

Generating Climate Healing and Ecological Change: The Power of Post-apocalyptic Spirituality in Octavia E. Butler's *Parable of the Sower*

Dr. Meriem CHEBEL

Badji Mokhtar-Annaba University, meriem.chebel@univ-annaba.dz

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Abstract

Octavia E. Butler stresses the importance of spirituality in rebuilding the connection between humans and the natural world they live in. In her postapocalyptic novel, *Parable of the Sower*, the promoted religion is that of Lauren Olamina, which allows the necessity of reconnecting the human with Earth and its ecosystems in a constructive way. Earthseed, Lauren's religion, celebrates a "God of Change" who changes according to the changes humanity and nature go through. The principles of Earthseed endorse a culture of evolution and economic equality. They encompass adaptability, resilience, and diversity.

Keywords: Ecosystem, climate fiction, post-apocalyptic, Earthseed, Afrofuturism.

تحقيق المعافاة المناخية والتغير البيئي: روحانية ما بعد الرؤيوي في رواية حكاية الزارع لأوكتافيا إي بتلر

ملخص

تؤكد أوكتافيا إي بتلر على أهمية الروحانية في إعادة بناء العلاقة بين البشر والعالم الطبيعي الذي يعيشون فيه. في روايتها (ما بعد الرؤيوي)، حكاية الزارع، الدين المروج له هو دين لورين أولامينا، والذي يسمح بضرورة إعادة ربط الإنسان بالأرض وأنظمتها البيئية بطريقة بناءة. تمجد "إرثسيد"، ديانة لورين، "إله التغير" الذي يتغير وفقًا للتغيرات التي تمر بها البشرية والطبيعة. وتدعم مبادئ إرثسيد ثقافة التطور والمساواة الاقتصادية وتحث على القدرة على التكيف والمرونة والتنوع.

الكلمات المفتاحية: نظام بيئي، خيال مناخي، ما بعد الرؤيوي، إرثسيد، أفروفيوتاريزم.

Générer la guérison climatique et le changement écologique: Le pouvoir de la spiritualité post-apocalyptique dans *La Parabole du semeur* d'Octavia E. Butler

Résumé

Octavia E. Butler souligne l'importance de la spiritualité dans la reconstruction du lien entre les humains et le monde naturel dans lequel ils vivent. Dans son roman post-apocalyptique, *La Parabole du semeur*, la religion promue est celle de Lauren Olamina, qui admet la nécessité de reconnecter l'humain avec la Terre et ses écosystèmes de manière constructive. Earthseed, la religion de Lauren, célèbre un «dieu du changement» qui change en fonction des changements que traversent l'humanité et la nature. Les principes d'Earthseed prônent une culture de l'évolution et de l'égalité économique. Ils englobent l'adaptabilité, la résilience et la diversité.

Mots-clés: Écosystème, Fiction climatique, post-apocalyptique, Earthseed, Afrofuturisme.

Corresponding author: Meriem CHEBEL, meriem.chebel@univ-annaba.dz

Introduction:

Octavia E. Butler is the first Black female science-fiction writer and the first science-fiction writer to receive the MacArthur “Genius” Fellowship grant. Her revolutionary and Avant-garde approach to the genre has contributed to its transformation and innovation. Whenever Butler is mentioned, multiple conceptions of different new fields are mentioned, like “post-apocalyptic literature”, “climate fiction”, and “Afrofuturism”. The thematic diversity she implements might have something to do with this multidisciplinary outcome in genre; this leads to one of the paper’s main research interests, which lies in investigating the relation between Butler’s thematic interest and the genres implemented. Her novel, *Parable of the Sower* (1993), takes an authentic approach to the post-apocalyptic genre. The apocalypse in the novel is caused by a climate crisis, which allows our discussion to touch on climate fiction as a primary interest in this paper. The main theme of the novel is the new religion Lauren Olamina, the main protagonist of the novel, creates. Lauren’s religion is different from traditional religions, for she believes that the latter harmonize with the corrupt socio-political ideology of capitalism that has led to the collapse of the natural world. Spirituality is rather celebrated in Lauren’s world the way diversity is. Race, Gender, and Class are also subversively discussed to allow a possibility at survival. These themes will be examined in this paper to further understand Octavia’s innovative approach to climate fiction and her success at engaging the “lethargic” reader to act in the world through her efficient story of surviving climate trauma. The use of the word “efficient” is intentional to indicate the usual inefficiency of engaging the modern reader to act towards nature; an example of this will also be examined in this paper when we compare Octavia’s operative insinuation of the female ingredient in her story to the lack of it in Cormac McCarthy’s *The Road* (2006).

After the thematic analysis of the novel, which two sections of this paper are dedicated to, the research will answer the main question, which lies in finding out the importance of the thematic diversity in revolutionizing the genre into multidisciplinary structures. Our contribution lies in focusing on Butler as the founding mother of Afrofuturism and her significant contribution through her powerful, empathetic, Black female protagonist, Lauren Olamina.

1- The Rise of Climate Fiction:

Climate change has caught the attention of a greater number of contemporary readers because of its encompassment as a central theme in contemporary fiction. The concept “climate fiction” is a neologism that was coined by journalist Dan Bloom in 2007. It is a fiction that tackles social, political, psychological, and other issues that are of a direct consequence of climate change. The events of the plotline of its novels take place in a space that mostly resembles the modern times we are living in. There are exceptions where novelists prefer a near future of our world or a fictional world where Earth is completely unliveable. An example of the latter lies in Frank Herbert’s *Dune* (1965). The novel, which has been adapted into one of the most popular movies of the century (according to the rating of IMDb), is said to be one of the earliest illustrations of climate fiction. The protagonist in *Dune* struggles to transform his planet, Arrakis, into an eco-friendly environment.

In “‘On Not Calling a Spade a Spade’: Climate Fiction as Science Fiction”, Pawel Frelik believes that part of coining the concept of climate fiction is “an act of the simultaneous un-naming of something else”⁽¹⁾, which is science fiction. The reason according to Frelik is the limitedness of understanding science fiction. Although many, among them Margaret Atwood, believe that it deals with unrealistic scenarios where the focus of the story features “aliens, apocalypses, and time machines”⁽²⁾, it shows a denial of the genre’s ability for literary variety that has been witnessed in the late 20th century. Climate fiction, according to Frelik and Istvan Csicsery-Ronay, Jr., is the result of science fiction’s attempt at novelty.

The other reason that might have led to the marginalization of science fiction as a highly established genre is the belief that it lacks relevance to our modern experiences. Most climate fiction writers who focus on climate ordeals prefer to be labelled as climate fiction than science

fiction writers because of the decline of the popularity of the latter in academic studies. However, Frelik argues that interest in climate change has always been of thematic importance to many works before the creation of the sub-genre. He gives the example of Herbert's *Dune*, J. G. Ballard's *The Drowned World* (1962), *The Burning World* (1964), and *The Crystal World* (1966), Geroge Turner's *The Sea and Summer* (1987), Kim Stanley Robinson's *Mars* trilogy (1993-1996), and many others. Although these works were published under the name of science fiction, they tackle topics that encompass "ecological ethics, climate change, terraforming, weather control, natural disasters"⁽³⁾. An even earlier example of climate fiction is Lord Byron's "Darkness" (1816), which is a poem set in an apocalyptic space where he describes gloomy natural settings, combined with ruined and burnt cities, that are almost inhabitable. Byron's inspiration for this setting is due to his seclusion in Switzerland. At that time, he was suffering from severe depression which explains the exaggerated description of the land. The poem appears like a dream of a present or a future that has a dark atmosphere with extreme low temperature, which is said to be a prediction of "the worst case scenario of global warming in the 21st century"⁽⁴⁾.

Contemporary modern writers who are aware of creating fictional representations of the current climate change rely on environmental science, which makes the genre of climate fiction an annex to science fiction rather than an independent one as Frelik deduces. The aim of both is to communicate to the audiences unfathomable scientific data and, thus, to teach them through story telling. Furthermore, climate change is not an issue of recent discovery. Scientists and artists have been interested in the Anthropocene climate change for as long as the human being started to make a drastic impact on Earth. Separating climate fiction from science fiction is like separating the Anthropocene from its historical origins. Frelik believes that "science fiction does not need cli-fi [...]. But climate fiction does need science fiction"⁽⁵⁾.

However, interest in anthropogenic change has risen drastically in the last decade beginning in the early 2010's. The number of literary productions that was estimated by the publication of Adam Trexler's (2015) *Anthropocene Fictions: The Novel in the Time of Climate Change* was 150⁽⁶⁾. The genre might have earned an independence from science fiction because writers are targeting the importance of the human action and relation towards nature in a more inclusive way to actually change the contemporary lethargic attitude towards nature into a responsible engagement.

Whether cli-fi is an independent genre or a subgenre of science fiction, its need is vital. Humanity's attitude towards taking an action towards protecting the natural world and our civilization is meagre. When Dominic Hofstetter asked Connie Hedegaard, a previous European Commissioner for Climate Action, about the world's active involvement, she answered, "We need compelling narratives"⁽⁷⁾. Story-telling has always been of a greater cognitive and didactic influence than science. The action would be taken when it is interpreted creatively in engaging narratives. Journalist and author, Bill McKibben, addressed this lack of representation in his essay, "What the Warming World Needs Now is Art, Sweet Art", as follows:

One species, ours, has by itself in the course of a couple of generations managed to powerfully raise the temperature of an entire planet, to knock its most basic systems out of kilter. But oddly, though we know about it, we don't know about it. It hasn't registered in our gut; it isn't part of our culture. Where are the books? The poems? The plays? The goddamn operas?⁽⁸⁾.

McKibben's wish was answered through the publication of numerous works of fiction, for when our age's literature will be studied in the future, "they will definitely see climate change as one of the major themes in literature, if not the major theme"⁽⁹⁾. Although the 2010's were the epitome of climate change representation in fiction, science fiction authors started to shift their attention to the Anthropocene years before its popularity. Octavia E. Butler's interest in the field has risen two decades before its emergence as an independent genre, which explains the unshakable connection between the two genres. Her novel, *Parable of the Sower*, is set in a post-apocalyptic America that is affected by extreme weather change and social inequality. The

writer believes that ecology “is almost a character in *Parable*”⁽¹⁰⁾. Since the novel had been written before the emergence of cli-fi as an established genre, Butler’s representation might have offered a different model than those of recent years. In this article, the main focus lies in analysing Butler’s authentic representation that has religion and spirituality at its heart.

2- Post-ecological Breakdown and Socio-economic Inequality:

Butler’s black adolescent female protagonist, Lauren Oya Olamina, is the only narrator of the novel since it is presented to us through a secretly kept diary. There are two main details that influence Lauren’s actions and her fate. First, she is made to seem super-human through her ability to share pain. The reason lies in having hyper-empathy, which is caused by her birthmother’s addition to drugs. Lauren’s way of dealing with it shows that Butler’s protagonist is destined to be a shrewd leader. Her father encourages her to keep it a secret because he wants to guarantee her survival in their small community and, if things go wrong, outside, where pyromaniac drug users, cannibals, and scavengers live. The second detail that defines Lauren’s actions and the tenets of her religion, Earthseed, is her powerful father. Lauren’s father is a Baptist pastor who is the leader of their gated community in Robledo, California. Although Lauren criticizes his conventional religious, philosophical, and political beliefs, he is the only one that presents a generous and insightful model for her. He manages to hold the different members of the community together through his religion and his selflessness to provide mutual aid and a vigilant use of the community’s resources. And it is quite symbolic that with pastor Olamina’s death, the community dies.

The ecological breakdown that is brought about by the extreme climate change has affected North America’s economic, political, social, and spiritual stability. People outside Lauren’s gated community live in utter poverty. They are homeless; many of them are thirsty, hungry, and mutilated, and most of them eventually get killed or raped. The situation has been the same for years and political leaders can hardly keep them safe. Food and water is scarce even within the community; however, education and morality help the individuals within it to form a sort of a temporary independent and civilized society. Butler’s portrayal of the society and its struggle for survival is accurately detailed.

The government’s capitalist approach has broadened the gap between the social classes. The police services are expensive and corrupt; as a result, slavery has risen again within the American community. Christa Grewe-Volpp believes that social injustice that has been spoken of by Environmental justice activists is delicately illustrated in *Parable of the Sower* “where people of color and poor people are disproportionately exposed to toxic waste and other environmental hazards”⁽¹¹⁾. In the novel, and outside the gated community where Lauren lives, society has fallen out of civilization. Interracial relations are impermissible; the gap between the rich and the poor is even wider, and the rich communities are mainly white. Blacks, Hispanic, and mixed races have fallen into slavery, poverty, or crime. Thus, Butler imagines a scenario where climate change redefines the socio-economic relations between Americans.

In the novel, the elected president, Christopher Charles Morpeth Donner, breaks his promise of going back to the “normal” life. In fact, no one in the community, or the people outside it, seem to care or to vote for Donner, except the Garfields who eventually move to a different community with stronger security systems and more potential. An important aspect to note here is that the Garfields are white. Butler puts the Garfields into contrast with another family in the novel. When pastor Olamina’s gated community falls apart and the few remaining survivors journey north where there is more potential, Lauren welcomes to their group a woman named Emery Solis and her nine-year-old daughter, Tori. The two are a mixed race that have been exploited into slavery by indebtedness to their former employers for as long as they can remember; they have also faced injustice through the violation of human rights and sexual harassment. Thus, instead of helping the social balance by decreasing violence, classism, and racism, Donner allows multinational corporations to privatize and control the cities. Lauren and her father are more intelligently aware of the situation than their friends, the Garfields. Although they are privileged into acceptance in Olivar, which is a corporate-ruled town, because of their

skin color and relative affluence, they would eventually find themselves in a situation of overwhelming debt because they will be having low-salary jobs to pay for the security and education provided. According to Lauren and her father, the Garfields are to become among the first white victims of debt-slavery. This shows that whites would eventually face the poverty and classism that is already faced by non-whites, which means that the climate crisis that Butler uses as a context for this socio-economic change does not choose the color of its victims as nature does not discriminate even when people do.

3- Lauren's Gospel of Change and Climate Healing:

Although the main members of the Olamina family are equally astute, Lauren belongs to the generation of change. Her father is the source of knowledge, yet she is the source of change. In most post-apocalyptic stories, there is room for a revolution led by a young protagonist who has an insightful vision that would help the surviving members to thrive. Butler's climate story is unlike that of Cormac McCarthy's. *The Road* has a rather pessimistic end as most of early climate fiction stories do. It is described by Volpp as "the bleakest vision of the end of our world" brought about by an ecological disaster of a meltdown in the same setting chosen by Octavia⁽¹²⁾. The protagonists of the novel are a father and his son. The latter depends on his father's unique survival skills and knowledge. Like pastor Olamina, the father in McCarthy's novel is a believer; the difference lies in the enlightening feminine vision of Olamina's daughter who believes that her father's reliance on "a big-daddy-God or a big-cop-God or a big-king-God" is dangerous, for she sees God as "another word for nature"⁽¹³⁾. The need for such an omnipotent figure is patriarchal, for it keeps them safe from destruction and chaos even when they are confined in a place that would evidently fall apart. This "patriarchal order which is strictly hierarchical and blind to changed conditions of life"⁽¹⁴⁾ is the basis for Lauren's opposition since she sees that "change" is a key component for survival. Change to her is change of place and morality. This change is the only possible way for survival and for healing. Doreen Massey in *Space, Place, and Gender* believes that "what gives a place its specificity is not some long internalized history but the fact that it is constructed out of a particular constellation of social relations, meeting and weaving together at a particular locus"⁽¹⁵⁾. This "locus" changes when the conditions of these social relations change.

Lauren believes that the condition outside their gated community, in addition to those inside it, will eventually affect the loose stability that her father's community enjoys. The pyromaniacs and the outlaws who surround their wall would eventually break in. Even some residents of Robledo eventually breach the law of staying inside the wall. Keith, Lauren's brother, is the first to rebel against his father's commandments of safety. His rebellion is different from that of Lauren's; while his is destructive, which is symbolic of the selfish individualism that has been promoted by the American society, Lauren's is constructive, making spirituality and diversity prominent creeds in her revolt. Her desire for freedom is characterized by patience and faith and its aim is holding the members of the community together; Keith's desire stems from a nihilistic source and a thirst for power.

Lauren's religion is introduced to us as an epigraph to the first chapter: "All that you touch / You Change./ All that you Change/ Changes you./ The only lasting truth/ Is Change./ God/ Is Change"⁽¹⁶⁾. Here, we understand that God is a direct reference to nature. Nature changes because we do, so the direct effect we bring upon nature is changing. Changing here means adapting. Lauren believes that intelligence lies in adaptability. It is the highest form of civilization and it is one of the tenets of Earthseed, which is the name she gives to her religion of change. Lauren's father's religion promotes stability, which symbolizes the morals of the former conventional society of the same ancestors who offended the God of change, which is nature. Earthseed is a religion of an Earthly community that shapes God through every member's ability to act towards change instead of denying its importance. Denial, which is another word for inaction, leads to destruction. Lauren's father, her stepmother, the Garfields, and many other members of the gated community live in denial until it threatens their survival. Octavia symbolizes this contrast between Lauren's power for adaptability and Dori's, her

stepmother, yearning for the past in Lauren's dream at the start of the novel. In the dream, Lauren sees a sky full of stars while Dori expresses her nostalgia for the city lights. This foretells Lauren's survival over Dori's. Lauren establishes a fundamental bond with nature through Earthseed.

Another example that foretells Lauren's selection for survival over most of the other members of the gated community is her attitude towards marriage and having children in a world that is destructed by chaos and violence. Also, gender boundaries are also another reason to prevent some of the members of her former community from survival. To illustrate, Aura Moss, whose father is married to two other women in addition to her mother, displays an unwillingness to use the gun, restricting herself to belong to the traditional conception of womanhood where women are supposed to be protected by men. Self-defence is one of the most fundamental tenets of Earthseed, and women are not exempt from it. The notions of the female role and the family institution are redefined to fit the mode of adaptability and change. The surprise and distrust that Harry Balter, another survivor of the coup against the Robledo community, expresses when Lauren brutally kills a man that attacks them shows the close-mindedness within which their former community works. Throughout their journey to the north, Lauren makes Harry understand the limitedness of the orthodox society her father used to lead:

You think you're strong and confident [...]. You think you can take care of yourself out here, and maybe you can. But think what a stab wound or a broken bone would mean out here. Disablement, slow death from infection or starvation, no medical care, nothing [...] Harry, your mind is still back in the neighborhood [...]. You still think a mistake is when your father yells at you or you break a finger or chip a tooth or something. Out here a mistake – one mistake – and you may be dead⁽¹⁷⁾.

Resilience is another important aspect of Lauren's surviving community. Self-victimization is presented as its opposite. Tracy Dunn mourns her daughter's death and her guilt of neglecting her by her suicidal act of walking out of the gate. However, Zahra Moss, a former prostitute who was rescued to be enslaved by a polygamous member of the former community, refuses to fall victim of the unfortunate events that occurred in her life. She thrives and embraces Earthseed as a religion, yet her understanding of the religion is different from that of Lauren's; she tells Lauren that "if you want to put together some kind of community where people look out for each other and don't have to take being pushed around, I'm with you"⁽¹⁸⁾. She does not share with Lauren the fantastic dream of living out of space. Zahra is an active member in Lauren's new community, Acorn, and her race, gender, and historical background add the necessary diverse touch in Butler's vision of a strong society, which encompasses "establish[ing] equality, reliance, authority, and empathy [...] above individualism"⁽¹⁹⁾.

Hybridity is, then, a powerful apparatus in the characters' diasporic journey. Harry, Lauren, and Zahra are the first members of this newly formed society. The power of Zahra's survival knowledge and Lauren's intelligence, which shows in the act of cutting her hair to reinforce the male component in the group, redefine gender boundaries, for Harry, Lauren's naïve white friend, shows a great lack of adaptability and survival. The group carries on to meet other diverse races and genders from different classes. Charles Travis Douglas is black; his wife, Gloria Natividad Douglas, is Hispanic. Their baby is light-brown. Bankole, who would later become Lauren's husband, is a black doctor. Allie and Jill Gilchrist are white women. Emery Solis is a mixed race of black and Japanese. Her daughter, Tori, had a Mexican father. The last to join the group are the Hispanic father, Grayson Mora, and his daughter. This mixed group strengthens Lauren's religious philosophy which finds diversity a vital component in survival. An example of this lies when they approach Salinas and meet with the vicinity's policemen. Lauren recounts when she "saw them watching us in particular, but they didn't stop us. We were quiet. We were women and a baby as well as men, and the three of us were white. I don't think any of that harmed us in their eyes"⁽²⁰⁾. Acorn and its principles of diversity erase racial boundaries, which allows the community to survive and thrive. Lauren tailors her religion on the bases of Earth's varied soils which have dissimilar colours. Metaphorically, it is in these

soils that Lauren's seeds will be planted as well as in other planets, and because they are diverse, they will thrive in all types of environments. Climate healing is an ultimate consequence of socio-economic and gender equality. Climate change requires a socio-political change that is represented in Butler's fictional community of Acorn.

Earthseed rejects individualism and stresses the above-mentioned principles of endurance. These principles acknowledge that the world is in a continuous change. Lauren's pathological empathy turns out to be harmonious with the extreme change of nature. The community, and in extension, nature, needs a sort of an interdependence rather than individualism. Butler, through Lauren's empathy, displays the ills of the current social scene and its effects on nature. It is disinterest, which ultimately stems from individualism, that is broadening the gap that the human has with his fellow humans and with nature.

4- The 'Hopeful' Adjustment Narrative and Afrofuturism in Butler's Climate Story:

What mostly characterizes the narrative of the most important surviving member, Lauren, is the anxious and alarmed mood that most climate fiction narratives display. The chapters are written in the form of specific dates that are sometimes close and sometimes far from each other. When Lauren's father dies, the story's climaxes and gets more eventful. The reflection of the religion of change on the structure of the novel is further evident since Lauren takes the lead instead of her father. What makes Butler's novel and its thrilling narrative attractive is, as Hoda Zaki asserts, its relatability. She also believes that "what makes the book a particularly difficult read is realising that, in many ways, our own society is not far removed from the one Butler imagines [...]. Fiction about imminent apocalypses cannot be dismissed as mere dystopian fantasy. The slowly disintegrating society of *Parable* is an exaggerated reflection of what is occurring today"⁽²¹⁾. However, while the narrative holds an anxious and bitter tone, the protagonist imagines a rather utopian world that the reader cannot help but rely on its credibility. It is still in her imagination though. What becomes a reality is a consistently cooperative society that shares trust and moral stability. Furthermore, Lauren's Acorn is the opposite of President Donner's America, for diversity is accepted and classism does not exist.

Lauren is a reliable narrator; her sense of social responsibility and independent mind, in addition to the many plans she thoughtfully designs to construct her community, support the narrative with a sense of relief and hope. What Butler creates is a unique story of hope, which is a representation that distinguishes *Parable of the Sower* from other climate fiction representations. Although most cli-fi stories come "primarily from a place of warning rather than discovery"⁽²²⁾, Butler's story, with Lauren's creative mind and empathy, displays a model for an actionable and optimistic insight. Dominic Hofstetter writes, in "Writing for Impact: How Climate Fiction Can Make a Difference", that "an empirical study of climate change literature has shown that fear — the emotion most central to cautionary fables — is generally ineffective at motivating genuine engagement"⁽²³⁾. Fear is a necessary component in post-apocalyptic stories, and because of its counterproductive influence, readers are frustrated from taking a genuine action in changing the unchangeable. Butler, contrarily, imagines a world that is quite realistically relatable even when it is alarming; the characters follow the protagonist in their positive engagement towards nature and each other. The mobile physical journey they take symbolizes the moral and philosophical change it generates on the characters, which brings about a change of action towards nature. Acorn is the outcome of the engaging action that is taken by Lauren and her friends towards their natural atmosphere.

Butler does not triumph because she creates a story of hope. She does so by making it relatable. The readers of contemporary times have already been introduced to the same problems Butler tackles in the novel. Social inequality and the ills of capitalism and individualism are socio-political issues that the world is already suffering from. Climate change is an alarming phenomenon that is already causing an economic upheaval that is affecting the lower and middle classes especially. Butler, by portraying "a resource-constrained lifestyle" that has already started to exist, makes her story an example of what Hofstetter calls an

“adjustment narrative”. Hofstetter differentiates adjustment narratives from post-apocalyptic ones as follows:

Adjustment narratives are different from post-apocalyptic stories. They depict a world that bears a strong resemblance to today’s, a world characterized by incremental evolution rather than discontinuous events. They presume that humanity got its act together and started reducing emissions in time to stave off the apocalypse. Effects of global warming are visible, but the world at large is coping⁽²⁴⁾.

Although Lauren believes that the “country has slipped back two hundred years”, she still sees herself and her friends as “a harvest of survivors”⁽²⁵⁾, and they carry a meaningful journey which would help them belong again. The story lessens the sense of anxiety, fear, and unease that have assumedly been felt by the reader by the start of the novel when the community lacked a plan towards change. The story goes further to imply action and hope against racial injustice and imagines a future of leadership for the African-American individual. Butler is considered among the first to write within the genre of Afrofuturism, which has risen to popularity only recently.

Afrofuturism is a revolutionary aesthetic movement which combines a patchwork of genres like science fiction, fantasy, and history to define and celebrate the African-American identity. It is mainly a cultural aesthetic supplement to science fiction or fantasy, in which African-American artists envision a future to their Afro-diasporic race. The concept was coined by the critic Mark Dery in 1993 and was developed and popularized later by Alondra Nelson. Ytasha L. Womack defines Afrofuturism as “an intersection of imagination, technology, the future, and liberation”⁽²⁶⁾. Liberation is the focal constituent of the movement since its source is black history and culture. Through Afrofuturism, Butler distinguishes her speculative climate future from that of her contemporaries by imagining a future that implements the power of hope and the poetic culture of her people through Lauren’s feminine poetic religion of change. Change is a defining element of Black history, for Butler imagines a future that is reminiscent of the past in the sense that the key towards a peaceful community that lives within a dystopian environment requires a reminder of the same community that lived through slavery. Such a community inspires cultural agency and spirituality which proved necessary in implementing resistance in not just the black community, but also the American society as a whole.

Conclusion:

Earthseed is not simply a religion; it is a natural cultural heritage of the native African community in particular, which Butler reincarnates to save the dead world from the apocalypse. This creates an innovative lens in which science fiction finds an authentically aesthetic answer to climate change. According to Butler, African heritage and African anthropological traditions, which are the source of the African-American culture, are the source of climate healing. Lauren brings about a sort of resistance to her father’s assimilationist approach towards nature. Coping was simply not the answer to Black resistance, and Lauren chooses change instead. Butler’s story, with Lauren’s creative mind, powerful empathy, and Black heritage, displays a model for an actionable and optimistic insight that proves that gender and ethnicity are important generators for climate healing. Earthseed is not just the main theme of Butler’s *Parable*; it is the product of an Afrofuturistic pattern that exceeds the novel’s thematic level and places it, instead, in a creative matrix of multi-genre of science fiction, climate fiction, adjustment literature, and Afrofuturism.

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