

March 2006

Eugenicism: The Construction of Queer Space in the Works of Octavia Butler and Samuel Delany

Freda Fair
Macalester College

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.macalester.edu/amst_honors

Recommended Citation

Fair, Freda, "Eugenicism: The Construction of Queer Space in the Works of Octavia Butler and Samuel Delany" (2006). *American Studies Honors Projects*. Paper 3.
http://digitalcommons.macalester.edu/amst_honors/3

This Honors Project is brought to you for free and open access by the American Studies Department at DigitalCommons@Macalester College. It has been accepted for inclusion in American Studies Honors Projects by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@Macalester College. For more information, please contact scholarpub@macalester.edu.

Eugenicism: The Construction of Queer Space in the Works of Octavia
Butler and Samuel Delany

Freda Fair

Advisor: Dean Jane Rhodes

Department of American Studies

Senior Honors Thesis

March 1, 2006

CONTENTS

	Page
Acknowledgements	iii
Overview of The Project: Situating Myself	v
Introduction: Science and Fiction, Where Do The Two Meet?	1
Chapter I: An Early History of Eugenics	9
Chapter II: Science Fiction as Genre: Boeckmann and Barr	26
Chapter III: A Gendered and Sexually Locatable Eugenic History	31
Chapter IV: Eugenicism in Science Fiction: Butler and Delany	57
Conclusion	83
Works Cited	92

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I dedicate this work to the late Octavia Estelle Butler (1947-2006). I would like to thank Professor Jane Rhodes, Professor Roderick Ferguson, Professor Duchess Harris, and Professor Christine Rose for serving on my Honors Defense Committee. I really appreciated all of your feedback and comments throughout this process. I would like to especially thank my advisor, Professor Rhodes, for all of her encouragement, assistance, and confidence in me. I send a big thanks to Kathie Scott, the American Studies Department Coordinator, for all of her cherished energy, knowledge, and sweetness. Thanks to Aaron Albertson for all of his wonderful reference assistance. Thanks to all friends and loved ones: especially my parents Alfred Fair and Yvonne Estrata, lovely grandparents, uncles, aunts and siblings. Thanks to Eliza Schrader for all of the work dates, and to Liz Kameroner for listening so well and for constantly supporting me. I have much love and appreciation for all of you.

Love,

Freda

“Is it the easy stories that make us who we are?” ...

Samuel Delany (MLW 344)

OVERVIEW OF THE PROJECT: Situating Myself

Tell a story.

The Honors Project
A Performance
Reflexive
Be critical, critique, criticism
Show off
Please.
Why is it important and to whom?

Tell a story.

Because stories are important.
Everything:
1) A story
2) A performance
3) Subject to interrogation, interpretation

Construction
Me
My story
My review of literature
My theory and my methodology
My relationship to the works of the writers

Tell a story.

Identity
Mine, yours, and ours.
Theirs.
First person, second and third.

Declarative, dialogue, formal
Seriousness and survival
Reality
Truths
Bodies
The body

1) The Honors Project.

The idea for this project came to me when I was unsure and unwilling to believe that I could move past my curiosity of the topic. As my scattered and uncertain goals for the project solidified, I realized just how interested and engaged I really was in the history of eugenics and what it might mean as a space of experimentation and creation from which to read literature. I saw the Honors Project as my space to explore and to grow not only as a better critical reader, but also as a more confident and developed analytical essay writer. After thinking about the Honors Project not as a thing, but as a space of exploration it became less of an intimidating and daunting task to undergo.

The seemingly far-reaching goals of eugenics and the legacies it left behind were where I started my research. In one of my classes as a first-year student at Macalester, there was a brief mention of the University of Minnesota as having been a vibrant Midwestern and national powerhouse of the Eugenics Movement of the early twentieth-century. After this discussion, I rode my bike over to the U of M to look at the beautiful and expensive new and old facilities and I made note of the embossed names of natural and social scientists on the front of the buildings. I realized of the few names that I recognized they were all white men. I returned to Macalester after my bike ride and simply stored this information in the back of my mind.

During the spring of my junior year, I developed a renewed interest in eugenics. When I began to think of my interests for this project, I thought of how the names on the buildings at the U of M and other institutions are representative of hidden histories, for the most part that are not discussed. The men whose names are embossed on the buildings represent many different processes and manifestations of science's quest for

truths and realities in the world and in U.S. society that still impact the present. The work of early eugenicists was fueled, in part, by public and political discourses surrounding the “Yellow Peril,” that which Palumbo Liu¹ refers to as having existed in the early and late twentieth century. This construction of the “Yellow Peril” allowed politicians, scientists alike to call for a closing of the national landscape and borders to Others, and helped generate the desire to export American Exceptionalism as defined by David Noble. Eugenicists were afraid of how to manage and deal with human difference.

2) The Performance and Construction.

ME

My story

My review of literature

My theory and methodology

My relationship to the works of the writers

Initially, I knew that I wanted to be able to speak to some of my own frustrations with feeling already constituted as a human being, as a subject already situated by identity, memory, and relationships. It is important that I discuss my relationship to theory, method, and methodology. This is necessary because theory is a production of knowledge in which everyone is involved in different ways. Each theoretical framework used in this paper signifies a great deal in relation to my development as a critical thinker. Of course there are limitations in expropriating the theories and methodologies of others; I accept those limitations and choose to work with them.

¹ From *Asian/American: Historical Crossings of a Racial Frontier* published in 2001.

2a) Reflexive. Be critical, critique

Show off

Who cares? Why is it important?

I think the most important part of completing this project has been the challenge of producing something beyond my intellectual grasp, something beyond my immediate ability to verbally communicate. It has been very much an exercise in active reading and thinking, and a difficult exercise in writing and narrating a story with a clear beginning, middle, and end. The difficulty in attempting to be self-reflexive and yet polished in my critique was and is perhaps the most trying part of the entire project. I am still uncertain of where and how I am standing outside of those locales of storytelling and analytical writing that draw definite conclusions and encourage the deterministic thinking that I initially wanted to avoid.

2b) Identity.

Mine, yours, and ours.

Theirs.

First person, second and third.

Declarative, dialogue, formal

Seriousness and survival

Reality

Truths

Bodies

The body

Tell a story:

Me: "When I grow up I'm going to get my tubes tied, clipped and burned."

My mother: "That's your decision, just as long as you keep your legs closed you won't have to worry about getting pregnant, but you're not fast, so I'm not worried."

This is a part of a reoccurring conversation that I had with my mother and usually other women relatives in my family throughout my youth before I was a teenager. I trace my early understanding and relationship to eugenics to these moments, to these statements, and with their varied significance in the early years of my life. Usually this statement accompanied other statements like: “I never want to get pregnant” or “I want to be free.” “I want to live on my own.” And they always were related to the fact that I thought having children was something embarrassing, and not socially accepted in the real world.

When I think back to these statements, I imagine an indignant young me struggling to understand restrictions and rules from the State and from community. The first statement, “I never want to get pregnant” I made often, usually in defiance or denial of the imagined idea that brown people who had children, had no control over their futures. I saw pregnancy as an automatic social contract and relationship with the State. The rules of Medicare concerning birth control tied to public assistance, caseworkers, and social workers all made up the lives of many people who were close to me. Thus, pregnancy and reproduction, to me meant something social; it was never something planned, beautiful, or wanted.

Now, I see my feelings of embarrassment and shame at articulating these thoughts, as a part of a systemic bullying and policing of young women, usually poor and/or of color, by the government in order to control their reproductive rights. How did I come to think such things? I see my early wish to get my tubes tied, not even knowing which tubes or where they lived inside me, just that they held the supposed key to my future success, as one story that speaks to my relationship to eugenics.

Audience, theorists, the project.

Where am I? Where am I situated as a subject as I work on this project? I first saw blackness, queerness, and science as amorphous abstractions; I only started to see them as possibly related when I conceived of this project. Always a closeted lover of physics and the other natural sciences, I thought it would be nice to bring science back into my life in a way that would allow me to explore it in relation to my other academic interests. I wanted to think about science as I thought about the ideas of theorists who inspired me: José Esteban Muñoz, Barbara Smith, Judith Butler, June Jordan, and Judith Jack Halberstam.

As a black woman I see my identity as very much involved in the project of queer as a revolutionary site of resistance and as a nonnormative sexual identity, I feel especially pressed to figure out the possibilities of (non)normative identities in science fiction as it intersects with and is informed by queer theory and queer space. Initially, I came into this project slowly and slipperily. It was apparent that I was interested in how certain identities became *biologized* and how biological sciences carved out a solid place for themselves in public discourse as an active voice in talking back to difference: whether it be racial, class or sexual. I knew that this particular project of talking back, otherizing, and pathologizing was called eugenics and it began in the late nineteenth century and twentieth century in Europe and in the United States and prompted policies of biological racism. What I did not know was how it could be explained as linked to cultural productions, specifically the science fiction writings of Octavia Butler and Samuel Delany. I had all of these pieces in front of me: eugenic history, queer theory and history, and science fiction novels and at first they all made up separate books on the

floor in front of me, books defined as either socio-political or literary. There appeared to be no discourse that brought them all together.

Further, the books on the floor told not only different stories of histories but different histories of politics and subjectivity. Each had its own genealogy, its own birth and life. As I did research I began to move those books out of the way and slowly replaced them with books that had two or three of the topics I was dealing with in their titles and that were identifiably comparative studies on the issues. I thought that the second set of books would create a cogent framework in my mind of how all of these events, moments and utopic inquiries connected, from there, I could reflexively manipulate their stories by moving backwards along the trajectory that the first set of books I had chosen would have taken me. This methodology assisted me in filling in the (w)holes with information that provided critiques of eugenics.

Before beginning to read I had already formed a hypothesis that I wanted to complicate, because I knew that the busy little modernist in me was already ordering things before I had a reasonable amount of information. I became disturbed and yet intrigued by the racism and sexism present in the sciences and in the history of eugenics as a biological science. I wanted to understand how queer and racialized bodies were policed through sterilization, lobotomies, and other State sanctioned medical intrusions by scientists. Early on I knew that queer did not delineate simply sexuality and that it came to encapsulate the occupation of space- spaces of difference or deviance composed of those deemed racial, political, or classed others. I was interested in the possibilities of queer utopias in novels and in creating queer spaces as a discursive framework to disrupt modernist discourses that had to do with the notion of progress, rationality, and

subjectivity of hu(man)ity. My project began to address the ways in which positing queer space as accepted and normative disrupts and simultaneously systems of hierarchy and hegemony.

FROM THE INITIAL PROPOSAL
September 2005

With this project I am interested in investigating the creation of queer space in science fiction and in the eugenics movement. I wish to discover parallels between marginalized queer subjects from perspectives of race, spatial location, national identity, and gender. Further, what interests me is the exploration of the ways that post-colonial, post-modern and queer theory can be employed to read novels and discover processes that construct queer space. I will read and employ feminist and queer theoretical frameworks from which to situate queer subjects; in this way, my analysis will automatically engage with an intersectional and interdisciplinary approach. By using queer as a discursive analytical tool to critically engage locations and spaces in which social interaction occurs, I hope to primarily explore nonnormative subjectivities that negotiate U.S. national identity, and also other nonnationalistic ways of belonging. Specifically, I choose queer because it is one location, analysis, and even identity that does not take the nation for granted as a state of belonging or as a set of cultural borders that defines its inhabitants along the lines of citizenship and nationality if not national belonging. Since queer critiques and challenges such categories while simultaneously engages with them and critiques itself in the process, I am even more interested in further exploring it. Thus, I choose queer, because it does not only talk about particular subjects

that are locatable inside of discourse, but it leaves space for its own critique as well as the critique of other frameworks and ideologies.

I want to answer more basic questions such as why would it be useful to call a space “queer” for the purposes of analysis? How could the use of queer tell particular stories in a way that using specific and mutually exclusive racial, gendered, national, and classed frameworks could not necessarily do? What happens to queer as both a social location and a theoretical framework across subject locations in literary and lived experiences? Are spaces, subjectivities, and social movements that are marginalized in relation to race, poverty, sexuality and other forms of marginalization somewhat queer already and might it be problematic to label them as so? These questions will assist me in discovering the queer reading that I would like to do.

Moreover, I am excited to explore the possibilities of queer as a postmodern category of identity and of analysis. It is important to be aware of the limits of applying it from one historical context and framework to another. Sometimes it might be more helpful and appropriate to use terms that were used by subjects themselves to identify themselves rather than using queer. At times, it is easier to locate queer moments in literature because there are many ways to read a text. There exists many ways to examine or read a biographical text of a person’s life based on their experiences and cultural practices. I hope that this particular way of thinking of queer might lead me past a point where I only deal with the ways in which subjects embraced or rejected queer as a sexual identity, and allows me to locate and analyze whatever or whomever might make up a space that is called queer.

Therefore, I am searching to highlight spaces that may be read as queer in order to see how they might speak against certain “truths.” Whether those truths are a part of larger literary tools or actual real life practices. Moreover, I also wish to explore how queer subjects might be constructed as queer either by queer discourses that are imposed onto them or by their own identification with queer. My work will center primarily around African American (queer) science fiction writing and modernist and postmodern white women authors, juxtaposing them with medical discourses on queerness principally coming out of the Eugenics Movement.

I will begin by exploring the history of queer movements in the U.S. and abroad paired with queer and feminist theory that has been written on those time periods. From there, I will use interviews, video footage and visit/research local queer organizations in order to gather their definitions of queer and how they came to identify them. I hope to gain a larger sense of how different queer spaces are created in order to create theoretical, analytical and literary conceptions of queer. Then I will read novels and materials on the Eugenics Movement and explore the ways in which subjects, human and literary, named queer or how they interacted inside of discourse and spaces deemed queer. To what extent does existing or being able to be socially located inside of spaces called queer make one queer by association? How might the rules and codes that seem to control fictional literary texts give us a window from which to critique and read and contextualize actual lived experiences? What are the drawbacks of reading literary texts too literally?

Finally, I am aware of the challenge of attempting to discuss literary and biographical texts; I see the project as a unique way to explore the intersections of the

two. I am not interested in at what point a text can be strictly read as a text, I am not interested in the truth of a text as it informs itself as a construction of reality. Nor do I wish to stretch the limits of literary texts in order to force them into my own narrative; rather, I am interested in how texts are created and how queer spaces are created. I know that the rules that make a literary text a literary text might not directly apply to actual lives and instances. However, I do think that there exist overlapping experiences and relationships that might be interesting to explore, especially as marginalized or subaltern experiences are concerned, and placed as the main subject of analysis.

Tell a story.

Because stories are important.

Everything:

- 4) A story
- 5) A performance
- 6) Subject to interrogation, interpretation

PART I

INTRODUCTION: Science and Fiction, Where Do The Two Meet?

“If it is true, as we are warned, that the time is coming when the realization of Utopia will prove a source of anguish, that will merely prove that we have built Utopia badly. Even then the freer and less ‘perfect’ world we shall thus be led to seek will only be another Utopia” (Ellis 70).

The conversation that this work stages between science and fiction comes together most organically in the hybrid genre of science fiction. The science of eugenics and its discourse, which I call eugenicism, offer an interesting set of challenges: to science, to the ways in which we construct narratives, and to our conceptualizations of utopia and dystopia. It becomes necessary here to discuss both science and fiction’s investment in utopia, in the sense that Havelock Ellis spoke of it above, as an apparatus from which to seek out a different and more understood world. Science has a vested interest in understanding, manipulating and improving human life for the present and the future. Science fiction and perhaps all fiction, represents the world around us in imaginative, disturbing, and beautifully distinct ways. Even if eugenics as a hegemonic force purporting biologized life chances and biologized human worth “did utopia wrong,” it is still possible to think about how utopia might be done, not right, but differently as Ellis suggests. Utopic projects display the power of imagination, and it is imagination that inspires cultural production and practices, as well as the development of hypotheses and the experiments of science.

Therefore, it is not only through imagined worlds, imagined lives, and imagined futures that we organize our relationships and come to know ourselves, but it is also through the subsequent consequences and restrictions of those imagined worlds. This project negotiates the construction of policed queer space during the Popular Eugenics Movement in the United States, and the ways we might read the constructions of queer space in the writings of black science fiction writers Octavia Butler and Samuel Delany alongside those of eugenics. This queer space, which I will further unpack in Chapter Three, is never simply a space just for the expression and celebration of embodied sexual identity. On the contrary, this queer space straddles, blurs, and challenges racial, gender, sexual and national identities and the binaries that institute and perpetuate them through power relations. The framework of queer space calls into question rigid separations made in the academy and in our everyday understandings between what truths constitute science, and what narratives are deemed historical fact or fiction. It is not only the fictions of literary genres, but also those of history, anecdotal or documented, that influence the truths in which we choose to believe.

To a certain extent, it is important to envision science as a fiction and fiction as a science, as they both systemically represent and validate the search for different kinds of knowledge. Science is defined as “the intellectual and practical activity encompassing the systematic study of the structure and behavior of the physical and natural world through observation and experiment” in the *Oxford American Dictionary*. Experience defines fiction as a kind of science in that it is a

form of cultural production predicated on imagination. Imagination is a form of cultural production because this paper understands it as connected in some way to the world that we already know, live in, and experience. Further, the definition of science positions “the physical” and “the natural” worlds as two distinct entities. Fiction challenges itself as a science, by having its own criteria for judging itself as fiction, thus differentiating it from prose and certainly from scientific experiment. Thus, fiction allows its hypothesis, the initial reason for exploration, to be negotiated between the author, the characters, and the reader. Hypothesis serves as a guessing game to find significance in the content of fiction. This allows the reader to participate in imagining the reason behind the work, as it encourages imaginative ways of writing and expression from the author. The guessing game is a part of what constitutes the ability to imagine and to create utopia or simply to create new imagined ways of existing, learning, and understanding. Ellis states that science is “the search for the reasons of things.”² Following Ellis, it might be useful again to not always read Science as simply science; this might solicit acknowledgment of the many sciences in the world, because there exist many ways to search for and to frame the “reasons of things.”

There has been some discussion of the term eugenicism in history and politics, but only as the practice of eugenics. The term eugenicism has never before been developed as a discursive tool to read and analyze literary works. Eugenicism is my attempt at such a project, my construction. Moreover,

² From page 8 of Havelock Ellis’ essay “The Dance of Life” in *My Confessional* (1934).

eugenicism produces a challenge to modernist conventional ways of organizing works of fiction by using scientific method and didactic reasoning to identify and hierarchize them into genres. Genres that contain work that, for the most part, do not represent factual but rather fictional accounts of real life and history³. At times, the histories that are recorded in history books are not the histories commonly thought of as presenting the truth, it is perhaps for this reason that histories that are written in works of fiction might also provide useful accounts closer to what has actually occurred. Thus, sometimes, telling stories is just that, telling stories, no matter the form or genre in which the story is told.

Science fiction is viewed by some scholars as the literature of cognitive estrangement (Barr 3); the inability for cultural studies and feminism to come to terms with it illustrates that charge of estrangement. There exist feminisms that constantly seek out new ways of envisioning gendered lives as they counter-act and undermine patriarchy, capitalism and its intersecting oppressive systems and forces. Science fiction has been one way that feminists have used imagination to reflect their visions of the present world and the future world:

“Feminist science fiction writers could critique high heels by exaggerating the results of wearing them. A feminist dystopia, for example, might feature a planet whose octopuslike businesswomen, because of fashion, have some of their legs amputated and commute in many pairs of running shoes” (Barr 3-4).

³ This is an issue that the literary movement New Criticism took up beginning in the 1940s. New Criticism, pioneered by such scholars as John Crowe Ransom, analyzed literature separate from the positionality of its author. It said that the biography of the author was irrelevant to the work. It is a debate that is still being waged in literary criticism today and in relation to artistic creation in general. It also wrestles with this idea of fiction as having no direct correlation to reality.

Feminist science fiction critic Marleen S. Barr speaks of a “literary gender war in postmodern”⁴ academic disciplines. While it is difficult to capture completely the significance of this statement, it is important to see the extension of the gender war or the war of the sexes from mainstream 1970s feminist discourses moving in to literature. It is this act of assigning relevance to how different ideological arguments and debates become incorporated into cultural production that serves as a solid example of the underlining justifications for eugenicism.

Further, the framework of eugenicism, as realized in this project, helps us make logical connections between the fictions of imagined worlds, specifically those of literature and of human existence. We, as readers, might make these connections by considering the contradictions present in these imagined worlds in dealing with systemic oppression and power. I talk about imagined worlds in a similar way as Benedict Anderson⁵ in his work on imagined communities; in that I think that there exist tangible consequences rooted in power relationships in imagined worlds and imagined communities despite their visibility or invisibility.

Therefore, the creation of an imagined world as perhaps a utopia or a dystopia by writers, politicians, education reformers, or any other person is in and of itself a project and a process containing both the possibility of transformation

⁴ Taken from page 10 of Barr’s feminist science fiction analytical essay in *Lost in Space: Probing Feminist Science Fiction and Beyond* published in 1993.

⁵ Benedict Anderson is author of *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* published in 1983. His framework for tracing the emergence of strong nationalism and national belonging really informs my view on the power of the imagination of the scientist, the queer theorist, the science fiction writer, and of us all.

and limitation. The construction of imagined worlds by writers is more visible and more easily digestible, because their work is by definition an interpretation, a representation, and a fiction. However, it becomes more difficult to discern the imagined worlds and subsequent projects of the politician or the educational reformer. The imagined world of the politician might manifest itself in the construction of terrorist *others* who will stop at nothing to destroy the world, and to destroy nations to which they are opposed. This imagined world of terror defines citizens as acting for or against the terrorism perpetrated by the pure evil inhumane *other*. At the same time, the imagined world that the public education reformer might construct may speak to fears of the deterioration of public education, based on the argument that it is difficult and impossible to assimilate and acculturate public school youth of color into the U.S. education meritocracy. This has the potential of leading to the construction of all inner city public school youth as underachievers who will not succeed unless they enter the “culture of success” and thus disband their culture of “underachievement”.⁶ This is simply a general illustration of how imagined worlds create public policy, construct

⁶ I chose to comment on the subject of the imagined world of public education, because I was thinking specifically of the portrayal of “Asian culture” and “black culture” as opposites by Abigail and Stephen Thernstrom in their coauthored book *No Excuses: Closing the Racial Gap in Learning* published in 2003. They only discuss or imagine black culture as a negative force that limits the educational success of black children. In order for them to enter the “culture of success” standards must be instituted. Although, the Thernstroms’ attempt to provide both a quantitative and a qualitative looks at the current state of urban public education, they do not see the limitations and the implicit and explicit racist claims of their arguments, and it is because of this that they fall short. However, the reality of their imagined construction of “black culture” in relationship to education has consequences for youth in urban public education.

relationships and alliances between people who might not know each other and always recreate hierarchy in some way, in a similar way as eugenics.

In the following chapters I will construct a narrative of eugenics that will begin with a simple genealogy, and will combine its history and ideological frameworks into the discursive tool of eugenicism. Eugenicism, as a compelling derivative idea from eugenics examines the legacies that eugenic thinking has left as a form of cultural production. Eugenicism is concerned with eugenic histories, but primarily it wrestles with what it means to be constituted as human and being forced to identify to some extent within the boundaries of: male or female, biologically fit and normal, or as an *other*. Chapter One will provide a modest history of United States eugenics. From there, the discussion will move to science fiction as a site to engage eugenicism, and onto the introduction of queer space and queer eugenic histories. The last chapter will utilize eugenicism to analyze selected works of Butler and Delany. Through the first chapters it will become apparent how the science of eugenics became its own fiction as it moved along a trajectory toward its ultimate goal of constructing a humanity that could never exist, one of absolute purity and elevated ability. Behind the guise of projects characterized by positive eugenic platforms, those of promoting fitter families and race betterment, U.S. eugenics always knew that it was fighting to retreat to a humanity that always was nothing more than an imagined homogenous community.

The history of eugenics in the United States as a social movement is one beget by the inquiries of academics concerned with heredity and progress. These inquiries existed before the public inception of the term genetics in the U.S. and the subsequent organization of genetics as a science. This discussion will revisit the arguments of this paper as a whole in relation to eugenics and cultural production. Further, as it will provide the theoretical fodder for eugenicism, a general eugenic history will be traced from European influences to a U.S. based generality of common impressions, situations, litigation, scientific method and experiments related to eugenics.

The following discussion of eugenic campaigns around issues of reproduction, immigration, and disease provides an intersectional analysis of race, national belonging, gender, and sexuality. This discussion provides the framework from which this particular history of eugenics will be discussed. Finally, there exist other histories and moments that have been more thoroughly documented and relate to the themes of the paper that are not present in this discussion.

CHAPTER I: An Early History of Eugenics

“The savage races of today have always been savage, and we are right in concluding, by analogy, that they will continue to be so, until the day when they disappear. Their disappearance is inevitable as soon as two entirely unconnected races come into active contact; and the best proof is the fate of the Polynesian and the American Indians”
(de Gobineau 174).

It is possible to argue that the nature vs. nurture debate, also referred to at the time as the hereditarian vs. environmentalist debate, concerning human heredity began as early as 350 B.C. with Plato’s explanation of humanity’s differences as a matter of natural essences and natural ways of being (Selden xiii). If not Plato, then perhaps we could look to U.S. born craniologist Samuel George Morton’s early nineteenth century experiments in cranial measuring as constituting the basis for eugenicist thinking and practices. Instead, let us look to the epigraph above taken from *The Inequality of Human Races* (1853-1855) written by French anthropologist Joseph Arthur de Gobineau, known for his theories of racial determinism and arguably for his investment in a merged environmentalist and hereditarian eugenicist schools of thought. Hereditarianism is a school of thought based from the ideology that human differences are innate and result from heredity, and that difference is caused by social patterns of development and geographical location. De Gobineau’s words articulate much of Western, the United States included, national and racial anxiety concerning the decline of the “superior races” (white westerners), because of race mixing and general contact with non Anglo-Saxon people. Although, de Gobineau states that

even he did not think: “every negro is a fool,” he does see value in the development of quantitative methods to measure races against other races in order to prove the overall superiority of white people. It is apparent that he sees race in terms of nation and physical appearance; it is not only that he sees just black, brown, white, red, and yellow, but also Irish, Italian, German, Jewish, “African” and so forth. Thus, it becomes even more imperative to track his argument of the heritability of blood along the lines of nation as well as racial identity.

As de Gobineau states later in Chapter Fourteen of *The Inequality of Human Races*, American Indians flee the white race because it is in their nature, their blood and their conscience to do so. He discusses the “unconquerable repulsion” from the “white race” of American Indians, despite their recognition of the overall strength, physical prowess, and superiority of white people in the world (171). Thus, following de Gobineau, American Indians are responsible for their own subjugation because they ultimately fail to adopt the manners of Europeans and become partners with them. They actively refrain from contact with Europeans and suffer the consequences: domination, alcoholism and poverty. This speaks to how pervasive arguments concerning blood quantum and allegiance were in Europe and in the United States even before the inception of the biological science of eugenics. Moreover, this is one result of how hegemony functions inside colonialism and imperialism in order to exercise cultural genocide for the purposes of the expansion of domination and capitalist gains.

This conversation on colonialist discourses of power and agency in which de Gobineau is involved also frames the modernist moment of which he is a part.

Further, de Gobineau's thoughts situate him within the political climate of both Europe and the U.S. concerned with guarding the national front against possible contamination by "alien" blood, and also with the discourse of the "decline" of the "white race" that traveled to the U.S. primarily from England, France, and Germany. The discourse of the decline of the "white race" coalesced with existing U.S. anti-immigrant and racist sentiments. Therefore, these early nature vs. nurture debates used the floating rhetoric of determinism in biological science to link human intellect and worth to economic expansion and conquest. Also present within this discourse is the inferable hope that science would pragmatically intervene and facilitate measures to control, dismiss and perhaps to marginally assimilate *others*. The figure of de Gobineau serves as a pertinent introduction to the history of eugenics.

In the last thirty years, there has been much scholarship completed on the history of the Eugenics Movement in the United States. Ashley Montagu's *Man's Most Dangerous Myth: The Fallacy of Race* (1942) and Mark Haller's *Eugenics: Hereditarian Attitudes in American Thought* published in 1963 were two of the very first works of scholarship that provide analytical and moral critiques of eugenics. Alongside the works of both Montagu and Haller, surfaces Daniel Kelves' 1985 publication *In The Name of Eugenics: Genetics and The Uses of Human Heredity*, Donald Pickens' *Eugenics and the Progressives* (1963),

Kenneth Ludmerer's *Genetics and American Society: A Historical Appraisal* (1972), and Allan Chase's *The Legacy of Malthus: The Social Costs of the New Scientific Racism* (1977). These works have been instrumental in establishing and facilitating the ongoing development of a body of academic research and scholarship on the subject of U.S. eugenics. Further, these works contextualize the intellectual framework from which the primary sources of this work emerge and diverge. Not to forget, there has also been some interdisciplinary scholarship from comparative national and international perspectives completed on eugenics and its legacies.

The brief review of literature above is an extension of a larger body of work on eugenics, across academic disciplines and literary genres, which grounds the prevailing arguments for the interrogation and the contextualization of U.S. eugenic history. It is from this terrain that this chapter's primary sources will engage first the question of eugenics, its definition, and its significance. Secondly, the chapter will historicize and explain the main tenants of the nature vs. nurture debate, and finally it will locate the intersecting practices, proponents, and processes of the institutionalization of U.S. eugenics in political, academic, and social spheres. Although, each state in the U.S. has had slightly and sometimes overwhelmingly different eugenic histories, their programs and projects all worked toward similar hereditary determinist goals to construct a future by utilizing eugenics. It is through this conception and imaginary of future that this chapter enters the conversation of what eugenics is and how it came to take up so

much space in U.S. political, scientific, social, and medical discourses and administration.

Eugenic campaigns in the United States have been described in terms of the binary created by historians and other social and natural scientists, most notably, of positive eugenics: facilitating and promoting the reproduction of the biologically “fit” and of negative eugenics: preventing or curbing the reproduction of the “unfit” (Stern 9). However, there has been much academic discussion of the productivity and the limits of using a framework rooted in binary thinking to assess and analyze eugenics. An analysis based outside of binary thinking, as eugenicism offers, provides a strong destabilizing theoretical and methodological framework for this work.

Many academics, including Steven Selden author of *Inheriting Shame: The Story of Eugenics and Racism in America*, begin their analysis by interrogating the transplantation of prevailing research and popular debates from European eugenics movements to the United States. Selden focuses specifically on the history of how eugenics has generally structured U.S. public and private educational systems. According to him, the hereditarian Popular Eugenics Movement was the primary ideological locale for biological determinist thinking in the early decades of the twentieth century. Selden’s work is instrumental in providing a genealogy of eugenics in the United States. He narrates Sir Francis Galton’s expression, experimentation, and ability to capitalize on truth claims of human heredity by using Mendelian philosophies of heritable characteristics. The

work of the Moravian⁷ monk Gregor Mendel resonated with Galton, because from his famous pea plant experiments in the mid-nineteenth century Galton deduced that there existed heritable generational traits. Mendel's experiments were used to justify the idea that there existed human heritable traits connected to an element of 'responsibility' and accountability to the general progress and the future success of all of society. Galton utilized Mendel's conclusions from his pea plant experiments in order to speak to his theory that privilege of class and nobility was to be preserved not only through social inheritance, but also through innate human characteristics. Galton's findings eventually became articulated in genetics once it developed as a science.

Galton was of course heavily influenced by the mid-nineteenth-century work of his cousin, English natural historian and geologist, Charles Darwin. Darwin's evolutionary theory of natural selection, lead to the development of "survival of the fittest," most commonly referred to as social Darwinism. Darwin's *Origin of the Species* published in 1859 asserted that different races of people "were actually different species with distinct biological and geographic origins" (Somerville 22). Thus, natural selection developed as an evolutionary theory setting the stage for its praxis, eugenics, through selective breeding. Galton believed in the biological heritability of royal power, work ethic, intelligence and other social characteristics. Eugenics was to solidify the

⁷ Moravia, is now exists as a province of the Czech Republic.

reasoning and the means through which privilege would remain in the hands of the beholder in order to assure its reproduction and regeneration.

During the late 1890s eugenics had been introduced to U.S. academics interested in the rising concern of the fate and purity of what was then called ‘American Stock’ or the good heritable blood of White Anglo-Saxon Protestants (Selden 2). This renewed interest in the nature of things and progress which had not been consciously expressed since perhaps the First and Second Great Awakenings⁸ and at the end of the Civil War in 1865, became galvanized in response to industrialization and immigration. Industrialization was increasingly shifting and diminishing capitalist exceptionalist attitudes of the United States in the world. As a result, immigration and naturalization became two inextricably linked processes that fueled debate over who was a natural citizen- a citizen by birth- and who was categorized and identified as *other*, and therefore illegitimate to the nation.

Thus, formally educated people and organic intellectuals at this moment were situated in a historical context characterized by U.S. imperialist ventures in Puerto Rico, Guam and in the Philippines and also at the beginning of great waves of Southern and Eastern European immigration (1880-1925)⁹. These factors necessitated a redefinition of purity and what was to be considered “good” blood in order that the U.S. could again engage with its friendly contradiction of

⁸ The First and Second Great Awakenings occurred between the periods of the 1730s-40s and 1820s-30s in the United States.

⁹ From *Reproducing Empire: Race, Sex, Science, and U.S. Imperialism* (2002) in Puerto Rico by Laura Briggs

“separate but equal,”¹⁰ which served to strengthen its commitment to racial purity through policy. Eugenics came at a moment when there existed the potential for it to elongate and expand into all political campaigns that spoke to “race betterment” and “fitter families.”

Moreover, the political terrain helps to explain the backlash against prior more pervasive environmentalist positions, inspired by beginning flirtations in cultural anthropology and sociology. Anthropology and sociology focused primarily on social improvement rather than biological destiny (Selden 2). As a direct response and rejection of the environmentalist or the nurture-oriented work of Franz Boas in cultural anthropology, the Galton Society was formed in New York in 1918 by Charles Benedict Davenport. Shortly thereafter, Madison Grant, Robert DeCourcy Ward, and Henry Fairfield Osborn joined Davenport formally in his efforts to institute eugenics through the American Eugenics Society. These men were key figures that dominated and shaped public discourse on eugenics throughout the 1920s and 1930s. The elusive and seemingly interminable nature vs. nurture debate is realized, as previously stated, in this moment as a debate between environmentalist and hereditarian ideologies that becomes more visible by 1915.

The evolution of the science of genetics arose from biological determinist eugenics as we see from early geneticists like Davenport. Therefore, the curiosity that surrounded heredity and human genetics and the institutionalization and

¹⁰ The decision of United States Supreme court, in the case Plessy vs. Ferguson in 1896

development of it as an academic discipline, were all inextricably linked to eugenics. Although, political theorists have mistakenly argued that eugenics and even the study of genetics was a product of conservative ideological frameworks, many academics still remind us that: “geneticists (conservative, liberal, Marxian and non-Marxian socialists) agreed on nothing at this moment, except the proposition that the salvation of mankind was to some extent bound up with hereditary improvement (Paul 28). This illustrates the fact that the campaigns of all adherents of eugenics were based around the importance of constructing a “fitter” humankind through the manipulation of heredity.

Early U.S. and European nature vs. nurture debates concerning human character and social development in relation to the rise in popularization of genetics greatly influenced the social milieu of the time. Further, the coining of the term genetics in 1905 by William Bateson, a British biologist, gave scientific conversations on inheritance and heredity that had been circulating not only in Europe but in the United States a home and a framework, that of organized genetics. It was not until 1906 that the term genetics was exported to the United States and became used in academic and medical discourses. U.S. geneticists and physicians, like Charles Benedict Davenport, Paul Popenoe, Henry Fairfield Osborn, and later Charles Fremont Dight, concerned with racial and national nativist political and social concerns like “race betterment” and “selective breeding” engaged with genetics through eugenics. It is because eugenics utilized

biological determinism in order to select and modify human heredity to enhance all of the “best” qualities of humankind:

“The belief that heredity was the primary factor in determining human betterment was a core assumption of the scientific, social, and political movement known as Eugenics... To fulfill this goal, eugenicists supported policies of immigration restriction, segregation of those judged socially ‘unfit’ and programs of human selective breeding. Supported by a broad spectrum of American intellectuals” (Selden 1).

Moreover, the first wave of organized U.S. eugenics in the period of 1903-1921 began with the creation of the American Breeders Association (ABA) in 1903 whose preeminent membership later recycled into the American Eugenics Society (AES) in 1922, both led by preeminent Mendelian geneticist and eugenicist extremist Davenport. Davenport was joined by fellow nativist politician and geneticists: Madison Grant, writer of *The Passing of the Great Race* (1921), inventor Alexander Graham Bell, and Henry Fairfield Osborn, Paleontologist and leader of the American Museum of Natural History for twenty-five years. Their work in the ABA, the AES, and the creation of the Eugenics Records Office in 1910 marks the beginning of the institutionalization of eugenics and the regeneration of its political life (Selden 4-6). As director of the Eugenics Record Office, Davenport published the highly contentious *Heredity in Relation to Eugenics* in 1911. Grant, Fairfield Osborn, and their counterparts promoted models of birth selection and human birth control as methods of promoting what was later referred to as positive eugenics. Further, Davenport had much support from the Carnegie Institution in Washington D.C. and from private donors to create committees and conferences, all of which he was directly or indirectly

involved in, such as the First and Second Race Betterment National Conferences in 1914 and 1915.

At the First National Conference on Race Betterment in Battle Creek, Michigan in 1914, the prominent African American figure Booker T. Washington was in attendance, because he possessed “moderate social evolutionist” position according to Selden. Washington gave an address at the conference where he stated: “The American negro is practically the only race with a dark skin that has ever undergone the test of living by the side of the Anglo-Saxon, looking him in the face and really surviving” (8). Washington’s words allow us to read his conservative arguments in the context of the necessity of affirming the humanity and worth of the black body in hopes that eugenics would not actively campaign and succeed in “weeding it out.”

Also, conservative supporter of immigration restriction Robert DeCourcy Ward presented at the conference, as did social theorist Herbert Spencer on “how to be a good animal.” Finally, Paul Popenoe, social Darwinist and co-author with Roswell Johnson of *Applied Eugenics* (1922), gave a talk on the topic of “infant mortality as an imperative process of “weeding out” the unfit at the Second National Race Betterment Conference in 1915 (Selden 10). All of the presentations spoke to the tension between eugenics- environmental reform- and eugenics (8), a branch of the nature vs. nurture debate that posited reform policy and biologically characterizable acts of genocide inside of nationalist politics of solidarity and progress. This was not too different from the environmentalist and

hereditarian debates that occurred in the late nineteenth century concerning social responsibility and local and national civil service. The reform policy spoke more to international concerns dealing with immigration and the troubles of reconstituting and assuring the power and control of whites after the Civil War and the Civil Rights Amendments to the Constitution. There was much attention to this conflict between eugenics and eugenics that existed residually from the Cartesian dualism of environmentalist and hereditarian positions.

Within the Galton Society, Grant pushed for the group to join ideological and philosophical forces with physical anthropologists and eugenicists (13). There were bars placed on the membership into the GS of ethnic and racial minorities, which in retrospect was for the best: “this list of nominees suggests that the GS viewed eugenics as useful not just for the creation of a meritocratic state, but for the rationalization of a racist order” (Selden 15). Therefore, the GS surfaces as first reactionary contingent, but develops into a well organized eugenic container of popular and active participation through which occurs the organization of a galvanized academic and political elite.

In the year 1932, the Third International Congress of Eugenics expressed its last appeal on a large mobilized eugenic scale for the country to actively adopt eugenic methodologies of “improvement” (35). Simultaneously, the GS disturbingly looks to Nazi Germany as a model for successfully enacting popular hereditarian policies. Although, Mendelian genetics had been somewhat debunked by a more medically sophisticated chromosomal genetics at this

moment in time it still carried social and political capital. This fact qualifies the state of rising racial tensions present in the national and international popularization of the Scottsboro trial beginning in 1932 in which nine young African American men were accused of raping two white women. Consequently, there was an emergence of a popular communist presence and anti-communist sentiment due to the economic hardship of the Great Depression and the political disenfranchisement of recent Eastern and Southern European immigrants and racially marginalized people. These social happenings served to support and legitimate the simplistic Galtonian explanations of human character and behavior difference, even though claims of this sort were no longer scientifically grounded.

Further, there were fitter family contests held in Oklahoma, New York, Kansas, Arkansas, Massachusetts, Michigan, Georgia and Texas throughout the 1920s and early 1930s. They assisted in the testing of theories of eugenic research of the AES and the GS, and involving the white public in projects that affirmed their superiority and duty to reproduce themselves in order to secure the nation against “alien defectives” of all sorts. As there were an estimated 85,000-350,000 sterilizations throughout the 1920s, it is apparent that eugenics got through to policy makers and social service providers.

These early forms of testing and experimentation in genetics based from the theory of “race betterment” informed mainly by Lamarckian theories. The work of French naturalist Jean Baptiste de Lamarck became incredibly important towards the end of the nineteenth-century to what some eugenic historians refer to

as the “revolution in biology... It was a revolution that appeared to reject previously held environmentalist interpretations of human improvement” (Selden xiii). Thus, Lamarck’s identification as a naturalist would principally situate him politically and intellectually as a proponent of the argument that posits human heredity and difference as a cause of nature, rather than environmental causal claims to the learned and the social aspects of human experience. Further, Lamarckian theories of human ability to affect change in environment and abandoned some of social Darwinism’s laissez-faire commitment to, what scholar David Noble might call bourgeois nationalism,¹¹ survival of the fittest and natural selection claims that privileged nature’s ability to weed out the unfit and assist in the health and continued well-being of the fittest.

These are all concerns that Diane B. Paul, political scientist and biologist enthusiast, outlines in her book of essays *The Politics of Heredity: Essays on Eugenics, Biomedicine, and The Nature-Nurture Debate*. In her essay “Eugenics and the Left” Paul discusses just how interlinked leftist scientists and politics were with eugenics. She wishes to dispel the notion that the Left was not involved in processes of embracing eugenics in order to create a socialist society

¹¹ From Noble’s new book *Death of a Nation: American Culture and the End of Exceptionalism* in which he introduces a discussion of “bourgeois nationalism” thus identifying the importance of the links between whiteness or “Anglo-American aesthetic authority” of American Studies historians and literary scholars to create the “national landscape” and to promote and critique global U.S. capitalism to export itself and to create class tensions in the U.S. This undermines U.S. claims to what Noble and others call American Exceptionalism. American Exceptionalism refers to the prevalent belief that the U.S.’s capacity to remain a world power while constantly managing capitalism and democracy like no other country provides license for U.S. control or imperialistic/militaristic judicial decisions. American Exceptionalism thrives on exclusion, national and international disunity, and the nexus of intersecting oppressions.

predicated on equality. Paul emphasizes the degree to which socialist geneticists, as she describes them, like H.J. Muller relied on the thought that they occupied a space in between vehement eugenic opponents classified by all around skeptics of science's role in politics and civic life and that of geneticist "environmentalists" who emphasized the connection between genes and moral characteristics, intelligence, and temperament.

During the 1920s, 1930s and the early 1940s, Paul illuminates the paradigm shifts in Leftist politics due to the failure of the Bolshevik revolution in Russia, and the decline in socialism juxtaposed with the expanse and exportation of imperialist and perhaps nationalist colonialist capitalist ventures. Although Paul's essays are primarily concerned with investigating the origins of eugenics in both behavior and medical genetics as it related to the nature vs. nurture debate, she explains how this eugenic history was always also informed by the discourse of heredity and discussions concerned with how to manage and predict its contamination:

"In the United States, immigrants were charged with carrying both genes for feeble-mindedness and germs responsible for TB, typhus, cholera, and trachoma, among other epidemics. And genes were often described in the language of germs, evoking the same fears of silent spread and demand for public health measures to bring it under control" (Paul 160).

From Paul, we come to understand the eugenics movements of these three decades as directly related to the social and political milieu of the time. Out of which occurred the world wars, the creation and replacement of the League of Nations by the United Nations, and specifically in the U.S. the migrations of

African Americans from the South to Northern urban centers. Later, historians show how the migrations were in fact steady movements of people back and forth, and less of a unidirectional treks of people from South to North. Also, we see the rise and deterioration of the Harlem Renaissance, state and local regulation of vice districts in large cities, the birth control movement and the rise in popularity of black face minstrelsy. These scattered and seemingly unconnected histories all become linked under the project of eugenics. Eugenics promises to resituate subjects and resolve conflict by better breeding.

Paul and Selden both offer a substantial understanding of the discourse of eugenicism. As we see eugenics' involvement in politics and its relationship to state apparatuses that sustain its campaigns, it becomes imperative to see the diversity of eugenic opinions: socialist geneticists, statisticians, and biologists. Further, as a discourse, eugenicism calls for the reflexive recognition of the power relations that shape its formation. Thus, these histories highlight the particular history of eugenics within governmental and state legislation. This legislation sifted through the work of the sciences in order to use their findings to suit political campaigns. Therefore, whether it was the sterilization laws of California or those of Virginia, The Tuskegee experiment, or various other manifestations of eugenics on state and local levels, all were based from a particular localized understanding of eugenicism. That is, regional political, social, and artistic culture became influenced to some degree by the conversations surrounding eugenics.

This chapter has provided some important factual information on the history of U.S. eugenics. The next two chapters will provide direct critiques of my method of framing this chapter, as historically linear. They will both offer the alternative of a kaleidoscopic framing of the debates around sexuality and race in the history of eugenics. The possibility of a kaleidoscopic way of viewing describes the ability of possessing a central view of the issue and having the option of rotating that view clockwise or counterclockwise in order to engage with different components of eugenicism. Eugenics stages conversations between the historical trajectories of sexuality, race, and citizenship, which all intersect, not only in science fiction, but also in culture and society in general. Therefore, let us move to a discussion of science fiction in order to explore eugenicism and to examine more closely the relationship between science and fiction.

CHAPTER II: Science Fiction As Genre: Boeckmann and Barr

The representation of *character* by Cathy Boeckmann in *A Question of Character: Scientific Racism and The Genres of American Fiction, 1892-1912* provides one example of how the eugenic process of biologizing behaviors and knowledges works to institutionalize and hierarchize experience, ability, and worth. Late nineteenth and early twentieth century usages of character for Boeckmann transcend contemporary perceptions of it as symbolic of or simply a way to socially read innate and learned moral qualities of people. Instead, at this moment it automatically signified universal racial embodied characteristics, which of course could not be separated from gender and sexual positionalities. Thus, *character* is engaged primarily as a literary and social construction of racial identity as hereditary. Not to mention, it was also an example of the conversation that existed between literary discourse and legislation. *Character* will serve as a point of departure from which to engage with the main themes of the construction of queer space in relation to experiences of belonging in the works of Butler and Delany in the next chapter.

Thus, character was always socially and discursively understood as a part of biological and political discourses, always consisting of racial signifiers that assisted in the interpellation of subjects. Of much importance, is Boeckmann's observation that literary constructions of character are always subject to the confines of genre, its boundaries and its rules, and the bodies it creates— textual

bodies of literary genres and human bodies of socio-political texts. Boeckmann reads one alongside the other, science and literature, in order to explore the definitions, possibilities, relationality and even the performativity of character. It is specifically the way in which Boeckmann discusses how genre develops character in U.S. fiction and socio-political history that demonstrates not only the ways in which literary culture constructs its own guidelines, standards and procedures, but also, how history might be constructed through that same literature. The fiction of history becomes fact and relays a particular story of reality, like the situation of character.

To a small degree, Boeckmann does discuss how character becomes integrated as a part of eugenicist discourse. Boeckmann argues that character is a foil for scientific and literary representations and constructions of race; I will explore this idea in relation to the idea of queer space in science fiction and eugenics. This argument suggests that eugenics constructed in such a way that allows it to invite interpretation through different analytical positions.

The effects of eugenics' biological characterizations, pathologizations, and acts of violence on certain groups of people create fear and mistrust. One eugenic story of "reality" is a story not only rife with sterilization and shock therapy methods, but also full of scientific wanderings, explorations, and frameworks that serve as sometimes useful and sometimes harmful. Eugenics is also one of the most interesting of biological sciences, because it not only theorizes subjects, but also creates material human conditions through those theories. It told particular

stories about particular groups, and managed to have lasting effects. Effects that are scientific, political, social, legal, historical, and ideological. Effects that are disturbing and traumatic.

How does eugenics provide its own important, significant, and interesting conceptualization of history and the present? How could a scientific discourse that knowingly adheres to so many scientific and socially constructed representations of being always embody both the scientific and the social? It is not only that eugenics is a science that naturalizes itself, which in turn renders it legitimate; rather, it also exists as a social discourse, and these two dimensions function coterminously. Biology affirms eugenics as a legitimate science, and the machinations of social institutions assist in its development and naturalization.

The Eugenics Movement of the twentieth century in the United States has assisted in the structuring of different social institutions, ideologies, representations, and cultural production including literature, visual art, and film. To name a couple: Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852) and the first U.S. feature film, D.W. Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation* (1915). Again, because eugenicism is situated by and actively serves to situate history, science, race, and sexuality it exists as a hybrid discursive tool as well as a theoretical idea derived from the actual history of eugenics. Further, eugenics serves as a biological practice of production and essentialism whose job it is to produce *others* and to render them static and threatening in order that they can be denied

agency and political participation. Science fiction is also wrestling with these ideas in interesting ways.

The positioning of relationships and of bodies as queer biologically and sexually is a project in which eugenics participates in order to mark others as not only *other* but as deviant, for both Delany and Butler it is a project that facilitates a different understanding of human possibilities in cultural production and in realities, a project that queer does on its own but here it is set to fiction and works in really interesting ways to tell the stories. Of course, there are multiple ways for analysis and queer is just one, but these novels in particular contain pertinent materials that allow for this discussion to progress.

By using eugenicism I do not wish to suggest that Butler and Delany are using eugenics creatively or that they are using eugenics in their creative processes, rather that it is that I am using eugenics partly as an analytical tool. I will draw attention to their references to eugenics in their writings and I will provide close reading. I merely want to point out interesting ways/similarities that can be linked to science fiction and eugenics about creation, the human spirit and humanity. I want to explore those links, but not necessarily say that they exist- they might exist- I do not want to create truths about the work of these writers. I simply want to point out the truths that the eugenics movement imagined and attempted to enact through biology, and analyze how the authors deal with biology as a lived experience and being.

In this work, eugenicism serves a specific role and that is to assist in the explaining, writing, and interpreting of scientific and even what can be called cultural eugenics in of science fiction. I will explore the emerging themes of eugenicism as a part of the practice or theory of eugenics. Thus, I will address the theories and imaginings that all eugenic camps were involved with that attempted to rid the world of biological inferiors and racial *others* through the use of science fiction as the medium to perform my analysis. Its legacies have organized and influenced much of how we think about the world in terms of biology, politics, and science and perhaps even how we imagine and create.

CHAPTER III: A Gendered and Sexually Locatable Eugenic History

“Eugenics is hydralike in strategy and ideology: one tentacle entwined with nationalism, another extending toward reform oriented liberalism, others to blatant homophobia, racism, misogyny, and white supremacy. Multiple identities and a shared demonization has meant that the consequences of eugenics for lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and transgendered people are now, and have always been, bound up with those for immigrants, people of color, and the poor” (Ordover 124).

This chapter will link the importance of early eugenic happenings like the creation of the AES and the Better Breeding Conferences as detailed in Chapter One, to the discursive political constructions of not only racial and national *others*, but also sexualized *others*. It is with attention to the construction of marginal sexual identities that one can read the ways in which sexology was exported from Europe mostly in the 1890s, primarily from Germany, to the United States during the same time period as Eugenics. It was the inclination of Eugenics to use state apparatuses to punish *others* and to institutionalize them; the inception of sexology was concerned with shifting the discourse around sexual inversion and perversion from one of criminalization and punishment to one of medical experimentation, and medical protection almost from state juridical systems of power. Thus, the move to decriminalize sexual practices deemed deviant was a move toward biologizing sexual practices as both of nature and of nurture.

The well-known English sexologist Havelock Ellis’ *Sexual Inversion* (1897) provides an introduction to the conversation between sexology and eugenics:

“Comparative anatomy, which had been the chief methodology of nineteenth-century racial science, gave sexologists a ready-made set of procedures and assumptions with which to scan the body visually for discrete markers of difference. Race, in fact, became an explicit, though ambiguous, structural element in Ellis’s *Sexual Inversion*” (Somerville 25).

This articulates something of the ways in which sexologists negotiated race alongside sexuality. In Ellis’ view of utopia presented in the Introduction he articulates his hope that new constructions of imagined existences be constructed, that do not allow for the criminalization of transgressive sexuality. Although, Ellis also called for the sterilization of the feebleminded, to some degree he saw medicine as a less dangerous and abusive space for queer people than the criminal justice system. Ellis was seen as out of line in some ways, his books went through periods of being banned from publication and he was often targeted as politically and morally deviant.

Again, I use imagined world throughout this paper simply to make explicit the connection between the thesis of the researcher and the ways in which the histories that we all rely on are to some extent fictions. This is not simply to say that historical events, facts, and movements did not happen as they did or when they did. However, it offers an alternative way to arrange events in historical narratives, as well as the recognition that anytime we reinterpret history we are doing it for a purpose, whether it is to write ourselves into history for the first time or to critique the exclusionary ways history has been written. This is not to depoliticize or deemphasize the importance of historical narratives, but rather the opposite, to say that there are many ways to identify with histories, and that we

are always creating half-truths for a number of reasons. Simply put, we can never completely retell or (re)present history so we are forced to construct fictive narratives in order to explain the world in which we live.

Thus, the work and imagined world of independent scholar, Nancy Ordover, falls directly in line with that of Paul. Ordover's book *American Eugenics: Race, Queer Anatomy, and the Science of Nationalism* is not only a logical extension of Paul's discussion of eugenic history, but it also contextualizes and historicizes the themes of this paper. Ordover unveils the ways in which the Eugenics Movement in the United States has greatly influenced the ways in which we experience and think about biological science and technology today. She provides a genealogy of eugenicist thought and practice from which U.S. scientific and civic culture has inherited many legacies. The book primarily analyzes the role that the controlling and defining of deviant sexuality has played in the institutionalization of the ideologies of eugenic campaigns and practices in the newly created medical and social scientist professions of the late nineteenth and early twentieth related to psychological and reproductive health and well-being. Thus, gynecology, genetics, psychology and psychiatry, as Ordover shows, developed as occupations from eugenic campaigns and practices to institutionalize its agenda.

The development of eugenicism takes on more historical richness as it negotiates the construction of other *others* not only by eugenics, though certainly at this moment usually a part of it, but by other dominant movements and

discourses. Suddenly, the mirrors and the tube of the kaleidoscope shift and eugenicism is infused with more fictions, histories, and interpretations. Ordover presents the ways in which queerness was constructed by eugenics as abnormal and by sexologists as a clinical illness, a mentally or sociologically contracted disability, or as simply a biological disease.

Thus, the hereditarian and environmentalist debates did not only belong to eugenics, but infiltrated many terrains. Any behavioral disorder or act of disobedience was thought about in the binary of nature vs. nurture. Therefore, the language of sexology that constructed the sexual invert also fit in a eugenicist framework because there was a space for the invert to exist in the discourse on the feeble-minded or the pervert. There is always a place of marginalization for other *others*, perhaps the presumed *others* of the eugenic campaign, but how eugenics prevailed was that it had a locatable space of marginalization and frameworks for understanding difference that was always predicated on otherization and erasure either through invisibility or enforced policies to disappear undesirables.

Further, deviant sexuality, as far as Ordover's work is concerned, is constructed mostly by the complex intersection of race, class, and sexual nonnormative preferences and behaviors. The eugenic agenda that promoted white racial purity and punished transgressors of racial and sexual norms was the same agenda that encouraged the construction of public policy to control immigration in order to construct a homogenous national body. The birth of white-collar professions and the beginnings of eugenics in the U.S. came at the

same moment in the late nineteenth century, and consequently are very much rooted in the same projects. Ordover analyzes the work of different interest groups as well as judicial decisions that still have not been overturned, which condone and sometimes promote eugenic practices such as sterilization, shock therapy, and the marginalization of racial and sexual *others*.

In the introduction Ordover, like Paul, engages primarily with Galton as representing the new wave in nineteenth century science and medicine that was very much defined by his theory of “selective breeding” or Social Darwinism, in order to interrogate the beginnings of eugenics. Due to discussions principally based in Europe and in the United States concerning heredity and progress, biological science became a basis to curtail population and manage human destiny through support and cultivation of the “fittest.” This is in direct relation to the fact that “eugenics played a pivotal role in nationalist and racist enterprises” (xv), via the promotion of a nationalism that relied on promises of citizenship and national belonging for those who represented the future of prosperity and progress. Thus, late nineteenth century international imperialist movements forged by European and U.S. governments of this moment demonstrate the manifestation of this strain of nationalism.

Specifically, the act of the signing of the Treaty of Paris on December 10, 1898, which formally ended the Spanish-American War, and consequently the U.S. became the imperial power over Guam, the Philippines and Puerto Rico. This exercise of the exportation of American Exceptionalism, serves as an

example of how eugenic discourses functioned as a signifier of allegiance to national belonging. It is of importance that Ordover quotes contemporary French intellectual Etienne Balibar early in the section: ““ for the nation to be itself, it has to be racially and culturally pure”” (xv). This serves as a great point of departure from which to engage Ordover’s interrogation of eugenic thinking in the cultural nationalism, biological science, and social movements in the U.S.

Ordover’s chapters on AIDS and reproduction are central to the theoretical and methodological basis of this work on science fiction, because of how she frames and critiques the eugenic, hereditarian as well as environmentalist as Paul suggests, conceptualizations of what is considered to be normatively human, and who should have the ability to reproduce this normativity. The intersection of Ordover’s early discussions on nature vs. nurture with that of science as provider of the key to purity and thus facilitating nationalism is queer in its description of the role that queer identities and queerness plays in the creation of a national community and national identity in opposition to *others*.

Further, the *American Breeders Magazine* created in 1910 by the ABA became the *Journal of Heredity* in 1913 and collaborated with Margaret Sanger’s *Birth Control Review* after 1917. Ordover links the political climate that produced these two publications to the implementation and mobilizations of the Christian Identity Movement, the National Origins Act of 1924, and the Birth

Control Movement¹² all of which influenced and affected public opinion and politics during the 1920s. Additionally, this assisted in the creation of governmental and private social institutions to respond and to contain the “social crises” of this period—the rebirth of deviance mostly in urban centers, immigration and increasing internationalization, which threatens the idea of American exceptionalism.

It is important to point out that Ordover’s work does not possess a strong racial analysis¹³. At times, her analysis democratizes oppression, and does not allow for the differences inside her intersectional historical genealogy to show. She instead seemingly creates an *other* made up of an immigrant, sexual, racial and gendered minority, but she does not always specify which queer people or which immigrants she is speaking about. I will revisit and talk more about the problematics of these themes when I introduce Gilroy’s planetary humanism to the discussion.

It is significant how eugenics married nationalistic discourses concerning access to “legitimate citizenship” and reproduction in order to discuss future as progress. Robert Decourley Ward, member of the AES, questioned “Who will sir

¹² Although I do not speak of it here Dorothy Roberts’ book *Killing the Black Body* informed how I read Ordover’s analysis of Margaret Sanger, and the reproductive infringements still occurring today attached to eugenic legacies.

¹³ Ordover’s work in the second section of Chapter One: “Calculating Hysteria” uses the past legislative decisions in order to articulate eugenic rhetoric related to “the immigrant within” and who could be deemed legitimate citizens of the nation, born into the nation. For example, the drafting into law of the Johnson-Reed Act and the outcome of the case of Buck vs. Bell, the most famous case concerning the sterilization of Lucy Bell.

and bear America's children?" to this Ordoover links the notion of "the immigrant within." This is an attempt to reaffirm what it means to be a citizen of the United States as opposed to a foreign born enemy. Also the statement "who will sir and bear America's children" is thought provoking because in it there are no preconceived parents- man and wife, male and female. One eugenic project fosters participation in building a new nation of citizenry who are biologically fit through the employment of Darwin's story of heredity that says people in a society can effect future change by allowing only those "fit" to reproduce to have children.

Moreover, Ordoover's section "Science as Savior" in "Part II: Queer Anatomy: One Hundred Years of Diagnostics, Dissection, and Political Strategy" serves as a discussion of historic and present scientific efforts to find a gay gene. By providing specific examples of the ways in which well-known physicist and biologists like Paul Ewald, Gregory Cochran, or Richard Green (The Sissy Boy Syndrome) facilitated public discourse and assisted in the institutionalization of specific nature and nurture camps of knowledge in relation to the presence and development of "biological" and "social" queer identities in people¹⁴.

¹⁴ Some of the findings of the studies that Ordoover illustrate the connections between the eugenic basis of all nature vs. nurture theories related to queerness are:

- 1) Murphy was concerned with the "cross-gendered" those whose "neurogender" differed from their 'morphological /physical/genital gender' According to Murphy- gays and lesbians had "cross sexed brain differentiations. Harkening back to Carpenter and Hirschfield, who plotted homosexuals along a sexual and gender continuum (115)
- 2) Lesbians more testosterone than straight women and were more masculine (116)
- 3) "From a neurological viewpoint, it is doubtful that many homosexuals engage in rape or murder"

Ordovery also critiques the practice of queer organizations to use strategic essentialism in order to gain inclusion in society on the grounds that this is linked to the work of eugenicist scientific communities who attempt to prove that queerness is biological. Ordovery argues that there is a sense of “personal investment” in identity that queer people have that essentializes it and thus ultimately depoliticizes it, because it is only political because it marks difference while at the same time reinstating heteronormativity. She critiques the argument that queer sexual identities are biological from birth and therefore not a learned set of behaviors or sexual practices, by illustrating how it oscillates closely alongside the eugenicist argument that posits queerness as a biological disorder or a mental illness to be corrected. She then demonstrates how biological and social theories attributed to defining queerness participate in the legacies of sterilization, shock therapy, scientific, or more accurately craniological experiments. Crucially, she suggests that political desire to locate queerness in the body as biological or to “find a gay gene” is rooted in this much longer history of exploitation and the experimentation on and mal-treatment of queer people.

Ordovery moves on to dismiss all of what she calls “additive causation theories” that try to argue for or against biological or social roots of queerness by saying that they all support each other. This is because they do not debunk the histories of each prior existing eugenic claim, therefore adding to destructive

4) gay men sure to be less aggressive than the androgenized heterosexual (116)
persistence of homosex in generations must mean that it serves some positive evolutionary function for the species (116)

5) c. doner’s rat study, homosex could be preempted in 4 or 5 month of development 116

eugenicist discourses whether public, medical, or political. Attached to each of the “additive causation theories” are “curative or punitive” practices that attempt to police and disrupt queer acts and queerness, sometimes using violence.

Ordoover poses incredibly important questions in this section, that speak to the work of the entire book: “Who wants to know and why?” which is addressed those who seek out causes of queerness, and asks them who might be affected by their conclusions. In the same way that the first question is motivated by the particular actions that might be taken by specific groups, Ordoover asks and declares: “What happens when faulty discourse becomes a part of public discourse? It sticks despite being debunked (64). She asserts this in relation to the results of a study performed by scientist Dean Hamer, at the end of which he made the conclusion that “queers were inherently deviant.” This is a fitting question because the media as well as national queer organizations held on to Hamer’s conclusion in order that it would represent biological explanations of queerness, and hence make promises of social inclusion against arguments of learned queer perversion. After Hamer was challenged by other scientists who could not seem to replicate any of his data the news media still supported his conclusions still wanting to hold onto biologized queerness.

Ordoover’s remarks on the subject nature vs. nurture is in many ways a related link from eugenics to discussions of Paul Gilroy that define and critique racialological thinking as fascist and as not having a radical potential that will facilitate transformative politics. Also, Judith Butler’s position on the limitations

of identity politics is also connected to Ordover. I will discuss both Gilroy and Butler in relation to Ordover later in the paper.

A key conclusion that Ordover draws as a critique of the argument that sexuality is biologically determined is that if “lab work” defines the future, then there is a certain depoliticizing effect on minoritized communities. Communities then cease to be potential or actual active agents able to participate and disrupt politics affecting their own futures. They become idle viewers waiting for lab results to convince society that they are worthy of rights, this is what is at stake.

These themes will provide much of the theoretical basis from which eugenicism will be linked in order to assist in the analysis of the novels of Butler and Delany. The questions that informed how I read the material on eugenics are: What does eugenics have to do with black science fiction? What does queer have to do with eugenics and black science fiction? What is the revolutionary potential of queer space in black science fiction? Two new questions in relation to Ordover that I hope to frame my analysis of Octavia E. Butler and Samuel R. Delany are: Could black science fiction be seen as a libratory space for the creation of queer space not based on biologism, not based on sex as biological, but instead as performed and as intrinsically a part of discourse? Finally, how does black science fiction of Delany and Butler create sexual, racial and *other* subjectivities?

Ordover’s arguments revisit and unpack past atrocities committed on U.S. queer communities and motivate current movements and work around queerness to move away from participating in biological essentialism. What Ordover does is

interesting in relation to proposing a kind of new relationship to nature, population, and humans in relation to the projects around those very same tenets of the black science fiction writers with whom I will engage. There is something very powerful and disturbing about human beings interfering with natural reproduction and deciding what kind of humans should be brought into the world in terms of race, physical attributes, and mental capacity. This is also a dilemma of science fiction although done through imagination, skill, and art primarily by the authors who actually create new worlds that are usually based from experiences in society, but authors have the right to exaggerate or play down the realities of those experiences.

Following Ordover's thesis that the science's nature vs. nurture foundations of queerness depoliticizes marginalized communities because it simply adds to causal theories that do not reverse existing laws, and processes that marginalize people. Eugenics can be read as a hegemony in that it creates hierarchy, dominance and coercion. The individual defers to the state of eugenics and becomes the site of experimentation and the vessel of implementation of its policies. Eugenics is everywhere and nowhere at once. It becomes invisible because it is diffused so intricately throughout state apparatuses of power, and yet its consequences for those it characterizes as *other* to its imagined world of the future are very tangible, violent, and dehumanizing:

“Whatever, guise eugenics arrives in, whatever promises its adherents make, its agenda is eerily transparent. It proffers ‘scientifically’ sustained scapegoating and calls it sound public policy; it defends a violent status quo as a viable political strategy. There is

no mystery to seeing through this subterfuge. All we have to do is ask ourselves, 'whose bodies will bear the brunt of the resulting enactments...' (215).

The concept of hegemony has not come up in the literature on eugenics thus far in relation to this project, but it is of extreme importance in conceiving of it alongside queer space. The idea of planetary humanism or intersubjectivity also functions on this level of an alternative hegemony that works from the postmodern horizontal relationships of power and democratization of oppression into a space that is at once queer but at the same time inhabitable by all. The dangerous and difficult task of operating outside of identity politics is one that must happen in order to facilitate solidarity and coalition in terms of difference and relationality. A part from the epigraph illustrating the hegemonic nature of eugenics, it also serves as a concrete example of how Ordoover's democratizing of oppressions can be read as problematic, but also speaks to the discursive elements of eugenicism as both contradictory and complex.

Now, to explore the possibilities and problematics that Ordoover relays in *American Eugenics*, let us turn to Gilroy's planetary humanism in order to complicate the notion of queer space as anti-essentialism while at the same time being constituted by the histories of difference which articulate themselves as essentially pertaining to homosexual, queer, lesbian, and transgendered people.

Muñoz and Gilroy: Queer Space and Intersubjectivity

The theories of planetary humanism and of intersubjectivity both are developed in black British sociologist and cultural studies scholar Paul Gilroy's

Against Race: Imagining Political Culture Beyond the Color Line (2000). Gilroy critiques the use of strategic essentialism by black diasporic nationalist movements, specifically the Back to Africa movement pioneered by Marcus Garvey and other Pan-Africanist movements that saw themselves as defining a united notion of blackness that could be read worldwide. What are the problematics of planetary humanism in relation to how Ordoover constructs her narrative? How does Butler challenge this and how does she participate in it?

Gilroy makes many critiques and assertions, some of which are outlined in Chapter One: “The Crisis of ‘Race’ and Raciology” which deals with race as an essentialist idea and fiction. Early on in the first chapters Gilroy discusses the fascist historical influences of Nazism alongside international black liberation movements in biological science and in national and international “raciologies.” He synthesizes the components of this discussion into a theory and practice that he calls raciology. Raciology not only includes the influence of biological science, but also extends to play a part in the ways in which “geopolitics”¹⁵ is conceptualized generally all over the world. In particular, he focuses on black intellectuals as they conceive of themselves as producers of knowledge. Further, Gilroy engages with Edouard Glissant’s idea of transethnic relations to discuss where the discourses of raciology and race are moving, and where they should be moving.

Gilroy discusses the “observance of race” like one might observe religious

¹⁵ Gilroy’s term planetary humanism signifies the politics of place

ceremonies or holidays—this constructs race as if one has the freedom to simply leave it behind at their own discretion. In the second and last sections of the chapter Gilroy engages with the effects more so of genomics, but also eugenics on how we think about race. He moves into how this is tied to corporate multiculturalism, cosmopolitanism and the how these concepts and practices are producing culture as something to be owned rather than lived. Culture is viewed within the framework of the democratization of oppression, no one owns it rather it is a free-floating commodity. Gilroy then discusses what has been called the New Racism¹⁶ and its emphasis on strong nationalist or culturalist influences engaged in defining identities as distinct but equal. To illustrate this He provides a critique of the limitations of what he calls the “belligerent nationalism” of activists and race-based politics. Thus, framing politics around identity is depoliticizing because it fractures movements.

The heart of Gilroy’s argument employs the aesthetics of fascism to provide a context for thinking about the security that raciology provides people, racial and cultural nationalists and racists alike. Gilroy probes us to think about why “Hitler wore khakis” as well as the popularity and fascination in U.S. media with black men flying (*Space Jam*) through space while there exist tangible forces- criminal justice system- that control black men and keep them from “flying.” Gilroy is more concerned with the aesthetics of popular raciology than with critiquing its socio-political causes.

¹⁶ Patricia Hill Collins uses this term in her book *Black Sexual Politics: African Americans, Gender, and the New Racism* published in 2001.

For, Gilroy idea of "race" is an antithesis to his concept of human progress and solidarity, he says that "race" becomes meaningless to the task of healing and protecting ourselves (37), and that it has offered "shortcuts" to solidarity. This ultimate solidarity can be found in exercising and practicing or even approaching his theory of planetary humanism and thus realizing an intersubjectivity that is always relational. Both Delany and Butler deal with this idea of intersubjectivity although not explicitly referred to as such. Thus, the discourse that Gilroy is helping to create and that he enters is one in which the disagreements between science fiction and specular fiction are also brought to the forefront. This is because mainstream science fiction has not and to a large degree acknowledged the presence or importance of race in its imagined worlds, and specular fiction has attempted to do so¹⁷.

Further, Gilroy posits race as degenerative and poisonous to planetary humans or to his notion of progress for humans. This surfaces as problematic because while Gilroy wishes to critique raciology, race-thinking, but he does not want to deal with race. Although, from his argument it is possible to infer that it is in fact the fascist raciology that he wishes to critique. He recognizes "race" only and essentially as a social construction albeit with consequences. It is apparent that Gilroy does not call for the dismantling of white supremacy and neocolonialism, yet he critiques racially based movements and does not offer an alternative manner of organizing that is less abstract than planetary humanism.

¹⁷ From William Clarke's talk on black science fiction and specular fiction

He examines racism through racial violence and oppression— he talks about the killing of Stephen Lawrence to highlight the material consequences of race hierarchical systems in fostering racism. He also uses Franz Fanon's writings to highlight the hierarchy of the colonialist racial system. However, he continues to argue that race is a thing of the past, citing the increase in focus on drawing on racial markets or markets of difference of corporatized mainstream media is providing the opportunity for the creation of physical human characteristics that are considered universally beautiful. It is difficult to see how race is a thing of the past if it is still organizing capital markets, biology, technology, and privilege.

Gilroy's focus on the role of Nazism in biology in the advancement of genomics (the study of genes) and the cultivation of ideas of white superiority and white supremacy also illustrates the project of eugenics. It is difficult to see why Gilroy does not posit his work as part of a larger project to dismantle racism through the exposure of representations of systems and histories of punishment, and the pathologization of marginalized groups for the purpose of domination or even economic histories. This critique of Gilroy is similar, but not comparable to the work of Ordoover. Ordoover sees her project as countering racial and cultural hegemonies and literary exclusions, but she does not identify the fictions that separated earlier violations and violences committed against *others*. Thus, it is not simply an amorphous group of *others*, rather the disparate constructions of different others matters to deconstruct its base arguments. We are not outside of cultural and racial hegemonies yet and that makes it all the more important to

preserve historicity and recognize the differences in experience between *others* in order to create solidarity.

However, Chapter Three: “Identity, Belong, and the Critique of Pure Sameness” of Gilroy identifies the ways in which identity is “always bound and particular.” He talks about the popularity of identity-based studies in the academy and in society as something to be both “possessed” and “displayed.” Identity to Gilroy assumes destiny and stifles the agency of people and stands in the way of the opportunity of nonidentity-based solidarity. He warns black political struggles against victimizing themselves through the use of identity politics and becoming immobile as a result. Gilroy then discusses the necessity and the importance of diaspora in assisting in the destabilization of the nation and the “power of territory to determine identity.” Also, he suggests that diaspora provides a useful model for thinking about race and identity in general as changing and complex rather than as rooted and stagnant.

The last Chapter of *Against Race*: “Third Stone From The Sun: Planetary Humanism And Strategic Universalism” engages critically with the notions of outer space and extraterrestriality as a means to talk about power relations and different imagining of life on earth. Gilroy examines current flirtations in popular cinema with black people and outer space. He cites The Nation of Islam’s Elijah Muhammad’s book: *Message to Blackman in America*, songs like “Planet Rock,” movies and TV series like *Star Trek Enterprise* and *Space Jam* as forms of “New Age Fundamentalism” and fascist ideology. This is because space often times in

these representations, as seen by Gilroy, offers a means for black people to rule white people and to participate in what he calls “disturbing patterns of authoritarian irrationalism” or of supremacist nature. These extraterrestrial experiences: recover lost glories of a rather generic African past, are not always related to a desire to assist in alleviating current “plight in Africa” but are simply ruminations, constructs the concept of original African civilizations that are sometimes opposed to capitalism but are still undemocratic and hierarchical, and portray romantic and sentimental distaste for racial capitalism. Gilroy ends by calling for the need to make links between “planetary humanity” and democratic and cosmopolitan (read diasporic) traditions that have been overlooked or omitted not only from current black political thought, but also from the black political imaginary.

The very nature of planetary humanism stands in contrast to the fascist impulses that raciology purports within cultures, as described by Gilroy. Planetary is against the simple connections by way of separation that race provides amongst people. Although it is impossible to facilitate any kind of planetary humanism in the world without first dealing with national and international inequalities in communities that have to deal with race, the environment, politics, and economics. It is important to analyze the “fascism” that raciology encourages and even maintains, but this must be linked to extinguishing the legacies of raciology as well.

From Gilroy's theory of raciology and planetary humanism it is important for this work to ask questions about the links between planetary humanism and the work of Butler and Delany. I will extend the idea planetary humanism to science fiction. This provides an extraordinary opportunity because in the science fiction works of Butler and Delany there are sometimes different representations of what human means, and the possibility of human in relation queerness.

Butler's engagement with the identification "people" to refer to all life in *Imago* and *Adulthood Rites* provide two possible representations of planetary humanism. The way in which Gilroy links histories of eugenics or biological science in Europe and in the United States to the creation of U.S. blackness in cultural production- *Space Jam* and *Independence Day* and the Civil Rights Movement and Pan-African Movements- is crucial to my understanding of eugenicism in Butler and Delany, and in how they both engage with utopia. Let us hold onto the idea of planetary humanism and move along its projected trajectory toward utopia into our discussion of science fiction in the next section.

Moreover, the idea of queer as defining not only a particular identity but also a space illustrates the ways in which "Utopia's Seating Chart: Ray Johnson, Jill Johnston, and Queer Intermedia as System" by José Esteban Muñoz serves as a point of connection for planetary humanism and queer utopia. Muñoz puts forth a theoretical framework of situating queer first as a space rather than as a necessarily locatable and embodied identity. This essay focuses on the visual artist Ray Johnson, founder of the New York Correspondence School, and the

dance and cultural critic Jill Johnston's construction of queer space. It also traces a queer genealogy that is not based in identity and not based on embodied characteristics that are more or less seen as stable and unquestionable. Muñoz dares to question them. Central to his discussion is the importance for subjects to engage in aesthetic and artistic utopic relational identity formation or intersubjective ways of being, in the words of Gilroy. The very concept of an existence that is predicated on dependence and relationality is a type of oppositional practice attempting to displace modernity's interference, boundaries, and limitations in processes of identity formation.

As Muñoz details in his essay, the potential of engaging with queer space allows for a postmodern process of the construction of identity that is not always only related to sexual orientation. Muñoz explicitly says that sexuality is a menial part of what he conceptualizes as queer space. It is a way to occupy space that is at once a disruption of modernity's work to rationalize identity and isolate experience. It seems that the idea of epistemology is questioned and instead is always and only presented as plural. It is impossible to only participate in one epistemology at a time, following Muñoz, and still engage in a life of action, interpellation, and meaning-making.

At the end of the essay, Muñoz linguistically inserts himself into a seat in the "Seating Chart" this allows for the reader to imagine Muñoz's name in the row and column that he specifies (next to Johnson). Further, the fact that Muñoz never actually met Ray Johnson, he only knows of his work through a friend's

father is another way that his utopic identity expresses itself, not through actually having had contact with Johnson, but by learning about his life practices through biographical accounts imparted to him by friends of Johnson and by biographies and other pieces written on him.

For Muñoz, this utopic space is a construction of queer space. In essence, queer space becomes the manifestation and negation of stability and embodiment. He speaks of Johnson through a practice of disidentificatory remembering. Disidentificatory because it is through a process of elimination and exclusion based from what he knows about the life of Johnson that he decides what he wants to include in the essay and with what he wants to disband. Undoubtedly, all of the things he includes relate to his insurgence into queer space, understandably, but I would argue that this is a way of constructing life, survival, and oppositional practices as argued by Muñoz in *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics*. This act of remembering or (not) remembering is a process that is not at all connected to actual personal memories, rather how Muñoz imagines and narrates Johnson's experience creating what he calls *nothings*, a form of the retelling of stories of others. Thus, the experiences are many times removed from Johnson, while at the same time they provide a direct link to Muñoz.

Muñoz essentially writes a story of Johnson's life that is predicated on his own; this can be deemed a radical act because it is in the process of engaging with biography or the simple retelling of a life not lived, a life not one's own that one

develops voice through narration. This at once collapses his experience into that of Johnson, of his own will, no permission, no need. Muñoz is the one telling the story. Thus, the life not lived, the life not one's own essentially becomes one's own life. Therefore, there is no exact pattern or manner to locate anything.

Thus, Muñoz not only brings the reader's attention to his way of engaging with constructiveness through storytelling, from facts or actual events, rather he shows a broader connection to storytelling in general that is biographical, historical, and memorial through a framework of queer interstitiality. This broader connection and link locates us all as subjective interpreters of events and as knowledge producers even of each other. By constantly invoking himself as the writer as the identifier or the one being identified, the one who is relating the story Muñoz provides a great representation of how we construct each others existences based from how we enter the story, it is a process of constant interpellation: textual, artistic, and otherwise.

Lastly, Muñoz begs us to ask what is memory, experience, analysis, and art independent of one another and what does it mean to always only be exclusively referring to a thing if it is not in relation to another thing. Not that we have to constantly provide multiple readings, interpretations, and attention to more than one subject of study, but that we must always be aware of our processes of thinking and making connections. Thus, following the lead of Muñoz becomes important to talk about black science fiction first as genre and

second as artistic creation that lends itself to articulating a particular U.S. experience of slavery, racism, and marginalization more generally.

To illuminate the coming together of eugenics, politics, and the representations of identity presented by Gilroy and Muñoz, Alexandra Minna Stern's interrogation and theorization of the Quarantine at the Mexico-U.S. border provides a dynamic point of connection. As Stern illustrates in her book *Eugenic Nation: Faults and Frontiers of Better Breeding in Modern America* the Quarantine at the Mexico-U.S. border existed as part of the abusive and violent immigration policy. What makes Stern's ideas so provocative is that she theorizes the purposes and actions of the quarantines run by the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service's border control employees. This contributes to Ordoñez's discussion of nationalism and the biologization of queer, because it serves to biologize other queer or marginalized subjects in a space developed to operate in the erasure of subjects defined as possessing an undesirable past. Thus, inscripting as well as interpellating these forever transient, and familiar *others* into subjectivity as undesirable brown *others*.

Stern historicizes paternalistic border quarantines or disinfection plants in Chapter Two: "Quarantine and Eugenic Gatekeeping" as serving the purpose of associating foreigners with sickness and solidifying a "boundary line that had previously been much more nebulous" (Stern 67). The border quarantines were described as necessary in order to cleanse Mexican and other Central Americans migrants; this necessity materialized in the National Origins Act of 1924. Here,

Stern simultaneously theorizes the idea of quarantine into the Quarantine as she narrates the real experiences of bodily and psyche violence of people forced to pass through the quarantines either to renew their work permit or simply to see family. It is because of public discourse surrounding foreigners as disease carriers and hosts of lice and other contagious viral and skin infections that the requirements of the quarantines resonated with the U.S. public.

It is through these accounts that we learn of the routine practices of the quarantine to serve eugenic goals. Stern displays the ways in which border crossers were subject to group sodium-fluoride showers (80), the shaving of all body hair, and were given different clothing. Stern provides second-hand testimonials of two Mexican immigrants of their experiences with the quarantine as well as journals written by majority white male quarantine patrol officers of their daily interactions and activities quarantining border crossers. Even after being presented with appropriate quarantine cards verifying that they had been cleansed and settling in the U.S. the children of these migrants were still subjected to institutional eugenic educational policies of standardized testing on which many Mexican and Mexican American children did poorly because of language difficulty and lack of strong English as a Second Language programs¹⁸.

The showering of border crossers serves as a eugenic practice of altering what is inevitable, marginalization. However, the justification exists that border

¹⁸ Stern shows how standardized testing functioned to exclude the children of Mexican immigrants from succeeding in the ranks of education (Stern 67).

crossers will experience a new emergence in a new place, which will help to ward off their degenerative past. There is a historical relationship between the identification of people as *other* because of race, gender, or national identity in a patriarchal white supremacist society, and that identifications hereditarian or naturalist eugenic links to dirtiness in terms of personal hygiene as well as in terms of the content of a person's innate character. Thus, people pass through the Quarantine as minoritized and marginalized in a different way. Border crossers on one side of the border do not pose the threat of using potential citizenship, but they are always just as "illegal" in political terms, because on some level they will always be seen as perpetual foreigners, *others* in the eyes of a white supremacist State. This otherness the Quarantine cannot shower away.

PART II

CHAPTER IV: Eugenicism in Science Fiction: Butler and Delany

Octavia Butler's trilogy series *Xenogenesis*—"the birth of something new and foreign" – consists of the three books *Dawn*, *Adulthood Rites* and *Imago*. All three books narrate the challenge of reoccurring loss, growth, and change. This section of the paper will advance an analysis of the three books in relation to how Butler constructs queer and queer space in each book of the trilogy and in the selected short stories from *Bloodchild: And Other Stories*. Does there exist a revolutionary potential in how Butler writes a racialized, gendered and sexualized story of queer? How does Butler complicate Gilroy's idea of planetary humanism as a product of generating and occupying oppositional identities and practices outside of what he calls raciology or raciological thinking? Eugenicism will be utilized in a number of ways in my analyses of the three books. I will employ eugenicism to look at the ways in which managing difference occurs under scientific and social forces, to define hierarchy as a genetic problem. Further, Butler engages with and challenges the eugenicist promise that the trajectory towards progress or toward a civilization composed of the biologically fit, will end with Anglo Saxon descendents as ultimately the only race of people left to lead humanity through the process of progress. Thus, eugenicism as a discursive tool will be used in the analysis of Butler's work in relation to Boeckmann's idea of the importance of *character* in determining hierarchies of

power, morality, and human history as it relates to queer. Further, it will serve as a frame for exploring the above questions as they pertain not only to Butler but also to Delany.

Dawn, the first of Butler's trilogy, begins with the reawakening of surviving humans after they have destroyed earth and almost all living organisms including most of humankind. This occurs after an event of extreme war perpetrated by humans that creates mass homicide, suicide, and violence on and to the earth. The Oankali aliens are working as a species of genetic manipulators to restore earth and humankind, and it is their lived duty and promise never to *allow* human control over earth again. This promise becomes something embodied in the biology of the Oankali; it is their nature that allows them to intervene and reconstruct earth as they see fit. The Oankali see earth not as something to be tamed, rather the Oankali see earth as an organ, as a living subject. Further, it is people, human and Oankali, who are to be genetically manipulated and changed in order to be fit to live on earth. The Oankali have altered earth in many ways, one such alteration is that they genetically engineer and recreate plants that were destroyed or killed off of earth by humans. It then becomes necessary for humans to relearn how to digest the plants they destroyed and to relearn much about the earth they have abused.

Moreover, it would be impossible for the Oankali to survive if they lost their ability to encode different genetic sequences and create mutations. This is part of the reason why the Oankali take the remainder of humankind aboard their

space ship and put them in a state of suspended animation. It is from of this state of suspended animation that the chosen human, Lilith Iyapo, is to awaken the first group of humans aboard the ship. *Dawn* begins with the awakening of Lilith and her frustration and fear as she becomes accustomed to the Oankali aliens. As a human, she learns from them how to reacclimate herself onto to earth and she is trained in how to impart knowledge to the other humans who she awakens. As the Oankali perform regenerative and transformative healing practices on her body, Lilith sporadically awakens disparate groups of humans. Meanwhile, she also serves as the mediator for relationships and visible exchanges that occur between the Oankali and the humans. Key ideas and events that come out of the story and that resurface in the other two books are: The process and theory of a reawakening and the subsequent stubbornness, disregard, and violence both of and against the new life for the humans that are reawakened by Lilith. Moreover, Lilith is identified as a black woman, but she transcends the roles that readers see black women play in fiction. She is in charge and she is responsible for the lives of people from different backgrounds.

Traversing time.

There is some mention of events that do not relate any one cohesive story about when exactly the destruction of earth takes place. The disjointed conversation in *Dawn*, and throughout the other books of the trilogy, on the Space

Race between Russia and the U.S. and other historical events that conjure thoughts up of a World War III that causes the great events of destruction of earth. This erasure of a time frame serves as a direct introduction into the relative dystopic utopia of the trilogy. Therefore, the destruction of earth, the foraging and hunting undergone by humankind, and the uncontrolled acts of violence by humans speaks to the reoccurring dystopic elements in some of the short stories of Butler's in her book *Bloodchild*. It is important that Butler does not allow the reader to make too many historical associations with temporal artifacts (events, people, or places that make up a period of history) that works to disrupt the fiction and dystopic/utopic elements of the trilogy. It is an important methodology that Butler works from as a science fiction writer, but that she complicates by offering up specific relational identities and events.

Moreover, the question of time is also expressed through generation: "We're like mature asexual animals in that way, but we divide into three: Dinso to stay on Earth until it is ready to leave generations from now; Toaht to leave in this ship; and Akjai to leave in the new ship" (Butler 34). Each Oankali generation has not only a trajectory from which they move and change location, but their existence is also biologically fashioned in such a way that they are predestined to divide and to become desperately displaced throughout the universe. This provides an interesting connection to eugenic promises of not only pre-destiny but also a path to structuring different ways of being constituted as human. The narration of the Quarantine, from *Eugenic Nation* by Stern, provides a parallel

framework from which to look at this traversing of temporality. It is important to see the imperative links made to the past to act on bodies in order to erase a history of peoples that is viewed just as undesirable as the bodies that cross borders. However, the goal of the Quarantine is not to incorporate those “sodium fluoride cleansed” bodies into the norm of the society. It is in a sense to allow them to participate in marginality, they are washed of a status that forces them to occupy space that renders them invisible or as a less than subject caught “red-handed” outside the borders and jurisdiction of citizenship. Thus, the Quarantine negotiates a position as interpellator as it is transformed from an inanimate cement institution into a subject- albeit a subject comprised of feelings of mistrust, hatred, and violation- that has the ability to subject others to harsh treatment in order that they be able to participate in their own processes of marginalization.

Furthermore, along the lines of traversing time and temporality, Butler’s trilogy traverses normative gender and sex. Gender and sex are instead directly connected to degrees of difference, and are also outside of binary designations of social roles like those that the humans have lived with for hundred of years. There is an epistemology of gender derived from the ways in which it diverges in relation to Oankali and humans. *Dawn* presents three gender locales for Oankali to occupy in relation to how their bodies appear, and also what their bodies can do reproductively that is very much connected to gender and sex. At the same time, these categories are not completely in line with how we as readers think about

gender and sex. *Dawn* takes us to a provocative queer space, because gender and sex roles are constructed similarly to human gender roles. They are constructed in order to extend along a prescribed sociological trajectory that rests on the existence of a biologically attainable end. Thus, whether it is about pregnancy, menstrual cycles, and erections all have a locale inside of the normative sociological gender-sex trajectory of male and female, but where they are positioned and where both Oankali and humans are allowed to enter them is in relation to the nongendered ooloi. As well as somewhat relative to the ways in which the humans conceive of their identities as gendered subjects and how they can and cannot take up space on an earth that is no longer “theirs” and in a space ship that does not belong to them.

Gender is also introduced in *Dawn* as a means to express and designate familial responsibilities as far as hunting, gathering, and reproduction. Even though it cannot be said that there exists binary constructions of humanity, there are however gendered and sexed constructions of humanity in the trilogy. It is women who can get pregnant, they need ooloi to impregnate them, but it is a process of three bodies that create life, not two, not male and female alone. This fact really advances feminist theorist Judith Butler’s idea of gendered performativity and the notion that what we think of as sex is always already gender. This is because Judith Butler speaks directly to the ways in which sex is inscribed with gender so much so that it is not just simply about reading bodies and being able to categorize them, but we constantly use gender in ways that help

to manage the biological along with the social in ways that are always construct them as mutually exclusive.

Thus, the ooloi come to potentially represent that initial moment of inscribing sex onto gender where the two become inextricably linked and where one can easily stand in for the other for Butler; perhaps also as a planetary cousin of Donna Haraway's cyborg. The very identification of an "it" makes sense in the ways in which Butler constructs relationships and reproduction. There is a nuclear family that revolves around the ooloi and gendered familial relations are constituted and developed from there. It is a process of genetic mixing that allows the human woman or Oankali woman to become pregnant. This genetic mixing occurs because the ooloi takes sperm and eggs from man and woman and mixes it inside of itself.

Moreover, Butler capitalizes Oankali and Humanity, along with Human and Earth in some ways as opposites needing to occupy the same space or needing to engage in codependence actively for survival. The fixation on codependence is interesting considering the fact that it is the antithesis of individualism and the democratization of power, everyone in a sense becomes free of everyone else, and it is not necessary to engage or to depend. Also, Butler capitalizes Awaken and Awake, because they come to mean the reemergence of the surviving humans into a world that is no longer controlled by them, and the end of their phase of suspended animation as long as they do not become violent toward other humans or the Oankali (Butler 129).

The trilogy creates a series of journeys as well as parallel understandings about what it means to be human. Human and Humanity are two ways of being that are simultaneously representative of a whole, while diverging in what they signify in relation to collectivity and individuality. Butler does interesting things with Human seen as at once in a semiotic relationship to the Oankali; they both relate experiences, new and old to each other and are codependent in terms of survival while at the same time they are represented as having divergent visions of the future of Earth.

Lilith is without family; all of her family has died. After being asleep for 250 human years since the “mass suicide” on earth Lilith awakes alone, and without the knowledge that she is the only human awake on the space ship. Jdahya, one of the Oankali, tells her that she has aged two human years and that she is now twenty-eight years old. Lilith has difficulty trusting Jdahya; for two years she has been in solitary confinement (Butler 23). She comes to think of ways that her body has been changed by the Oankali and the ways in which she is being policed, controlled, and kept by them, as similar to the way that humans had treated animals (Butler 31). Therefore, the fact that the Oankali experiment and change her body against her will as they see fit surfaces partly as an act of violence. This serves as a prime example of to the treatment of racial and sexual minoritized subjects by eugenics.

In her rewriting of identity and the meaning of humanity, Butler does not make “Man” a synonym or a superlative of human, as do Delany and Gilroy to a

certain extent in their imagined worlds; Man does not come to represent a modernist construction of “people” and “human.” Instead, who is included in Humanity becomes much more difficult to discern as Oankali have more contact with humans and genetic engineering on multiple levels occurs. Some of the human resisters deny humans who have had any physical contact, even those who have been healed by the Oankali, as being entirely human. Also, Butler brings modernist history to the forefront when Lilith asks if the Oankali relative is male or female. The Oankali is quick to tell her that her judgment is modernist and perhaps violent: “It’s wrong to assume that I must be a sex you’re familiar with,” it said, but as it happens, I’m male” (Butler 15). This is an interesting moment where the presence of modernist Cartesian dualism is imbedded in the Oankali’s use of “wrong” in the question he poses to Lilith. Further, the Oankali and the humans are both referred to as “people” which also complicates how the reader engages and understands the text (Butler 35). People has been a category reserved for humans, thus, it is difficult to read the gender and sexual variation outside of the binaries and essentialisms in which many readers frame their thoughts. The Oankali checks Lilith’s desire to put him in one category or the other. However difficult to read the three genders as they stand, it would have been interesting for there to exist alternative gender pronouns in order to queer the Oankali gender system.

Thus, while the Oankali critiques Lilith’s binary reversion, he reinserts the good/bad binary by saying that she is “wrong” instead of perhaps entertaining her

question with a less power differentially loaded statement like: “it is curious” or “it is interesting” or something of that sort to encourage Lilith to see her own process of judgment and identification. Consequently, Lilith ends the conversation with: “Good. ‘It’ could become he again. Less awkward” (Butler 11). Therefore, she does not really understand or care to ponder the depth of his critique. Hierarchy exists on many levels in the trilogy, and this helps destabilize the modernist notion that hierarchy is visual and has clearly distinguished boundaries- the oppressors and the oppressed. Along this same line, *Dawn* introduces the reader to the idea that humanity’s hierarchical tendencies will destroy any society if it is allowed to perpetuate itself in the same way. This, as we learn from the vantage point of the Oankali, is because difference is predicated on hierarchy, and hierarchy as articulated by humans is ultimately destructive. Butler illustrates how difference becomes a mechanism and a reason for why the Oankali see that they are predisposed to manage the “genetic contradiction” of humans and to eventually recreate Humanity.

The biopolitics of the Oankali signify the fact that their bodies are kept healthy and alive by the transfer of genes. Oankali means trader (Butler 26), no Oankali is out of the norm. They attempt to create families with one ooloi and two humans, there are no marginal communities to speak of, and it is apparent that they trade themselves, their genetic material, and in doing so their abilities to genetically engineer Humanity and Oankali together.

Moreover, the human body is conceptualized in an essentialist manner throughout the novel. It is a body for experimentation for the Oankali, in a way that their own bodies are not, it has become *other* in the sense that it is not the body in the center, rather it is the body that must be interpellated into conscious and existence by the Oankali. The human body must be enhanced and modified in ways that the bodies of Oankali do not have to be changed in order for them to survive on Earth. Aside from the experimentation role that the human body plays, the Oankali justify their paternalistic relationship with the human body by viewing it as genetically flawed in relation to the Oankali: “Human bodies are fatally flawed because they have a mismatched pair of genetic characteristics” (Butler 36).

Genetic Engineering and Hierarchy

The Oankali understand Humanity as hierarchical by nature and by nurture: “there is a lethal genetic conflict in Humanity and you know it” (Butler 10). Later, Butler discusses this “lethal genetic conflict” as Humanity’s inability to manage and cope with difference (Butler 186). This creates a dynamic binary conception of themselves as nonhierarchical, because they see themselves as the polar opposites of Humanity. Although, they see difference as both a threat and as a necessity of survival, they do not use difference in order to marginalize humans, they need humans to genetically survive and they want to assist in the

creation of a new Earth. Like Humans they want to be able to control the amount of mixing between Humans and Oankali and as we see in the last book of the trilogy they attempt to do so. Also, the power relations are such that the Oankali relate to Humans as if they were their experiments. The Oankali do create hierarchy, they do not do it for the same reasons as Humans, but because they believe in the great Contradiction of Humanity. They must intervene and serve as translators and gate-keepers to the different worlds, ways of living and knowing for Humans.

Further, the Oankali see hierarchy as a genetic problem (Butler 37) rooted not only in Humanity since the beginning of time, but also in modernity and the rise of competition and technological advancement, and perhaps although not explicitly expressed capitalism. The abuse, a product of modernity, of weapons is one of the reasons for the mass suicide due to the effects of human hierarchy. The Oankali's genetic trading and manipulation is one of the ways in which difference is managed and hierarchy is flattened in all of the books of the trilogy.

The Oankali's genetic engineering of Humans is also a process of the genetic engineering and (re)fashioning of themselves: "We trade the essence of ourselves. Our genetic material for yours" (Butler 39). This complicates the contemporary practice of genetic engineering as a process by which human subjects have the rational ability and liberty to fashion other subjects, to tamper with "nature" and to invent their own destinies.

Butler's *Humanity* coupled with Gilroy's planetary humanism creates a complex trajectory for utopic and theoretical exploration not bounded by circumstance or time. Gilroy tells the story of what happens on the Mars colony of Butler's book through his assertion that if planetary humanism is not achieved the fascist tendencies of raciology will destroy humanity. Although we see that eugenics promises to manage difference and this is why it prevails. Many arguments are made in reference to mortality in a biologically fit universe:

"We're not hierarchical, you see. We never were. But we are powerfully acquisitive. We acquire new life- seek it, investigate it, manipulate it, sort it, use it. We carry the drive to do this in a minuscule cell within a cell- a tiny organelle within every cell of our bodies" (Butler 143).

The history of modern eugenics becomes recognizably postmodern, and yet something that is perhaps beyond postmodernity. I say this because the Oankali speak to eugenics (Butler 144) and utilize its practices as they critically read, utilize, and store information. Thus, the Oankali work from a project that is very different from eugenics in the ways in which they do not work toward the creation of a future species that is seen as the fittest, yet they work to merge the worlds of earth, Lo, Mars and the spaceship with that of the Humans. In this process they are creating the most genetically diverse and fit population of the future.

Another crucial theme for interpretation that Butler brings out in *Dawn* has to do with Human archival practices through documents and even through memories. The dossier is a tie to the past lives of humans who are in suspended

animation (Butler 123). The dossier serves as a mode of research or even as an archive of a person's former life, and is most helpful to Lilith who is to decide on whom to awaken based on their representations on the dossier. Eugenics, both figuratively and metaphorically worked with dossiers that organized human life. The dossier performs eugenicism in order to selectively make decisions on human lives based on who can be trusted to not be violent during the post-suspended animation learning phase, who will not attack Lilith, and who will be cooperative and who will not. Lilith says to Tate, the first human that she awakens from suspended animation: ““ You seemed least likely to try to kill me, least likely to fall apart, and most likely to be able to help with the others as they Awaken”” (Butler 129). The dossier represents a new way of knowing a person, a way much like how people read other people based on physical appearance, voice, and body language before really getting to know them. The dossier exists before the person comes into being.

Two moments where the importance of the dossier are made apparent are when they are used by the Oankali to choose Joseph as a partner for Lilith (Butler 164), and it becomes a mimetic process of recreation of self by deciding which other Humans are allowed to Awake. Lilith chooses Tate because she is a woman and therefore she thinks there will be less of a chance of her becoming violent and uncontrollable (Butler 145). This is one example of how Lilith's experience of gender roles on Earth informs how she perceives people on Lo.

Aside, from humans being described as inherently hierarchical, the question of leadership and the creation of leaders as people who stand apart from the group and speak to and for the wishes of the group is questioned by the Oankali in relation to Lilith. Lilith recognizes one of the difficulties that come with being a leader is that people blame you for making them dependent on you (Butler 153).

The only mention of queered sexuality in *Dawn* is when Joseph is being harassed because he is Asian and because the men in the group decide that he is sexually deviant: “One has decided he’s called a faggot and the other dislikes the shape of his eyes” (Butler 159). The Oankali unknowingly asking what homosexual is serves as a moment to mark the difference in the differentiation of sexual preference. Moreover, for Oankali sexual intercourse is not pleasurable in the sense that it is physical, stimulation is experienced differently:

“Interpretation. Electrochemical stimulation of certain nerves, certain parts of your brain... What happened was real. Your body knows how real it was. Your interpretations were illusion. The sensations were entirely real... And I offer a oneness that your people strive for, dream of, but can’t truly attain alone” (189).

Intercourse is a sharing of many things, and mostly remains elusive to the reader. The male and female are positioned so that they cannot physically touch, and the ooloi rests in the middle of the two. From *Dawn*, we see the importance of engaging with the remaining two books; The relationship to *Dawn* and the other books is like a series vignettes or stills that only become animated when they are juxtaposed with one before or after the other.

Adulthood Rites, the second book, reintroduces hierarchy, but there are actual tangible representations of it since Humans have been put back on Earth. The story remains focused on Lilith, but it shifts dramatically to focus on Akin, her newborn son who is born after Joseph, the father of Akin, has been murdered. Moreover, the most important idea transmitted from *Dawn* to *Adulthood Rites* is the notion that there exists the possibility of the composition and the ordering of a livable space just for Humans. The story of Lilith continues, but she is on Earth in the community of Lo, the Earth community on which the Oankali and some Humans live, is a living entity that can be acted upon to create harmony in the world. The book is told from the vantage point of Akin as he interacts with his Nikanj, Dichaan and Ahajas, and his Oankali parents.

After *Adulthood Rites* is *Imago*, one of the most fitting novels to analyze in relation to eugenics. *Imago* tells the story of the life of Jodahs who is a Human-ooloi, a hybrid construct of Oankali aliens and Humans as policed in its Humanity and in its alienality. At this moment, Earth is several centuries beyond a great war between Humans that destroys most of Humanity. Oankali aliens have taken control of Earth, and all of remaining Humans have three choices to decide their fate: become resisters continue to populate only amongst Humans and go extinct passing along debilitating genetic disorders to their offspring, go to the Mars colony to reproduce with other Humans, or stay on Earth and be paired with Oankali mates in order to reproduce and continue living. Jodahs is a product of a family of two male and female couples of both Humans and Oankali, and one

ooloi parent— “a different sex altogether.” For this third sexual identity, as well as pre-metamorphosis non-sexually identified beings like the younger siblings of Jodahs, Butler uses “it” to describe them.

The first and seconded metamorphoses of Jodahs consists of its transformation into ooloi adulthood and from of non-sexual differentiated childhood. This surpasses the complete development of reproduction ability of the adolescence of Humans and Oankali, because ooloi are neither male nor female. It is a great surprise and matter of disconcertion to the family of Jodahs, that its metamorphosis will result in its becoming ooloi, because Jodahs has been perceived to be male his entire life and at the moment of its first metamorphosis it becomes apparent that something is different, and as we find out it is that Jodahs is a developing into an ooloi. It is apparent to Jodahs that Humans become attached to the scent and comfort of ooloi to survive, and it becomes difficult to leave them, because the ooloi need Human mates to survive. In the community of Lo Humans may only reproduce with an Oankali couple and one single ooloi. The function of the ooloi is to genetically control population growth and variety, and it collects reproductive cells from other members of the family.

Delany.

Equinox, one of the most provocative and sexexplicit erotic science fiction novels by Samuel Delany, exemplifies the ways in which control in not only genre, but also in storyline is most effective when it is hybridized. The hybrid

elements of the work and its style remind the reader of the importance of daring to transgress norms of genre in fiction and social conventions. This is one erotic novella in which the very practices of sexuality deemed deviant in conventional U.S. society, allow the characters to participate in community and interact with one another. In the first pages we learn that *Equinox* was originally published as *Tides of Lust* in 1973 and in it the young characters were all under eighteen. Since it is so unavoidably sexexplicit and there is sex between children and adults, the new copy right restrictions forced Delany to change the ages of all the children so that they would be “of age.” Included in the 1994 reprinted edition is a “Note of Moral Intent” in which Delany humorously admits to deliberately adding one-hundred years to all of the ages of the children:

“We hope the disruption of the image will prevent the age of these characters (now emended throughout the text) from functioning as a node of libidinal exploitation, as all directly stated ages in the novel are now eighteen or significantly above” (6).

This practice of defiance frames the novella’s intentions to straddle the lines of codes of conduct, simultaneously blurring them in the process. Similar to the project of recovery and manipulation of eugenics in proving a thing as undesirable and then promising to destroy it, Delany from the onset of the book declares that the “undesirable” acts, behaviors and attitudes, expressed in the book represent something much larger than a simple change in age of the characters.

Equinox tells the story of Captain, a black man who owns and navigates a ship called the Scorpion. We meet Captain in the middle of his journeys, traveling from country to country. Captain’s sexual prowess and inability to be

satisfied with any sexual act for any length of time is one of the most disturbing and driving forces of the novella. After the first ten pages we know more about the refractory period of Captain after he has had sexual intercourse, then information about his family, his wishes, or his history. It becomes less important for the reader to invest emotionally in Captain or even identify with him most of the time. The imposition of power of his character in relationships with other people creates an imbalance in the ways in which power functions and an exaggeration of the positions. Suddenly, the lurid extremity of Captain disallows the reader a “loyal” protagonist to rely on, while at the same time Captain is always only honest. He has no guise, he answers only to himself. There exists no society to say to him that he, his crew, and their behaviors are undesirable.

The importance instead becomes the people Captain interacts with and the ways in which he affects them. The story takes place in a very liminal temporality that is impossible to know the truth of and posits itself as better understood outside of any one temporal element. The most important thing about Captain that we find out in the first pages is that he owns two young white adolescents named Gunner and Kristen. Many of the issues and situations that come up in the book pertain to national as well as transnational political and human sexual rights agendas today; issues concerning: sex work, sexual slavery, and rape. All oppressions and possibilities for recreating oneself as a gendered subject and a worker in a world economy premised on neoliberalism and the traffic and tourism of human beings exist in the book. Delany brings to the

forefront the ways in which gendered subjects might occupy different degrees of a gendered identity, this automatically leads to a queering of sexuality that is always embedded in relations of power and control. Sexuality is so pervasive that it bleeds into everything on the Scorpion and in all of the places it lands. It is possible that the Scorpion is one of the few characterizations of queer space that could be seen as both utopic and dystopic depending on how the reader.

Delany illustrates the popular notions of prostitution and sexual exploitation such as sex trafficking, incest, pimping, sex work, and something close to the sexual slavery of everyone. This forces sexuality to reflexively look at itself and either get sick or indulge in itself. This means that sexuality at once becomes a site to interrogate what kind of humanity a character is operating from, dominating like Captain, or willingly and perhaps consciously acquiescing to his wishes like Gunner and Kristen. The ship is the sphere of influence for the Captain. Irrespective of age and with little or no concern for societal processes of preservation of sex until children grow older, life on the ship and on land offer a metanarrative for differing spheres of existence, colliding worlds that are right next to one another. It is really interesting that everyone on the ship is subjected to the reign of control of the Captain, because the ship is his sphere of influence. Also, Captain carries his jurisdiction off of the ship onto the land.

Further, The ship functions as a phallic source of inspiration for rule and trade to Captain. It is difficult not talk about benefit and sacrifice when discussing Captains relationships with the other characters. Captain always

occupies a space of dominance; he is never subject to criticism and can never show vulnerability. Captain practices an embodied eugenics. Biology, race, gender do not lead to a set trajectory of socialization. Power runs in all directions in the novella, which serves as a direct link to Delany's sexual exploits and position on the AIDS epidemic in his autobiography *The Motion of Light In Water: Sex and Science Fiction Writings In The East Village: 1960-1965* which will be discussed in the next section in relationship to eugenics and the AIDS crisis.

Butler.

The last two pieces by Butler come from a collection of short stories in the book *Bloodchild: And Other Stories*. The two stories: "The Evening the Morning and the Night" and "Speech Sounds" narrate a future, that *Equinox* also suggests, that is only possible through extreme loss and sacrifice. In developing eugenicism in these two stories I want to ask: Does Butler set up a pattern that can be traced from the trilogy to these stories for the reader that is based on science, reproduction and trading? It will then become possible to see the ways in which components of eugenicism are presented. In "The Evening and the Morning and the Night" Butler is content to investigate how biology, as one lives it, becomes a reflexive process of anthropology. The science of biology in this story represents perceived destiny, the constant negotiation of difference— a theme that Butler engages in the trilogy as well.

However, “Speech Sound” refers specifically to what happens when human communication is forced to develop from trauma and violence. This story is feminist and dystopic in its function and its ontology in how it relays and recalls experiences of alienation, need, and the importance of travel as a component of the dystopic geography and desire. Butler provides written commentary on her writing process and her intentions at the end of each story in the collection, this is not always helpful, although it situates her more explicitly, it becomes less possible to let the fiction situate her as it should in some cases.

“The Evening and the Morning and the Night” narrates the story of Lynn Mortimer a fifteen-year-old girl who is a carrier of the Duryea-Gode disease (DGD). This disease causes people to tear away at their flesh from the inside out in an effort to be free of their bodies, and in the process they attack other people. In this imagined world, there have been many DGD attacks, there are DGD wards Lynn says: “Dad had killed mom, then skinned her completely. At least that’s how I hope it happened. I mean I hope he killed her first. He broke some of her ribs, damaged her heart. Digging” (36). After this horrifying occurrence, Lynn attends college on a DGD scholarship. She lives in a house with other DGDs and dates a controlled DGD like herself, Alan Chi, who takes her further into the world of institutionalized DGDs when he takes her to visit his mother one day. Lynn learns from Beatrice Alcantara, director of Dilg one of the most impressive institutions for DGD’s that it is her destiny to direct such an institution. That it is her pheromones that calms and urges other DGD’s to listen to her, who otherwise

would be chewing off their ears, fingers, or those of others. It is her biology as a product of two DGD parents and a controlled DGD herself, meaning she has the disease under control and does not have to be institutionalized, that identifies her as one of the few who might possibly save the lives of other DGDs.

The direct opposite or inverse of eugenics' desire to sterilize subjects deemed unworthy to reproduce is the case of the subject who talks about wanting themselves to be sterilized. The subject that dares be in agreement with eugenic discourses about their nature and fear of their reproductive possibilities: “ Hell they should pass a law to sterilize the lot of us” '(42) as Lynn says. It is relevant that Butler makes the story take place in the state of California, a state like all other states in the U.S. that is subject to the jurisdiction and social rhetoric of democracy. California's particular history of sterilization as Stern narrates in *Eugenic Nation* is timely in thinking about the questions of citizenship and acceptance in relation to the case of the DGDs.

Thus, the DGDs occupy positions of constant surveillance by institutions that they participate in (university, businesses, etc.), and they always are made aware of the threat of possibly being institutionalized if they become unable to control the disease. Their subjectivities as human is mysterious because of their genetic mutations force them into a marginalized inhumane space in society. A space that is at once public and private. The humanity of the DGDs rests on their ability to be civil and display appropriate public behaviors to other citizens. If they are caught “drifting” or showing signs that their disease is out of control they

will be institutionalized. This constitution of identity as contingent upon pre-established conditions, is nothing new, however, the element of the immediate and the distant future of that the disease presupposes allows for it to escape the notion that the subject is constantly making and remaking itself in the present. The performative element of identity then insures future freedom or at least life outside of institutions.

Further, Butler reveals postmodernity coupled with dystopia as it engages the present in “Speech Sound.” The story can be read as feminist because it lends intersectional critical attention to issues of oppression of gender, sexuality, (dis)ability, and of difference. The story begins with “There was trouble abroad the Washington Boulevard bus” (89). Right away the reader is made aware of the situation, the location, and the locale of the protagonist. This simple sentence becomes slowly deconstructed as the story progresses from its original purpose to situate and locate the protagonist Rye.

Much in the same vane of constructing a Californian society, but an explicitly dystopic one, “Speech Sounds” enters the conversation about constituting place, home, and normativity. Rye lives during a moment of lawlessness: “there were no more LAPD, no more of any large organization, governmental or private” (Butler 92), and also during a moment of utter confusion where everyone has become strangers to one another, all sense of trust has dissolved. Rye is traveling from Los Angeles to Pasadena, and many instances occur during her journey, which force her to use embodied indicators of temper

and disposition in order to make decisions. When Rye asserts: “left-handed people tended to be less impaired, more reasonable and comprehending, less driven by frustration, confusion, and anger” (Butler 92), her statement displays an inclination toward biological determinism. One of the effects of lawlessness is Rye’s constant questioning of her safety: “Rye watched him wearily. People might very well stand by and watch if he tried to rape her. They would also stand and watch her shoot him. Would he push things that far” (Butler 95).

Also, each character possesses a symbol with their name engraved into it in order to account for the inability of people to communicate through speech:

“The illness, if it was an illness, had cut even the living off from one another. As it swept over the country, people hardly had time to lay blame on the Soviets (though they were falling silent along with the rest of the world)... Language was always impaired. It was never regained. Often there was also paralysis, intellectual impairment, death” (96).

The (dis)ability of speech impairment creates chaos, the distortion of interpretations of reality, and an overall sentiment of unwillingness to communicate between people. The name symbol stands in for the person and simultaneously represents the purpose of language; it calls attention to the construction of sign systems that are a necessity to communication in a world without words.

The anxiety that the future presents is also present in the story, much like the trilogy’s disruption of eugenicism’s desire to locate and produce a stable future that is always utopic and ideal. However, Rye imagines the future differently: “They had no future. They were now all they would ever be” (101).

This moment is one of the few, in which Rye talks about a material future and she comes to theorize this future in the presence of children. The fact that the children live in a world that cannot be remedied by biological determinism because the “illness” is not only something that is locatable inside of bodies it is everywhere and no where all at once. Thus, the image of children running through streets unable to verbally communicate with one another and instead using a newly created sign system of gestures and movements presents the idea of an end: “They were now all that they would ever be.” Also, this touches on the idea of determinism in general, which makes it impossible to imagine a future in which certain subjects exist, in the same way as eugenics. It posits the children in “Speech Sounds”, the marginalized subjects of eugenics, the Mexican migrants passing through the Quarantine as static eugenic *others as* forever a threat and forever undesirable. Although, Delany reminds us of the power of desire to stabilize, to force communication, and risk taking with strangers. There is very little room for trusting strangers in the dystopic world of “Speech Sounds.” Disability and disease create miscommunication, lack of love, and isolation. The act of speaking at the end of the story that occurs between the children is a moment of recognition and acceptance of each other, and possibly one that expresses hope that the world will not always be doomed.

CHAPTER V: Conclusion

This work has interrogated eugenics as a hegemonic force that can be analyzed not only from the vantage point of the social and natural sciences, but also alongside history and literature. Within the story of eugenics there exists the discursive potential to unpack the ways in which it constructs humanity and an imagined world of the future based on purity. Like all frameworks eugenicism is but one story that relays information rhetorically and in doing so is inherently partial. The concluding section of the paper will explore the topic of disease and disability through Delany and Ordovery, only this time as sites outside of the immediate locale of eugenicism. Much of public discourse surrounding disease and disability are connected to the project of imagining and creating fictions in order to understand the reality of situations. At times, it is from disease and disability that detrimental fictions are constructed in order to represent their effects as biologically particular to certain populations of people.

Further, disease and disability are locations where eugenics and science fiction are at work to construct them as embodied by the *other*, and as possibilities for building community around the notion of excluding and policing the *other*. Disability not only signifies physical disability, but also signifies a perceived incompetence because of the identification as *other*. The sexual *others* that Delany discusses in his memoirs and the sexual world that he constructs in *Equinox* work alternatively to construct community for those ostracized as carriers of a disease or those who are sexually and socially deviant.

Moreover, tied to Delany's representation of sex acts as a service and as exchangeable material goods in *The Motion of Light in Water* is the conception of sex as a living dynamic experience inside which alternative ways of being and living are offered up in exchange for the sacrifice of safety and vulnerability:

"Because feelings, emotional and physical, are so foregrounded in sexual encounters, the orgy is the most social of human interchanges, where awareness and communication, whether verbal or no, hold all together or sunder it" (MLW 241).

Delany's conception of the notion of orgy in his autobiographical work *The Motion of Light in Water* published originally in 1988 and later in 1993, provides a complex connection to the ways in which he portrays sexual relations in *Equinox*. In *The Motion of Light in Water* he explores the invisibility of queerness, and lays the framework for understanding the coerced visibility of queerness in the face of disease and disability with the attention to the spread of AIDS in the 1980s and early 1990s in the United States.

Delany's honesty and willingness to engage with the emotional and physical side of sexual encounters allows the reader to read the orgy not only as a space of sexual transgression and excess, but a space of community and love. Although, it would be appropriate to critique Delany for his seemingly male chauvinism and sexism in both his memoir and *Equinox*, because all of his imagined worlds exist primarily as containers for the sexual service of men. It is also important to read Delany as disrupting what dominant notions consider as love, affection, and meaningful connections between and by *others*.

Disease and Disability: AIDS and Biologism

Ordovery's remarks on eugenics and AIDS provide an important lens in addition to that of Delany from which to examine this issue. Returning to Ordovery's analysis in "Aids, Backlash, and the Myth of Libratory Biologism," provides the opportunity to illustrate the way in which public discourse developed around the initial naming and identifying of AIDS in the United States was a direct product of the eugenics movements. The discussion from Chapter One on the history of eugenics contextualizes precisely Ordovery's claims that the construction of disease and its transmission as not particular to law abiding fit citizens. The ABA, the GS, and the AES all participated in campaigns that posited disease as a product of foreign bodies within the nation and from outside of the nation. Further, there is a constant fear of diseased *others* outside of the nation, because they will want to enter the nation at some point. The Quarantine serves historically as a manifestation of those fears. Ordovery positions the eugenic legacies inherited by U.S. public medical discourse alongside the reaction to AIDS in the medical community and in international health politics. This is an example of how eugenics has a lasting effect of shrinking what is a vast important issue making it seem particular to a separate and containable group of *others*. In this way unanimity stands in for the multitude in order to construct the ways in which the public conceptualizes disease, and then imagines and becomes ambivalent to the perceived deviant acts that "cause" disease in the first place.

At the very start of the AIDS crisis, the disease was named a “strange gay cancer.” Cancers are typically named for the part of the body that they attack—lung, testicular, breast, etc. However, the name: “strange gay cancer” is meant to tell a very specific story about the sexual practices of queer people who during the mid-1980s constituted the group with the most deaths from the disease. Ordover asserts that early sentiments around AIDS reflected the ways in which the rhetoric and practices of eugenics, religion, public policy, and medicine had constructed queer people throughout history (119).

Some believed that AIDS was based on “the idea that queers shared some special bodily anomaly unknown to heterosexuals” (Ordover 119). This belief not only led to some of the very first names for AIDS, as Ordover illustrates, but also a reframing of the ongoing nature vs. nurture debate that relied on biological queerness as opposed to queer socialization and practice. Philosophers and theorists such as Richard Von Krafft-Ebbing and Michel Foucault began to suggest that queer people became biologized by eugenics in the late nineteenth and throughout the twentieth century as *other*. It was not necessarily that queers constituted a kind of degenerate race that would possibly be “reformed” into productive breeders, but because they were biologized as queer the body was seen as a locale embodied by queerness. Perhaps, AIDS was somewhere in their genes, the medical community thought, hence the second name for AIDS after the “strange gay cancer” was seen as somehow not “medical” enough. Gay-related immune deficiency (GRID) later replaced gay cancer. Biology continued to

prevail when AIDS replaced GRID (Ordovery 119). The fact that the names were products of careful and conscious scientific medical researching did not escape the fact that that medical community was a part of a larger culture that “biologized homosexuality” in terms of eugenics (Ordovery 120). Suffice it to say, that this was an irresponsible and misleading construction of AIDS, because it did not solidify the fact that all people were capable of contracting the disease, not just queer people.

Moreover, the concerted effort of forging public health campaigns around educating people on how to protect themselves against contracting the disease was not only motivated by concern for public health, but rather it was saturated by eugenic legacies. This idea or project did not have to do with “the promise of liberation of minorities, but liberation from minorities- as is the promise of all eugenic campaigns” (118). This belief facilitated dialogue, funding, and research. Later, when IDS research and services became drastically under funded there became funds available for research that did not have to do directly with the prevention and treatment of AIDS; some of the studies were conducted by biologist like Dean Hamer, Bailey Pillar, and geneticist LeVay. These studies further biologized the disease as resulting from deviant queer sexual practices:

“In turn, such research is marked and marred by a climate that insists on intrinsic difference and distance. Endeavors that chart the roots of homosexuality are but another way to single out queers, underscore an imagined, biologically immutable difference, and increase our political and social vulnerability” (Ordovery 121).

The shift studies occurred in the moment that AIDS became a disease less related to middle class white gay men in the U.S., and increasingly characterized as effecting people of color and the people on an imagined monolithic African continent. Although, many populations of people have always contracted the disease, campaigns became under funded and official state governmental travel bans were placed on those African countries where it was most concentrated. Suddenly, AIDS was not so much what its initial name “strange gay cancer” deemed it as, rather it was a disease of poor people, drug addicts, brown people, and third world people. Perhaps, if all people in the world had been framed as being susceptible and potential carriers of the disease, then eugenics would have stood a chance at being battled and debunked in relation to AIDS.

Moreover, genetic disorders continue to be linked primarily to certain racial and gendered heredities, of which the identification of sickle cell anemia as a black illness is a prime example. This succeeds in marking medical difference onto a group of people and essentializes the disease as not potentially a problem for others. This consequently miseducates people who could possibly become susceptible to the sickness. It is possible to make the argument that it might be useful in certain instances to use strategic essentialism to biologize a disease as affecting a certain people in order to obtain medical assistance. Perhaps, following the tactic strategic essentialism the high numbers of black women who are carriers of the disease might cause the occurrence of more medical research in that particular community and maybe less of a spread of the disease. At the same

time, it is possible in the process of biologizing that because of the invisibility and dismissing of racism and sexism that occurs in all public discourses, black women would not receive any additional medical assistance. Ordover would say that any kind of strategic essentialism along the lines of biologization is a part of the history of eugenics and therefore a step backward and ends up not being transformative or helpful in the long run. Ordover expresses the powerful notion that additive causation theories, such as the one of strategic essentialism described above, do not work to debunk eugenic constructions, rather they simply add to its history and canon. The challenge then remains how can strategic essentialism, Paul Gilroy's alternative strategic universalism (planetary humanism), or even queer space be used for transformative purposes and to create coalition? Coalitions that might then step outside of essentialism in order to transgress the norms of strategic essentialism and work to construct something more transformative that does not democratize difference. Along the lines of this the issue of reproduction and eugenics dealt with by Ordover surfaces.

The third part of Ordover called "Sterilization and Beyond: The Liberal Appeal of the Technofix" provides a theory of reproduction that is really important in thinking about the Butler trilogy. With the earlier synopsis and short analysis of the nature vs. nurture debate and Ordover's arguments in reference to the AIDS, reproduction surfaces as the last and one of the most important themes examined in relation to eugenicism and the literary analyses of Butler. The section "Liberal Loopholes" provides an outstanding example of the embrace of

eugenic ideology and practice by Margaret Sanger during the Progressive Era.

Sanger is often remembered for promoting 'voluntary motherhood' which worked to separate sex from procreation (Ordovery 127) through the introduction of the birth control pill. Sanger's contentious involvement with eugenics developed from:

"Her own associations were more problematic. She courted eugenicist support, championed economically coerced sterilization of those deemed 'unfit,' endorsed medical experimentation on poor women, collaborated with Clarence Gamble "who zealously established sterilization programs in Puerto Rico, the southern United States, and elsewhere" (Ordovery 127).

Consequently, the eugenic campaigns that attempted to control reproduction by injecting pregnant mothers with steroids were also a part of the birth control movement (Ordovery 117). Thus, it was not only about people having control over their own bodies and reproductive capabilities, but also birth control came out of a discourse of family planning, of better breeding, of state imposed eugenics. The hereditarian nature of liberal birth control politics makes it difficult to separate the varying camps of eugenics and the ability to find a usable past inside family planning discourses:

"While liberal philosophy can encompass a critique of institutional biases and injustice, it remains grounded in a belief that these can be offset by individual exercises of choice and responsibility, for example, birth control use" (Ordovery 128).

As Butler illustrates in her trilogy and short stories, the future is constructed through reproduction. Ordovery, Gilroy, and Muñoz also discuss the future along the lines of reproduction: of hegemony, oppression, or simply biological. It is not only babies who result from reproduction.

As we depart from this discussion, it becomes important to consider the importance of disease in forming collective understandings of modernized biologically and morally fitter humans. Any history of eugenics reminds us of the harm done when attempts at the strict biologizing of disability and disease- anecdotally and scientifically- are put onto people. It is apparent that the arenas of science and fiction are rarely seen as interlinked, but this project offered the possibility of reading one alongside the other. Let us shy away from liberal and conservative philosophies of power that are attached to subordinating groups of people as biological *others* or as predisposed to certain diseases.

Finally, while it is important to realize that disease might run in families and along bloodlines, let this not be a way to essentialize a disease or a person as only a carrier of disease. From here, we might look to current discourses on diseases and disabilities in order to find their possible eugenic legacies, and then begin conversation related to the invisible history of eugenics in discourse and culture. Many scholars have made this argument; I am simply viewing it as a conversation that is not only happening in social and natural sciences, but also in literature. Please take my writings as one fiction, as one story presented consciously as a part of a multitude of others.

Works Cited

- Abbinnett, Ross. *Truth and Social Science: From Hegel to Deconstruction*. London, UK & Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1998.
- Barr, Marleen S. *Lost in Space: Probing Feminist Science Fiction and Beyond*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993.
- Barr, Marleen S, ed. *Future Females, the Next Generation: New Voices and Velocities in Feminist Science Fiction Criticism*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000.
- Boeckmann, Cathy. *A Question of Character: Scientific Racism and the Genres of American Fiction, 1892-1912*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2000.
- Butler, Octavia E. *Bloodchild: And Other Stories*. New York: Four Walls Eight Windows/Turnaround, 1995.
- . *Parable of the Sower*. New York: Four Walls Eight Windows, 1993.
- . *Imago*. New York: Warner Books, Inc., 1989.
- . *Adulthood Rites: Xenogenesis*. New York: Warner Books, Inc., 1988.
- . *Dawn: Xenogenesis*. New York: Warner Books, Inc., 1987.
- . *Mind of My Mind*. New York: Warner Books, Inc., 1977.
- Delany, Samuel R. *Aye, and Gomorrah: And Other Stories*. New York: Vintage Books, 2003.
- . *Equinox*. New York: Masquerade Books Inc., 1994.

- . *The Motion of Light in Water: Sex and Science Fiction Writing in the East Village, 1960-1965*. New York: Masquerade Books Inc., 1993.
- Duggan, Lisa and Nan Hunter D. *Sex Wars: Sexual Dissent and Political Culture*. New York: Routledge, 1995.
- Ellis, Havelock. *My Confessional: Questions of Our Day*. Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1934.
- Fiol-Matta, Licia. *A Queer Mother for the Nation: The State and Gabriela Mistral*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2002.
- Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality: Volume One*. New York: Random House Inc., 1986.
- Galton, Francis. *Hereditary Genius: An Inquiry Into Its Laws and Consequences*. London: Macmillan and Co., 1892.
- Gilroy, Paul. *Against Race: Imagining Political Culture Beyond the Color Line*. Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2000.
- Halberstam, Judith. *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives*. New York: New York University Press, 2005.
- Harding, Sandra, ed. *The "Racial" Economy of Science: Toward A Democratic Future*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993.
- Kline, Wendy. *Building A Better Race: Gender, Sexuality, and Eugenics From the Turn of the Century to the Baby Boom*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001.
- Muñoz, José Esteban. "Utopias Seating Chart: Ray Johnson, Jill Johnston and Queer Intermedia as System." *After Criticism: New Responses to Art and Performance*. Ed. Gavin Butt. Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2005.

Ordoover, Nancy. *American Eugenics: Race, Queer Anatomy, and the Science of Nationalism*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003.

Paul, Diane B. *The Politics of Heredity: Essays on Eugenics, Biomedicine, and the Nature-Nurture Debate*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1998.

Queer Ideas: The David R. Kessler Lectures in Lesbian and Gay Studies: From the Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies, CUNY. New York: Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 2003.

Selden, Steven. *Inheriting Shame: The Story of Eugenics and Racism in America*. New York: Teachers College Press, Columbia University, 1999.

Stern, Alexandra Minna. *Eugenic Nation: Faults and Frontiers of Better Breeding in Modern America*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005.

Zenderland, Leila. *Measuring Minds: Henry Herbert Goddard and the Origins of American Intelligence Testing*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge