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**GOD IS CHANGE: REVIEW OF OCTAVIA BUTLER'S *PARABLE OF THE SOWER*  
(A BOOK REVIEW BY)**

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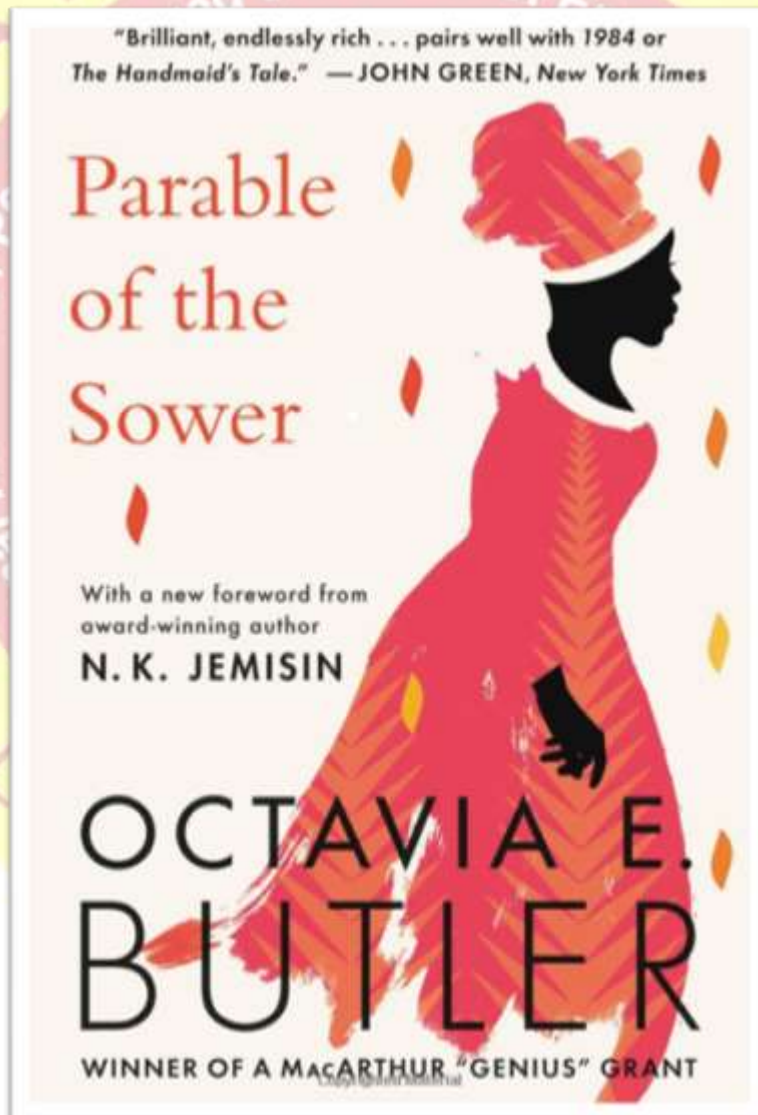
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Octavia Butler's Sci-Fi text is a compelling novel set in a dystopian future where environmental degradation, economic collapse, and social inequality have led to the disintegration of American society. Published in 1993, the novel remains a timeless classic, raising important questions about the future of humanity, the role of religion in society, and the need for social and environmental justice. At its core, the novel is a powerful exploration of the human condition in the face of adversity. The protagonist, Lauren Olamina, is a young black woman with hyper empathy syndrome, a condition that allows her to feel the pain and emotions of those around her. She is forced to navigate a dangerous and chaotic world, facing poverty, violence, and the constant threat of death.

Through her struggles, Lauren develops a philosophy of "Earthseed," a vision of hope and resilience that she shares with others in an effort to build a better future. To my study, what sets this text apart as a dystopian text is its focus on the intersection of social and environmental issues. The novel offers a scathing critique of contemporary American society and its failure to address the root causes of climate change, economic inequality, and social injustice. The collapse of society in the novel is not the result of a single catastrophic event, but rather a slow and steady decline brought on by a lack of political will and a failure to prioritize the needs of the most vulnerable.

"They were happy with their own religions, their own gods, their own illusions of safety" (Butler, 104). To my understanding, the novel is also notable for its exploration of the role of religion in a dystopian world. Lauren's philosophy of "Earthseed" offers a vision of hope and resilience in the face of chaos and destruction. In "Parable of the Sower," religion is challenged in several ways. Firstly, the novel takes place in a dystopian future where the traditional religious institutions and practices have largely collapsed. This is shown through the various characters who either dismiss religion entirely or cling to it in an unorthodox way. Secondly, the protagonist Lauren Olamina develops a new religion of her own, called "Earthseed." This new belief system is based on the idea that God is change, and that humanity must embrace change and adapt to survive. This contrasts with traditional religious beliefs that emphasize stability and the preservation of the status quo.

Furthermore, Lauren's new religion is a product of her own experiences in a world where traditional religious institutions have failed to provide answers or guidance in the face of environmental, economic, and social crises. Lauren's belief in Earthseed therefore becomes a sort of critique towards traditional religions, which she sees as outdated and incapable of addressing the challenges of the modern world. In the novel, Lauren's attempts to spread her new religion face numerous challenges, including resistance from those who adhere to traditional religious beliefs. This resistance is rooted in the fear of change and the perceived threat to established social hierarchies that Lauren's new belief system represents. Thus based on my study it could be said that, in "Parable of the Sower," religion is challenged on multiple levels - from the collapse of traditional religious institutions to the emergence of a new belief system that critiques traditional religious beliefs and practices.

The novel offers a thought-provoking exploration of the role of religion in a changing world and invites readers to consider the ways in which religious beliefs and practices may need to adapt to meet the challenges of the future. The themes and ideas resonate deeply with our current political climate as well. As the world grapples with the impacts of climate change, economic inequality, and social injustice, the lessons of "Parable of the Sower" are more relevant than ever. The novel serves as a cautionary tale, warning us of the dangers of inaction and complacency in the face of these challenges. In many ways, the novel is a precursor to the current wave of climate fiction, or "cli-fi" that has emerged in recent years. Climate fiction is a subgenre of speculative fiction that explores the impact of climate change on human society. Like other works of cli-fi, this text too offers a vision of the future that is both stark and unsettling, forcing readers to confront the consequences of our current actions and the urgent need for change.



Lauren's belief system in *Earthseed*, which emphasizes the importance of change and adaptation, could resonate with the beliefs of many people in today's times, particularly in the face of ongoing wars and the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has highlighted the importance of adaptation and resilience in the face of unexpected and unprecedented challenges. People have had to adapt to new ways of working, learning, and socializing, often in very short periods of time. Similarly, Lauren's belief in the need to adapt to changing circumstances and to embrace change as a necessary aspect of survival could speak to people's experiences of the pandemic and their desire to find ways to cope with ongoing uncertainty.

In addition, ongoing conflicts and wars around the world have made it clear that traditional approaches to peace and security are often inadequate. Lauren's belief in the need to take action and to work actively to create a better future could resonate with people's desire to find new solutions to these ongoing problems. Moreover, *Earthseed's* emphasis on community and mutual aid could also resonate with people's experiences of the pandemic, which has highlighted the importance of solidarity and support networks in times of crisis. It therefore can be said that, Lauren's belief system in *Earthseed* offers a new way of thinking about the world and our place in it, one that emphasizes the importance of adaptation, action, and community. These ideas could resonate with many people in today's times, who are facing unprecedented challenges and seeking new ways of coping and creating a better future.

It offers a vivid and detailed description of a future world that is shaped by environmental catastrophe, depicting the harsh realities of life in a world that has been ravaged by climate change. At the same time, it explores the social and political implications of these changes, highlighting the ways in which environmental degradation exacerbates existing inequalities and creates new forms of injustice. Overall, "Parable of the Sower" is a masterful work of science fiction that explores important themes and raises important questions about the future of humanity. Octavia Butler's prose is both beautiful and haunting, and her vision of a dystopian future is all too plausible. This novel is essential reading for anyone interested in science fiction, dystopian fiction, or social and environmental justice. Its relevance to our current socio-political climate and its insights into the challenges we face as a society make it a must-read for anyone concerned about the future of our planet and our civilization.

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