

Hegemonic Slavery and Racism as an Impetus of Colonial Oppression in Octavia Butler's Wild Seed

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ABSTRACT

This paper attempts to discover colonial oppression depicted in Octavia Butler's *Wild Seed* by applying post-colonialism. Two important concepts thus will be applied: Homi Bhabha's concept of ambivalence and Edward Said's concept of Self-Other relationship. The study, accordingly, tries to unravel how the black Africans and the white Americans perceive each other on the basis of racism and slavery by dint of oppressive hegemony. On the one hand, the Africans see the Americans as cruel, exploitive, but charitable. On the other hand, the Americans judge the Africans as inferior but have the right to resist in order to reclaim their cultural identity and freedom. By analyzing this relationship, the study will show how the opposition between the white Americans and the Afro-Americans is not reconciled, and it has an everlasting colonial ambivalence between black Americans and the white American colonial masters. Thus, the study's gap lies in its exploration of colonial oppression as an impetus of hegemonic slavery and racism is brought into terms by ambivalence and self-other relationship.

Key Words: Ambivalence, Hegemony, Identity, Post-colonialism, Racism, Self-Other Relationship, Slavery

1. Introduction

Postcolonialism approaches intricate issues concerning the position of the colonized nations; and literary works expose the colonial atrocities exerted against them. It represents their experience in the light of the hegemonic power used by the colonizers to impose their dominant power. Being so, postcolonialism plays a decisive role in dealing with the contradictory positions of the colonized nations and their colonizers (Currie 62). One of the powerful effects of postcolonialism is slavery; whereby the colonized people are treated as inferior ethnicity exploited for the sake of the colonizers. In this case, the oppressed people

rebel against the suppressive hegemonic power in order to reclaim their identity and national role in leading their homeland. For this reason, the core notion of such power is that the colonizers do not consider the colonized people equal to them. Consequently, they treat them in the light of the marginalization in suppressive practices (Warren 119). In this sense, slavery makes the colonized people devoid of power and self-determination; and they could not cope with the dominant postcolonial hegemony.

The result of this hegemonic dominance is the cultural self-other relationship. The colonized people become the cultural counterparty of the colonizers (Bruce 18). In order to enhance the cultural relationship between the colonized and the colonizers is the followed social and cultural equilibrium that elevates the weak position of the colonized nation. In this way, they could be reconciled after the period of aversion developed and motivated by colonial oppression and marginalization (Hoogvelt 53). Consequently, the postcolonial culture becomes more effective as it includes the colonized natives that aspire to preserve their devastated socio-cultural traditions at the hands of the colonizers. The current paper, therefore, will study the depiction of the colonial suppression in *Wild Seed*. The main focus will be on three colonial elements. First, the colonial slavery practiced by the whites against the blacks in the novel. The second focus of the study will be racial segregation. The colonial hybridity will be the third element.

2. Slavery

Wild Seed recounts the life of Anyanwu, the unethical female that lives in West-Africa. Doro, who is another significant character, befriends Anyanwu; and they become intimate friends. Both characters are representations of the immortal sense of colonialism. They constantly become familiar with each other more than ever; and they develop pure procreation friendship. The procreation means that they intend to breed children to keep the line of their posterity. They do not want to die without children. They aspire to make their life immortal by having children. The notion of breeding children is the novel's concern with colonial issues, like dominating the blacks' territories forever. They do cunning ways to keep their immortality. They believed in living forever but not in their bodies. Instead, they try to avoid death by jumping from human body to another body to keep their apparent immortality.

In *Colonial America* (2015), George Enzo argues that colonial slavery has many destructive agendas. One of these agendas is the cultural traditions. The white colonizers force the blacks to follow their cultural traditions and conventions. But, the whites sometimes force the blacks to follow their cultural traditions indirectly (75). When the whites bring with them new cultural "symbols," like cloths and culinary gadgets, they make them gradually prone to the whites' culture (76). The blacks ultimately become a part of the whites' cultural traditions. In this respect, George's main focus is on the white's ways of life including customs and traditions, namely food and clothes.

Similarly, In *Wild Seed*, the whites' colonial oppressive powers are carried out through characters of Anyanwu and Doro. They are both presented as an embodiment of the colonial powers. In the course of the plot, Anyanwu tries to watch the whites' ways of life. She hides and watches a white woman while she is doing her household affairs: "Anyanwu watched

carefully as the white woman placed first a clean cloth, then dishes and utensils on the long, narrow table at which the household was to eat. Anyanwu was glad that some of the food and the white people's ways of eating it were familiar to her from the ship" (75). Here, Anyanwu is deeply surprised by the whites' cultural traditions and customs. She finally goes and joins them their meals. The purpose behind this behavior is that she wants to become like them.

Furthermore, Anyanwu exemplifies one feature of such intimate relationship between the whites and the blacks. She is black, but the other colonizers are whites. There is a big difference between them. There is no cultural link between them. But the only contact between them is their cultural traditions. Her black cultural traditions prevent her from being as good as the whites in terms of food and clothes. Thus, she begins interacting with them slowly: "She could sit down and have a meal without seeming utterly ignorant. She could not have cooked the meal, but that would come, too, in time. She would learn. For now, she merely observed and allowed the interesting smells to intensify her hunger. Hunger was familiar and good" (75). The whites, who are the colonial domination in Anyanwu's territories, are teaching the blacks how to become civilized like them. In fact, teaching the black the ways of life and civilized manners is an indication of colonial slavery (Melton 32).

Hunting is another element of colonial slavery. The whites can hunt and exploit the properties of the blacks because they have the complete hegemony over them (Stevenson 16). Hunting symbolizes colonialism and what colonialism might bring after the complete domination over the blacks. In *Wild Seed*, Anyanwu is surprised by the whites' hunting of her land's animals. Additionally, they exploit the blacks' agriculture for their food: "It kept her from staring too much at the white woman, kept her from concentrating on her own nervousness and uncertainty in the new surroundings, kept her attention on the soup, thick with meat and vegetables, and the roast deer flesh—venison, the white woman had called it—and a huge fowl—a turkey" (75). Anyanwu does not know the whites' colonial agendas, but she knows how they exploit her land for their interests.

Furthermore, Anyanwu cloths, for example, are a symbol of the colonial influence upon her cultural traditions. She did not use to wear the whites' clothes. But she becomes interested in the whites' costumes when she encounters them. The whites' colonial powers make her change gradually according to their colonial agendas. This is the inherent idea of gradual colonialism in her territories: "Anyanwu repeated the words to herself, reassured that they had become part of her vocabulary. New words, new ways, new foods, new clothing . . . She was glad of the cumbersome clothing, though, finally. It made her look more like the other women, black and white, whom she had seen in the village, and that was important" (75). She is more interested in the whites' clothes than before. She does not want to wear her traditional clothes. She likes to be similar to them.

P. Sanal Mohan, in *Modernity of Slavery* (2015), maintains that slavery does not last for a long time. Slavery imposes itself over the slaves for a long time, and then it disappears. The reason of its disappearance is the blacks' hatred of this slavery (82). Slavery is against all human virtues though brings civilization to the slaves or black people (82). It is the destructive power used by the whites to subjugate the blacks (87). The blacks have no way to

escape this slavery. They are suppressed and persecuted. However, they can escape this slavery by “hatred.” The slaves might hate the whites to get rid of their hegemonic suppressive powers.

In *Wild Seed*, Anyanwu is enslaved several times. She cannot do anything to gain her freedom. She is a captive of the colonial slavery in the novel. She hates them because they are her “masters” though she lives on her lands: “Anyanwu, on the other hand, had been a slave twice in her life and had escaped only by changing her identity completely and finding a husband in a different town. She knew some people were masters and some were slaves. That was the way it had always been. But her own experience had taught her to hate slavery” (6). Anyanwu negative experience in her lands is the cause of her hatred of the white masters. She has never been exposed to this experience before the advent of the colonial whites. The whites brought with them aspects of good and advanced civilization, but they become the dominating force over the colonized. Anyanwu hates this domination and does not surrender to the new civilization.

Furthermore, colonial slavery involves the loyalty to the white colonizers. The whites have the strong force to order the blacks to follow them and obey their rules. They are the powerful authority. This authority could be practiced in the blacks’ territories. In this respect, Patrick Rael discusses the colonial loyalty. He contends that colonial loyalty is the authorizing power used by the whites to harness the blacks. The blacks are the victims of this loyalty because they do not have any other choice (185). They should follow and do the whites’ orders to save their lives. Otherwise, the whites would exterminate all the black for the purpose of colonizing the blacks’ territories (185). Rael’s discussion of colonial loyalty is an integral idea of slavery i.e., the blacks sympathize with other blacks to help each other bear the hard conditions of colonial loyalty.

This loyalty is evident in *Wild Seed*. Anyanwu sympathizes with other blacks, and she helps them in their work. They could not disobey the whites’ orders. For this reason, she helps the other slaves to mitigate their work burdens. Black people should comply by Doro’s orders. Anyanwu feels pity for them and tries hard to help them: “‘I [Doro] let myself be drawn here because people who had pledged loyalty to me had been taken away in slavery,’ he said. ‘I went to their village to get them, take them to a safer home, and I found . . . only what the slavers had left. I went away, not caring where my feet took me. When they brought me here, I was surprised, and for the first time in many days, I was pleased’” (11). Then, Anyanwu is extremely surprised at Doro’s harsh treatment of the blacks: “I [Anyanwu] cannot see how any man would hold you in slavery. What are you?’” (35). In this quotation, Anyanwu seems to be opposing the colonial loyalty to the whites.

Anyanwu’s sympathy with the black slaves intensifies. She would sacrifice herself for rescuing the black from being colonized by the whites, especially Doro. She agrees to marry him because she believes that she can save the blacks of slavery. Rescuing the blacks from slavery is another indication of colonial suppression of the blacks. Rebecca Rissman examines this suppression in *Slavery in the United States* (2015). Rissman assert that colonial suppression come out of the color of skin (20). She supports her idea by discussing the

colonial sacrifice in the colonial periods of time. To illustrate, she claims that when the blacks feel that they are suppressed, they begin recognizing the implications of their skin color (23). For example, the blacks' suffering begins when they know that there is a bias against their colors. This recognition makes them sacrifice to save their life of the whites. Furthermore, this recognition begins when the blacks are colonized for slavery for a long period of time (23). However, not all the blacks sacrifice their lives. According to Rissman, only the black protagonist sacrifices his/her life to save the blacks from harsh slavery.

In a similar way, Anyanwu sacrifices her life to save the blacks from slavery. Throughout the novel, she hates the whites for their inhumane subjugation of her black people. She does not like the whites' colonial exploitation of her people and territories. During the colonial period, she feels repulsive of the whites' unethical colonization. Nevertheless, she agrees and complies to marry Doro. She does not love him. But she aspires to save her black people from slavery. More specifically, she wants give birth to children who belong to Doro. When she does so, she could get rid of Doro's subjugation. She manages to give life to her colonized people. Moreover, she could deliver children whose father (Doro) is white. In this way, she might guarantee the rescue of her black people: "Doro had her people been nearby. It would be good for the children of their marriage to know her world as well as Doro's—be aware of a place where blackness was not a mark of slavery. She resolved to make her homeland live for them whether Doro permitted her to show it to them or not. She resolved not to let them forget who they were" (78). Anyanwu is concerned with rescuing her people. Consequently, she agrees to marry Doro though he is a white colonizer. She is the embodiment of the anti-colonial slavery depicted in the novel.

The blacks' suffering from slavery is not only connected to sacrifice. Anyanwu and other blacks are the authentic symbols of slavery happening in the United States in the life of Butler. In this regard, Butler portrays slavery to be more inclusive of death scenes in the novel. In postcolonial studies, death stands for slavery (McIlvenna 37). Yet, death is not depicted directly by postcolonial fictional authors (38). It takes place gradually in the course of the fictional plots. The whites feel proud and braggart that they could exterminate the blacks. They could annihilate the existence of the blacks (38). As such, the death of the blacks conveys "the inherent meaning of slavery renewal" (38). The whites want to renew the blacks' generations to have other strong and well-built slaves.

In *Wild Seed*, Butler echoes this idea. Doro, for example, feels proud and he becomes a braggart that he could kill people. He describes how he could see the blacks die in front of him. He remembers their death and how their descendents grew older. These slave descendents are different from their parents: "And he had nodded and smiled. 'The people I learned it from stole me away into slavery when I was only a boy. Now they're all dead. Their descendants have forgotten the old wisdom, the old writing, the old gods. Only I remember'" (79). Doro's inhumane annihilation of the blacks turns Anyanwu's life into bitterness. He tries to soothe her, but she is still afraid of him. She cannot escape her bad fate: "She had not known whether she heard bitterness or satisfaction in his voice then. He was very strange when he talked about his youth. He made Anyanwu want to touch him and tell him that he was not alone in outliving so many things. But he also roused her fear of him,

reminded her of his deadly difference. Thus, she said nothing” (79). The existence of Doro in Anyanwu’s life is something totally new for her. She is not accustomed to the whites’ colonization. She wants to be free. She sacrifices her life and marries him, but she is afraid of him. Doro’s colonial exploitation of her and the other blacks the core of slavery scenes in the novel.

Additionally, post-colonialism exposes the negative exploitation of the blacks in a direct way. The blacks’ plights are represented in a consistent way in colonial fictional writings. In *The Archaeology of Slavery: A Comparative Approach to Captivity and Coercion* (2015). Lydia Marshall argues that colonialism causes many harmful consequences for the blacks (126). The harmful sequences comprise different socio-cultural changes. These changes are divided between the social customs and cultural traditions (126). The blacks become gradually accustomed to the presence of their white colonizers. Nonetheless, the blacks get more familiar to the whites, because the whites have the power to control the blacks’ lives (126). But the socio-cultural changes have a harmful influence upon the blacks’ psyches. They repudiate their hatred for the whites. In essence, slavery is the main factor of this change. Consequently, Marshall tackles the radical transformation in the psychology of the colonized blacks. The blacks do not have any control over their territories. Their disability to take control over their territories weakens their position as the right owners of their territorial homelands. This is linked to the psychological changes brought by colonial slavery.

The psychological transformation is conspicuous in Anyanwu’s case in *Wild Seed*. She does not like Doro. She loathes him because of his colonial domination over the blacks. The sense of national belonging to her people changes accordingly. She was previously interested in Isaac. But they are separated by Doro’s covetous colonial plans. Doro could force her to marry him and live away from Isaac; the following quotation illustrates how she and Isaac feel sad about their separation. She tells him that she is the “wrong wife” as an allusion to their estrangement: “‘No.’ She rested her head against him. ‘I have decided. I will not tell any more brave lies, even to myself.’ She looked up at his young face, his boy face. ‘We will marry. You are a good man, Isaac. I am the wrong wife for you, but perhaps, somehow, in this place, among these people, it will not matter’” (91). After that, she succumbs to slavery life with Doro. She complies with his merciless exploitation. He exploits her for breeding other black people to enslave them when all the old blacks die. He needs to have more children for future slavery. On the other hand, she benefits from this slavery i.e., Anyanwu will live longer if she obeys him: “He lifted her with the strength of his arms alone and carried her to the great soft bed, there to make the children who would prolong her slavery” (91). Anyanwu sacrifices her life to safe of Doro’s ruthless extermination of her people.

Giving birth to children in colonial situations is another token of slavery. Benedetta Rossi approaches the issue of children birth in relation to slavery. She maintains that children born in colonialism are the product of slavery concerns (58). She adds that birth occupies a distinctive position in colonialism. Children are born “for colonial ambitious projects” (58). The whites marry black women to breed new generations of slavery (58). Being that so, slavery does not end. It continues through the whites’ blood lines. The whites have ambitious colonial enterprises to build new colonies or nations in the lands they occupy (59). They do

not depend on one generation to continue their new civilizations. They try to breed many children to be the next generations that hold the hope of the white colonizers. They keep their hegemony in the blacks' territories by breeding new children (59). Most interestingly, Benedetta maintains that the "whites do not breed new black posterity" out of white women. Instead, they marry black women to utilize their children for slavery.

This is quite similar to the birth of Anyanwu's children in Butler's *Wild Seed*. She marries Doro, and she gives birth to mullato posterity. She delivers many children whose father is white. He wants to enslave them like animals: "'I [Doro] tell you, you will make an animal of him if you don't!' she said. 'Haven't you seen the men slaves in this country who are used for breeding? They are never permitted to learn what it means to be a man'" (144). In this quotation, Doro is obsessed with the idea of exploiting his mullato children for slavery. He goes too far and, he forces the black men to give birth to other slave children. He even does not allow the black men to take care of their children: "They are not permitted to care for their children. Among my people, children are wealth, they are better than money, better than anything. But to these men, warped and twisted by their masters, children are almost nothing. They are to boast of to other men" (144).

Stephen, who is another white character, also exploits the blacks' children. He describes the blacks like animals. He tells Doro of the importance of slavery: "One thinks he is greater than another because he has more children. Both exaggerate the number of women who have borne them children, neither is doing anything a father should for his children, and the master who is indifferently selling off his own brown children is laughing and saying, 'You see? Niggers are just like animals!' Slavery down here opens one's eyes, Doro. How could I want such a life for my son?" (155). Doro, here, is satisfied with selling black children or "niggers" for slavery.

Selling black children for commercial interests is a symbol of colonial slavery in *Wild Seed*. The blacks, including their children, are treated as business trade by the whites. Laura Sullivan discusses the commercial characteristics of slavery in *The Colonial Slave Family* (2015). She claims that the blacks are used like tools for trade in colonial societies. Moreover, the blacks are deprived of their human rights as independent as the whites (74). The whites exert "inappropriate harnessing of the blacks for slave trade" (74). Sullivan elaborates the notion of selling the blacks for trade objectives. That is, the whites recognize the blacks "love of each other and they start separating them from each other" (75). Hence, the whites can breed more children for slavery trade.

Butler portrays such trade in *Wild Seed*. Doro considers Anyanwu a good woman for business. He estimates her a businesswoman for breeding children. He, simultaneously, knows that she hates slavery: "He [Doro] looked up. 'You're a better businesswoman than I thought with your views against slavery,' he said'" (164). To achieve his goals, he tries hard to separate Anyanwu from Isaac because he knows well that they are blacks, and they sympathize with each other: "Doro neither encouraged nor discouraged this, though he did approve. He had been thinking a great deal about Isaac and Anyanwu—how well they got along in spite of their communication problems, in spite of their potentially dangerous

abilities, in spite of their racial differences. Isaac would marry Anyanwu if Doro ordered it” (63). Consequently, when Doro marries Anyanwu he guarantees her safe life, but he threatens her safety as he sells her children for slavery: “And once Anyanwu accepted the marriage, Doro’s hold on her would be secure. The children would come—desirable, potentially multitalented children—and Doro could travel as he pleased to look after his other peoples” (63). Here, Anyanwu’s children are used for slavery in other people’s lands. These lands are occupied by Doro. He travels to these lands to colonize them like Anyanwu’s people. Thereupon, exploiting Anyanwu’s children for slavery is a manifestation of colonial racism in *Wild Seed*. Consequently, the following section will focus on the racial matters in the novel.

3. Racism

Postcolonial appropriation of racism involves work or labor. The whites utilize the blacks for work. They force them to work many hours a day. The blacks do not have the minimum means of life to survive. They do not have great economic opportunities to be equal to the whites. Thus, they are obliged to do hard work for the whites. In this regard, Winston Mano claims that colonial racism has a fundamental factor, that is work (49). The white colonizers harness the blacks for the labor benefits. They earn different refunds when utilizing the blacks for such labor (49). As a result, the blacks become a victim of colonial labor. They work by force because they are not allowed to work freely. The whites have the right to exploit them for labor. In this case, the blacks ask for work (50). They appeal the whites to work for them to earn some money to meet the minimum requirements of their life’s needs.

In *Wild Seed*, Daly asks Doro for work. Being a black person, Daly does not have any work opportunity. He therefore asks Doro to work since he is not free: “And by the time he recovered, he [Daly] had realized that he was no longer a free man—that Doro was capable of taking the life he had spared at any time. Daly was able to accept this as others had accepted it before him. “Let me work for you,” he had said. “Take me aboard one of your ships or even back to your homeland. I’m still strong. Even with one hand, I can work. I can handle blacks”” (32).

Daly’s situation is an exemplification of colonial racism. He complies by Doro’s orders as he does not have sufficient work. There is not chance to work. He tried to find other kinds of work but he failed. He goes and volunteers to work for Doro’s benefits. In colonial racism, the blacks are normally depicted as being despondent and have no way to rely on themselves. They cannot escape the whites’ racial segregation. In *Native Games: Indigenous Peoples and Sports in the Post-Colonial World* (2015), Chris Hallinan emphasizes the poor conditions of the blacks in colonial racism (71). When the blacks feel that they are colonized, they become more “sick” or “repulsive” of the whites’ racial segregation. Work, in this case, is the essential cause of racism (72). The whites neglect the blacks and their abilities to become independent. They only utilize “the blacks for work without giving them proper wages” (72). The blacks, then, begin rivaling each other. They feel envious of each other to “draw the attention of their white colonizers; and they rally for getting work to avoid their harsh lives” (72). Hallinan’s argumentation of the blacks’ work is a remarkable insight of colonial racism.

As a matter of fact, the whites marginalize the blacks. Correspondingly, they blacks do not have any choice to live without work and try their best to be close to the whites. They will not be able to meet their lives' needs if they fight or be estranged from the whites. The blacks' poor conditions compel them to near the whites as possible as they could. This is true to Doro's racial segregation against the blacks in *Wild Seed*.

The blacks' poor conditions are properly portrayed in *Wild Seed*. Daly, for example, becomes fed up with the work conditions in his homeland and he plans to leave his land. He wants to look for his freedom like the other blacks. He feels "sick" of his "country" because of the hard work conditions imposed by Doro: "'Now that your people are gone,' Daly said, 'why not take me to Virginia or New York where you have blacks working. I'm sick to death of this country'" (32). Daly is not satisfied with his work for Dor. He hates Doro because of his racial segregation. Doro constrains the blacks' ability to work.

However, Daly does not find any job; and he decides to continue working for Doro. After that, he meets another obstacle. He is set in competition with another black person, namely, Woodley. Hence, Daly wants to return to work for Doro. But Woodley becomes his rival. In the course of the events, they become envious of each other: "He [Woodley] could have become wealthy, could now be commanding a great ship instead of one of Doro's smallest. But he had chosen to stay near Doro. Like Daly, he enjoyed being an arm of Doro's power. And like Daly, he was envious of others who might outrank him in Doro's esteem" (32). Doro's constriction of the blacks' work opportunity is the main reason of Daly and Woodley envious feelings towards each other. Doro, in this manner, typifies the racial segregation in the novel. Nweke, Anyanwu's daughter, also suffers from racial segregation. She feels embarrassed when she is treated baldy by Doro: "Nweke twisted away, embarrassed. There was no coyness to her; her embarrassment was real" (99). All these black characters are the victims of colonial suppression.

Therefore, work completion among the blacks paves the way racial segregation. It prolongs the disharmony among the blacks' community (Nijhar 98). In *Wild Seed*, Doro's hegemony over work in the blacks' lands distorts the relationship between Daly and Woodley: "Doro shrugged and let the contradiction stand. Woodley knew better than Daly ever could just how much it was the same. He'd worked too closely with Doro's more gifted children to overestimate his own value. And he knew the living generations of Doro's sons and daughters would populate a city" (33). Being so, the blacks are set in critical strenuous conditions: "He [Doro] knew how easily both he and Daly could be replaced. After a moment he sighed as Daly had sighed. 'I suppose the new blacks you brought aboard have some special talent,' he said" (33). In the long run, Doro's control over Daly and Woodley make them rivals though they are blacks and belong to the same race. Doro's racial segregation is the main factor of this rivalry.

Furthermore, colonial racism manifests in the whites' exploitation of the blacks for doing agricultural work. The blacks can do kinds of work which is done by animals (Napier 62). The blacks could be utilized for work because of their cheap prices (62). In this sense, the blacks play an essential role in determining the whites' economics. They are the authentic

economic agents used to do work instead of animals (63). The blacks are used for cultivation and harvest. In *Wild Seed*, Doro uses the blacks for cultivation and harvest instead of animals: “Two mules had died and three others were old and would soon need replacing. Field hands needed shoes, hats . . . It was cheaper to have people working in the fields bringing in large harvests than it was to have them making things that could be bought cheaply elsewhere” (160). This situation makes Anyanwu sad about the slaves’ poor conditions: “That was especially important here, where there were no slaves, where people were paid for their work and supplied with decent housing and good food. It cost more to keep people decently” (160). These conditions are brought by Doro’s racial prejudice against the blacks.

Moreover, Anyanwu changes because she is affected by Doro’s racial oppression: “‘Even so.’ Anyanwu stared up at the solemn young woman, remembering that lovely, fearful courting. They had been as fearful of marrying as they had been of losing each other. ‘She thought at first that there could be no children, and that saddened her because she had always wanted children’” (146). The relationship between Doro and Anyanwu embody such self-other relationship in *Wild Seed*. This is clear in Anyanwu’s recognition of her life with white people including Doro: “Then she realized that I could give her girls. It took her a long time to understand all that I could do. But she thought the children would be black and people would say she had been with a slave. White men leave brown children all about, but a white woman who does this becomes almost an animal in the eyes of other whites” (146). The following section will introduce the colonial self-other relationship as depicted in the plot.

4. Self-Other Relationship

Anyanwu’s transformation into another life with the whites incarnates the self-other relationship in *Wild Seed*. Such kind of colonial transformation is set within the limits of self-other relationship because “colonial discourse analysis theory is its dependence on the discursive coherence of colonial relations; through which the self/other relation is introduced as fixed binaries. The construction of the colonial subject is depicted through a discursive essentialist mode of representation whose basic features are stability, autonomy and coherence” (Ahmad 62). Such ethnic coherence is “the split between the two primary entities” (27). Furthermore, it “maintains the differences between colonized [black] culture” (Said). In this respect, Edward Said argues that the “self and other, the colonized/colonizer, that the colonial culture maintains in a discourse of power relations, construct a web of racial and cultural stereotypes, power relations and ‘dehumanizing ideology’ that dominate the colonizer [the whites] and the colonized [the colonizer] in the colonial world” (27).

This relation inherently “depends largely for its strategy on this primary division of reality, it is intended by the colonial suppression to go beyond this colonial discourse. The discourse of colonial powers does not place the self-other relation in a whole series of unified and sustained relationships with the colonial premise, the colonial influence upon societies” (27). As such, self-other relationship includes the suppression of the blacks at the hands of their white colonizers. The blacks begin suffering from this suppression during the colonial period. In this way, this relationship is similar to Anyanwu and Doro colonial relationship.

Doro's oppressive colony is an embodiment of self-other relationship since it "offers an interesting instance of the interrelation between colonizer, colonized, society and, history, the personal and the textual. These dichotomies which have become part of the common colonial suppressive discourse, the very similar colonial discourse" (Sheffer 46). This suppressive dimension "produces a narrative that reacts conversely to the colonial monolithic discourse of power relations. The whites exhibit a marvelous capacity to be inside and outside the colonial culture dominant in these discourses; they could transcend the deeply troubling and essentialized self/other approach to colonial relations that often entrap it" (Williams and Chrisman 73). The following section will focus on hegemony as a result of this self-other relationship.

5. Hegemony

Hegemony is considered as a colonial dominance used to explicate a "sufficient explanation of colonial powers to dispel the hegemonic nature of suppressed voice itself. Suppressing of other nations is one former metropolitan power instead of another automatically relocates the role of postcolonial literature in the global market place" (Laitin 69). This is due to the fact that "the historical traces that connote colonial relations not only influence but also determine the position that new cultural productions acquire in an age of late colonialism. Colonialism has, has, become a relation in itself and it marks the positioning of literature along the diffused and complex lines of colonial dynamics" (69). It produces a "contact zone between society and its representation through literature. In this literature theories and politics meet to defy and subvert previous colonial hierarchies. Post-colonial literature thus constitutes a fruitful and contentious field of studies, which is not devoid of internal frictions or paradoxes of hegemony" (71).

In *Wild Seed*, Doro embodies the hegemonic paradoxes: "He had been watching her, looking at her eyes with a curiosity that most people tried to hide from her. People said her eyes were like babies' eyes—the whites too white, the browns too deep and clear. No adult, and certainly no old woman should have such eyes, they said. And they avoided her gaze" (5). Moreover, Doro's eyes were very ordinary, but he could stare at her as children stared. He had no fear, and probably no shame" (5). Doro's fearless state is a reflection of his powerful hegemony: "I came to this territory last about three hundred years ago," he said. "I was looking for a group of my people who had strayed, but they were killed before I found them. Your people were not here then, and you had not been born. I know that because your difference did not call me. I think you are the fruit of my people's passing by yours, though" (5).

Hegemony indicates the nature of oppressive dominance; whereby "the colonial anxiety that the postcolonial paradigm narrows down intellectual investigations not only around the rubric of colonial history but—even more limiting—around the imperial canon. This has been amply demonstrated by the many studies focusing on British India and on "the empire writing back" from India as the ad hoc peripheral location" (Kapoor 83). Similarly, Doro exemplifies this oppressive hegemony in the novel: "Should she break her tradition now simply because this stranger asked her to? He had done much talking, but what had he actually shown her

about himself? Nothing” (8). Doro’s natural powers are similar to supernatural unusual powers: “He was like an ogbanje, an evil child spirit born to one woman again and again, only to die and give the mother pain. A woman tormented by an ogbanje could give birth many times and still have no living child. But Doro was an adult. He did not enter and re-enter his mother’s womb. He did not want the bodies of children. He preferred to steal the bodies of men” (8). This powerful hegemony enables Doro to be a master of the blacks. It also makes him breed hybrid black people because he is married to Anyanwu; and this hybridity will be highlighted in the next section.

6. Ambivalence

In *Wild Seed*, the ambivalent relations are apparent in Doro’s people of colony people without regard to their ethnic identities and racial colors: “This time, though, before she thought of anything that might be useful, a white man came to her, bringing a small metal container full of some liquid. The man looked at Okoye, then nodded and put the container into Anyanwu’s hands” (37). Such people socialize with each other as one ethnic group: “He [Doro] made signs to indicate that she should get Okoye to drink. Anyanwu looked at the container, then sipped from it herself. She would not give anyone medicine she did not understand. The liquid was startlingly strong stuff that first choked her, then slowly, pleasantly warmed her, pleased her” (37). These people also help and support each other: “It was like palm wine, but much stronger. A little of it might make Okoye forget his misery. A little more might make him sleep. It was no cure, but it would not hurt him and it might help” (37).

In *Nation and Narration* (1990), Bhabha argues that ambivalence “might anticipate both the anger and the frustration of the colonial powers. It is a realization of the power of colonial discourse on the one hand, and its inherent confusion on the other. Unfortunately, however, at the time when colonization is increasing the necessary tools that colonialism has devised much later, to conclusively deconstruct this kind of ambivalence” (28). Furthermore, ambivalence positions the blacks in a weak status and the whites in a powerful one.

Ambivalence it is set “within imperial paradigms and hence situate the problem of representation on a separate plane altogether. It realizes the moment but cannot seize it because of the ultimately traditional framework that it works within” (Said 30). It also “constructs and cancels, deconstructs and re-constructs at ease, thereby playing the game of representation on a plane completely removed from colonialism. Here is something we need to understand from the point of view of colonial location. There is much less anxiety about his location than in the ambivalent relations” (42). Such ambivalence relates to Anyanwu and several women who undergo this experience: “Then she looked up and saw that the thin crewman was still there. He was a green-eyed man with a head that was too long and bones that seemed about to break through his splotchy, unshaven brown skin. He was a white man, but the sun had parched him unevenly and he looked diseased” (50).

In *The Location of Culture* (1994), Bhabha explicates the same literary trope of revealing the effect of ambivalence portrayed in fictional works. He contends that cultural ambivalence represents an ethnic “stereotype which locates itself out of the political into the

psychological. It tries to identify the problem of racial segregation in terms of the equality” (109-10). The concept ambivalence has a “latent indication of colonialism. It has an imaginary conceptualization of suppression aggressivity. The subject of this latent difference from the suppression and a consequent feeling of superiority, the aggressivity masks this difference in terms of the politics of identity with the colonized people” (Said 96). Furthermore, the “identity of the colonizer is thus qualified by both fixity and fantasy—the fixity of a monolithic image of the colonized subject to dominate, compare, or identify with, as also the fantasy of the narcissistic pleasure of superiority. Both these functions of the imaginary conceptualization of equality therefore need the stereotype as an imperative” (103).

This ambivalent stereotype is exemplified in Doro’s character in *Wild Seed*. It is his brutal suppressive practices against his people: “He was still semiconscious. His eyes were closed now, but she could see that they moved under the lids. And his lips moved, formed silent words. He had almost a black man’s mouth, the lips fuller than those of the other whites she had seen. Stiff yellow hairs grew from his face, showing that he had not shaved for a while” (52). He treats Anyanwu in the same suppressive way: “He had a broad, square face not unattractive to Anyanwu, and the sun had burned him a good, even brown. She wondered what white women thought of him. She wondered how white women looked” (52). Thus, the ambivalent relationship is Anyanwu, Doro, and other oppressed people; whereby ambivalence provides viable solutions to oppression and oppressive hegemony.

7. Conclusion

This paper has examined Butler’s *Wild Seed* in the light of colonial suppression. Such suppression is carried on by the oppressive powers which posit the colonized black people in a weak position. As such, the white colonizers use their powers to subjugate the blacks for colonial purpose exemplified in the whites’ longing for exploitation and suppressing of the blacks. Therefore, this power has been studied to emphasize the whites’ destructive method to control the blacks’ territories and establish their own authority through both slavery and racism. Doro, who symbolizes the white colonial suppression, breeds hybrid generations to keep his colonial plans for a long time in the future. He marries Anyanwu although she is black. By this marriage, he keeps a hybrid blood line generation. This generation is a mix of his white race and Anyanwu’s black race. In so doing, he practices a timeless colonial suppression in the course of the novel. Ultimately, Butler; through her *Wild Seed*, produces an anti-colonial critique to expose the colonial blatant transgression in contemporary America.

The analysis has provided a qualitative study of the fictional characters which represent the conflict between the blacks and the whites in the course of the novels’ plots. Therefore, a close reading of the characters behaviors will be pursued. The whites’ behaviors will be analyzed as the colonial racial oppression against the blacks who are exploited and subjugated for slavery. In this regard, the study has mainly focused on the gradual development of slavery depicted in the novels. Then, it has demonstrates how the white characters consider themselves as the mastering “Self” which persecutes and colonizes the

black “Other.” It has also identified the ambivalent relationship between the whites and the blacks. This ambivalence has been examined to explore the human relationship between the whites and the blacks. In this sense, the whites consider the blacks as inferior but they sympathize with them. The blacks, on the other hand, consider the whites as oppressors and cruel but they are powerful and have good socio-cultural manners.

Furthermore, the concept of slavery has been incorporated with the concept racism hybridity used to analyze the colonial oppression in the novel. It has shown how the blacks’ identity becomes ambivalence as a result of the whites’ hegemony. As a result, the study has combines both self-other relationship and ambivalence in its argumentation of “racial segregation” and “blackness” being portrayed in the novel. Thus, slavery has been studied from a postcolonial perspective, and the study has explored slavery as a result of socio-cultural changes in the blacks’ identity.

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