

Long Essay Draft 001:

Initial Idea:

For the final Long Essay of the semester revolving around Octavia Butler's *The Parable of the Sower* and its connections to societal, governmental, political, and not limited to sexual issues that were exemplified throughout the text... Specifically through the concept of "Parareligion or being Parareligious" in the context of civil religion (Establishments of society that are held to the highest degree of importance).

Furthermore, I would like to use this concept of someone who is "paralogous" to explore society's project of *Whiteness* as throughout the story, it is reinforced and challenged through Lauren's interactions/experiences with gender normativity, socioeconomic and the impact of systematic racism.

These core issues all tie into the project of *Whiteness* that is riddled through America and the Americanization of smaller cultures. Lauren's mother passing from drug abuse is one element of the story that I would like to examine, as well as it draws upon issues with drug abuse, big pharma, and socioeconomic pressure. Diving into the systemic racism, *Whiteness project*, and heteronormativity displayed throughout the text...

Introduction:

Hook:

Thesis: Throughout Octavia Butler's *The Parable of the Sower*, Butler postulates societal and political issues that have taken precedence throughout US history through a parareligious lens that is Lauren's experiences and voice that challenges *Whiteness*; Racism, socioeconomic insecurity, and not limited to cis-gender privilege.

Paragraph 1: Defining Whiteness & Exploring Civil Religion (*Establish Perspective lens*)

"While some have argued that Christianity is the national faith, and others that church and synagogue celebrate only the generalized religion of 'The American Way of Life,' few have realized that there actually exists alongside of and rather clearly differentiated from churches an elaborate and well-institutionalized civil religion in America." (Bellah, 1)

This is society's project of Whiteness that is established through racism, socioeconomics, and not limited to sexism.

Whiteness “as an organizing concept...replaces racism with race, equates race with racial identity, which it accepts uncritically both as an empirical datum and as a tool of analysis. It thereby establishes a false parallel between the objects and the authors of racism and between Afro-Americans and other Americans of non-European ancestry. Whiteness is the ideological counterpart of race relations, both of them ways of skirting around the relations of political, social, and economic power that have determined the place of Afro-Americans in American society.” (Filed, 48)

Transition into Parable of the Sower’s application continuing with this lens.

Paragraph 2 (Gender Privilege, Sexism & Racism):

“I was thinking of traveling as a man,’ I said to him. He seemed to be repressing a smile. ‘That will be safer for you. You’re at least tall enough to fool people. You’ll have to cut your hair, though’. Zahra grunted. ‘Mixed couples catch hell whether people think they’re gay or straight. Harry’ll piss off all the blacks, and you’ll piss off all the whites. Good Luck.’” (2353)

- Exemplifies and exploits the Male gaze to offer safety at the expense of Lauren’s femininity.
- Draws upon heteronormativity and homophobia that is held by society.

Thugs “prey on old people, lone women or women with young kids, handicapped people... They don’t want to get hurt. ” (2827)

- Categorizing societal’s view of the perceived *weak-femme*.

Paragraph 3 (Big Pharma, War on Drugs, Drug Abuse // Impact)

- “A first wife who was a drug addict and a daughter who is drug damaged is not something he wants to boast about.” (146)

- “I can’t do a thing about my hyper empathy, no matter what my Dad thinks or wants or wishes. I feel what I see others feeling or what I believe they feel. Hyperempathy is what the doctors call an ‘organic delusional syndrome.’ Big shit. It hurts; that’s all I know. Thanks to Paracetco, the small pill, the Einstein powder, and the particular drug my mother chose to abuse before my birth killed her, I’m crazy. I get a lot of grief that doesn’t belong to me and that isn’t real. But it hurts.” (147)

- In a literal sense, Lauren, at the end, is talking about grief that she obtains through her hyper empathy. On the contrary, Lauren is also talking about her own grief of not having a mother due to drug abuse. Lauren is also pointing blame at her mother as the single reason for her condition as “it doesn’t belong to me,” insinuating it belongs to her mother.

Paragraph 4 (Lauren's Civil & Faithful Lens & Understandings)

- “God is Change, and in the end God prevails. But God exists to be shaped. It isn't enough for us to just survive, limping along, playing business as usual while things get worse and worse. If that's the shape we give to God, then someday we must become too weak – too poor, too hungry, too sick – to defend ourselves. Then we'll be wiped out.” (1051)
 - An early belief in which Lauren defines God as Change, offering the reader a critique not only of Cory, and her Father in which this is contextualized, but a critique on society's values, both religious and literal.
- Need more future examples to cross reference Lauren's growth, and Change in herself.
- PROPHET // Messiah

Paragraph 5 (Conclusion)

Works Cited

- Bellah, Robert N. “Civil Religion in America.” *Daedalus*, vol. 96, no. 1, 1967, pp. 1–21. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20027022>. Accessed 13 Apr. 2023.
- Carmichael, Cassandra. “The Environmental Crisis Finds Religion.” *Conservation Biology*, vol. 25, no. 5, 2011, pp. 1059–60. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41315184>. Accessed 11 Apr. 2023.
- Fields, Barbara J. “Whiteness, Racism, and Identity.” *International Labor and Working-Class History*, no. 60, 2001, pp. 48–56. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27672735>. Accessed 13 Apr. 2023.

The book offers a personal lens through the eyes of Lauren of the political issues in the history of America that includes *Whiteness*; Racism, socioeconomic insecurity, and not limited to cis-gender privilege

Through Lauren eyes we can see political issues in American History like whiteness, racism and cis-gender privilege.

Through the lenses of Lauren we can see political issues in American History like whiteness, racism and cis-gender privilege.

You did a good job finding secondary sources for each subtopic of your thesis.

Find more examples from the book that will help each subtopic of your thesis.