

This essay is about the dynamic tension between reproduction, autonomy, and (dis)ability in Octavia Butler's *Lilith's Brood*. In conversation with theorists and critics of Afrofuturism who argue that technology often brings the hope of a release from the violences of the past, while having the effect only of altering the ways in which those violences function, Butler asks us how to create a future in which the Human Conflict—hierarchy and intelligence—does not structure our world, in which, for example, anti-Blackness does not scaffold our ways of living, loving, and reproducing. *Lilith's Brood* seeks, in other words, to break the chain of the “more of the same.” In *Lilith's Brood*, this project involves the always unfinished project of opening up, and being open to, the possibility of interdependence and to the terrifying thrill of difference—“dangerous and frightening and intriguing.” However, as the seed's “tiny positioning movements of independent life” at the end of the trilogy indicates, this is not an endpoint, but rather a horizon, an always unfinished and always difficult project. Butler's speculative world charts the irresolvably ambivalent tension between autonomy (humans wanting their own Akjai colony, wanting to reproduce on their own) and interdependence (Oankali reproducing with numerous mates, birthing and raising children with the whole community), between having one's own body and sharing worlds with others, between the “more of the same” and the “always already.” While honoring struggles for autonomy (and documenting not only the pleasures, but also the terrors, of interdependence), Butler uses the framework of a “new” world and an “alien” species biologically impelled to be interdependent in order to show what was *always already* true: we are not autonomous, we have never been autonomous.