

# Imagining the Oankali

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wgs 410 & 510 / winter 2017 / university of oregon / chang

For this exercise, draw or create a one-page visual representation (8.5" x 11") of what you imagine Octavia Butler's *Dawn's* "Oankali" to look like, be like, act like, live like. How do you represent or convey something conveyed only through words, inferences, and expectations? Consider the initial descriptions of Jdahya: "His tentacles seemed to solidify into a second skin—dark patches on his face and neck, a dark, smooth-looking mass on his head...He looked remarkably human now. Was it only the tentacles that gave him that sea-slug appearance? His coloring hadn't changed. The fact that he has no eyes, nose, or ears still disturbed...His skin was cool and almost too smooth to be real flesh..." (23). You can hand draw, use mixed media (but keep it flat), use digital tools. Be creative and think critically. Given that one of the central tensions in *Dawn* is a decentering of the "human," consider what it means to try to represent something alien, monstrous, different, nonhuman, posthuman, even inhuman. We will collect your representations and scan them for the class blog.

## Guidelines and Due Dates

**Format:** 8.5 x 11" drawing, media of your choosing, flat  
consider rendering one of the Oankali characters or differences in Oankali sexes

**Due:** Thursday, February 9, at the start of class

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