

Review of *Bloodchild and Other Stories*

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1. "Bloodchild"

Topics

- Coming of Age
- Sacrifice
- Symbiosis
- Slavery/exploitation
- Addiction
- Pacification
- Rape
- Fear/Desire of Difference (of the "Other")
- Surrogacy/Pregnancy as an act of love
- [Cognitive Estrangement](#) of Pregnancy
- Feminization of the male body/merging of masculine and feminine roles
- "Paying the rent"
- Disenfranchisement/marginalization of humanity

Online collaborative discussions

- [Group relationships](#). Responses [HERE](#)
- [Species interconnection](#). Responses [HERE](#)
- [The pregnant body](#). Responses [HERE](#)

Secondary Sources checked so far

"Bloodchild." *Short Stories for Students*. Ed. Tim Akers. Vol. 6. Detroit: Gale, 1999. 23-37. Encyclopedic overview of "Bloodchild."

Kristen Lillvis. ["Mama's Baby, Papa's Slavery?: The Problem and Promise of Mothering in Octavia E. Butler's 'Bloodchild'."](#) *MELUS: Multi-Ethnic Literature of the U.S.* 39.4 (2014): 7-22. Argues that the context of exploitation allows the male protagonist to inherit maternal experience, power, and authority.

2. “The Evening and the Morning and the Night”

Topics

- Entrapment
- Segregation/ Containment
- 2nd class citizenship
- Dehumanization
- Internalization of hatred
- (Genetic) impurity
- Uncontrollable bodies
- Rebirth/Healing
- Matriarchy as utopian alternative
- Emasculation of the male body

Online collaborative discussions

- Struggle and Rebirth. Responses [HERE](#).
- Entrapment and Liberation [HERE](#).
- Segregation and Community [HERE](#).

Secondary Sources checked so far

Lavender, Isiah, III. "[Digging Deep: Ailments of Difference in Octavia Butler’s “The Evening and the Morning and the Night”](#)." *Black and Brown Planets: The Politics of Race in Science Fiction*. Ed. Isiah Lavender, III. Jackson, MS: UP of Mississippi, 2014. 65-82. Argues that DGD is a metaphor for race (blackness).

3. “Speech Sounds”

Topics

- [Aphasia](#) as the source of frustration, confusion, envy, and social disorder and breakdown
- The disintegration of civil authority and civil society (in both meanings of the term “civil”)
- Isolation
- Dehumanization
- Language/communication as hope
- Survival of the fittest?
- Teachers/mentors as bringers of a new beginning
- Obsidian's role and purpose

Online collaborative discussions

- "Speech Sounds" Responses [HERE](#).

Secondary Sources checked so far

Govan, Sandra Y. "[Disparate Spirits Yet Kindred Souls: Octavia E. Butler, 'Speech Sounds,' and Me.](#)" *Strange Matings: Science Fiction, Feminism, African American Voices, and Octavia E. Butler*. Ed. Rebecca J. Holden and Nisi Shawl. Seattle, WA: Aqueduct, 2013. 109-127. Surveys the whole story, the setting, the protagonist, the main topics, and the real-life affliction that could cause speech loss.

Troy, Maria Holmgren. "[Loss of Words: Octavia Butler's 'Speech Sounds'.](#)" *The Power of Words*. Ed. Solveig Granath, June Miliander, and Elizabeth Wennö. Karlstad, Sweden: Karlstads Universitet, 2005. 73-80. Analysis of the short story elements of "Speech Sounds." Troy uses this story as a starting piece in her linguistics class.

4. "The Book of Martha"

Topics

- Troubleshooting human hierarchical impulses
- Sacrifice for salvation
- The de-gendering/(de-racing) of religion
- Female/feminist creation story (Genesis)
- The (minority) writer as God

Online collaborative discussions

- "The Book of Martha": The Writer as God Responses [HERE](#)
- Backgrounds for the story responses [HERE](#)

Secondary Sources to be checked

Curtis, Claire P. "[Theorizing Fear: Octavia Butler and the Realist Utopia](#)". *Utopian Studies* 19.3 (2008): 411–431. Argues that Butler is a Hobbesian realist in that she considers the state of the human as driven by fear, self-interest, and pride

Hampton, Gregory Jerome. "Religious Science Fiction: Butler's Changing God." [Changing Bodies in the Fiction of Octavia Butler](#). Blue Ridge Summit, US: Lexington Books, 2010.

5. "Amnesty"

Topics

- Captivity (alien and human)
- (Un)ethical behavior
- Indentured servitude

- Collaboration
- Amnesty
- Sacrifice
- Fear/Desire of Difference (of the “Other”)
- Compromise for survival and peaceful coexistence
- Leadership
- Disenfranchisement or marginalization of humanity

Online collaborative discussions

- “Amnesty”: Captivity or Collaboration Responses [HERE](#)
- Backgrounds for the story responses [HERE](#)

Secondary Sources to be checked

Curtis, Claire P. “[Theorizing Fear: Octavia Butler and the Realist Utopia](#)”. *Utopian Studies* 19.3 (2008): 411–431.

Edwards, Elisa. “[Octavia Butler’s ‘Amnesty’](#).” (2003) in *Race, Aliens, and the U.S. Government in African American Science Fiction*. Münster [u.a.: Lit, 2011.]