



Aversion and Desire: The Disruption of Monolithic Ambivalence in Octavia Butler's *Kindred*

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Abstract

This article is an attempt to explore colonial ambivalence in Octavia Butler's *Kindred* (1979). The significance of study brings to light a major issue which has been hardly emphasized in the existing academic scholarship on the novel. The study will reveal an ambivalent identity in an individual colonial locales and societies. It will analyze and show the many complex ways in which Butler uses her fictional savvy as a medium to broker, affiliate, and project the places, peoples, cultures, and ethnicity to work through the ethical, political, and affective conceptualization of ambivalent identities. Butler's ambivalent writing, correspondingly, asserts a sense of belonging to the locality in which post-colonial subjects have evolved, and, at the same time, expresses the specificity of the actual racial experience of being ethnic, or alienated in homeland. The study will add to the remapping of contemporary postcolonial fiction and the reevaluation traditional ambivalent identities. It will testify to the increasingly progressive and long-awaited destruction of cultural national containment. The study addresses a vastly under-examined area, namely the impact of colonialism on the native identities of the blacks. Ambivalent subjectivities have always coexisted within and outside the long inherited history of the blacks' nation, but their text has long been disregarded. As a mode of demonstration, the problem with politically correct perspectives on ambivalent relations and those with the neat postcolonial and colonial oppositions are manifold, including the effects of hegemonic policies. Such hegemonies will be scrutinized by applying Homi

Bhabha's concept of ambivalence as a conceptual framework for the study's textual analysis.

Key words: Ambivalence; Ethnicity; Hegemony; Identity; Post-colonialism; Slavery

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1. INTRODUCTION

Slavery is against human dignity in post-colonial studies. It advocates the voice of the black suppressed minority, and at the same time, it exposes the faults of the white's exploitive colonial powers. Both slavery and racism have a long history, and "since the early 1980s, slavery and racism have developed a body of writing that attempts to shift the dominant ways in which the relations between the blacks and the whites are always in contradiction" (Young, p.2). In addition, post-colonialism focuses on the colonial reality in the black societies because "they have the right of being the same as the whites in terms of material and cultural well-being. The reality is that the blacks' inequality to the whites should be fortified in order to abolish slavery and racism caused by the whites" (p.2).

Moreover, slavery and racism result in a cultural division among the colonized black societies where "this division between the blacks and the whites is made fairly absolute in by the expansion of the whites' empires, as a result of which the whites could colonize and enslaved the blacks on the ground of racial segregation" (Young, p.2). Consequently, post-colonialism is concerned with the imperial plans to subjugate the blacks and harness them for the whites' colonial benefits. In this sense, slavery emerges out as an imperial rule which "legitimizes"

the whites' ability to exploit the blacks (Abu Jweid and Termizi, 2015a, p.132).

Being that so, post-colonialism deals with the whites' hegemony over the blacks' colonized territories, whereby the divisive territorial consequences of the whites' colonialism subjugate and control the blacks' belongings (Amoko, p.12). In addition, the whites' slavery practices involve the control of the blacks' residential locations in order to impose socio-cultural influences upon the blacks. Therefore, colonial racism is a result of slavery created by the whites (Ashcroft et al, p.38). The reduction of slavery could not be achieved as far as the whites maintain powerful control over the blacks (Femia 4). That is, the whites' enslavement and harsh treatment of the blacks make them resistant, and consequently, opposing the whites' covetous agendas (Abu Jweid and Termizi, 2015b, p.74).

Accordingly, in this study I will focus on the depiction of slavery and racism in Butler's *Kindred*. I will offer a close analysis of the white and black characters, and how slavery and racism develops among them. The Self-Other relationship between the whites and the blacks will illustrate how slavery and racism cause colonial hatred and division among them. Then, I will examine the ambivalent relationship between them. This relation reveals that though there is an antagonistic opposition between the whites and the blacks, there is a common human line which lies under their relations.

To explain, the whites consider the blacks inferior, but they have the right to keep their homeland. On the other hand, the blacks consider the whites aggressive and vicious, but they are superior to them because they have power. The example of this ambivalent relationship will mainly be examined by focusing on the marriage between Dana and Kevin. Kevin, who is a superior white man marries Dana; a slave black woman. Here, the ambivalent relationship is that a white man agrees to marry a black woman though they are opponents. This is the essence of their human co-existence in a colonial atmosphere.

2. SLAVERY IN *KINDRED*

Butler's *Kindred* has many representations of slavery. Tom Weylin, who is Rufus's father, is one of the major white characters who enslave the blacks for their own interests. He makes them captives, and he imprisons them: "The patrol [white man] and its stumbling captive headed back to the road, slanting off toward the Weylin house. If they had gone back exactly the way they came, they would have either gone over me or driven me from my [Dana] cover. I was lucky—and stupid for having gotten so close" (p.38). Here, Dana feels pity for the blacks, especially Alice, who is enslaved by Rufus and Tom Weylin. Therefore, she wants to help Alice to get rid of her slavery: "I [Dana] wondered whether the captive black

man belonged to Tom Weylin. That might explain Rufus's friendship with the child, Alice. That is, if this child was Alice. If this was the right cabin. Whether it was or not, though, the woman, unconscious and abandoned, was in need of help. I got up and went over to her" (p.38).

In postcolonial terms, slavery represents the whites in the position of strong colonial forces (Abu Jweid and GhadaSasa, p.340). The whites have a complete control over the blacks. In *Transatlantic Memories of Slavery: Reimagining the Past, Changing the Future* (2015), Elisa Bordin and Anna Schacci claim that colonial slavery is made when the whites have "an entirely superiority over the blacks" (p.53). In this case, the blacks embody the weak colonized nations "at the hands of their white counterparts" (p.54). The blacks are invaded by the whites and are made a subject to exploitation. In other words, the white masters bequeath their posterity, such as sons and grandsons to take colonial sovereignty over the blacks (Ashcroft et al., p.67). Consequently, the white masters could torment the blacks; and they could trade in the blacks' children because they have a colonial power (Abu Jweid, 2016, p.535).

Similarly, Tom Weylin encourages and enhances his son, Rufus, to subjugate the blacks. Both Tom and Rufus Weylin torment the blacks. Rufus subjugates Alice in order to force her to serve him. He also tries many times to sell her children. Alice is brought by Rufus to his plantation (colonial settlement), and after a short period of time he sells her children: "There was a woman [Alice] on Weylin's plantation whose former master had cut three fingers from her right hand when he caught her writing. She had a baby nearly every year, that woman. Nine so far, seven surviving. Weylin called her a good breeder, and he never whipped her. He was selling off her children, though, one by one" (p.192). Furthermore, Tom and Rufus took Alice from her mother's house by force though she tried to hide from them. Dana risks helping her but in vain: "And there in her words was a reason for the risk I had taken. I hadn't thought of it until now, but if Rufus was one to tell what he shouldn't, Alice's mother should know so that she could either hide me or send me away.... And that had to mean that she agreed with Alice, that Rufus was all right. Tom Weylin had probably marked his son more than he knew with that whip" (p.40). In this respect, Tom teaches his son Rufus to torment Alice by a whip. Such treatment is an obvious symbol of colonial slavery.

Colonial slavery also includes the whites' control over the blacks' families. When the whites have domination and superiority over a black individual, they also have superiority over his family members, such as father, mother, husband, sisters, brother and so forth. Nicola Frith and Kate Hodgson tackle the whites' domination over the blacks' families in *At the Limits of Memory: Legacies of Slavery in the Francophone World* (2015). Frith and

Hodgson argue that the whites are “blessed with colonial force which provides them with a total domination over the blacks’ families” (p.116). The whites practice powerful exploitation of the blacks in a way that enables them to take hegemonic leadership upon the blacks and their relatives (p.117). Being that so, colonial slavery entails the whites’ oppressive colonization of the blacks’ family members (Abu Jweid and Kaur, 2018, p.10).

In Butler’s *Kindred*, for example, an anonymous black man is beaten harshly by Tom Weylin. Dana is very surprised at his fortitude and endurance of the torment: “By now, the man had been securely tied to the tree. One of the whites went to his horse to get what proved to be a whip” (p.37). The man’s torment is intensified at the hands of Tom Weylin: “He [Tom Weylin] cracked it once in the air, apparently for his own amusement, then brought it down across the back of the black man. The man’s body convulsed, but the only sound he made was a gasp. He took several more blows with no outcry, but I could hear his breathing, hard and quick” (p.37).

Strikingly, Tom Weylin enjoys, or finds amusement in tormenting the black man. But the interesting point here is that Tom Weylin has control over the black man’s wife and children. In so doing, he heavily torments the black man for slavery in front of his family: “Behind him [the black man], his child wept noisily against her mother’s leg, but the woman, like her husband, was silent. She clutched the child to her and stood, head down, refusing to watch the beating” (p.37). Tom Weylin, therefore, torments the black man in front of his family in order to make them obedient and follow his orders. Additionally, he frightens the other slaves by tormenting the man: “But Weylin was making an example of the man. He had ordered all of us to watch the beating—all the slaves” (p.93). Tom Weylin’s negative treatment of the black man exemplifies his colonial covetousness because he “ordered people to do work they were already doing, criticized their slowness and laziness even when they were quick and industrious” (p.94).

Tom Weylin tyrannical torment incarnates the tough colonial subjugation of the blacks. This subjugation is approached in Márcia Rego’s *The Dialogic Nation of Cape Verde: Slavery, Language, and Ideology* (2015). Rego contends that if the white masters subjugate the blacks, their white sons also subjugate their black slaves (p.39). This is the essence of “dialogic slavery ideology” which means the white masters and their sons have the same ideological plans to harness the blacks for slavery, labor, and domestic affairs (p.41). Once the slaves are subjugated, their sons are raised in slavery to be servants for their white masters (Ashcroft et al., p.69). In a similar manner, Rufus; in Butler’s *Kindred*, subjugates Carrie for slavery. He learned this from his father, To Weylin, who tormented the blacks in order to exploit them for his labor. As such, Carries’ son Nigel and his children are tormented and enslaved by Rufus: “Nigel carried her [Carrie] up to

her room. She could walk a little, but she couldn’t manage the stairs....Slave children hadn’t interested her unless her husband had fathered them. Then her interest had been negative. But she gave Nigel’s sons candy and they loved her” (p.94).

As argued earlier, slavery grows out of the whites’ subjugation of the blacks and their families. In *The Fiction of Imperialism: Reading between International Relations and Postcolonialism* (1998), Phillip Darby describes the colonial relations between the whites and blacks in terms of an imperial domination (p.15). The whites have imperial powers since they could control the blacks for slavery. Yet, the whites need time to have an “overwhelming occupation of the blacks and their families” (Coker, p.96). The whites are in a progressive process to involve the blacks in their colonial plantations i.e., colonial settlements (Abu Jweid, Termizi, and Majeed, 2015, p.19).

In the same fashion, Tom Weylin needed a quite long time to oppress the blacks and include them to his plantation. He tells the slave Luke to bring his wife and children into his plantation in order to have them all for his service: “Mister Tom said for him to choose a new wife there on the plantation. That way, Mister Tom’ll own all his children” (p.40). By time, Tom Weylin and his son Rufus become accustomed to enslaving other blacks and their families in vicious ways by using, for examples, rifles to threaten the blacks: “Rufus’s father arrived on a flat-bed wagon, carrying his familiar long rifle—an old muzzleloader, I realized. With him in the wagon was Nigel [a slave, the son of Carrie and Luke] and a tall stocky black man. Tom Weylin was tall himself, but too lean to be as impressive as his massive slave” (p.66).

Tom Weylin colonial subjugation of black people represents the slavery agendas and how they change the relationships between the blacks and the whites. Kirsti Bohata discusses the destructive slavery agendas done by white colonizers in *Postcolonialism Revisited* (2004). Bohata maintains that when the whites oppress the blacks, they “imprison them in places which symbolize colonial slavery” (p.19). According to Bohata, these places “might be prisons, cabins, and ditches” (p.20). The whites use such places to belittle the value of the slave as a human being (Colăcel, p.68). As the black slaves are confined in these places, they lose their human true identity; and consequently, they become subhuman (p.68). To illustrate, the whites’ imprisonment of the blacks is an indication of the whites’ oppressive superiority over the blacks. Consequently, the blacks are gradually tamed by this treatment and become submissive to the whites. In *Kindred*, Tom Weylin embodies this treatment when he imprisons some slaves in half-hidden cabins; and the blacks become subhuman, as Dana describes them:

Someday, he [Tom Weylin] would be the slaveholder, responsible in his own right for what happened to the

people who lived in those half-hidden cabins. The boy was literally growing up as I [Dana] watched—growing up because I watched and because I helped to keep him safe. I was the worst possible guardian for him—a black to watch over him in a society that considered blacks subhuman, a woman to watch over him in a society that considered women perennial children. I would have all I could do to look after myself. But I would help him as best I could. And I would try to keep friendship with him, maybe plant a few ideas in his mind that would help both me and the people who would be his slaves in the years to come. I might even be making things easier for Alice. (p.69)

The imprisonment of the blacks in the cabins refers to the colonial agendas planned by Tom Weylin. When the white colonizers, like Tom Weylin and Rufus, take the whole colonial authority they could to frighten the blacks and instruct them how to be educated. In *Postcolonial Comics: Texts, Events, Identities* (2015), Binita Mehta and Pia Mukherji assert that the whites deprive the black slaves of learning (p.26). The purpose behind this deprivation is to prevent the slaves from progress to be equal to the whites (Menon, p.74). In Butler's *Kindred*, Dana sympathizes with other slaves, such as Carrie and tries to teach them. But she is afraid of Tom Weylin if he catches her teaching other slaves: "I [Dana] looked from the boy to the girl. 'Shall I teach you, Carrie?' If I did and her mother caught me, I might be in more trouble than if Tom Weylin caught me. I was afraid to teach her both for her sake and for mine. Her mother wasn't a woman I wanted to offend or to hurt, but my conscience wouldn't let me refuse her if she wanted to learn" (p.106).

Tom Weylin's oppressive authority deprives the blacks of progress. He hinders their ability to emulate the whites and become strong like them. The whites can hinder the blacks' education by warning them against education (Szeman, p.83). They can also decrease the blacks' educative consciousness by torment in case they refuse to abide by the whites' orders. They have the power to "impose torture upon the blacks to make them more obedient to their colonial mentality" (Thomas, p.171). In this regard, slavery culminates in the blacks ignorance and torment at the hands of the whites. In a similar fashion, Rufus and his father torment the blacks by a whip. Dana, for example, suffers from the whip marks on her back. She is beaten toughly by Rufus. She could not wake up as usual and move to do her house affairs: "It was morning when I awoke, and I was still at home. My back hurt whenever I moved. I managed to spray it with an ointment Kevin had used for sunburn. The whip lacerations hurt like burns. The ointment cooled them and seemed to help. I had the feeling I should have used something stronger, though" (p.116). Dana further talks about Tom Weylin who whips another black man till he is fatally wounded: "Tom Weylin had ordered brine thrown onto the back of

the field hand he had whipped. I could remember the man screaming as the solution hit him. But his wounds had healed without infection" (p.116).

Here, Dana and the black man slavery is a manifestation of colonial oppression practiced by the whites. Tormenting the blacks appears in lashing or whipping them. In this case, the blacks begin showing themselves in physical weariness or physical fatigue as a result of torture (Venkatachalam, p.145). They try persistently to show their sufferings to their white colonizers to arouse their pity. The blacks could gain much relaxation and exemption from slavery labor if the whites sympathize with them (Whitlock, p.97). For example, Dana wants to be observed by some people to tell Rufus and his father that she is extremely tired at work: "I [Dana] wanted the others to be able to say they saw me go to bed. I wanted Rufus and Tom Weylin to waste time looking around the plantation for me tomorrow when they realized they hadn't seen me for a while. They wouldn't do that if some house servant—one of the children, perhaps—said, 'She never went to bed last night'" (p.172). Dana wants other black servants to see her fed up with work. She does so to obtain rest and comfort away of Rufus enslavement of her and her family. Strikingly enough, the relationship between Dana and Rufus is the core conceptualization of self-other slavery relationship.

Both Dana and Rufus stand for the Self-Other relationship between the whites and the blacks. For this reason, Rufus represents the white "Self" and Dana represents the black "Other." To argue this point, the postcolonial discourse posits the notion of slavery on the basis of discrimination in terms of self-other relationship. Edward Said, in his book *Orientalism* (1978), argues that racial discrimination comes out of "power, of domination, of varying degree of a complex hegemony" between between the Orient and the Occident (p.5). Additionally, slavery discrimination "is not innocent but profoundly connected with the operations of power" (p.43). Said asserts that the "colonizer [the whites] knowledge of the colonized [the blacks] goes arm in arm with expansionism, exploration and settlement in the land of the colonized" (p.8). This is the measurement of self-other relationship which involves "the conventional axis of interaction between the colonizer and colonized or the self and the other" (p.42). In this manner, the colonized and the colonizers (the whites and the blacks) relationship must create its own other; because of this other it can strengthen its own identity and superiority and "because of this other it can set off against the slavery as 'a sort of surrogate [alternative] and even underground [oppressed] self'" (Ashcroft et al, p.78).

Said's discussion of self-other relationship involves two parts, or opponents, in the colonial slavery. They are solely the oppressive whites and the oppressed blacks (Loomba, p.35). Accordingly, I will emphasize the

relationship between Dana and Rufus as the self-other relationship in my analysis. The relationship also involves Dana's husband, Kevin. He is negatively treated by Rufus though he is a white man. Rufus thinks that Kevin deserves punishment because he is married to a black woman, namely, Dana. This is true to Butler's *Kindred* where troubles begin between the blacks and the whites in the first phases of their colonial encounter: "The trouble began long before June 9, 1976, when I [Dana] became aware of it, but June 9 is the day I remember. It was my twenty-sixth birthday. It was also the day I met Rufus—the day he called me to him for the first time" (p.12). Furthermore, Kevin and Dana remember these events and their negative effects upon their relationship: "Kevin and I had not planned to do anything to celebrate my birthday. We were both too tired for that. On the day before, we had moved from our apartment in Los Angeles to a house of our own a few miles away in Altadena" (p.12). Dana and her husband are prevented from celebration by Rufus who runs after them everywhere. He does not want them to be free or relaxed. He only aspires to take them to slavery.

Rufus's unjustified enslavement of Dana and her husband leads her to think of destroying him. In post-colonialism, the unfair enslaving of the blacks might cause destruction to the white colonizer (Klinger, p.18). As a matter of fact, the blacks' feeling of oppression and exploitation results in a certain resistance of the whites. The whites could be resisted by burning their belongings, like money and houses (Ingleby, p.76).

By the same token, Rufus is threatened by burning in *Kindred*. Dana thinks profoundly to burn Rufus's house and money to make him poor and weak. As such, Dana and her husband could be free when Rufus becomes poor. However, she changes her thinking and becomes more afraid of Rufus. This is because he will whip her as before: "I started thinking that if I burned the house, he would lose all his money.... 'But then I remembered the stable, and the whip he hit me with after I set that fire. Mama said if she hadn't stopped him, he would have killed me. I was afraid this time he would kill me, so I wanted to put the fire out. But I couldn't. I didn't know what to do'" (p.27).

In this quotation, Dana appears weak and submissive to Rufus. She could not think of his resistance. This is because resisting the whites is a very challenging endeavor for the blacks (Kistnareddy 64). The blacks who live in long slavery time could not change their existential relationships with the white colonizers overnight. They necessarily need some daring changes to prove their identity as human beings. In *African Realism?: International Relations Theory and Africa's Wars in the Postcolonial Era* (2015), Errol Henderson tackles the way in which the blacks fail to get independence of the whites' slavery domination. Henderson contends that the blacks "live in an everlasting contest with the whites and

they would not become autonomous because they comply with the self-other relationship" (p.164). The blacks have haunting thoughts of the whites who might torment them if they do not comply with their rules.

Similarly, Dana and Rufus Self-Other relationship does not have a compromise. Dana cannot become independent as she is deeply afraid of Rufus's torment if she disobeys him: "I [Dana] might have found myself standing between father and son during one of Rufus's beatings. What would have happened then, I couldn't imagine. One meeting with Rufus's father had been enough for me. Not that the boy sounded like that much of a bargain either" (p.27). She is upset by Rufus's whipping of niggers (Black servants) like his father. She does not want to be whipped like them: "I sat still, breathed deeply, calming myself, believing him. I did believe him. I wasn't even as surprised as I should have been. I had already accepted the fact that I had moved through time. Now I knew I was farther from home than I had thought. And now I knew why Rufus's father used his whip on "niggers" as well as horses" (p.28). As a result, she becomes very careful in her relationship with Rufus. She follows his orders and rules as a master. She pretends to be a slave to avoid his torment: "I was careful. As the days passed, I got into the habit of being careful. I played the slave, minded my manners probably more than I had to because I wasn't sure what I could get away with. Not much, as it turned out" (p.92).

The Self-Other relationship between Dana and Rufus is completely colonial. It does not have any human common equality. That is, there is not equal human dignity between them. As a rule of thumb, the blacks lose their dignity as human beings when they are humiliated (Dessingue, p.46). The whites' tremendous hegemony makes the blacks in a continual fear and unrest. This is the notion of losing human dignity (Hoene, p.15). The whites try to impose fearful domination to prove being strong. In this way, they keep their colonialism. On the other hand, the blacks remain submissive and obedient to save their lives.

In *Kindred*, Dana is so frightened by Rufus. She goes to deserted places surrounding her village to have some rest time far away of Rufus's demanding authority. When she is alone, she feels afraid of anybody who may come and see her. Being so, Rufus might be informed of her relaxation and, in turn, he asks her again for work: "I [Dana] could see scattered trees and shadowy buildings around me.... Slave cabins, I supposed. I thought I saw someone moving around one of them, and for a moment, I froze behind a huge spreading tree. The figure vanished silently between two cabins—some slave, probably as eager as I was to avoid being caught out at night" (p.34).

Furthermore, she may meet other white persons who will report her stay to Rufus. She is more frightened by Rufus than the whole violence happened to the blacks in her village: "I skirted around a field of some grassy waist-high crop I didn't even try to identify in the dim

light. Rufus had told me his short cut, and that there was another longer way by road. I was glad to avoid the road, though. The possibility of meeting a white adult here frightened me, more than the possibility of street violence ever had at home” (p.34). Correspondingly, the self-other relationship between Dana and Rufus is the ultimate point of colonial slavery. Such kind of slavery paves the way for racial segregation depicted in Butler’s *Kindred*. Thus, the following section will focus on racism practiced by the whites against the blacks in the course of the novel.

3. RACISM

The white patrol is the exemplification of racism in *Kindred*. They are the white agents who exploit the blacks for the purpose of working at their companies. They are ordered by Tom Weyling to captivate the blacks and harness them for labor force: “The patrol and its stumbling captive headed back to the road, slanting off toward the Weylin house. If they had gone back exactly the way they came, they would have either gone over me or driven me from my cover. I [Dana] was lucky—and stupid for having gotten so close” (p.38). Dana, here, contemplates Tom Weylin and his son Rufus who manage the patrol white group to subjugate the blacks for work and captivity: “I wondered whether the captive black man belonged to Tom Weylin. That might explain Rufus’s friendship with the child, Alice. That is, if this child was Alice. If this was the right cabin. Whether it was or not, though, the woman, unconscious and abandoned, was in need of help. I got up and went over to her” (p.38). Dana is surprised by Rufus’s kind and tender treatment of Alice although she is a black slave. She could figure out that he wants Alice to work at his company, and then, enslaves her. In this situation, Dana feels that she holds responsible for helping Alice in her work to mitigate Rufus’s daunting demands.

Dana’s sympathy with Alice’s poor condition comes out because she is a black slave like her. In essence, the black slaves sympathize with their compatriots, and the white masters appreciate each other and marginalize their black slaves. This sympathy is tackled in Alexander Anievas et al.’s *Race and Racism in International Relations: Confronting the Global Colour Line* (2015). Anievas et al. claim that the colonial whites exert racial segregation via hostility (p.61). They whites “appear hostile and aggressive to the blacks and do not allow them to interact with them in their colonial peripheries” (p.61). The whites are ruthless and creating racial discrimination against the slaves.

To connect this to Butler’s *Kindred*, Margaret Weylin does not sympathize with Dana. Dana and Rufus are tired, but she brings water only for Rufus. She does not give Dana Water because she is a black slave. Moreover, she shows hostility to Dana: “Margaret Weylin rushed back

into the room with water for Rufus and more hostility for me than I could see any reason for. “You’re to go out to the cookhouse and get some supper!” she told me as I got out of her way. But she made it sound as though she were saying, ‘You’re to go straight to hell!’” (p.71). Margaret Weylin makes Dana reacts in an agitated way. Dana considers this segregation as being more than racism: “there was something about me that these people didn’t like—except for Rufus. It wasn’t just racial. They were used to black people. Maybe I could get Kevin to find out what it was” (p.71). Here, she looks for her husband Kevin to console herself after being marginalized by Margaret Weylin’s hostility.

Racial segregation encompasses the preference of some blacks to other blacks. To illustrate, when the whites perform racial segregation, they tend to choose some slaves and disregard the others. The choice of the preferred slaves is pursued on the basis of, for example, education (Huggan and Tiffin, p.15). But, all the slaves are the same according to the whites. In *Kindred*, Dana is marginalized by Margaret Weylin. She is like her husband, Tom Weylin, who does not distinguish between the educated and the non-educated slaves. Margaret sometimes resents her and the other slaves: “She [Margaret Weylin] probably doesn’t want to share her son with anyone. Heaven help him when he gets a little older and tries to break away. Also, I don’t think Margaret likes educated slaves any better than her husband does” (p.83).

Additionally, racial segregation makes the whites impose observation over the blacks all the time. The blacks are always watched by the whites in order not to give them any chance to get rid of their slavery (Lam, p.93). As a result, the whites become worse, and perform much racial segregation. Dana suffers from this segregation in the course of *Kindred*. She tries to go outside for a walk but she is watched by people sent by Margaret Weylin. Thus, her life becomes more restricted than before: “Now we [Dana and other slaves] were walking together away from the house and the quarter. We weren’t heading for our oak tree because by then, if Margaret Weylin saw us there, she sent someone with a job for me. Her husband may have stopped her from throwing me out of the house, but he hadn’t stopped her from becoming a worse nuisance than ever” (p.99).

Racial segregation is caused by Margaret Weylin and Rufus. They carry on harsh treatments of the slaves. They use the slaves for their own benefit. The slaves do not resist them by any means. Accordingly, slavery develops and allows the white colonizers to take over all the black affairs. The postcolonial appropriation of meek slavery is the whites’ ability to utilize the blacks in domestic affairs, such as cooking, taking care of the whites’ children, and harvesting the crops. These affairs are considered the social work done by the blacks. This work is the authentic racial segregation against the blacks.

Serge Moscovici approaches the dimension of such racism in *The History and Actuality of Social Representations* (2000). Moscovici maintains that the blacks “become the work agents utilized by the whites to do household traditional affairs, among them are cooking and harvesting agricultural crops. They are not given any sympathy by their white colonizers. Other blacks lend a helping hand for them to be less tired of work; this is the extreme notion of racism” (p.22). The blacks are exploited severely for the whites’ interests. The whites do not allocate any rest time for them. They have to achieve the whole domestic work. But, other blacks assist them to give them some rest of work. The whites ignore helping the blacks because they feel that they are inferior and do not deserve help. In so doing, they exert racial discrimination against the blacks.

Similarly, Dana sympathizes with Sarah who is exploited by Rufus do household affairs including cooking and harvesting corn. She collects the corn to be cooked for the whites. The whites do not help her. Instead, Dana helps her because they are both black: “But for three days I didn’t see Rufus. Nor did anything happen to bring on the dizziness that would tell me I was going home at last. I helped Sarah as well as I could. She seemed to warm up to me a little and she was patient with my ignorance of cooking. She taught me and saw to it that I ate better. No more corn meal mush once she realized I didn’t like it” (p.82). Sarah is obliged to do all the household work. Rufus does not allow her any rest tome. She therefore suffers from work fatigue. Dana feels pity for her and tries her best to help her.

Dana has sincere human awareness of racism and slavery. She refuses this racism by helping Sarah. On the other hand, Rufus does not feel pity for Sarah. His white identity makes hem haughty enough to ignore her sufferings. This ignorance makes Dana help Sarah, Carrie, and other slave servants with their household work: “I [Dana] cleaned and plucked a chicken, prepared vegetables, kneaded bread dough, and when Sarah was weary of me, helped Carrie and the other house servants with their work. I kept Kevin’s room clean. I brought him hot water to wash and shave with, and I washed in his room. It was the only place I could go for privacy” (p.82).

Rufus’s racial segregation against Luke and Nigel is exaggerated at the expense of their dignity. Belittling human dignity is deemed precarious in post-colonialism (Whitlock, p.194). The unjustified exploitation and marginalization of the blacks would result in disastrous human relations. There could be no any reconciliation between the whites and the blacks if the whites proceed treating the blacks in an unethical way. In like fashion, Rufus continues provoking and marginalizing black slaves. Among these slaves are Alice and her mother, Luke, and Nigel. Rufus separated them form Dana for a long time. He does not want her to help them. Then,

he torments them. When Dana could see then again, she could not recognize them because they are harmfully whipped. Their faces were swollen of beating. They are beaten to the extent that they could not know Dana when she visits them. Their fatigue worsens their memory to recognize her. She tries to ask them about their status, but she cannot.

They could not tell her that they are so tired. She waits to ask Rufus about this though she knows that he is responsible for their torment: “The words, the questions made me think of Alice and her mother. I looked at Luke’s broad face, wondering whether it would do any harm to ask about them. But how could I admit to knowing them....Nigel knew I had been here before, but Sarah and Luke might not. It would be safer to wait—save my questions for Rufus” (p.74). When Dana sees Rufus, she tells him of his responsibility of tormenting the Alice, her mother, and the black children, this makes her wonder why the blacks accept slavery easily: “I know. That’s why I didn’t ask you.”... I never realized how easily people could be trained to accept slavery” (p.102).

Furthermore, Rufus’s deadly treatment of the blacks exacerbates. He forces them to live in isolated places. To connect this point, the stereotypical negative image of the whites causes catastrophic events in the lives of the blacks. These events, according to Dominic Thomas, include fatal diseases. The whites do not care for “the blacks fatal diseases because they racially abuse them. Being weak and feeble, the blacks could not heel themselves and diseases bring precarious life. The outbreak of infectious diseases among the black communities is caused by the lack of proper medication or doctors” (p.86). These diseases are a result of the whites’ racial segregation. They just keep medication for themselves, and disregard the blacks’ plights and unhealthy sufferings. In *Kindred*, the scenario of fatal diseases is obvious in terms of Rufus’s racism. In the quotation below, Dana describes the blacks’ poor situation. They suffer from diseases, and could not have doctors to treat them:

When Luke and Nigel took Sarah out of the room with them, I feasted on a shapeless sandwich. In the middle of it, I caught myself wondering about the ham, wondering how well it had been cooked. I tried to think of something else, but my mind was full of vaguely remembered horror stories of the diseases that ran wild during this time. Medicine was just a little better than witchcraft. Malaria came from bad air. Surgery was performed on struggling wide-awake patients. Germs were question marks even in the minds of many doctors. And people casually, unknowingly ingested all kinds of poorly preserved ill-cooked food that could make them sick or kill them. (p.76)

Rufus does not quit tormenting the blacks. Some slaves like Sarah accepted slavery and racism out of fear: “She had done the safe thing—had accepted a life of slavery because she was afraid” (p.146). She wants to save her life. In colonial communities, the whites decide and shape the destiny of the slaves (Anievas, p.73). The

lives of the blacks are likely decided by the whites. Luke's tragic experience is an illustrative example of this destiny. Luke tries to rebel against Rufus. He resists Rufus' racial segregation. He teaches his son Nigel the will to resist the whites at all costs. On that account, Rufus and his father become angry and they torment him. They whip him strongly on the back. Then, Rufus decides to sell him to get rid of his resistance.

Tormenting Luke makes the blacks, especially Dana, afraid of Rufus and his father because it is impossible to escape their racial enslavement at the hands of the blacks: "There were a few whip marks on Luke's back, and I'd twice heard Tom Weylin swear to give them company.... I [Dana] had no intention of taking a whipping if I could avoid it, and I was sure Kevin could protect me if he was nearby when I needed him" (p.97).

In this quotation, it is conspicuous that Dana seeks a safe refuge from Rufus and his father enslavement. She finds her Husband Kevin the safest refuge from this enslavement. Interestingly enough, the relationship between her and Kevin is complicated since she is black and he is white. How could she seek safety and survival through a white man? She, presumably, could obtain safety by ambivalence i.e., she and her husband can co-exist and reconcile with each other through dedication. Both of them do not judge the other racially. They simply live as human beings without racism or slavery. The following section will concentrate on how ambivalence develops between Dana and Kevin.

4. AMBIVALENCE

Dana and Kevin are the representation of colonial ambivalence. They come from different racial backgrounds. Kevin travels to the south to free the blacks of slavery. He meets Dana and marries her in the course of the journey. Kevin struggled hard to marry Dana because his family tried to prevent him from marrying her. The reason behind this prevention is that he is a white and he is not supposed to marry a black woman. The blacks are normally considered inferior to the whites in post-colonialism (Ashcroft et al, p.109). They are harnessed for serving the whites.

However, the case of Dana and Kevin is different. They value and appreciate each other in spite of the fact that they are of opposite racial and racial classes. Kevin's sympathy and appreciation of the blacks makes Dana fall in love with him: "I [Dana] fell in love with Kevin all over again" (p.87). He also tries hard to help her to find a better job. She normally works as a slave for Rufus, but Kevin's dissatisfaction with her slavery stirs him to ask her to quit household affairs: "'Quit,' Kevin told me. 'I'll [Kevin] help you out until you find a better job.' If I [Dana] hadn't already loved him by then, that would have done it" (p.109).

Being so, Dana and Kevin have ambivalence relationship midst colonial circumstances. They ignore their racial backgrounds. What unites them is their humanity. They judge each other as human beings, not through slave-master tradition. In essence, they exhibit the necessary ambivalent equality between the whites and the blacks. In *The Location of Culture* (1994), Homi Bhabha outlines the critical nexus of colonial ambivalence. Bhabha is considered the progenitor of the concept of ambivalence; and according to him, the concept of ambivalence is a "subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite" (p.122). The subject of difference, argues Bhabha, is the racial differences between the whites and the blacks, but is "almost" the same in the sense that it unites them regardless their racial origins. Additionally, the concept is important since it describes "the unstable environment that the colonized [the black] is forced to either adapt to or work really hard to reject" (p.122). The colonized blacks should adapt and come into terms with the whites. They are integrated within a human equality, but not racial segregation. The whites and the blacks should care for each other, and they do not have to marginalize each other.

Dana and Kevin embody these relations. They care for each other. They need each other all the time. They do not feel that they are different. Dana narrates how Kevin is always eager to talk with her. He wants her to take care of him: "He didn't seem to want to sleep with me. But he wanted me around—someone to talk to, someone who would listen to him and care what he said, care about him" (p.180). Kevin, additionally, wants to free Dana of Rufus slavery: "'At least partly. Of course I [Dana] love you, and I don't want anyone else. But there's another reason, and when I'm back there it's the most important reason. I don't think Rufus would have understood it'" (pp.246-247). Kevin wants to speak with Rufus about Dana's freedom, but he thinks that Rufus will refuse.

Therefore, Dana's liberty is one aspect of the ambivalent relationship between her and Kevin. Liberty is judged as one of the most effective issues in colonial ambivalent relations (Burton, p.76). It is the coherent and mutual understanding of personal needs between the whites and the blacks (p.78). Furthermore, Bhabha discusses the notion of ambivalence in *Nation and Narration* (1990). He argues that ambivalence appears "when the two cultures [racial ethnicities] mix" together. One of these cultures is superior and the other is inferior. But liberty makes the superior and the inferior equal (p.314). When liberty is achieved, the blacks feel that the whites are benign. They become friends to the blacks instead of being demanding masters.

In *Kindred*, Rufus is a white demanding master. He remains a master till the end. But Kevin becomes benign and good. His true love and honest sympathy with Dana are exceptional. These peculiarities draw Dana's respect of

his behaviors until she considers him not only a husband, but also an ancestor, a brother, and a friend. He is not a white master as Rufus and his family: "I could feel the knife in my hand, still slippery with perspiration. A slave was a slave. Anything could be done to her. And Rufus was Rufus—erratic, alternately generous and vicious. I could accept him [Kevin] as my ancestor, my younger brother, my friend, but not as my master, and not as my lover. He had understood that once" (p.261).

Dana's freedom is contiguous to the whites' life. When she is free, she is not confined by their demands. As a matter of fact, the whites' sympathy leads to the blacks' complete freedom when they replace their racial segregation with good deeds (Genova, p.118). As the whites help and sympathize with the blacks, the racial limits between them disappear. Consequently, the blacks recognize that they are not properties or belongings owned by their white opponents. To link this to *Kindred*, Dana tells Kevin that she is not a property owned by Rufus. She does not want to lose her freedom to lead a better life: "'I'm [Dana] not property, Kevin. I'm not a horse or a sack of wheat. If I have to seem to be property, if I have to accept limits on my freedom for Rufus's sake, then he also has to accept limits—on his behavior toward me. He has to leave me enough control of my own life to make living look better to me than killing and dying" (p.247). Yet, Dana is indebted to Kevin's help. He married her and challenged his white traditional marriage. Being so, he assisted her to obtain her freedom.

The ambivalent relationship between Dana and Kevin is gaining freedom and independence from the whites. For example, the blacks' recovery of freedom and mastery in Kevin's land is the rejection of slavery and racism. In *Transculturation and Aesthetics: Ambivalence, Power, and Literature* (2014), Joel Kuortti et al. argue that the blacks' freedom abolishes slavery and racism (p.58). When the blacks got their complete independence, they remember their slavery experience as a harsh reality (p.58). They feel cheerful and delighted because they do not suffer from demanding orders and daunting work. The blacks lead a new luxurious life devoid of racial segregation. Ultimately, they try to document their tragic racial experience in books, papers, journals, diaries and the like. The colonial ambivalence is the chief reason of this transitional entity (p.59).

This transitional state is radically connected to the life of Dana in Butler's *Kindred*. She lives with Kevin in a convenient house after being enslaved by Rufus: "for one thing, Kevin and I had lived here together for only two days.... That was a stark, powerful reality that the gentle conveniences and luxuries of this house, of now" (p.191). Furthermore, she feels happy and cheerful with Kevin, especially when she finally got rid of slavery: "I [Dana] found myself laughing, almost crying. I put my head on his shoulder and wondered whether a little time in some sort of mental institution would be worse than

several months of slavery" (p.242). Thus, they wanted to document their racial slavery experience in a book. This book documents the history of slavery in America; and it documents the tragic dates and events happened during colonialism in Dana's past colonial settlement, Maryland: "I [Dana] stuffed another pencil, pen, and scratch pad into the bag. I was slowly emptying Kevin's desk. All my things were still packed. And I found a compact paperback history of slavery in America that might be useful. It listed dates and events that I should be aware of, and it contained a map of Maryland" (p.115). In so doing, they expose the atrocities of the white colonizers. Thus, they want to make their past experience a human lesson to the white colonizers to be ambivalent, or good, towards their black slaves.

CONCLUSION

Ambivalence comes out of colonial powers in the novel. The novel is a symbolical depiction of the colonial encounters between the whites and the blacks in the American history. These powers involve the racial encounters between the blacks and the whites. Both powers have a different conceptualization and perception of each other. In the main, the colonial relationships are characterized by a tense and severe clash or conflict which results in a distorted human harmonious life. The essence of such conflict brings about destruction and harmful practices in the colonial world of the blacks and the whites simultaneously. Accordingly, the blacks strive for confirming their black or authentic identity regardless of the whites' covetous practices which subjugate their rights. The whites, on the other hand, try to maintain their original identity by emphasizing their cultural hegemony on the blacks.

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