

## Abstract

The thesis explores the theme of hybridity in Octavia Butler's *Xenogenesis* trilogy and in her last novel, *Fledgling*, which both deal with complex relationships between humans and a different species. The main focus is on the characters of mixed origin – offspring of two distinct species and beings whose existence is a result of genetic experiments. These individuals occupy a metaphorical “in-between” space where cultural, racial, sexual and other boundaries meet and blur. The theoretical framework follows two sets of ideas – Homi Bhabha's notion of hybridity and the so-called Third Space, and Donna Haraway's cyborg figure.

The second chapter of the thesis is centered on the origins and development of the concept of hybridity and its current use in postcolonial discourse. Furthermore, it introduces the most relevant ideas from Bhabha's *The Location of Culture* and Haraway's “A Cyborg Manifesto” and compares them. The following two chapters are mainly devoted to Butler's hybrid characters, Akin and Jodahs from *Xenogenesis* and Shori, the protagonist of *Fledgling*. This section analyses, among other issues, their physical features and special skills connected with hybridity, the construction of their identity, their relationship with others and their relation to the clash between different species and cultures. The main aim is to discuss the ways in which these characters transgress various boundaries and blur binary oppositions which often perpetuate unequal power structures and hierarchical behavior – self/Other, human/non-human, human/animal, black/white, male/female and so on. Another objective is to determine whether these individuals represent the possibilities outlined by Bhabha and Haraway and to comment on the ways in which they influence the community.

The analysis and the summarizing comparison conducted in the final chapter reveal that although her hybrid characters have many common characteristics, such as their

multiplicity, openness towards difference and change, transgression of boundaries or their ability to negotiate and to come up with new alternatives, Butler's two texts do not offer a unified view on hybridity. In *Xenogenesis*, hybrid protagonists bring about promising options, but the instability connected with their hybridity poses a threat for the community. In *Fledgling*, the depiction of the protagonist's hybridity does not seem to include any dangerous elements. What is morally problematic in this text is the uneven relationship between humans and the Ina, which the hybrid character influences in a positive way, but she does not resolve it. Furthermore, the thesis shows that even though the author depicts hybridity as a source of new possibilities, she does not idealize it, nor does she present it as a utopian solution to the problematic situations in her novels.