 2005 by The Kent State University Press. All reproduced by permission.—*FEMSPEC*, v. 3, 2002. Reproduced by permission.—*Foundation*, v. 48, spring, 1990. © 1990 by the Science Fiction Foundation. Reproduced by permission.—*Image & Narrative: Online Magazine of the Visual Narrative*, January, 2003. Reproduced by permission.—*ImageText*, v. 1, fall, 2004 for “Alan Moore and the Graphic Novel: Confronting the Fourth Dimension” by Mark Bernard and James Bucky Carter. Copyright © 2004 Mark Bernard and James Bucky Carter. All rights reserved. Reproduced by permission of the respective authors.—*International Journal of Comic Art*, v. 6, spring, 2004; v. 7, spring-summer, 2005. Both reproduced by permission of John A. Lent.—*Journal of Popular Culture*, v. 33, spring, 2000. Copyright © 2000 Basil Blackwell Ltd. Reproduced by permission of Blackwell Publishers.—*Journal of the American Academy of Psychoanalysis*, v. 30, fall, 2002. © 2002 The American Academy of Psychoanalysis. Reprinted with permission of The Guilford Press.—*Literary Review*, v. 38, spring, 1995 for “Genre to the Rear, Race and Gender to the Fore: The Novels of Octavia E. Butler” by Burton Raffel. Reproduced by permission of the author.—*Literature Film Quarterly*, v. 32, 2004. Copyright © 2004 Salisbury State College. Reproduced by permission.—*Locus*, v. 51, July, 2003. Reproduced by permission.—*MELUS*, vol. 13, spring-summer, 1986. Copyright *MELUS: The Society for the Study of Multi-Ethnic Literature of the United States*, 1986. Reproduced by permission.—*Metro Magazine*, v. 148, 2006. Copyright 2006 Australian Teachers of Media. Reproduced by permission.—*Michigan Feminist Studies*, 2004. Reproduced by permission.—*Ninth Art*, March 31, 2003; April 7, 2003. Both reproduced by permission.—*Novel*, v. 35, spring, 2002. Copyright © NOVEL Corp., 2002. Reproduced with permission.—*Post Script*, v. 20, summer, 2000. Copyright © 2000 by POST SCRIPT, INC. Reproduced by permission.—*Salon*, October 26, 1999; October 18, 2000. Copyright 1999, 2000 Salon.com. These articles first appeared in Salon.com, at <http://www.salon.com>. Online versions remain in the Salon archives. Both reprinted with permission.—*Science-Fiction Studies*, v. 22, March, 1995. Copyright © 1995 by SFS Publications. Reproduced by permission.—*Sight and Sound*, v. 13, October, 2003. Copyright © 2003 by The British Film Institute. Reproduced by permission.—*Slate*, December 17, 2003. Copyright © 2003 United Feature Syndicate, Inc. All rights reserved. Distributed by United Feature Syndicate, Inc.—*Studies in American Fiction*, v. 27, spring, 1999. Copyright © 1999 Northeastern University. Reproduced by permission.—*Transition*, 1994 for “After Identity” by Peter Erickson. Reproduced by permission of the author.

COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL IN *CLC*, VOLUME 230, WAS REPRODUCED FROM THE FOLLOWING BOOKS:

Accomando, Christina. From “Exposing the Lie of Neutrality: June Jordan’s Affirmative Acts,” in *Still Seeking an Attitude: Critical Reflections on the Work of June Jordan*. Edited by Valerie Kinloch and Margaret Grebowicz. Lexington

Books, 2004. Copyright © 2004 by Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. Reproduced by permission.—Bartholomew Ortega, Kirsten. From “June Jordan’s Radical Pedagogy: Activist Poetry in Public Education,” in *Still Seeking an Attitude: Critical Reflections on the Work of June Jordan*. Edited by Valerie Kinloch and Margaret Grebowicz. Lexington Books, 2004. Copyright © 2004 by Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. Reproduced by permission.—Brogan, Jacqueline Vaught. From “From Warrior to Womanist: The Development of June Jordan’s Poetry,” in *Speaking the Other Self: American Women Writers*. Edited by Jeanne Campbell Reesman. University of Georgia Press, 1997. © 1997 by the University of Georgia Press. All rights reserved. Reproduced by permission.—Coleman, Ramona. From “Narrating Nation: Exploring the Space of Americanness and the Place of African American Women through the Works of June Jordan,” in *Still Seeking an Attitude: Critical Reflections on the Work of June Jordan*. Edited by Valerie Kinloch and Margaret Grebowicz. Lexington Books, 2004. Copyright © 2004 by Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. Reproduced by permission.—Creeber, Glen. From “TV Ruined the Movies: Television, Tarantino, and the Intimate World of ‘The Sopranos,’” in *This Thing of Ours: Investigating The Sopranos*. Edited by David Lavery. Columbia University Press, 2002. Copyright © 2002 Columbia University Press, New York. All rights reserved. Republished in North America with permission of the Columbia University Press, 61 W. 62nd St., New York, NY 10023. In the U. K. by permission of Wallflower Press.—Creighton, Jane. From “Writing War, Writing Memory,” in *Still Seeking an Attitude: Critical Reflections on the Work of June Jordan*. Edited by Valerie Kinloch and Margaret Grebowicz. Lexington Books, 2004. Copyright © 2004 by Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. Reproduced by permission.—Eagleton, Mary. From “Working Across Difference: Examples from Minnie Bruce Pratt and June Jordan,” in *Caught Between Cultures: Women, Writing & Subjectivities*. Edited by Elizabeth Russell. Rodopi, 2002. Copyright © 2002 Editions Rodopi B. V. Reproduced by permission.—Fausty, Joshua, and Edvige Giunta. From “Quentin Tarantino: An Ethnic Enigma,” in *Screening Ethnicity: Cinematographic Representations of Italian Americans in the United States*. Edited by Anna Camaiti Hostert and Anthony Julian Tamburri. Bordighera Press, 2002. Copyright © 2002 by Anna Camaiti Hostert, Anthony Julian Tamburri, Joshua Fausty and Edvige Giunta. Reproduced by permission.—Garner, Ken. From “‘Would You Like to Hear Some Music?’ Music In and Out of Control in the Films of Quentin Tarantino,” in *Film Music: Critical Approaches*. Edited by K. J. Donnelly. Continuum International Publishing, 2001. Copyright © K. J. Donnelly 2001. All rights reserved. Republished with permission of Continuum International Publishing, conveyed through Copyright Clearance Center, Inc.—Green, Michelle Erica. From “‘There Goes the Neighborhood’: Octavia Butler’s Demand for Diversity in Utopias,” in *Utopian and Science Fiction by Women: Worlds of Difference*. Edited by Jane Donawerth and Carol Kolmerten. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1994. Copyright © 1994 by Syracuse University Press. All rights reserved. Reproduced by permission.—Keating, AnaLouise. From “The Intimate Distance of Desire: June Jordan’s Bisexual Inflections,” in *Romancing the Margins? Lesbian Writing in the 1990’s*. Edited by Gabriele Griffin. Harrington Park Press, 2000. Copyright © 2000 by The Haworth Press, Inc. Binghamton, New York. All rights reserved. Reproduced by permission.—Pfeiffer, John R. From “Octavia Butler Writes the Bible,” in *Shaw and Other Matters*. Edited by Susan Rusinko. Cranbury, NJ: Susquehanna University Press, 1998. Copyright © 1998 by Associated University Presses, Inc. All rights reserved. Reproduced by permission.—Walsh, Rebecca. From “Where Metaphor Meets Materiality: The Spatialized Subject and the Limits of Locational Feminism,” in *Exclusions in Feminist Thought: Challenging the Boundaries of Womanhood*. Edited by Mary Brewer. Sussex Academic Press, 2002. Copyright © Academic Press 2002. Reproduced by permission.—Willis, Sharon. From “Style, Posture and Idiom: Tarantino’s Figures of Masculinity,” in *Reinventing Film Studies*. Edited by Christine Gledhill and Linda Williams. Arnold, 2000. Copyright © 2000 by Arnold. Used by permission of Hodder & Stoughton Educational.

Thomson Gale Literature Product Advisory Board

The members of the Thomson Gale Literature Product Advisory Board—reference librarians from public and academic library systems—represent a cross-section of our customer base and offer a variety of informed perspectives on both the presentation and content of our literature products. Advisory board members assess and define such quality issues as the relevance, currency, and usefulness of the author coverage, critical content, and literary topics included in our series; evaluate the layout, presentation, and general quality of our printed volumes; provide feedback on the criteria used for selecting authors and topics covered in our series; provide suggestions for potential enhancements to our series; identify any gaps in our coverage of authors or literary topics, recommending authors or topics for inclusion; analyze the appropriateness of our content and presentation for various user audiences, such as high school students, undergraduates, graduate students, librarians, and educators; and offer feedback on any proposed changes/enhancements to our series. We wish to thank the following advisors for their advice throughout the year.

Barbara M. Bibel

Librarian
Oakland Public Library
Oakland, California

Dr. Toby Burrows

Principal Librarian
The Scholars' Centre
University of Western Australia Library
Nedlands, Western Australia

Celia C. Daniel

Associate Reference Librarian
Howard University Libraries
Washington, D.C.

David M. Durant

Reference Librarian
Joyner Library
East Carolina University
Greenville, North Carolina

Nancy T. Guidry

Librarian
Bakersfield Community College
Bakersfield, California

Heather Martin

Arts & Humanities Librarian
University of Alabama at Birmingham, Sterne Library
Birmingham, Alabama

Susan Mikula

Librarian
Indiana Free Library
Indiana, Pennsylvania

Thomas Nixon

Humanities Reference Librarian
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Davis
Library
Chapel Hill, North Carolina

Mark Schumacher

Jackson Library
University of North Carolina at Greensboro
Greensboro, North Carolina

Gwen Scott-Miller

Assistant Director
Sno-Isle Regional Library System
Marysville, Washington

Contents

Preface vii

Acknowledgments xi

Literary Criticism Series Advisory Board xiii

Octavia E. Butler 1947-2006	1
<i>American novelist, short story writer, and essayist</i>	
June Jordan 1936-2002	132
<i>American poet, essayist, novelist, editor, journalist, and dramatist</i>	
Alan Moore 1953-	259
<i>English graphic novelist and novelist</i>	
Quentin Tarantino 1963-	316
<i>American screenwriter and director</i>	

Literary Criticism Series Cumulative Author Index 407

Literary Criticism Series Cumulative Topic Index 515

CLC Cumulative Nationality Index 529

CLC-230 Title Index 545

Octavia E. Butler

1947-2006

(Full name Octavia Estelle Butler) American novelist, short story writer, and essayist.

The following entry provides an overview of Butler's career through 2005. For additional information on her life and work, see *CLC*, Volumes 38 and 121.

INTRODUCTION

Butler is best known for her "Patternist" series of science fiction novels which portrays a society whose inhabitants have developed telepathic powers over several centuries. Butler's writing explores themes that have generally received cursory treatments in the sci-fi genre, including sexual identity, racial conflict, and contemporary politics. Butler's heroines typically are powerful black women who possess large measures of both mental and physical acumen. While they exemplify the traditional female gender roles of nurturer, healer, and conciliator, these women also display courage, independence, and ambition and embody the belief that hierarchical systems are flawed. They enhance their influence through alliances with or opposition to powerful males. Butler, whose works have been compared to those of Toni Morrison and Margaret Atwood, has received many top honors within the field of science fiction and has earned recognition as a pioneer amongst women writers.

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Born in 1947, Butler grew up in a racially mixed neighborhood in Pasadena, California. Her father died during her childhood and her mother worked as a maid to support their family. Butler has written memoirs of her mother's sacrifices, which included buying Butler a typewriter at age ten, and paying a large fee to an unscrupulous agent. Butler entered student writing contests as a teenager and attended such workshops as the Screenwriters' Guild of America's Open Door Program and the Clarion Science Fiction Writer's Workshop. This early training led to contacts with a range of well-known science fiction writers, including Joanna Russ and Harlan Ellison; Ellison became one of Butler's most significant mentors. Butler went on to earn an Associate of Arts degree at Pasadena City College in 1968. She also attended California State

University and the University of California, Los Angeles. After several years of working low-wage jobs in restaurants and factories, Butler sold her first work of fiction. With the encouragement of Ellison, Butler published her short story "Crossover" in *Clarion* in 1971. Butler has won several prizes for her science fiction works, including the Locus Award in 1985 for her novella "Bloodchild," the Nebula Award for "Bloodchild" and for the novel *Parable of the Talents* (1998), and the Hugo Award in 1984 for the short story "Speech Sounds" and again for "Bloodchild." She also received the prestigious MacArthur Foundation "Genius" Grant in 1995, a PEN Lifetime Achievement award in 2000, and a Langston Hughes Medal from The City College of New York. On February 24, 2006 Butler died from a head injury that she sustained after a fall outside of her home near Seattle, Washington.

MAJOR WORKS

Five of Butler's novels—*Patternmaster* (1976), *Mind of My Mind* (1977), *Survivor* (1978), *Wild Seed* (1980), and *Clay's Ark* (1984)—revolve around the Patternists, a group of mentally superior beings connected to one another telepathically. These beings descend from Doro, a four thousand-year-old Nubian man who has selectively bred with humans throughout time with the intention of establishing a race of superhumans. He prolongs his life by killing others, including his family members, and inhabiting their bodies. *Wild Seed*, which begins in seventeenth-century Africa and spans more than two centuries, outlines the origin of the Patternists. The novel recounts Doro's uneasy alliance with Anyanwu, an earth mother figure with extraordinary powers. Their relationship progresses from power struggles and tests of will to mutual need and dependency. Doro's tyranny ends when one of his children, the heroine of *Mind of My Mind*, destroys him and unites the Patternists with care and compassion. The rest of the "Patternist" novels take place in the future. In *Patternmaster*, two brothers fight for the role of Patternmaster, the one who controls the telepathic network that unites the Patternists. Meanwhile, a group of humans genetically mutated by a mysterious disease attacks the Patternist community and threatens its destruction. *Clay's Ark* explains the origin of the disease and how it came to Earth. This novel reflects Butler's interest in the psychological traits of men and women. Set on an alien planet, *Survivor* examines human attitudes toward racial and ethnic dif-

ferences and their effects on two alien creatures. Alanna, the human protagonist, triumphs over racial prejudice and enslavement by teaching her alien captors tolerance and respect for individuality. *Kindred* (1979) departs from the "Patternist" series yet shares its focus on male/female relationships and racial matters. The novel focuses on Dana, a contemporary African American writer who is transported to a pre-Civil War plantation several times over the course of the work. She suffers as a victim of both her slave-owning ancestor who summons her to the past when he is in danger, and of the slaveholding age in which she finds herself trapped for increasingly lengthy periods of time.

Known collectively as the *Xenogenesis* trilogy, the novels *Dawn* (1987), *Adulthood Rites* (1988), and *Imago* (1989) take place in an apocalyptic future. The trilogy begins following a nuclear war that has destroyed Earth. A group of aliens called the Oankali has begun to mate with the surviving humans. Critics have interpreted these three novels, published together in 2000 as *Lilith's Brood*, as reflecting a positive analysis of society as evolutionary and dynamic. In Butler's story "Speech Sounds," violence and anarchy erupt after a disease robs humans of their ability to communicate; while some lose the ability to speak, others can no longer read or write. Butler's acclaimed novella "Bloodchild," anthologized in the collection *Bloodchild and Other Stories* (1995), explores patriarchal society. This story presents a world inhabited by human-like beings called Terrans who live on "Preserves" provided for them by a government run by a monstrous race of creatures known as Tlics. The Tlics employ the Terrans for breeding, requiring each Terran family to sacrifice at least one of its sons to function as a "host" for Tlic eggs; the process produces highly desirable offspring but sometimes results in the death of the host. The novella centers on the relationship between T'Gatoi, a government official who manages the Preserves, and Gan, the Terran boy who serves as the host for her eggs. *Parable of the Sower* (1993), the first novel in Butler's "Earthseed" series, is presented in the form of a journal written by a young black woman named Lauren Olamina. This work takes place in California of the 2020s. Society has descended into chaos: food, gasoline, and electricity are in short supply, and crime and drug use have overwhelmed Los Angeles. While Laura witnesses the destruction of her neighborhood and the death of her family, she creates a new religion called Earthseed based on the idea that "God is change." Eventually Laura flees southern California and heads north, where she establishes an Earthseed community named Acorn. In *Parable of the Talents*, a Christian fundamentalist organization founded by a newly elected president of the United States threatens to destroy the thriving Acorn community. *Fledgling* (2005) concerns a race of vampires called Ina who maintain symbiotic relationships with humans—they rely on human blood to

survive, and they also give pleasure and health benefits to the people they bite. The novel follows Shori, a 53-year-old Ina with the appearance of a 10-year-old black girl, who must flee for her life after the murder of her family.

CRITICAL RECEPTION

Critics applaud Butler's lack of sentimentality in her work, and respond favorably to her direct treatment of subjects that science fiction writers have not traditionally addressed. As Patricia Melzer has written, "Butler emphasizes that the embracing of difference does not only enhance the quality of human interactions, but that it is an act of survival and of necessity if humankind wants to end conditions of hate and violence." Several reviewers have asserted that Butler's fiction contains an underlying theme of slavery, but Butler herself has disputed this. In an interview with Stephen W. Potts, she has stated, "The only places I am writing about slavery is where I actually say so." Critics have noted Butler's ambiguous endings that leave open possibilities and limitations for mankind, with Jim Miller having observed that "Whether she is dealing with the role of medical science, biological determinism, the politics of disease, or the complex interrelations of race, class, and gender, Butler's dystopian imagination challenges us to think the worst in complex ways while simultaneously planting utopian seeds of hope." As the most prominent female science fiction writer in a field dominated by men, Butler has garnered praise for the feminist themes in her writing. She has also earned recognition for her role as a trailblazer for African-American authors in the genre of science fiction. According to Sandra Y. Govan, Butler "is a writer very conscious of the power of art to affect social perceptions and behavior and a writer unafraid to admit that, when appropriate, she borrows from tradition, that she takes and reshapes African and Afro-American cultural values, that she has heuristic and didactic impulses which she transforms into art."

PRINCIPAL WORKS

- **Patternmaster* (novel) 1976
- **Mind of My Mind* (novel) 1977
- **Survivor* (novel) 1978
- Kindred* (novel) 1979
- **Wild Seed* (novel) 1980
- **Clay's Ark* (novel) 1984
- †*Dawn* (novel) 1987
- †*Adulthood Rites* (novel) 1988
- †*Imago* (novel) 1989

The Evening and the Morning and the Night (novella) 1991

‡*Parable of the Sower* (novel) 1993

Bloodchild and Other Stories (novella, short stories, and essays) 1995

‡*Parable of the Talents* (novel) 1998

§*Lilith's Brood* (novels) 2000

Fledgling: A Novel (novel) 2005

||*Seed to Harvest* (novels) 2007

*These works comprise the "Patternist" series.

†These works comprise the *Xenogenesis* trilogy.

‡These works comprise the "Earthseed" series.

§This work contains the complete *Xenogenesis* series: *Dawn*, *Adulthood Rites*, and *Imago*.

||This work contains the novels *Wild Seed*, *Mind of My Mind*, *Clay's Ark*, and *Patternmaster*.

CRITICISM

Sandra Y. Govan (essay date spring-summer 1986)

SOURCE: Govan, Sandra Y. "Homage to Tradition: Octavia Butler Renovates the Historical Novel." *ME-LUS* 13, nos. 1-2 (spring-summer 1986): 79-96.

[In the following essay, Govan places Butler's novels in the tradition of slave narratives and historical novels.]

Despite the fact that her novels are sometimes difficult to find, Octavia Butler has nonetheless firmly established herself as a major new voice in science fiction. The five published novels of her "Patternist" saga, depicting over a vast time span both the genesis and evolution of Homo Superior (psionically enhanced human beings) and his mutated bestial counterpart; the one novel, *Kindred*, outside the serial story; and the short stories, all speak exceptionally well for Butler's artistry and growth.¹

Through the interviews she has given, the articles she's written, the pieces published about her, and of course, her novels, Octavia Butler emerges as a forthright and honest author. She is a writer very conscious of the power of art to affect social perceptions and behavior and a writer unafraid to admit that, when appropriate, she borrows from tradition, that she takes and reshapes African and Afro-American cultural values, that she has heuristic and didactic impulses which she transforms into art. With *Wild Seed* and *Kindred*, for instance, Butler seizes the possibilities inherent in the historical novel and the Black tradition in autobiography. She adapts these forms to produce extrapolative fiction

which, for its impetus, looks to an historically grounded African-American past rather than to a completely speculative future. On the surface, this seems indeed a curious connection, this linkage of future fiction to the past. Regardless of the surface appearance, the format itself, extrapolating or projecting from social structures of the past to those possible in the future, is not new (Isaac Asimov's *Foundation* series is a model precursor). What is new and distinctive is Butler's handling of the format or frame, her particular choice of past cultures to extrapolate from. She has chosen to link science fiction not only to anthropology and history, via the historical novel, but directly to the Black American slavery experiences via the slave narrative. This is a fundamental departure for science fiction as genre. *Wild Seed* and *Kindred* demonstrate this new configuration aptly. However, before engaging in an immediate discussion of these two novels, it seems appropriate to delay the discussion momentarily in order to better frame it with some critical definitions.

Most of us probably have seen the historical novel as a continuation of the realistic social novel; we associate it with Sir Walter Scott or Charles Dickens, or perhaps with Margaret Mitchell or Margaret Walker. We know that its setting and characters are established in a particular historic context—the age of chivalry or the French Revolution or the antebellum American South. Casual readers of the European or Western historical novel are usually content to forgo the kind of rigorous economic, philosophic, political analysis that Georg Lukács, in *The Historical Novel*, brings to his discussion of the form's origins. Lukács argues, for instance, that of prime importance to the historical novel's development "is the increasing historical awareness of the decisive role played in human progress by the struggle of classes in history." In his analysis, knowledge of "the rise of modern bourgeois society" from "the class struggles between nobility and bourgeoisie, . . . class struggles which raged throughout the entire 'idyllic Middle Ages' and whose last decisive stage was the great French Revolution," is crucial to the historical novel (27-28).

Using Sir Walter Scott as his archetypal model, Lukács outlines Scott's principal contributions to the form: "the broad delineation of manners and circumstances attendant upon events, the dramatic character of action and, in close connection with this, the new and important role of dialog in the novel" (31). For my immediate purposes however, Lukács' remarks are most germane when he says the authentic historical novel is "specifically historical," that its history is not "mere costumery," and that it presents an "artistically faithful image of a concrete historical epoch" (19).

Slave narratives, the first Black autobiographies, have a great deal in common with our understanding of the attributes of the historical novel. Each narrative is

"specifically historical" (Marion Starling has traced narratives as far back as 1703 and followed them forward to 1944; their peak period was 1836-1860).² The historical circumstances of each text are so far removed from "mere costumery" that extensive, often intrusive, documentation of the ex-slave's veracity is quite frequently an established feature of the text, part of what Robert Stepto refers to as the "authenticating" strategy of the narrative voice (35). And without question, slave narrators strove to produce a powerful yet "faithful image of a concrete historical epoch." Perhaps only a handful of the six thousand extant narratives became artistic successes, works with the strength and quality of Frederick Douglass' *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* or Harriet Jacobs' *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* or the dramatic tale of William and Ellen Craft's *Running a Thousand Miles for Freedom*.³ But successful literary works or not, most slave narratives depicted faithfully and graphically the brutal reality of slave life and each showed the direct impact of slavery, that peculiar institution, not only on the narrator's own life and that of his/her family but also the debilitating and corrupting effects of such an institution on those who held power within it, slaveholders.

Because the slave narrative and the historical novel, especially the historical novel which concerns itself with life in the antebellum South, share some common characteristics, a clear relationship between them may be easily established. For instance, Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is unquestionably indebted to the life story of Josiah Henson, fugitive slave. But, of more importance than demonstrating a relationship between the historical novel and the slave narrative is our understanding of the specific function slave narratives served. Unlike the novel, whose primary purpose was entertainment, the primary function of the slave narrative was to educate and politicize in no uncertain terms. At the height of their popularity, slave narratives, called "those literary nigritudes—little tadpoles of the press which run to editions of hundreds of thousands,"⁴ were highly influential tools used by abolitionist societies here and abroad to mold public opinion, to bend the public mind toward the task of eliminating slavery. As a group, slave narratives exhibited these characteristics: they focused on the special experience of racial oppression; they were intended to be records of resistance; they employed a variety of literary/rhetorical devices including concrete imagery and diction, understatement, polemical voice, and satire to describe vividly the actual conditions of slavery; they looked at the self outside the typical western perspective of the individual and chose instead to recognize or represent the self in relationship to the oppressed group with ties and responsibilities to group members.⁵ Slave narrators were conscious of their own cultural schizophrenia, their burden of blackness in white America, or, as W. E.

B. DuBois said in his seminal *The Souls of Black Folk*, their "double consciousness," their two "warring selves in one dark skin."

Slave narrators were conscious, too, that they were presenting objective fact through the filter of their own subjective experience. Taken collectively, their narratives frequently show recurrent patterns. There is a loss of innocence wherein the slave, usually as a child, recollects his or her first awareness of the personal impact of slavery. There are detailed descriptions of various phases of bondage as the slave witnesses them and then experiences them. There is the punishment factor, the resistance motif, the glimpse of life-in-the-quarters. There is also the slave's quest for education, the slave's encounter with abusive sexual misconduct and immoral behavior, the slave's recognition of religious hypocrisy and the adulterated Christianity practiced by "Christian" slave holders, the slave's escape attempts, and, finally, the slave's successful escape. Of course, this pattern varied from narrative to narrative and oftentimes, what was stressed depended upon the discretion and sensibilities of the narrator or, sometimes, on the concerns or dictates of an editor or an amanuensis.

Butler's *Wild Seed* and *Kindred* are rich texts which neatly define the junction where the historical novel, the slave narrative, and science fiction meet. The two novels build upon tenets clearly identified with the expected conventions or norms of the genres she employs. Then, because Butler's forte is extrapolative fiction, we can easily see the melding as each novel moves us through the recreated, historically plausible, viable, yet totally speculative alternative reality which is the realm of science fiction—as distinct from the codified expectations we have of fiction which operates from the realistic or naturalistic realm. To phrase it succinctly, Octavia Butler's work stands on the foundation of traditional form and proceeds to renovate that form.

Wild Seed is not about Arthurian England or the French Revolution. Instead, it is about alienation and loneliness; about needs, dreams, ambitions, and power. It is also about love. Africa provides the cultural backdrop for the initial interaction between plot and character. Although the opening setting of *Wild Seed* is 17th-century west Africa, specifically the Niger river region of eastern Nigeria, the setting shifts through the course of the novel and we follow the lives of Butler's two immortal central characters, Doro, a four thousand year old Nubian, and Anyanwu, a three hundred year old Onitsha priestess, through the Middle Passage voyage to life in a colonial New England village, to life on an antebellum Louisiana plantation, to California just after the Civil War. In the course of two hundred years of movement we are privy to a broad and vivid historical canvas. Again, however, Butler's use of history and

cultural anthropology do more than simply illuminate the text or serve as mere coloration. Both disciplines are intrinsic to our understanding of character, theme, and action. Their use also permits Butler to employ a more original approach to the old theme of the trials of immortality, the theme of the spiritual disintegration of the man who cannot die.

The specifically African segment of *Wild Seed* only occupies four chapters of the text but an African ethos dominates the whole book. The novel opens in 1690. Doro has returned to Africa to look for one of his "seed villages," one of several communities he has carefully nurtured, composed of people with nascent or lateral mutant abilities. They know things or hear things or see things others cannot and so in their home communities, they are misfits or outcasts or "witches" because of their abilities. In his autonomous villages wherein he collects and breeds these people, Doro is their protector; his motives, however, are far from altruistic for he needs his people in a very real way. He "enjoys their company and sadly, they provide his most satisfying kills."⁶ Doro's mutant power is the ability to transfer his psychic essence to any human host; thus, he kills to live. And, as he kills, he literally "feeds" off the spirit of the host body. But whenever Doro kills or "takes" his own kind, he gains more sustenance from their heightened psychic energy than he derives from the "taking" of ordinary non-mutant human beings.

The village Doro returns to has been destroyed by slave hunters and as he contemplates the carnage and thinks about tracking and regrouping the captured survivors, his gift of attraction to other mutants, an innate tracking sense or "telescent" subtly makes him conscious of the distant Anyanwu. He finds himself pulled toward her. Butler's narration here adeptly conveys both character and place.

He wandered southwest toward the forest, leaving as he had arrived—alone, unarmed, without supplies, accepting the savanna and later the forest as easily as he accepted any terrain. He was killed several times—by disease, by animals, by hostile people. This was a harsh land. Yet he continued to move southwest, unthinkingly veering away from the section of the coast where his ship awaited him. After a while, he realized it was no longer his anger at the loss of his seed village that drove him. It was something new—an impulse, a feeling, a kind of mental undertow pulling at him.

(9)

It is a subtle awareness of Anyanwu which attracts Doro and pulls him to a country he has not visited in three hundred years. When he finally meets and talks with her, Doro suspects immediately that they are distant kin, that she is "wild seed," the fruit of [his] peoples' passing by [hers] during one of Africa's many periods

of flux. Ironically, Anyanwu herself supports this idea when she recalls a half remembered and whispered rumor that she was not father's child but had been begotten by a passing stranger. Originally, Doro's people were the Kush, an ancient people part of the vast Ethiopian Empire (Williams, 92). Anyanwu's people are the Igbo or Onitsha Ibo people of eastern Nigeria. Traditional Onitsha society, explains ethnologist Richard Henderson, was a "community strongly concerned with maintaining oral accounts of the past." Henderson tells us that "Onitsha lacked an elaborate mythology as its cultural charter, and instead emphasized a quasi-historical 'ideology' based on stories tracing the founding of its villages to prehistoric migrations and political fusions" (31). We see an example of this quasi-history when Doro questions Anyanwu, trying to place her in his long personal history. "'Your people have crossed the Niger'—he hesitated, frowning, then gave the river its proper name—'the Orumili. When I saw them last, they lived on the other side in Benin'" (14). At this point Butler deliberately employs the omniscient narrative voice in conjunction with Doro's to signal the embedded signs of heritage and culture she wants her audience to note. Anyanwu's near poetic reply compresses years of African history, years of tribal warfare and tribal development, years of gradual adaptation to change. "We crossed long ago. . . . Children born in that time have grown old and died. We were Ado and Idu, subject to Benin before the crossing. Then we fought Benin and crossed the river to Onitsha to become free people, our own masters" (14).

Butler's Anyanwu is partly based on a legendary Ibo heroine, Atagbusi, a village protector and a magical "shape shifter." Henderson, whom Butler acknowledges as a source,⁷ says that Atagbusi "is said to have been a daughter of the tiny clan called Okposi-eke, a descent group renowned for its native doctors and responsible for magical protection of the northwestern bush outskirts of the town. She was believed capable, as are other persons of Okposi-eke, of transforming herself into various large and dangerous animals, and it is believed that she concocted the medicine that protects the community on its western front" (311).

Like the legendary Atagbusi, Butler's Anyanwu is also a shape-shifter, a woman capable of physical metamorphosis. She can become a leopard, a python, an eagle, a dolphin, a dog, or a man. For self-protection, most of Anyanwu's powers are hidden from the villagers. And to reduce fear of the inexplicable, Anyanwu alters her body gradually so that she seemingly ages at the same rate as the various husbands she has married over the years, the same rate as the people around her. But whenever she chooses Anyanwu can regain her natural body, that of a sturdy, beautiful, twenty-year-old woman. Anyanwu is the village healer, a doctor for her

people. She grows traditional herbs to make the customary medicines even though her power to heal does not always require the use of herbs. A respected and powerful person in the village hierarchy, Anyanwu's place is well defined.

She served her people by giving them relief from pain and sickness. Also, she enriched them by allowing them to spread word of her abilities to neighboring people. She was an oracle. A woman through whom a god spoke. Strangers paid heavily for her services. They paid her people, then they paid her. That was as it should have been. Her people could see that they benefited from her presence, and that they had reason to fear her abilities. Thus she was protected from them—and they from her—most of the time.

(10)

Anyanwu's sense of protection, her maternal instinct of care and concern for her people, is part of the African ethos which pervades the text. Of paramount importance to Anyanwu is the well being and safety of her kin—her children and her grandchildren. This is entirely in keeping with African tradition which holds "children are worth." Henderson affirms this with the observation that the Onitsha are "rooted firmly in notions of filiation and descent. When Onitsha people assess the career of a person, their primary criterion is the number of children he has raised to support and survive him. Children are extolled in proverbs above any other good, even above the accumulation of wealth; 'children first, wealth follows' is a proverb affirming the route to success" (106).

After three hundred years, ten husbands and forty-seven children, Anyanwu's descendants people the land. Their security is the lever Doro uses to pry Anyanwu away from her homeland. He appeals first to her innate sense of isolation and loneliness, proclaiming her place is among her own kind, then he appeals to her maternal spirit, promising children with genetic traits like their mother. "A mother," he tells her, "should not have to watch her children grow old and die. If you live, they should live. It is the fault of their fathers that they die. Let me give you children who will live!" (26) Reluctantly and somewhat apprehensively, Anyanwu agrees to leave the village with Doro. But, when Doro speculates that her children, although they manifest no sign of her mutant ability, are also his peoples' children and that perhaps they should accompany them to the new world, Anyanwu becomes adamant—"you will not touch my children"—and remains so until Doro pledges he will not harm her children.

Unwittingly, Anyanwu's resolute stand in protection of her children gives Doro yet another lever to use against her. Totally devoid of scruples, and possessing a keen insight into her psychological makeup, quite early in their journey to the coast Doro plots the strategy he will

use to bind Anyanwu to him. It is a time-encrusted masculine ploy. He will get her pregnant; then, with a new child,

her independence would vanish without a struggle. She would do whatever he asked then to keep the child safe. She was too valuable to kill, and if he abducted any of her descendants, she would no doubt goad him into killing her. But once she was isolated in America with an infant to care for, she would learn submissiveness.

(30)

Doro's power play, his perception of the most immediate method he can use to control Anyanwu reflects his understanding of cultural ties, of the "appropriate manners and customs" which are part of Anyanwu's historical legacy. Though a powerful woman on her own turf, essentially Anyanwu leaves her tribal homeland to protect her kin.

Of course, Anyanwu never does learn submissiveness. Although she and Doro share a link forged in a bygone age, his name means "the east—the direction from which the sun comes" and hers means "the sun," they are not alike. Anyanwu is distinct from any woman Doro has encountered in thirty-seven hundred years. She is his female counterpart with one important distinction—she is not a predator. Her powers have long made her independent notwithstanding her emergence from a culture where wives are considered the property of husbands. In one sense, however, Doro assesses Anyanwu correctly; she remains in his compound for years, she even marries as he directs (primarily out of fear and a strong survival instinct); but, she remains, too, for the sake of the children she bears and out of her concern for the strange, sometimes pitiable, sometimes warped or dangerous children who are the products of Doro's mutant communities. Much of *Wild Seed's* tension is controlled by Doro's efforts to break Anyanwu, to use and then destroy her. She resists and fights back with the resources she has—her own strength of will. Again, however, the struggle is not solely for her sake but also for the safety of the children, the kin she forever shields.

African kinship networks seem to be the major structural device Butler uses to build dramatic complexity in this novel. When the principal characters first meet, the question of identity is crucial. Following the customary "who are you?" comes the equally important "who are your people?" The latter question springs from the African sense of connectedness to a specific place, a specific people, or a specific heritage. As indicated above, Doro traces his origins to the ancient Kush, one of the three great sub-Saharan societies. Anyanwu ties the history of her people, through wars and unification, to the powerful kingdom of Benin.

The importance of kinship is demonstrated repeatedly. When Anyanwu embarks on an attenuated version of the slaves trade's Middle Passage, she happens upon

two captured slaves she can actually help. Fortunately, they have been sold to Doro. It is their good fortune in this sense: Okoye is the son of Anyanwu's youngest daughter. Udenkwo, a young mother stolen from her village and separated from her five-year-old son, is a more distant relative. Anyanwu tells Udenkwo to trace her lineage through her clan and her male ancestry, a process which suggests subtly the value Africans attached to collective identity, familial bonding, and communal history. It happens that one of Udenkwo's ancestors was Anyanwu's eighth son, another, Anyanwu's third husband. (Here Butler slips in a quick feminist thrust: although Udenkwo traces her patrilineage, it is her matrilineal descent, her connection to Anyanwu, literally an earth mother, which saves her.) Because both Okoye and Udenkwo are Anyanwu's descendants, they will be spared the more brutal aspects of slavery. They will not be separated or sold again to some terrifying white plantation master. They will not be assaulted or beaten by Doro or his people. And although they are kinsmen, they will be permitted to marry despite the idea of "abomination" such an act connotes for Anyanwu. The marriage will permit them to offer each other comfort in their new and strange surroundings for as Doro says of his seed people, "our kind have a special need to be either with our kinsmen or others who are like us" (61).

The initial contact with the new world is not quite as traumatic for Anyanwu as it was for true slaves but still, she must cope with complete change. She must reckon with strange and restrictive western clothing, with a new diet (animal milk—another "abomination"), with learning a new language and new customs among a new and foreign people. And she must make all these adjustments in a land where color automatically determines status. The New England village Doro brings Anyanwu to is Wheatley, ostensibly named for an English family Doro supports and a principal cash crop. Butler slips in another quick thrust here for "Wheatley" is an allusion to young Phillis Wheatley, the child stolen from Africa who became known as the "Sable Muse" and was recognized as a significant contributor to 18th-century American poetry. Wheatley, however, is significant for another reason: life in the village cushions the impact of Anyanwu's contact with America's hardening race and color caste system. Doro's villagers are a racial amalgam—Blacks, Indians, mixed bloods, and whites, a mixture not uncommon in the northeastern states before the increase in the slave trade. Anyanwu finds most of the villagers are friendly and also that village society is tight-knit, functioning roughly in a manner that approximates the familiar rhythms of clan life she had known. Relatives within the compound live with or near other relatives. People who share a common language are allowed to group together. Where no blood or tribal ties previously exist, newly formed families function as extended family and

the weak, insecure, or unstable are placed with those who will care for them. The villagers see Doro as a guardian spirit who protects them from Indian raids and like disasters even as he controls their lives. They even make blood sacrifices to him for he takes from among them when he needs a new body. Yet despite the death he inevitably brings, whenever Doro is present in his compound he receives all the homage due a titled tribal elder with many children. And in fact, he has several children within the village.

The most serious clash of wills between Doro and Anyanwu is about the value assigned kinship. Doro's genetics program respects no tradition or socially sanctioned belief. He breeds people, related or not, to improve the pedigree of his stock. When in Wheatley he commands Anyanwu to marry and bear children by his son, and suggests that later she will also bear *his* children, Anyanwu withdraws in total revulsion—a greater abomination she cannot imagine. A century will pass, Anyanwu will have escaped Doro and formed her own special protected community (composed of mutants linked by blood and heightened psychic sensitivity) on a Louisiana plantation where she is the master, before she and Doro can come to civil terms again. They forge a new alliance based on respect and compromise. She recognizes he must kill to live but he learns genuine respect for her feelings and abilities and he also realizes that he must cease killing those of his own who serve him best or any of her close relatives. For Doro to regain Anyanwu's companionship, he must salvage what humanity remains to him.

If kinship is an underlying motif contributing to the dramatic tension in *Wild Seed*, it is clearly the focal point of *Kindred*, the motif underscoring the theme. *Kindred* is outside the "Patternist" saga, yet it shares with *Wild Seed* three common denominators: Black and white characters who move through an historically viable setting, one which explores the tangled complexities of interracial mixing during slavery and beyond; linkage through phenomenal psychic energy; an emphasis on blood ties and the responsibilities that result. The bonds of blood in *Kindred* however are not created by exotic mutation nor genetic engineering. They are the result of plain undisguised lust and the raw exertion of power.

Kindred is a neatly packaged historical novel which uses scenes of plantation life and the techniques of the slave narrative to frame the plot. Dana Franklin, the heroine, is a Black woman, a writer who lives in Los Angeles, California, a woman very much of the present. Her family's roots are in Maryland; a fact made all the more pertinent when Dana finds herself traversing time and geography to move between twentieth-century California and nineteenth-century Maryland. The reason she moves is simple—Rufus Weylin "calls" her to him