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et les défis contemporains de paix durable dans l'espace  
CEDEAO »**

***"Integration, Free Movement of People and Goods and the Challenges of  
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## ***Revue Internationale de Langue, Littérature, Culture et Civilisation***

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### Editorial

La *Revue Internationale de Langue, Littérature, Culture et Civilisation* (RILLiCC) est une revue à comité de lecture en phase d'indexation recommandée par le Conseil Africain et Malgache pour l'Enseignement Supérieur (CAMES). Elle est la revue du Laboratoire de Recherche en Langues, Littérature, Culture et Civilisation Anglophones (LaReLLiCCA) dont elle publie les résultats des recherches en lien avec la recherche et la pédagogie sur des orientations innovantes et stimulantes à la vie et vision améliorées de l'académie et de la société. La revue accepte les textes qui cadrent avec des enjeux épistémologiques et des problématiques actuels pour être au rendez-vous de la contribution à la résolution des problèmes contemporains.

RILLiCC met en éveil son lectorat par rapport aux défis académiques et sociaux qui se posent en Afrique et dans le monde en matière de science littéraire et des crises éthiques. Il est établi que les difficultés du vivre-ensemble sont fondées sur le radicalisme et l'extrémisme violents. En effet, ces crises et manifestations ne sont que des effets des causes cachées dans l'imaginaire qu'il faut (re)modeler au grand bonheur collectif. Comme il convient de le noter ici, un grand défi se pose aux chercheurs qui se doivent aujourd'hui d'être conscients que la science littéraire n'est pas rétribuée à sa juste valeur quand elle se voit habillée sous leurs yeux du mythe d'Albatros ou d'un cymbale sonore. L'idée qui se cache malheureusement derrière cette mythologie est que la littérature ne semble pas contribuer efficacement à la résolution des problèmes de société comme les sciences exactes. Dire que la recherche a une valeur est une chose, le prouver en est une autre. La *Revue Internationale de Langue, Littérature, Culture et Civilisation* à travers les activités du LaReLLiCCA entend faire bénéficier à son lectorat et à sa société cible, les retombées d'une recherche appliquée.

Le comité spécialisé « Lettres et Sciences Humaines » du Conseil Africain et Malgache pour l'Enseignement Supérieur (CAMES) recommande l'utilisation harmonisée des styles de rédaction et la présente revue s'inscrit dans cette logique directrice en adoptant le style APA.

L'orientation éditoriale de cette revue inscrit les résultats pragmatiques et novateurs des recherches sur fond social de médiation, d'inclusion et de réciprocité qui permettent de maîtriser les racines du mal et réaliser les objectifs du développement durable déclencheurs de paix partagée.

Lomé, le 20 octobre 2020.

Le directeur de publication,

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### ***Ligne éditoriale***

**Volume :** La taille du manuscrit est comprise entre 4500 et 6000 mots.  
Format: papier A4, Police: Times New Roman, Taille: 11,5, Interligne 1,15.

### ***Ordre logique du texte***

Un article doit être un tout cohérent. Les différents éléments de la structure doivent faire un tout cohérent avec le titre. Ainsi, tout texte soumis pour publication doit comporter:

- un titre en caractère d'imprimerie ; il doit être expressif et d'actualité, et ne doit pas excéder 24 mots ;
- un résumé en anglais-français, anglais-allemand, ou anglais-espagnol selon la langue utilisée pour rédiger l'article. Se limiter exclusivement à objectif/problématique, cadre théorique et méthodologique, et résultats. Aucun de ces résumés ne devra dépasser 150 mots ;
- des mots clés en français, en anglais, en allemand et en espagnol : entre 5 et 7 mots clés ;
- une introduction (un aperçu historique sur le sujet ou revue de la littérature en bref, une problématique, un cadre théorique et méthodologique, et une structure du travail) en 600 mots au maximum ;
- un développement dont les différents axes sont titrés. Il n'est autorisé que trois niveaux de titres. Pour le titrage, il est vivement recommandé d'utiliser les chiffres arabes ; les titres alphabétiques et alphanumériques ne sont pas acceptés ;
- une conclusion (rappel de la problématique, résumé très bref du travail réalisé, résultats obtenus, implémentation) en 400 mots au maximum ;
- liste des références : par ordre alphabétique des noms de familles des auteurs cités.

### **Références**

Il n'est fait mention dans la liste de références que des sources effectivement utilisées (citées, paraphrasées, résumées) dans le texte de l'auteur. Pour leur présentation, la norme American Psychological Association (APA) ou références intégrées est exigée de tous les auteurs qui veulent faire publier leur texte dans la revue. Il est fait exigence aux auteurs de n'utiliser que la seule norme dans leur texte. Pour en savoir

plus, consultez ces normes sur Internet.

### **Présentation des notes référencées**

Le comité de rédaction exige APA (Auteur, année : page). L'utilisation des notes de bas de pages n'intervient qu'à des fins d'explication complémentaire. La présentation des références en style métissé est formellement interdite.

### **La gestion des citations :**

**Longues citations :** Les citations de plus de quarante (40) mots sont considérées comme longues ; elles doivent être mises en retrait dans le texte en interligne simple.

**Les citations courtes :** les citations d'un (1) à quarante (40) mots sont considérées comme courtes ; elles sont mises entre guillemets et intégrées au texte de l'auteur.

### **Résumé :**

- ✓ Pour Pewissi (2017), le Womanisme transcende les cloisons du genre.
- ✓ Ourso (2013:12) trouve les voyelles qui débordent le cadre circonscrit comme des voyelles récalcitrantes.

### **Résumé ou paraphrase :**

- ✓ Ourso (2013: 12) trouve les voyelles qui débordent le cadre circonscrit comme des voyelles récalcitrantes.

### **Exemple de référence**

#### **Pour un livre**

Collin, H. P. (1988). *Dictionary of Government and Politics*. UK: Peter Collin Publishing.

#### **Pour un article tiré d'un ouvrage collectif**

Gill, W. (1998/1990). "Writing and Language: Making the Silence Speak." In Sheila Ruth, *Issues in Feminism: An Introduction to Women's Studies*. London: Mayfield Publishing Company, Fourth Edition. Pp. 151-176.

#### **Utilisation de Ibid., op. cit, sic entre autres**

**Ibidem (Ibid.)** intervient à partir de la deuxième note d'une référence

source citée. Ibid. est suivi du numéro de page si elle est différente de référence mère dont elle est consécutive. Exemple : *ibid.*, ou *ibidem*, p. x.  
**Op. cit.** signifie ‘la source pré-citée’. Il est utilisé quand, au lieu de deux références consécutives, une ou plusieurs sources sont intercalées. En ce moment, la deuxième des références consécutives exige l’usage de *op. cit.* suivi de la page si cette dernière diffère de la précédente.

### **Typographie**

-La *Revue Internationale de Langue, Littérature, Culture et Civilisation* interdit tout soulignement et toute mise en gras des caractères ou des portions de textes.

-Les auteurs doivent respecter la typographie choisie concernant la ponctuation, les abréviations...

### **Tableaux, schémas et illustrations**

Pour les textes contenant les tableaux, il est demandé aux auteurs de les numérotter en chiffres romains selon l’ordre de leur apparition dans le texte. Chaque tableau devra comporter un titre précis et une source propre. Par contre, les schémas et illustrations devront être numérotés en chiffres arabes et dans l’ordre d’apparition dans le texte.

La largeur des tableaux intégrés au travail doit être 10 cm maximum, format A4, orientation portrait.

### **Instruction et acceptation d’article**

A partir du volume 2 de la présente édition, les dates de réception et d’acceptation des textes sont marquées, au niveau de chaque article. Deux (02) à trois (03) instructions sont obligatoires pour plus d’assurance de qualité.

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## **LITTERATURE**

**Body of Difference and of Desire in Barbara Chase-Riboud's  
*Hottentot Venus* (2003)**

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**Abstract:**

South-African historical and mythical figures have continental dimension in so far as writers have depicted them in their works. This study discusses the hegemonic colonial South-African society, culture and tradition against the background of Western hierarchy and duality of difference. The paper brings into focus the exploitation of women who have developed through the commodification and the objectification of the female species. Under Post-colonialism and Jacques Derrida's "différance" that operates at the heart of difference, dichotomy, the discussion concludes that praises of the culture of difference reinforces conditions of the debasement of the Other.

**Key words:** hierarchy, difference, desire, commodification, objectification.

**Résumé :**

Quelques figures historiques et mythiques sud-africaines ont eu une dimension continentale dans la mesure où les écrivains les ont représentées dans leurs œuvres. Cette étude, portant sur l'hégémonie coloniale dans la société coloniale sud-africaine, met l'accent sur la hiérarchie occidentale et la dualité de différence. L'objectif est de faire une analyse des femmes exploitées à travers la marchandisation et l'objectivation. À partir de la théorie postcoloniale et de la "différance" de Jacques Derrida qui opère au cœur de la différence, de la dichotomie, il s'agit d'explorer la différence par la dépréciation de l'Autre.

**Mots clés :** hiérarchie, différence, désir, marchandisation, objectification.

**Introduction**

Chase-Riboud's *Hottentot Venus* is an autobiographical narrative about the life of Sara Baartman who is also given the name 'Hottentot Venus.' Indeed, 'Hottentot Venus' is attributed to Baartman's particular body shape, protruding buttocks; a synonym for her ugliness — the absolute

negation of European beauty. In addition, the story in *Hottentot Venus* stresses the point that the indigenous Hottentot people are hunted and massacred under Portuguese, Dutch and English colonial rule. It is therefore colonization which becomes the basic pillar to perpetuate Portuguese, Dutch and English colonial ideology, exploitation and the policies of subjugation, oppression.

Colonization operates to 'other' the natives or indigenous people who are commonly recognized as colonized peoples or else, imperial or colonized subjects. The colonizer and the colonized are two kinds of people in the colonial system. They indicate the racial hierarchy that prevails: Whites on top and Blacks at the bottom. Like the colonizer, the colonized is a subject matter in the works of the theorists of colonization like Frantz Fanon (1965) and Albert Memmi (1974).

Memmi's (1974: 4) studies the functioning of colonization, its moral and cultural mission as well as the portraits of the colonized people as "oppressed peoples". In addition, Memmi (1974: 5) writes in the book that colonization "chained the colonizer and the colonized into an implacable dependence, molded their respective characters and dictated their conduct." The permanent conditions of dependence and exploitation forced on the colonized by the colonizer are revealed through *Hottentot Venus*. In reality, *Hottentot Venus*' characterization highlights the politics of white supremacy and its ideologies of subjugation and exploitation; the denial to the colonized the right of independence and autonomy.

In consequence, *Hottentot Venus* is articulated in the discourse of colonialism along with such stereotypes as animality which, Hartman (1997) identifies as "Scenes of Subjection" in her book dedicated to slavery and the formation of the enslaved. Hartman (1997: 4) quotes "the Scenes of Subjection" which exemplifies "the enactment of subjugation and the constitution of the subject". Equally, Judith Butler (1997: 2) identifies 'subjection' which signifies "the process of becoming subordinated by power as well as the process of becoming a subject". The subjection that the power appropriates is relentlessly marked by *becoming*, a *becoming* imposed on the subject.

This relationship of dependence or *becoming* has another characteristic which, in Chase –Riboud’s fiction, is revealed through the Hottentot Apron. Terry (1995: 19) quotes Anne Fausto-Sterling whose article throws light on the Hottentot Apron when she views it in terms of “the illustrations of...genitalia” Moreover, the Hottentot Apron can be associated with what Sander L. Gilman (1985: 37) calls “the stereotypes of sexuality” with which all sorts of sexual immorality are played and therefore justify the occurrence of many indecent attitudes attributed to Hottentot Venus. Ultimately, Thomas (2007) mentions “The Sexual Demon of Colonial Power” which may interpret the Hottentot Apron as coupled with the specificity of dirt and lust that would best characterize Hottentot Venus.

Needless to stress, the dependence or *becoming* which is typical of Hottentot Venus helps reveal “Body of Difference and of Desire”. Indeed, the formulation “Body of Difference and of Desire” alludes to the language that racist whites have always attached to Hottentot Venus and her Apron. Essentially, “Body of Difference and of Desire” places Hottentot Venus in the periphery whereas the colonizer is at the center and, permits to analyze how the ‘othering’ mechanism and the persistence of a colonialist ideology or psychology infest the discursive practices that sustain the creation of Hottentot Venus.

Yet, Oyewumi (1997) refers to “Colonizing Bodies and Minds” which connotes an integral part of the portrayal of Hottentot Venus through the colonial discourse of “Body of Difference and of Desire”. In this perspective, Chase-Riboud’s *Hottentot Venus* has been attached to the colonizing bodies and minds of the African woman who to some extent has served to a form of representation or identification that vacillates between difference and desire.

Therefore the questions of this study are framed as follows: How does Chase-Riboud’s *Hottentot Venus* navigates between body of difference and of desire in order to produce the racial dichotomy upon which colonial ideology feeds? To put it differently, to what extent does body of difference and of desire highlight racial lines that separate white colonizers from colonized African peoples?

Applying Post-colonialism and Derrida's 'différance' helps analyze first, *Hottentot Venus* as a colonial discourse, a form of discourse crucial to the construction of differences and discriminations which is implicated in the relationship the Colonizer has with the Colonized. Then, it allows to mainly focus on Hottentot Venus' sexuality, that is, the Hottentot Apron. The Hottentot Apron is linked to the images of dirt and lust. Very often in a subordinate position, Hottentot Venus is victim of racial discrimination and violence, sexual exploitation, and discriminatory treatments. The main reason is that she is believed of being sexually impure as well as she is not able to control her sexual lust or appetite.

### **1. Hottentot Venus: The Ambivalence of the Colonial Discourse**

In his book *The Location of Culture*, the postcolonial critic Bhabha (1994: 94) writes:

In the ambivalent world of the 'not quite/not white', on the margins of metropolitan desire, the *founding objects* of the Western world become the erratic, eccentric, accidental *objets trouvés* of the colonial discourse - the part-objects of presence... Black skin splits under the racist gaze, displaced into signs of bestiality, genitalia, grotesquerie, which reveal the phobic myth of the undifferentiated whole white body.

From Bhabha's standpoint, the term 'not quite/ not white' is profoundly ambivalent; it draws its significance in the Western world. Additionally, Bhabha coins 'colonial discourse' which becomes very important for a deeper understanding of 'not quite/not white' dichotomy upon which the colonial ideology feeds. In reality, Bhabha (1994: 67) defines colonial discourse as "a form of discourse crucial to the binding of a range of differences and discriminations that inform the discursive and political practices of racial and cultural hierarchization."

Bhabha (1994: 70) presents colonial discourse as "a complex, ambivalent, contradictory mode of representation"; an apparatus of power as he argues that its objective is "to construe the colonized as a

population of degenerate types on the basis of racial origin, in order to justify conquest and to establish systems of administration and instruction.” Needless to say, for Bhabha (1994: 68), colonial discourse offers the opportunity to highlight what is known as Western representationalist discourse. Bhabha’s terms the founding objects ; “the part-objects of presence” offer the opportunity to highlight colonial discourse or else, western representationalist discourse which consists in perpetuating the colonial ideology and within which, the colonized are represented as the founding objects ; the part-objects of presence, that is, the most degenerate, debased, inferior and degraded ones.

With the post-colonial critic indeed, we can conclude that colonial discourse which is part and reflection of the Western world employs the founding objects; the part-objects of presence which are used as the symbolic representations of such category of ‘not quite/ not white.’ All in all, what Bhabha (1994: 91) calls the discourse of splitting is inextricably linked to colonial discourse. In fact, for Bhabha (1994: 94), the discourse of splitting is quite visible throughout the notions of “bestiality, genitalia, grotesquerie” that represent “black skin ... under the racist gaze.”

Chase-Riboud’s fiction deals with the invasive settlement of the European colonizers; namely the Portuguese, the Dutch and the English within the eastern coast of South Africa. Also, as mentioned by the author, the Khoekhoe also called the People of the People have been savagely massacred by the colonizers. Because they are constantly in contact with the colonizers, these indigenous people are exposed to all kinds of diseases and eventually, to the practice of slavery that reinforces the whites’ hegemonic power. The writer (2003: ix) provides the details of all these happenings in a lengthy explanation:

Once upon a time, there was a Khoekhoe nation called the People of the People, who inhabited the eastern coast of South Africa. In 1619, we were discovered by the Portuguese, who, besides civilization, brought us syphilis, smallpox and slavery. They were followed by the Dutch, who gave us our name, Hottentot, which means ‘stutterer’ in Dutch, because of the way our language sounded to them, and who introduced us to private property, land theft and

fences. They were succeeded by the English, who organized us all into castes and categories and who called themselves and others like them white, and us, Hottentots, Bushmen and Negroes, black, although to my knowledge, none of us ever chose that name. And so to tell this, my true story, I was stuck with a name we didn't choose but must use so that those who gave us these names may listen. And, although Hottentot is an insult equivalent to nigger, I used it in this, my story, just as Negroes use that word they do not recognize themselves by with whites, who gave them that name to begin with. I am sure that God doesn't call me Hottentot any more than He calls them white.

In light of the foregoing, the term “Hottentot”, to borrow Chase-Riboud’s term, is attached to the Khoekhoe people; it is the discourse used by the colonizers to represent them. From what the writer’s explanation suggests, Hottentot designates “stutterer” (2003: 17) which characterizes the language of the Khoekhoe people. In reality, the discourse of “Hottentot” appears as the basic means to which the colonizers often resort in order to impose their ideology and to remain always powerful.

Fundamentally, Lois Tyson (2006: 419) puts this idea in perspective when she specifies in *Critical Theory Today* that there is a colonialist ideology or psychology when “a group or class produces discourses in which ‘colonialist thinking’ is expressed, that is, one based on such group’s assumption of its superiority, which it contrasts with the allegedly inferiority of the others.” This psychology is often articulated in discourses wherein they seek to deny blacks’ civilization, or in short, humanity. As a result, while depicting the Khoekhoe people, Chase-Riboud (2003: 5) puts stress on the fact that the colonizers often stress their shadow – like presence along with such discourses like : “monster” ; “the animal” ; “the dis-human” ; “the ugly” ; “the heathen” ; “the black Moor, evil encased in black skin” ; “thing – that –should –never –have – been –born” ; “the missing link between beast and man.”

In fact, these discourses include almost all the elements that point to the Khoekhoe people as the demonic others and to the colonizers as the center. Of an obscure origin, it is logical if they should be unintelligent,

and unable to understand the most elementary things of Western civilization. Clearly enough, “kaffir”; “Bushwoman”; “pygmy”; “savage”; “cannibal” (2003: 35) underscore the firm and prejudiced belief that the Khoekhoe people remain uncivilized people, beasts of the worst type. Equally, the discourse of “idiot” (2003: 35) includes almost all the elements that point to the Hottentot as one the most debased colonial subjects who lack reason.

Without any doubt, the above-mentioned discourses function exactly like discourses of colonization and use Homi Bhabha’s “fixity”; “stereotype” to reach their goals. Bhabha (1994: 66) defines the concept of fixity as “the sign of cultural/historical/racial difference in the discourse of colonialism [that] connotes rigidity and an unchanging order as well as disorder, degeneracy and daemonic repetition.” The critic Judith Butler (1993) has contributed to this subject with *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex*. Butler (1993: 2) has basically dealt with the issue of fixity which, according to her, is “the effect of power, as power’s most productive effect.” Clearly enough, the fixity or materiality is generated from Europeans’ imperial powers and has the effect of restricting the Hottentots’ freedom, and of controlling; of influencing or conditioning through the codes of stereotype along with their decaying impacts over them.

Likewise, Bhabha (1994: 66) has framed the notion of stereotype which to some extent corresponds to “a form of knowledge and identification that vacillates between what is always ‘in place’ already known, and something that must be anxiously repeated.” Essentially, the stereotype is “an ambivalent mode of knowledge and power.” As it can be observed, stereotype in Chase-Riboud’s understanding does mean “insult” (2003: 45). Definitely, Hottentot is one instance of the insult or stereotype that is used by the Colonizers. The term “nigger” (2003: 251) is another stereotype used to represent the Hottentots. Furthermore, the stereotypes of “crude, ugly, inferior, savage or simple-minded” (2003: 155) emerge from the colonizers’ discourses which describe the Hottentot. These stereotypes literally echo with Frantz Fanon’s *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963: 227) which defines the colonized people the critic attempts to describe “living on the periphery ... waiting for a better life.”

In parallel, in Chase-Riboud's novel, the Hottentot – that epitome of the Wretched of the Earth have fallen into castes and categories. What Fanon (1963: 50) calls a compartmentalized world is very important in representing the castes and categories. Fanon's compartmentalized world is also true in Gayatri Spivak's *Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism* as the critic (1985) reveals a distinct world she terms as the Third World. The Third World is that one noticed by the postcolonial critic Edward Saïd when he talks of First, Second, Third and Fourth Worlds. Spivak (1985: 243, 250) offers through the notion of the Third World the opportunity to highlight "the distant cultures, exploited..." which almost prevails through the fracture of imperialism.

There is, indeed, in Chase-Riboud's novel, the white ruling class at the top, geographically, culturally, socially and economically demarcated from the Third World where the Hottentot community resides, at the bottom of the ladder. While the first, the Whites, are regarded as the norm and the center, the latter, the Hottentots, are confined to a peripheral existence. To put it in a nutshell, the Hottentots, as Chase-Riboud (2003: 5) gives thought to in her fiction, are marked with expulsion not only from Eden but from the human race.

In the same vein, Fanon (1963: 50) presents the compartmentalized world as the colonized world which, according to him, is a world divided into two. The Manichaeian or compartmentalized structure of colonial society, Fanon (1963: 52) acutely argues, "is divided in two (...) inhabited by different species." It is within the compartmentalized world that other concepts emerge. For example, Chase-Riboud puts emphasis on the discourses of us-others which normally echo Fanon's compartmentalized structure of colonial discourse symbolically represented by the Whites on the one part and the Hottentots on the other.

In *Orientalism*, Said (1978) explores and questions the artificial boundaries that have been drawn between the West and the East. Therefore, Said (1978: 2) in *Orientalism* "expresses and represents that part culturally and even ideologically as a mode of discourse with supporting institutions, vocabulary, scholarship, imagery, doctrines, even colonial bureaucracies and colonial styles." The fact is that,

*Orientalism* is as a style of thought based upon a culturally and ideologically distinction between the colonizer and the colonized. It is indeed through *Orientalism* that Said notices that “the basic distinction between the East and the West” fully takes place. Furthermore, *Orientalism* is often articulated in discourse wherein it alludes to the Orient that is basically defined “the most recurring images of the Other” (1978: 1). If the Orient subtly evokes the East; the West in turn illustrates the Europeans. As we can clearly see in Chase-Riboud’s fiction, the discourse of us –others is utilized by the whites to other the Hottentots.

In Chase-Riboud’s fiction, with Hottentot, as well as with Hottentot Venus, the discourse informs the existence of such outstanding ambivalences or binaries as White and Hottentot; White and Bushmen; White and Negroes, civilized and primitive, center and margin, but it also hints other key opposition as Us/ Others. It is good to note that Chase-Riboud’s *Hottentot Venus* is exposed to many misogynistic discourses and numerous phallic images which eventually confirm the status of the female Hotttentot as an ambivalent other. In some instances, Hottentot Venus’ portraits fit in Whites’ ideological orientations; she emerges from the racist image as primitive, far remote from civilization. Thus she is said to be “a woman with the lowest race of the human species, the Negro race, and the highest race of primates, or the orangutan” (2003: 233). In addition, she is given the name «inferior humanity. The very last layer of the human pie” (2003: 285); these names are none but persistent colonial discourses.

The stereotype of the monstrous being with an animalistic instinct emerges through Georges Cuvier’s discourse when he points to “the enormous protuberance of her buttocks and the brutality of her face (...) her movements also have something brusque and capricious that resembles that of the orangutan” (2003: 234). Yet, Hottentot Venus’ physical depiction draws her closer to an animal than to a human. All the aspects of her physical body are described by Chase-Riboud (2003: 234) in the following:

the head seems to be (...) like that of the primate or the monkey species’; ‘the teeth are beautiful, very white, close-

set and big ...the aspect of pincers'; 'the lips are quite thick and sharp'; 'the mammaries are very big, hanging quite near to the hemispheric median line towards their lower part'.

The above descriptions clearly suggest the practice of corporal inspection always done by the whites in order to appreciate which body is good for reproduction as well as for field chores. Indeed, Cuvier reproduces the same corporal inspection through Hottentot Venus. His observations start from all the portions of her anatomy right from the head to the shape of her hips. And his conclusion is substantiated by his observation that Hottentot Venus is a type of enormous; excessive creature (2003: 236).

Definitely, Cuvier's observation together with his conclusion epitomize an exceptional white privilege and a feeling of Whites' superiority over Blacks when he argues that "The white race to which the civilized people of Europe belong, with its oval face, straight hair and nose, appears to us the most beautiful of all. It is superior to others also by its genius, courage and activity" (2003: 236). Yet, Cuvier's opinion has not changed about Hottentot Venus. For example, he overtly indicates his repugnance in front of the structure of her body and quickly senses "the abnormalities of her organs of generation" (2003: 233). Cuvier's word that designates Hottentot Venus' sexual organ remains the one that acts in conformity with the ideological imperatives of his environment; it is that one which is regarded as monstrous (2003: 92).

Obviously, Hottentot Venus makes us to identify the female Hottentot whose body is a trope of ambivalence, of difference constructed by the colonial discourse. The distinction that Chase-Riboud's work allows us to see about Hottentot Venus is also present in what she terms as "the organ of generation" (2003: 61). Also called Hottentot Apron, Chase-Riboud's own term, the organ of generation is what makes the whites to believe that Hottentot Venus is the prototype of immoral black woman whose sexuality is much more dirt and lust that is, ever impeding real sentiment.

## **2. Of Dirt and Lust: The Hottentot Apron**

The feminist critic bell hooks explores the issue of sexism that acknowledges Whites' superiority as men and that frequently motivates their sexual exploitation and assaults of women. As hooks (1982: 33)

deals with sexism through White colonizers' control of black women's sexuality, she notes: "As white colonizers adopted a self-righteous sexual morality for themselves, they even more eagerly labeled black people sexual heathens. Since woman was designated as the originator of sexual sin, black women were naturally seen as the embodiment of female evil and sexual lust." This passage summarizes Whites' practice of sexism during colonization through its particular institution of slavery. During this period of colonization, black people are at the mercy of white colonizers who view them as just little more than animals or objects, never acknowledging their humanity.

Moreover, colonization is the arena upon which all sorts of immorality is played, and therefore justified the occurrence of indecent sexual behaviors applied to black women. In reality, black women are seen as "the embodiment of female evil and sexual lust" (1982: 33). So whenever a White man touches a black woman, it seems as if he has deconsecrated the whole white community. Indeed, the image of black women as the epitome of female evil and sexual lust is used to characterize the stereotype of 'the Hotttentot Apron', to paraphrase Chase-Riboud's term. The Hotttentot Apron is therefore applied to the character of Hotttentot Venus, and in that sense, she is fixed with sexual evil, dirt and lust that characterize Whites' language towards her.

Hotttentot Venus is fixed with the stereotype of 'the Hotttentot Apron' which is used to represent her "exaggerated sexual organs...proof of her inferiority and animality" (2003: 243). In reality, the Hotttentot Apron summarizes the essence (2003: 242) and it supports the description of "a morbid development of the inner vaginal lips divided like two wrinkled, fleshy petals which, if raised, form the figure of a heart" (2003: 242). Moreover, another description of the Hotttentot Apron displays some elements which suggest its real nature. For the writer, the Hotttentot Apron has connotations of "extraordinary appendix ... an organ of particularly size ... the development of the nymphae, the inner lips of the vulva, to a length of about four inches" (2003: 282).

Definitely, a deeper description of the Hotttentot Apron in Chase-Riboud's fiction echoes with "the natural degree of lasciviousness and

voluptuousness” (2003: 240). Similarly, in a 1985 article, Sander L. Gilman (1985: 212) uses the notion of voluptuousness which offers the idea that the Hottentot Apron is “developed to a degree of lascivity”; in other words, “much more developed than those of whites”.

Elsewhere, Gilman (1985: 212) quotes the stereotype of lasciviousness which puts stresses on ‘animal-like sexual appetite’ or else, “more sexually intensive. In the same vein, bell hooks (1982: 62) quotes “heightened sexuality” which highlights the myth perpetuated by Whites; this myth so dominated the psyches of Whites and therefore encouraged the sexual exploitation of black women.

Likewise, steatopygia, Chase-Riboud’s term, is associated with Hottentot Venus’ protruding buttocks. Chase-Riboud (2003: 60) remarkably captures the essence of the steatopygia and expresses it through “sex, deformity, monstrosity and prostitution.” Furthermore, Chase-Riboud (2003: 97) quickly captures Whites’ belief on the steatopygia as Master Alexander Dunlop, the white physician, discloses that “a Hottentot is ruled by prostitution...there is no difference between a Hottentot and a prostitute.”

We can infer from Hooks’ understanding of prostitution that “black women [are at the service of white men] for sexually exploitative purposes” (1982: 33). Similarly, Gilman (2003: 150) concludes that the prostitute is “the embodiment of sexuality and of all that is associated with sexuality.” The prostitute in Chase-Riboud’s understanding connotes an immoral person.

Through Chase-Riboud’s novel indeed, one understands that the image of the prostitute is an essential characteristic of Hottentot women. If one agrees that the prostitute is what defines them, one can immediately see that immorality also justifies the sexual practice in which they are trapped. To conclude with, the stereotypes of dirt and lust confirm well the practice of immorality imposed on Hottentot women in general and in particular on Hottentot Venus.

Through hooks’ explanation, White men refuse to take responsibility in the sexual crime that they commit. Curiously, they unjustly accuse

Hottentot women not just of immorality but of provoking all the sexual acts orchestrated against them. hooks (1982: 30) indeed argues, “Colonial white men placed the responsibility for sexual lust onto women and consequently regarded them with the same suspicion and distrust they associated with sexuality in general.” Indeed, according to hooks, until Whites regard black women as mere instruments for satisfying their libido, it seems normal as they hold them responsible for being victim of sexual lust and dirt or impurity.

The character of Alya, a white woman, is the one who perpetuates the stereotype of sexual dirt against the Hottentot race and in particular against Hottentot Venus in Chase-Riboud’s fiction. Indeed, Alya considers Hottentot Venus as dirt at the service of Whites, unworthy of sexual morality and purity. Through her choice to maintain the color line, Alya therefore claims her superiority over Hottentot Venus and validates the negative stereotype of dirt, that is to say, of loose and filthy sexual habits. Chase-Riboud (2003: 45) reports that Alya notices Hottentot Venus’ dirty nature so much as she engages in maintaining the color line or the invisible racial gap between them:

Alya, also had her ideas about how far away from her I should stand. All her servants were ordered to keep their distance of ten feet. She didn’t want to smell or touch them and she didn’t want them breathing on her person. This was one of the many ways she fought Dirt. –what is life, she would say, but stink and shit? Dirt, Dirt, Dirt. Her only reason for living was to rid the earth of it and protect her family from it. So we would stand ten feet away from her, raising our voices as if we were about to decapitate her to inform that dinner was ready, or the cat had disappeared, or that the rain had stopped. I would hold the youngest of her children, Clare, in my arms, with little Karl clinging to my skirts and Erasmus, the oldest, hung on my neck, while avoiding breathing upon her.

Through the stereotype of dirt, Alya admits the repulsive aspect of black race and gender. In addition, her understanding of the notion of dirt contrasts with the widely – held notion claimed by her race which is, as Chase-Riboud (2003: 48-49) writes:

Cleanliness (...) godliness (...) to be clean was an affirmation of independence. What was cleansed was the dirt of the world: pollution and injustice. Dirt disguised violence and torture. It prevented self-knowledge. Cleaning made everything distinct and clear like the African dawn. To keep oneself clean was to set oneself apart in a world of confusion and foreigners. Dirt was vagabond. Dirt was the appetite of the flesh. Dirt was folly, disorder and sex. The Hottentots, she would say, were not only dirty, they were filthy.

Obviously, the notions of Dirt and Cleanliness do not go together. Not only do they highlight the binary opposition between Whites and Blacks but also between White women and Black women. As Collins (2000: 129) observes, the stereotype of dirt concerns black women's sexuality. While Hottentot Venus, the Hottentot woman stands for the essence of Africans as race, she also symbolizes the sexualized woman. So she represents the embodiment of sexuality and all the European society associates with it: dirt as well as disease.

As Gilman (1985: 237) remarks, the Hottentot woman's genitalia is as well as rejected by Whites, mainly, men and women. So they even go far as to finally give it the impression of being, "uncleanliness, this disease, which forms the final link between two images of woman, the black and the prostitute. Just as the genitalia of the Hottentot were perceived as parallel to the diseased genitalia of the prostitute, so (...) the power of the idea of corruption links both images."

The image of the Hottentot woman as the prostitute contrasts with the white woman's. She is often referred to as Black 'dirt' while the white woman is regarded and appreciated for being the model for 'cleanliness.' We can use the image of 'dirt' and conclude that it is attached to Hottentot Venus. Hooks (1982: 59) uses the noun Jezebel to refer to the black woman who is the embodiment of sexual depravity as well as the white woman is represented through the images of cleanliness and lady (1982: 62).

In another instance, Alya openly expresses the deep feelings towards Hottentot Venus' apron whenever she has the opportunity to see it. As Chase-Riboud (2003: 51-52) tells her own version of the happenings:

One day, Mistress Alya surprised me in my bath. — What are you doing bathing in the middle of the day? She said. — It's my rest hour, I replied, rising (...) I (...) — What's that? She cried. She was staring at my sex in horror. I had forgotten to hide myself. — My apron, ma'am. — Your what? — My apron (...) — It's (...) obscene (...) horrible. Cover yourself! I pulled up my smock from the floor and held it against me. — Don't you ever let anyone see you again or that filthy appendix (...) — But, I protested, a Khoekhoe girl must submit to this (...) arrangement. Otherwise I would find no husband! — I have heard of the Abyssinians and the Egyptians cutting girls, but never the contrary (...) said the mistress. — I wouldn't know, ma'am. But I knew the Yousha tribe and the Fula and the Sarahuli excised part of their womenfolk's sex, then sewed them up so that it took ten minutes to urinate and ten days to complete their menses, "the sewn women," they were called. But I would never repeat these secrets to Mistress Alya, even though female circumcision was considered clean (...) I remained silent. — You know what I'm talking about, you filthy girl. You get your clothes back on and get back to work. The sight of you is so repugnant, I cannot fathom how you can live (...) Vuile bruiden (...) Ribaude! She cast one more horrified look at me...I crossed my legs to hide my femaleness even from myself, my arms hanging limply at my sides, my mouth opening in the grief of an O. I sank down hoping the water would not only cover my nakedness but swallow up my life as well.

Alya's words are the expression of superiority white women still feel for their race and therefore, their desire to express black women's inferiority over lascivious and licentious sexual drive. This inferiority is often articulated in Alya's discourse wherein she seeks to depict Hottentot Venus' apron as obscene and horrible. These descriptions, according to Terry Jennifer and Jacqueline Urla (1995: 19) "contain meanings (...) as deeply racist."

Equally, Gilman (1985: 102) quotes H. Peter Hildebrandt who interprets the Hottentot apron as this “malformation with the overdevelopment of the clitoris (...) as leading to those excesses”. Also mentioned by Hildebrandt (1985: 101), the Hottentot apron implies the “evidence of an anomalous sexuality (...) only in black women.” The episode where the character of Alya designates the Hottentot apron as ‘filthy appendix’ confirms the stereotype of Hottentot Venus as sexual lust and immorality.

It is indeed with the character of Colonel Caesar that Chase-Riboud explores the subject of forced sex. Caesar delightfully engages in the practice of forced sex as a way of acknowledging the myth that Hottentot Venus is sexually immoral and therefore responsible for such obscene experiences as rape. Chase-Riboud (2003: 40-41) reports how Hottentot Venus becomes a victim of Caesar’s rape:

Mistress Van Loott left the room and Colonel Caesar ordered me over to the window. — Come here, Saartjie, I want to see you in the light. — Colonel Caesar (...) — Call me Master. — Master (...) — Walk over here by the window. I approached him, my heart in my mouth. — Just want to feel you up a bit, Saartjie. I'm a good Christian, faithful to my wife (...) He opened his breeches, took out his organ wild with red hairs like an orangutan's posterior. I stared at it with horror. His organ had two testicles (...) I wondered if all white men were so deformed. — What you staring at, Saartjie? Can't tell me you ain't never seen a man's penis before — you a married woman. Now kiss it. I knelt down before this horribly deformed man, not knowing what he expected from me. But before I could act, his free hand groped under my smock, clutching my backside, and it was over. — Ahhh, he gurgled. You'll do nicely, Saartjie, he said when he had come to himself. I got up off my knees, wondering if I should tell Mistress Van Loott what had happened. — Now, no need for you to tell Miss Van Loott. It won't happen again. Not like you're a virgin or anything. Correct? My silence was taken for consent.

In the above descriptions, we perceive Hottentot Venus’ vulnerability, expressing a range of emotions such as accepting to have sex against her will and Colonel Caesar’s indecent manners that predispose him to sexual

abuse. In fact, Colonel Ceasar, who has much to do for the settlement of his plantation, needs a servant and nurse. His genius leads to Mistress Van Loott who is in charge of Hottentot Venus since the death of the Reverend Cecil Freehouse, the former owner. So to Colonel Ceasar, he needs to attest that Hottentot Venus is apt to any sorts of sexual adventure. In reality, it is at this moment that she is expected to conform to the custom that gives white men the right to possess black mistresses. Having sex with black women is taken as part of the white privilege. Very certain of this privilege, Colonel Ceasar turns to Hottentot Venus whom, he may “just want to feel (...) a bit” (2003: 40).

Mass culture, in hooks’ understanding, perpetuates the primitivistic notion “that there is pleasure to be found in the acknowledgement and enjoyment of racial difference” (1992: 21). Where gender and racial differences meet in the bodies of Black women, the result is Hooks’ coinage getting a bit of the Other which explores how desire for the Other is expressed. Mass culture, according to hooks (1992: 23-24), perpetuates the concept of “getting a bit of the Other” through “engaging in sexual encounters with non-white females (...) a ritual of transcendence (...) out into a world of difference that would transform, an acceptable rite of passage.”

Like Colonel Ceasar, Master Hendricks experiences the same privilege given to Whites whose ultimate aim is Black women’s acceptance of the sexual exploitation imposed on them. With the example of Master Hendricks, Hottentot Venus is unfortunately at the mercy of her white masters who, as the narrator explains, view her as just sexual object, never acknowledging her humanity. Every detail in the following passage stresses the degree of Master Hendricks’ sadism. Indeed, it can be noticed that Master Hendricks primarily seeks to gain pleasure by causing weakness and vulnerability to Hottentot Venus his sexual target, while he plays on her emotions through displaying false words of love. It is indeed Chase-Riboud (2003: 52-53) who gives an account on Hottentot Venus’ rape as she writes:

As I knelt before Master Hendricks, I could feel his eyes on me, as always, and hear his pale eyelashes blinking. I said

nothing, bending low over the restless feet (...) I was still folding my clothes when the door to my cabin in back of the kitchen opened and Master Hendricks entered. — I love you, Saartjie. Been eyeing you, I have. Seems you've got something under your skirts that's a wonder to see ... a phenomenon (...) Before I could reach the door, he was upon me. He caught both my wrists and held them with one iron fist. He took a cord from his pocket and bound them together while I kicked and screamed. Then he threw me on the bed and attached me to the bedposts (...) — Surprised you, didn't I? But you're really not surprised, are you? I saw the way you looked at me, nigger slut. You asked for this. You've been asking for this ever since I saw you. Ever since the first day you washed my feet ... I've been told you Hottentot women have a jewel between your legs that can drive a man insane. Now, let's see (...) Fear coiled inside me. What was he going to do? This man who had two testicles instead of one — What kind of man was this? — Good God! What's this? I tried to answer but I was gagged. Roughly, he pulled the handkerchief out of my mouth. — My apron, I gasped. — The Hottentot apron — I thought it was a legend, a myth like mermaids, he whispered. But you're real (...) When he had finished, he straightened up, contrite, and untied my hands.

While analyzing this passage and Hendricks' instructions to Hottentot Venus, we note that immorality is not only a matter of forced sex. Since sex can happen in a house, a store or any place where the white man's lust seizes him, immorality rather becomes an essential characteristic of Whites' character.

If careful readers understand that depravity is what defines most the white man's world, they can also apprehend why Master Hendricks has opened his eyes (2003: 52). Indeed, through eyes, readers are given a good deal of information on Master Hendricks and the manner in which he organizes a sort of surveillance in the purpose of finding the moment to have sex with Hottentot Venus. Curiously, he employs the term "nigger slut" (2003: 53) to prove his innocence and at the same moment, her guiltiness in a way that she is responsible for the rape committed on her. By giving the name nigger slut, Master Hendricks places the responsibility for sexual lust on Hottentot Venus and consequently

regards her with the same suspicion he associates with Hottentot women's sexuality. For him, Hottentot women are endowed with demonic power which motivates their immoral attitudes the white men are often victimized of.

## **Conclusion**

Chase-Riboud's *Hottentot Venus* has shown how race operates in a colonial environment. In reality, race empowers the European imperial powers which sustain colonialism, a philosophy that supports the occupation of lands; the politics of difference that facilitates the exploitation of human and economic resources belonging to the native people. Through the novel, "Hottentot" is constituted under the conditions of colonialism. In the same vein, "Hottentot Venus" highlights the debasing representation of Hottentot women during the colonial period. Hottentot Venus is articulated in the discourse "Body of Difference and of Desire" wherein the Hottentot woman is associated with bestiality and primitivism.

Considering the postcolonial theory and Jacques Derrida's 'différance', this study has examined Body of Difference and of Desire as a colonial discourse. Our first reflexion has focused on the body which is used as a locus of identity to underwrite the discourse of race as well as the relations of power. Indeed, Chase-Riboud's novel has inscribed Hottentot Venus in the narrative as the body and identity construction of subjection. To recapitulate, inscribing the Other termed by Gilman (1991) may give to the author's work all its capacity to generate significance.

In another analysis of "Body of Difference and of Desire", Hottentot Venus is linked to the representation of stereotypical sexuality. Indeed, Gilman (1985) has termed the notion of stereotypes of sexuality which best designates the negative images of the Hottentot Venus' sexuality. In all of the stereotypes of sexuality we have examined, the Hottentot Apron is evident. The Hottentot Apron highlights Hottentot Venus' sexual alterity through the stereotypical images of dirt and lust.

However, the Hottentot Apron matches Hottentot Venus with the images of whore, slut and prostitute. Hottentot Venus is often subjected

to sexual abuse; her body serves as an object of lust at the same moment she is accused of excessive and untamable sexual drive. The metaphor of dirt or immorality contrasts the notion of purity which is, White women's sexuality. Given its association with Body of Difference and of Desire, Hottentot Venus may well fit in the dualism Lisa Blackman (2008:6) has termed "Absent Present."

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