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INTER-TEXTUAL

TRAVEL-ISM AS AN ESSENCE OF IMPERIALISM IN OCTAVIA ESTELLE BUTLER'S *KINDRED* (1979 [2003]), *WILD SEED* (1980) AND *DAWN* (1987)

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Abstract:

This essay studies Octavia Estelle Butler's Kindred (1979 [2003]), Wild Seed (1980) and Dawn (1987) with a postcolonial perspective. It questions the meaning of the narratives of travel through time and space in Butler's science fiction novels. On the one hand, the postcolonial reading of these novels has helped discovering the moral duty in traveling to the past, its humanitarian and didactic function. On the other hand, it has demonstrated that these same narratives reinforce an imperialistic discourse in favor of cultural imperialism by the redemptive mission assigned to the travelers and their ability to change the social order. Finally, these narratives have been portrayed as a means of political domination for they present the power of imperialist states that conquer, change the mode of leadership in the conquered territories and deprived the native people of all kind of power.

Key Words: Moral duty, humanitarian, cultural imperialism, cultural trauma, mimicry, redemptive mission

Résumé:

Cet article étudie les œuvres d'Octavia Estelle Butler telles que Kindred (1979 [2003]), Wild Seed (1980) et Dawn (1987) sous une perspective postcoloniale. Il interroge le sens des récits de voyages à travers le temps et l'espace dans les romans de science-fiction de Butler. D'un côté, la lecture postcoloniale de ces romans nous a aidé à découvrir le devoir moral à travers le voyage de retour dans le passé, sa fonction humanitaire et didactique. D'un autre côté, il a été démontré que ces mêmes récits renforcent un discours impérialiste en faveur de l'impérialisme culturel à travers la mission rédemptrice assigné aux voyageurs et leur capacité à changer l'ordre social. Enfin, ces récits ont été dépeints comme un moyen de domination politique vu qu'ils présentent le pouvoir des états impérialistes qui conquièrent, change le mode de leadership dans les territoires conquis et dépoillent les populations natives de toutes sortes de pouvoir.

Mots clés : devoir moral, humanitaire, impérialisme culturel, trauma culturel, mimique, mission rédemptrice

Introduction

This essay questions the meaning of the narratives of travel through time and space in Octavia Estelle Butler's novels *Kindred* (1979 [2003]), *Wild Seed* (1980) and *Dawn* (1987). It postulates that these different travels constitute segmented parts of a general politics of imperialism. Traveling, here, appears as an expression of power, the exhibition of scientific, technological, and cultural power over the people of the territories accessed. In this way, traveling bears a political agenda and becomes a theoretical discourse of imperialism, hence the ‘-ism’ added to ‘travel’ in the formulation of the present topic. The political discourse of dominion underpinning these narratives calls for a postcolonial study of Butler's narratives of travel. Specifically, the political discourse of dominion creates the conditions of the examination of the relations of power that the travelers hold on the indigenous populations that they visit. What is the moral foundation of traveling in Butler's narratives? What is the meaning of imperialism in traveling through time and space?

In her “Gender and Race in Science Fiction and the Emergence of Afrofuturism” (2018), Tosaya C. Lando makes this comment upon James Cameron's film *Avatar* (2010):

Avatar is a film about the colonization of Pandora and how the character Jake Sully suffers from a type of “white savior” complex in regards to Na’vi within the film and how the Na’vi are in a sense, the “white man’s burden” or sometimes even the ‘white man’s nemesis’. The “white savior” complex occurs when the humans inhabit Pandora and teach the native people English and the human way of living, to save them from their savage ways. The “white man’s burden” occurs when the humans infantilize the Na’vi people as if this alien species hasn’t been surviving on its own, without outside help of the human race. And finally, the Na’vi become the “white man’s nemesis” when they do not comply with the demands of the humans and decide to fight back for their land to avoid colonization. (Tosaya, 2018: 49)

In this comment, Tosaya retraces the story of *Avatar* (2010) while underlining the colonialist discourse underpinning it. In fact, the story of *Avatar* is the story of imperialism codified by the character of Jake Sully, a white man who personifies the imperialistic perspective of white and Eurocentric domination. The expression of the “white savior” complex shows enough the complex of superiority so inherent in Eurocentrism. Besides, this film expresses the upcoming of human beings in a native Na’vi land. This narrative fictionalizes a travel adventure with an imperialism objective. In *Reason in History: A General Introduction to the Philosophy of History* (1953), Georg

Wilhem Friedrich Hegel has depicted a close relation between a nation's powers to its ability to ship through the seas to other territories.

Therefore, in Hegel's opinion the power of a nation; its civilization is bound to its ability of projection towards other civilizations. Here, it becomes evident that the idea of colonial conquest is celebrated as a blatant expression of power. In such a context, the cultural domination becomes the rule in imperialist countries who perceive by this simple fact the essence of their power. Evidently, cultural subjugation entails cultural hybridity. This reality is what allows Bhabha K. Homi to quote Bernard Williams' confession about the dynamism of culture in his *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy* when he recognizes that: "A fully individual culture is at best a rare thing" (Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 1994: 125). By this confession Williams sheds light on the progressiveness of culture when it encounters a dominant one. This process is also what Bhabha conceptualizes as "hybridity".

Consequently, this essay will be read with a postcolonial perspective. Postcolonialism is a political and literary theory that proposes to analyze the complex relation that people of former colonized countries have with the culture of colonial powers. It also offers an avenue to appreciate how anti-colonialist ideologies are used to resist the process of othering applied by the western Eurocentric vision. Concretely, Bhabha K. Homi's concept of hybridity will be used in the course of the study. In *The Location of Culture* (1994), Bhabha K. Homi contends that: "Hybridity is a problematic of colonial representation and individuation that reverses the effects of the colonialist disavowal, so that other 'denied' knowledges enter upon the dominant discourse and estrange the basis of its authority – its rules of recognition" (Homi, 1994: 114). Bhabha demonstrates by this contention that hybridity is the result of the encounter of outer cultural values with one's own cultural values where the interaction does not give place to an assimilation but rather an influence. In this sense, hybridity appears as the conjugation of the upcoming of an imperialist cultural and civilizational movement with the reaction of the dominated people's own cultural and civilizational values.

In its manifestation, hybridity is less overwhelming than the creation of the "subaltern" according to Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's concept released in her essay entitled "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1988). In the course of this analysis, the concept of subaltern will be used to

decipher the verticality of the reaction of the imperialistic impulse underpinning travels in Butler's narratives.

Admittedly, Butler's narratives of travel show evidences of a verticality of power by the travelers in their interaction with the native people of the territories they access. The fact is that this verticality is expressed differently. In *Kindred* (1979 [2003]), it is the story of Edana Franklin nicknamed Dana, an African American young woman who finds herself abducted from her peaceable life as a young married to the White man Kevin Franklin in the California of 1976 to the antebellum Maryland of 1815. Such abduction that she cannot herself explain scientifically will extend to six different times curiously each time when a young white boy named Rufus Weylin's life is at stake. She will discover later that Rufus is nothing else than her own ancestors. This experience depicts the power of postmemory on historical facts for the travels of Dana are triggered by a kind of psycho-historic force independently of her will.

As far as *Wild Seed* (1980) is concerned, it depicts the travel of an African demigod called Doro and his female counterpart called Anyanwu. Both of them make a travel to America at the occasion of the Atlantic Slave Trade. Doro's mission was to create a community of people endowed with special qualities like telepathy and immortality. The problem is the struggle for domination between Doro and Anyanwu that seems very like "the battle of the sexes and the battle for dominion over racial groups" ("Dawn by Octavia E. Butler" in *Black American Literature Forum*, Vol. 23, N°2: 389) according to Adele S. Newson's words. If the issue of gender hierarchy is largely dealt in *Wild Seed* (1980), issue of racial domination may well analyzed in *Dawn* (1987).

In *Dawn* (1987), Butler fictionalizes a post-apocalyptic world nearly devastated by a global nuclear war. In that moment of the downfall of the human civilization, an extraterrestrial community called the Oankali come down on earth to try a saving adventure to preserve what remains of humanity. The problem is that the salvation of humanity by the Oankali aliens have a price; the acceptance of hybridity. This authoritarian political offer creates discrepancies that occasion interspecies conflicts.

Consequently, the study in this essay on the meaning of travel in Butler's science fiction novels will first make a focus on the moral sense of traveling back to the past. The second point will consist in deciphering the imperialist discourse of redemption contained in travel adventures

in works of science fiction and how it displays a complex of superiority. The last part will demonstrate how these narratives reinforce traveling as a means of political domination.

1. The Moral Sense of Traveling Back to the Past

Traveling back to history has always borne political discourses. These discourses vary from the more ideological to the more philosophical according to the meanings that they try to anchor in the reader's mind. In this vein, the narratives of travel in works of science fiction constitute themselves a literary aesthetic that portrays sociopolitical issues. As a matter of fact, the works of science fiction give an occasion for prospective studies as to sociopolitical issues that humanity may encounter. This function of the science fiction novels akin the study field of political science. Donald M. Hassler and Clyde Wilcox establish a link between the object of political science and the interest of science fiction in *In Political Science Fiction* (1997) in this analysis:

Political science often addresses many of the same questions as those raised in science fiction. Political theorists debate the role of the state and speculate about the nature of a just society. Their theories are sometimes fleshed out into hypothetical societies by those who write of political and social utopias. Theorists also write of the role of various social elements such as class and gender in the conduct of the state, and conduct "thought experiments" in which they imagine a world without these distinctions. Once again, science fiction writers frequently imagine worlds in which species change genders at will, in which class is irrelevant, in which various religious groups such as fundamentalist Christians or Muslims rule. Political theorists and science fiction writers alike are also continually aware of the role language itself plays in politics. (Hassler and Clyde 1997:10)

By this comparative study, Hassler and Clyde try to underline the link between the object of science fiction and political science. For them, the link between these two fields of study lies in their address to real sociopolitical issues with the objective to invent just and fair societies through the creation of "thought experiments" that are some kind of simulation for such societies. By the creation of such imaginative societies theorists of science fiction and political science aim to imagine future living conditions and the situations in which humankind will be projected. In so doing, science fiction as well as political science aim to inscribe the history of the future so as to prepare humanity to face these times. However, what happens when the present goes back to the past and thus becomes the future of the past?

Traveling back to the past implements the inscription of a moral duty. The moral duty at work in the adventures of traveling back to the past in Butlers' science fiction novels concern

primarily her *Kindred* (1979 [2003]). In this novel, Dana's return to the antebellum Maryland of 1815 is donned with an impetus to accomplish a moral duty; the restorative duty of the history of her ancestors subjugated by the ties of bondage. This restorative impetus sounds very like a response against the racist and colonialist discourse that founds the ideology that brought her ancestors to the New World now known as the United States of America. In the following passage, Dana as a young black woman of the California of 1976 is talking about one of her experiences of spatiotemporal travel from her own time to the antebellum Maryland in order to help a white boy: "It was time for me to get out of this house. I had done enough talking and learning and hoping to be transported home. It was clear that whatever power had used me to protect Rufus had not provided for my own protection". (Butler, *Kindred*, 1979 [2003]: 30).

This narrative breaks the colonial discourse of white superiority. The fact for a black and woman to save the life of a white boy is a narrative of resistance to racism and white complex of superiority. All the same, it enforces the idea of a moral duty as an impulse of the travel to the past. In fact, the spatiotemporal travel of Dana to the past happens many times in the novel and it curiously happens each time when Rufus Weylin's life is at stake. Despite the dangerousness of that antebellum period for Blacks, a kind of moral and spiritual force drives Dana to the past where she acknowledges that "Blacks here were assumed to be slaves unless they could prove they were free" (34).

This information provided by Dana on the social and identity condition of Blacks in the antebellum period sheds light on the callousness of the politics of othering implemented against black people during that period. That is why her travels back there echo an answer to that political system of othering a category of human beings with the direst manner. In this vein, Dana's travel back to the past appears as humanist mission.

The humanitarian aspect of Dana's travel back to the past crosses the racial or ideological borderlines. Indeed, these time travel narratives call for the preservation of life and liberty in a society where an entire racial community's liberty is alienated by a political system based on racism and its politics of othering the non-Whites. Then, the time travel narratives in *Kindred* (1979 [2003]) subvert the overtly Eurocentric foundations of the antebellum society. More importantly, they legitimate Dana's duty as a modern black woman to work for the preservation of the Humans Rights (to life and liberty). Endowed by this mission, even the life of Rufus Weylin, the son of

Tom Weylin, an authoritarian and demanding slaveholder is not neglected as recounted in this passage: "I was certain now. The boy drew me to him somehow when he got himself into more trouble than he could handle" (26). This confession demonstrates that what triggers her travels back to history is a psycho-historic force at the service of a humanist and even humanitarian value. Consequently these time travel narratives in Butler's novels have to be linked to highly moral sense for they echo a celebration of human life above the obscurantism of colonialism and its racist politics of othering.

In addition, traveling back to history in Butler's narratives vehicle the search of the re-establishment of the historical truth. In this vein, these narratives confirm a restorative work for the recovery of the historical memory of the black people. For many Blacks in America are still suffering the feeling of unhomeliness due to their uprooting from Africa and their unfortunate predicaments in the United States of America where the first experience of their ancestors is slavery. The "cultural trauma" (Eyerman, 2003:2), as would say Ron Eyerman, undergone by the black people during the antebellum period has caused African American to develop a double consciousness due to the heritage of slavery. As a matter of fact, the violence of their abduction from Africa to America and the mode of their integration in America by the system of slavery is an element that builds such an instability of their self. A testimony of this attack to the identity of the black people is recounted in this narratives:

In the benign atmosphere of the ship, all the slaves were recovering from their invariably harsh homeland experiences. Some of them had been kidnapped from their villages. Some had been sold for witchcraft or for other crimes of which they were usually not guilty. Some had been born slaves. Some had been enslaved during war. All had been treated harshly at some time during their captivity. All had lived through pain – more pain than they cared to remember. All had left kinsmen behind – husbands, wives, parents, children ...people they realized by now that they would not see again. (Butler, *Wild Seed in Seed to Harvest*, 2007: 64)

This account explains widely the different stories of those who have been sold in slavery. For fair, it is a more credible explanation on the different cases inasmuch as it is not a totalized account. In fact, this account reveals the intimate stories of snatched people in slavery. There are so many reasons, many causes evocated in this account that it forces a recognition as a credible account. The fact is that the traumatic circumstances of the snatching of the African people into slavery is an evident cause of the split of their self-esteem and thus their identity. It recalls the a technique of imperialism that consists in breaking the self-reliance of the colonized people so as to make of them very colonial subjects. The analysis of the all these narratives demonstrate that

Butler's narratives of travel to the past are endowed with a moral duty. The moral duty to which Butler invites the reader consists in appreciating not only a humanitarian duty but especially a restorative duty of the historical truth concerning the Blacks. However, these same narratives expose other issues that goes above the moral duty.

2. Travel-ism and Cultural Imperialism

The narratives of travel in Butler's science fiction novels reveal another reality. This reality concerns the imperialist discourse of redemption in travel adventures. In fact, traveling back to the past holds the imperialistic discourse of cultural imperialism. For instance, the travels of the extraterrestrial community of Oankali down on earth in order to save a humanity in the brink of extinction due to a global nuclear war appear as an expression of a cultural imperialism. The idea of cultural imperialism in this spatiotemporal travel is vindicated by the Oankali's authoritarian attitude on the Humans' life. In their point of view, the fact of having recuperated some Humans under the wreckage of their civilization allows them to manipulate their genes without their consent. Even the notion of consent is something of the more complex in the Oankali's understanding.

The Oankali assume that they are engaged in a redemptive mission. This mission that they regard as messianic enough could not have limits. That's why they take decision concerning the Humans' life without worrying their consent. For them they represent the superior civilization and the Humans are the subaltern, then the Humans cannot purport to question their social and political orientations. According to the Oankali's understanding, the orientations that they want to give to the humanity cannot suffer any kind of misleading. As an evidence, they will go far by imposing a social order to the human beings. This social order revolves around the implementation of hybridity in their culture, moral and sexual ethics:

Oankali crave difference. Humans persecute their different ones, yet they need them to give themselves definition and status. Oankali seek difference and collect it. They need it to keep themselves from stagnation and overspecialization. If you don't understand this, you will. You'll probably find both tendencies surfacing in your own behavior." And she had put her hand on his hair. "When you feel a conflict, try to go the Oankali way. Embrace difference." (Butler, *Adulthood Rites in Lilith's Brood*, 2000: 329)

In this passage, Lilith, the black woman and first awoken among the Humans is charged to be the main negotiator between the Humans and the Oankali. This task enables her to hold a position of a matriarch for the new humanity in reconstitution by the Oankali aliens. The briefing

offered by Lilith shows how valuable Oankali regard difference. In their sense, difference is unavoidable for progress because it helps them to ameliorate their nature. But also, difference provides them from regeneration. What is more is the pertinence of the Lilith's discourse on the importance of the presence of the Other in the apprehension of one's social status among humans.

Of course, she insisted on the fact that though we, Humans, are accustomed to bullying those we consider as unfit because of their difference, our individual and social identity is built in comparison to others. Even if this is true, the reality is that she insisted because she wants to legitimate Oankali's cultural values. Therefore, she is indulged in the strengthening of the Oankali's cultural imperialistic politics. By doing so, the Oankali aim to save the Humans from ignorance and cause them to mimicry their habits. It is like Dana who wanted to save medical doctors from their ignorance on the vector agent that transmits malaria in a time where microscopes where not yet invented: "Doctors of the day didn't know. Which probably meant that Nigel wouldn't believe me when I told him. After all, how could a thing as tiny as a mosquito make anybody sick? "Nigel, you know where I'm from, don't you?" (Butler, *Kindred*, 1979 [2003]: 203). In reality, coming from the future supposes the access to a more advanced technological and civilizational era.

This messianic perspective is the impulse of cultural imperialism that begets colonial subjects. The so called civilized people allege that they want to save savage-like people and then starts their alienation indeed. One of these allegations concern the salvation of the so called people of those they regard as barbaric. The othering process consisting in presenting the other as barbaric is inherent in every imperialistic culture. The Oankali, for example, postulate that without their help humanity will not know a renaissance. At the end they become the worst oppressors of humanity. However, at the beginning they allege that their help is the surer offer for humanity's reconstruction:

This is my home. You could call it a ship—a vast one compared to the ones your people have built. What it truly is doesn't translate. You'll be understood if you call it a ship. It's in orbit around your Earth, somewhat beyond the orbit of Earth's moon. As for how many humans are here: all of you who survived your war. We collected as many as we could. The ones we didn't find in time died of injury, disease, hunger, radiation, cold... We found them later."

She believed him. Humanity in its attempt to destroy itself had made the world unlivable. She had been certain she would die even though she had survived the bombing without a scratch. She had considered her survival a misfortune—a promise of a more lingering death. And now..? (Butler, *Dawn in Lilith's Brood*, 2000: 14 – 15)

This passage exemplifies the expression of the Oankali's super power over humankind. They are presented as the unique way out if they want to escape the achievement of the apocalypse trigger by the nuclear bombing. Their narrative is so convincing that even Lilith seems to be absolutely conquered by their project. Lilith's loss of confident in humanity' ability to rebirth counting on its own force in favor of an exterior help incarnated by the Oankali is symptomatic of somebody who is unhomed. This feeling of unhomeliness is shared by all the latterly awaken Humans who see themselves caught in a radical change of paradigm politically as well as socially.

As a matter of fact, the travel adventures in Butler's novels give vent to the subversion of the sociopolitical order. Most of the time these subversions pave the way to a reconfiguration of the social order according to the dominant forces' ideological order. Such examples can be found in *Adulthood Rites* where the Oankali aliens at the height of domination stated clearly the objective of their intervention on earth as such:

“Families will change, Lilith—are changing. A complete construct family will be a female, an ooloi, and children. Males will come and go as they wish and as they find welcome.”

“But they'll have no homes.”

“A home like this would be a prison to them. They'll have what they want, what they need.”

“The ability to be fathers to their kids?”

Nikanj paused. “They might choose to keep contact with their children. They won't live with them permanently—and no construct, male or female, young or old, will feel that as a deprivation. It will always be many more females and ooloi than males”. It rustled its head and body tentacles. “Trade means change. Bodies change. Ways of living must change. Did you think your children would only look different?” (Butler, *Adulthood Rites in Lilith's Brood*, 2000: 260)

This dialogue between Lilith and Nikanj shows very openly that the core reasons of the Oankali's intervention on Earth is to subvert Humans sociopolitical functioning while instituting their own sociopolitical order. This imperialistic vision of the construction of people's history and culture partakes in a very politics of universalism. By this act, the Oankali want to write the history of the posthuman era by their own narratives. Similarly, the Oankali proceed to the exploitation of the economic potentials of what remains on earth according to a very neocolonialist agenda.

Thus, the narratives of traveling through space and time in Butler's science fiction novels make a critique of cultural imperialism. They even establish a parallel with the Whites/Europeans imperialist adventures in Africa. This comparative situation calls for a meditation on the dynamic paradigm of oppression. An example that unveils the connection between Butler's narratives and

the history of colonialism is to be found in this account: “Slavers had been to it before him. With their guns and their greed, they had not herded away, they had slaughtered. Doro found humans bones, hair, bits of desiccated flesh missed by scavengers” (Butler, *Wild Seed* in *Seed to Harvest*, 2007: 5). This account uncovers a kind of story as it really happened in African history at the time of the scramble for Africa. The greed of imperialism exploits everything it can exploit and destroy what it cannot exploit.

Truthfully, this passage portrays the devastating deeds of slavers on the black people that they consider no more than natural resources. In their eyes, African people represent nothing more valuable than raw materials. In this perspective, their alienation is considered as a mere redemptive operation for people lost in the darkness of paganism. African people were definitely viewed as unproductive and useless in Africa while they represent important working forces for the wild land of the “New World”. Therefore, their exploitation for the labor is perceived as a recycling politics from savagery to civilization. Owing to that theorization of African’s subjugation, white slavers’ practice of slavery is to be classified as a totalized method of Blacks’ cultural castration. By the same way, seeing that Whites considered the devastating effects of their imperialist interventions in Africa not much harmful than simple corollary effects of their civilization transfer, it is incontestable that imperialism embodies the expression of Whites’ ideology of cultural essentialism. Consequently, the exertion of disproportional violence on the African people is trivialized by Whites and it finds justification according to them. This is due to the Eurocentric conception of human interactions.

3. Traveling as a Means of Political Domination

In the system of imperialism, the expression of the power of a state is linked to its ability to travel and conquer exterior territories. Thus, expansionism is a key sign of influence in imperialistic societies either under its cultural or political form. That is the reason why the imperialist invasions always go with the remaking of the political order of the invaded areas. In the implementation of such agenda, there is no place left for the colonized point of view. This discussion between Lilith Iyapo and Nikanj is an example of that vertical exertion of power:

“Shall we tell them they can come back to us?”

“No. And don’t be too obvious about helping them get away either. Let them decide for themselves what they’ll do. Otherwise people who decide later to come back will seem to be obeying you, betraying their humanity for you. That could get them killed. You won’t get many back, anyway. Some will think the human species deserves at least a clean death.” (Butler, *Dawn in Lilith’s Brood*, 2000: 246)

This dialogue engaged by Lilith Iyapo and her ooloi partner Nikanj, reveals that freedom is not the best thing Oankali reserve for the survivors. Contrastively, Lilith insists on the fact that if the survivors should accept and live accordingly to the Oankali societal project, they should do it by their free will and that they should not be compelled to do it. That dialogue discloses a little bit of the negotiations held by Lilith for the regaining of dignity for the survivors.

In the perspective of the redefinition of the conquered territories, the invaders proceed to the rethinking of the model of leadership in the invaded societies. This partakes in the politics of alienation of the colonized. In conquered territories, the colonized is reduced to a mere colonial subject just made to obey. In such circumstances, mimicry becomes the social norm in order to be well integrated. Working on the possibilities to give a relative freedom to the Humans who will accept the Oankali’s domination, Lilith Iyapo, the matriarch of that new humanity in reconstitution negotiates the conditions of their integration of newcomers under the Oankali full-rule:

“Shall we tell them they can come back to us?”

“No. And don’t be too obvious about helping them get away. Let them decide for themselves what they’ll do. Otherwise people who decide later to come back will seem to be obeying you, betraying their humanity for you. That could get them killed. You won’t get many back, anyway. Some will think the human species deserves at least a clean death.” (Butler, *Dawn in Lilith’s Brood*, 2000: 246)

By this plea, Lilith is interceding for the independence of the Humans. , she has been chosen by the Oankali to lead that posthuman society as the matriarch of the post-apocalyptic human community. Her role as the representative of the humankind unveils the upheaval of the sexist and racist politics inherent in the human civilization before the nuclear chaos. Assuming fully her role, she is pleading for the lightening of the Humans’ alienation by the Oankali. As a matter of fact, the catastrophic loss of power by the Humans due to their war and its corollaries that one is the swing of the world in a posthuman era, has deprived them of control on any aspect of their life. As an example, they even have no control on their reproductive mode the alien Nikanj said here: “They need us now. They won’t have children without us. Human sperm and egg will not unite without us” (Butler, *Dawn in Lilith’s Brood*, 2000: 245).

This loss of control by human beings of their leadership on all the aspects of their life is the result of a relentless practice of imperialistic politics of domination by the Oankali. The Oankali in the narratives of Butler prefigure the rise of an authoritarian and callous political elite that is deeply embedded in elitism and neocolonialism with the key objective; that of the exploitation of anything that can strengthen their power. Such an advent is foreseeable because of the characteristic greed of neocolonialism manifested under multiple form in politics, business and even sport where some anti-social and even unnatural values seem to be imposed by the power of money and media propaganda. In a nutshell, the narratives of traveling back to the past in Butler's science fiction novels open the debate on the decline of some social and ethical values face to the rise of the so called universal values.

Conclusion

To conclude, this essay has led an analysis on the meaning of the narratives of travel through time and space in Butler's science fiction novels. The objective was to demonstrate that all these narratives work to ratify an imperialistic discourse. In this vein, the first axis of analysis has focused on the moral sense at work in these narratives. In this axis, has studied the moral duty as an incentive of Butler's narratives of return to the past. It has been demonstrated that the travels through time and space in Butler's narratives invite the reader to adopt a struggle based on the moral principles of humanitarian actions. Here, the preservation of the human life is seen as an important reason of this narratives.

Similarly, the narratives of travel to the past have shown to be merged with a didactic function. Indeed, traveling to the past connect the reader with the discovery of historical truth silenced in the process of the construction of the grand historical narratives. This partakes in the cultural domination. As far as the second part or axis of study of this essay is concerned, it has been consecrated to the examination of the narratives of travel to the past as a narrativization of the power of cultural imperialism. Cultural imperialism in these narratives is perceived in its redemptive discourse. In fact, the travelers in Butler's narratives are always donned with the power to save the natives of the accessed territories. This narrative aesthetic empowers the travelers with messianic capacities while it deprive the natives. Besides, these narratives portray the upheaval of the sociopolitical order of the established people by the travelers who come as invaders and succeed

to be the master of the native people showing thus how these narratives reinforce the imperialist discourse.

The third and last part of this essay has been a critique of the narrative of travel as a means of political domination. In so doing, the analysis in this part has consisted in showing that the narratives of travel to the past celebrates the imperialist invasion of territories as an expression of power. It has also underlined the following process after the conquest of a territory which is the redefinition of the model of leadership that finish in a total loss of control on any single aspects of the life of the societies pre-established in the conquered areas. Finally, a prospective critique has been made upon some observations inspired by the aesthetic of the narrative of travel to the past. This critique warns against the arrival of authoritarian and cynical political elites at pre-eminence positions imposing antisocial and unnatural values to the societies in a time where the power of money and the manipulation of media is increasing.

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