



WHAT IF?

ALTERNATE HISTORY FICTION, SPECULATIVE FICTION AS TOOLS FOR EMPOWERMENT



By Ward Shelley

SPECULATIVE FICTION

"The most useful way to think of the various literary genres is [...] as regions on a map, the map of fiction.

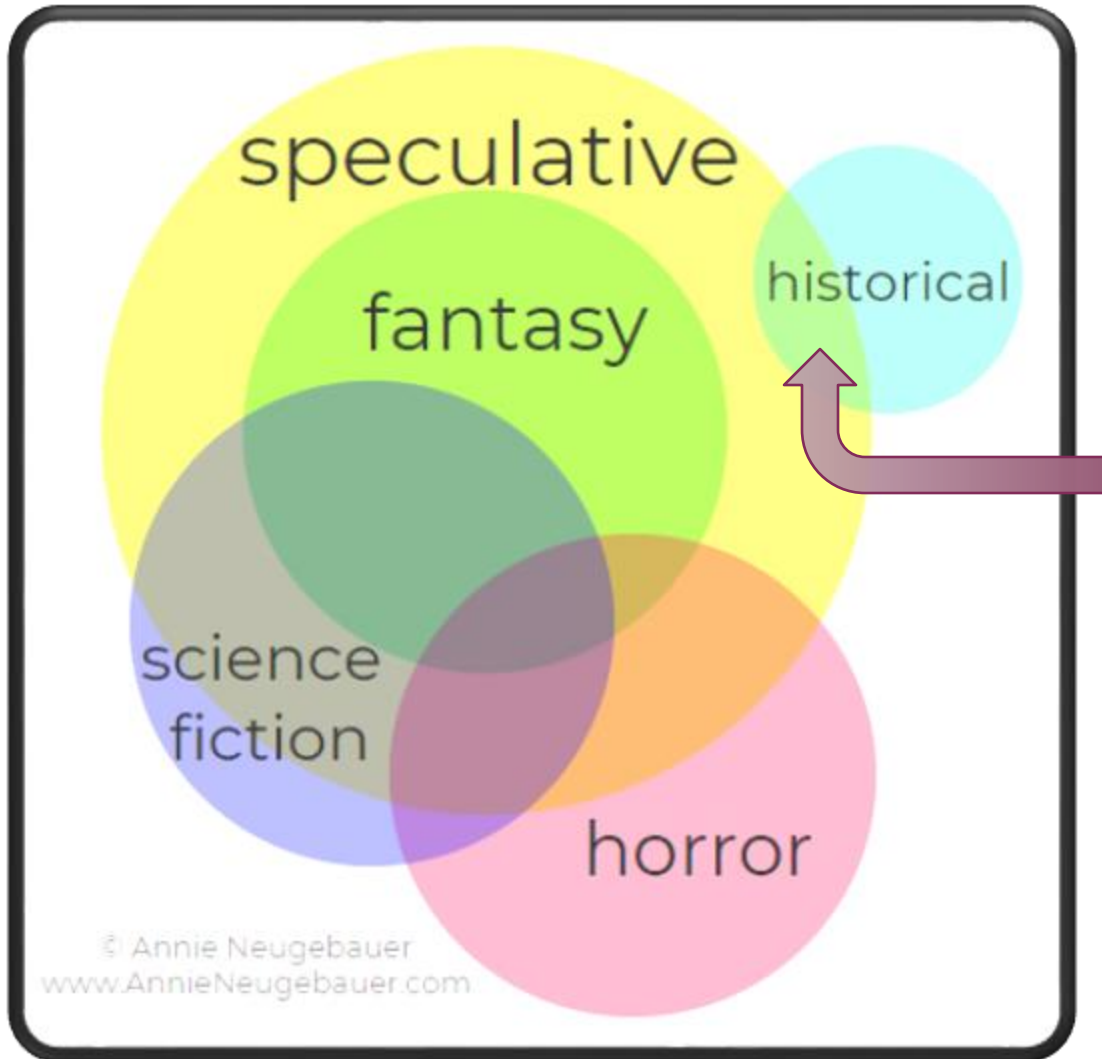
And as with the regions on a map, on the map of fiction there is overlap."

Michael Chabon

= WHAT IF?



= WHAT IF?



Alternate history fiction requires that the world described be historically the same as ours up to some point prior to when the author wrote the story, after which things begin to get different.

**THERE ARE NO CORRECT ALTERNATE HISTORIES, THERE ARE ONLY
PLAUSIBLE ALTERNATE HISTORIES...**

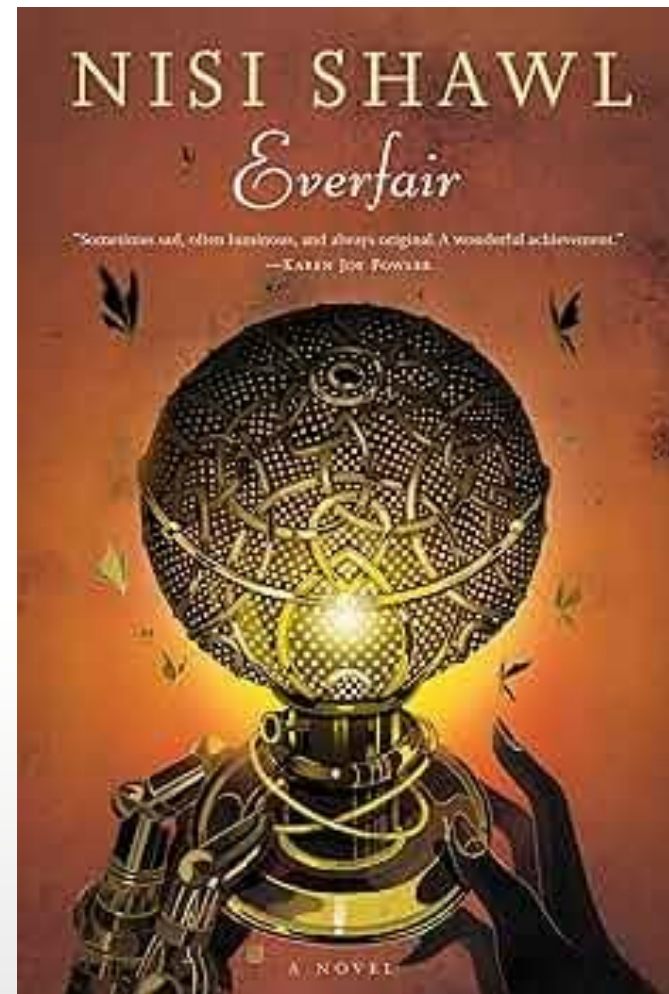
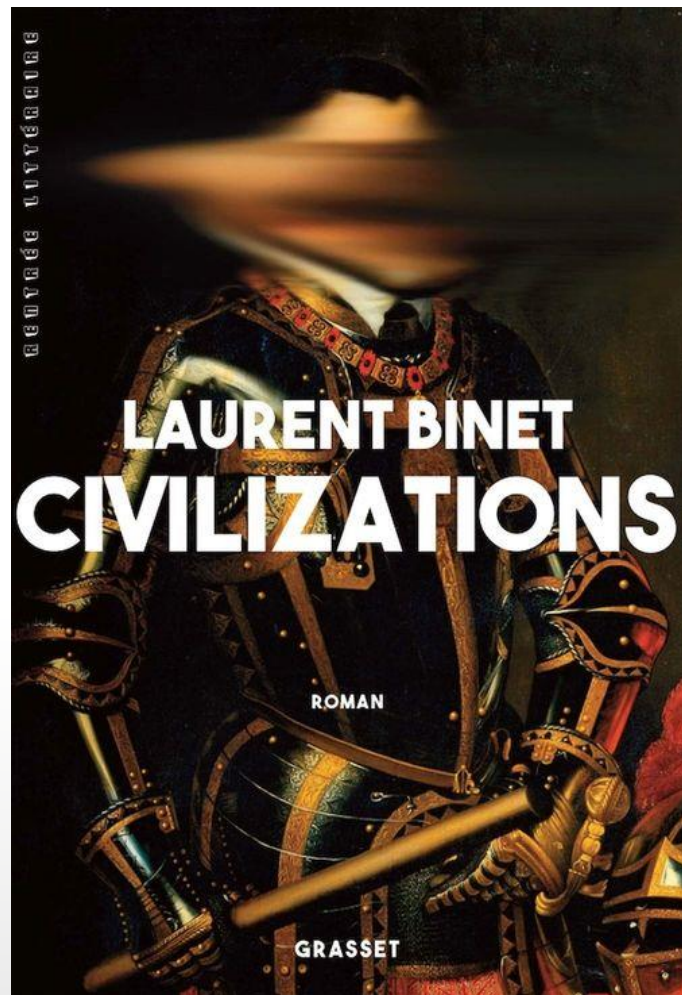
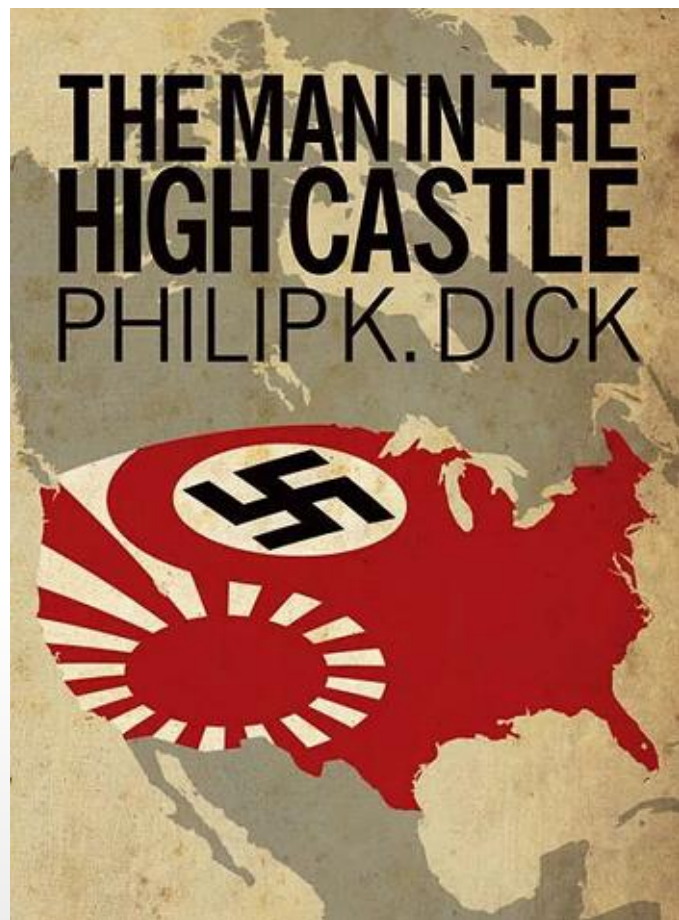
— WILL SHETTERLY



First documented alternate history fiction work

27-9 BC - *Ab Urbe Condita Libri* by Titus Livius

Book 9 - What if Alexander the Great had been defeated by Rome?



UCHRONIA.NET

Divergence Chronology

The notations CE or BCE mean Common Era and Before Common Era, respectively, and denote the same eras and year numberings labeled by the possibly more familiar AD and BC.

Not all entries in the database appear in this chronology.

Total of 2215 entries in the chronology; displaying entries 1-250.

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c 4,500,000,000 BCE — Comins, Neil F. "What If the Sun Were More Massive? Granstar"
c 4,500,000,000 BCE — Comins, Neil F. "What If the Earth Were a Moon? Mynoa and Tyran"
c 4,500,000,000 BCE — Comins, Neil F. "What If the Earth Had Less Mass? Petiel"
c 4,500,000,000 BCE — Comins, Neil F. "What If the Moon Were Closer to the Earth? Lunholm"
c 4,500,000,000 BCE — Turtledove, Harry. *A World of Difference*
c 4,500,000,000 BCE — Comins, Neil F. "What If the Earth's Crust Were Thicker? Dichron"
c 4,500,000,000 BCE — Comins, Neil F. "What If the Moon Orbitied Backwards? Anillo"
c 4,500,000,000 BCE — Comins, Neil F. "What If the Earth Were Tilted Like Uranus? Urania"
c 4,500,000,000 BCE — Comins, Neil F. "What If the Moon Didn't Exist? Solon"
c 500,000,000 BCE — Comins, Neil F. "What If the Earth Had Two Moons? Dimaan, Lluna, and Kuu"
c 85,000,000 BCE — Turtledove, Harry. *The United States of Atlantis*
c 85,000,000 BCE — Turtledove, Harry. *Opening Atlantis*
c 85,000,000 BCE — Turtledove, Harry. "The Scarlet Band"
c 85,000,000 BCE — Turtledove, Harry. *Liberating Atlantis*
c 85,000,000 BCE — Turtledove, Harry. "Audubon in Atlantis"
c 85,000,000 BCE — Turtledove, Harry. *Atlantis*
c 80,000,000 BCE — Daniel, Tony. "God's Foot"
c 70,000,000 BCE — Leigh, Stephen. *Ray Bradbury Presents Dinosaur World*
c 70,000,000 BCE — Leigh, Stephen, and John J. Miller. *Ray Bradbury Presents Dinosaur Samurai*
c 70,000,000 BCE — Leigh, Stephen, and John J. Miller. *Ray Bradbury Presents Dinosaur Empire*

1766 — Carr, Caleb. "William Pitt the Elder and the Avoidance of the American Revolution"
1767 — Dutourd, Jean. *Le feld-maréchal von Bonaparte (considération sur les causes de la grandeur des Français et de leur décadence)*.
1768 — MacLeod, Ian R. *The House of Storms*
1768 — MacLeod, Ian R. "The Bonny Boy"
1768 — MacLeod, Ian R. *The Light Ages*
1769 — Atiyah, Edward. *The Eagle Flies from England*
1770 — Grenier Christian. "L'Australie? C'est une autre histoire!"
c1772 — Foster, Alan Dean. "Polonaise"
1772 — Langkjær, Michael A. "Min Vilje er min Skæbne"
1772 — Chamberlin, Joseph Edgar. "If Alexander Hamilton Had Not Written About the Hurricane"
1773 — Pervuhin, Mikhail. *Пугачёв-победитель [Pugachev — Pobedite]*
c1773 — Sverzhin, Vladimir. *Trekhglavii orel*
1774 — Wright, Esmond. "If I had been... Benjamin Franklin in the Early 1770s"
1774 — Rusch, Kristine Kathryn. "Common Sense"
c1775 — Cremer, Andrea. *The Conjuror's Riddle*
1775 — Wentz, Richard E. "Reflections of a Rebellion Averted"
c1775 — Cremer, Andrea. *The Turncoat's Gambit*
1775 — Berman-Gorvine, Martin. *Save the Dragons!*
c1775 — Sterling, Bruce, and Lewis Shiner. "Mozart in Mirrorshades"
c1775 — Cremer, Andrea. *The Inventor's Secret*
1776 — Green, Roland J. "Written by the Wind"
1776 — Stirling, S.M. *The Domination of the Draka*
1776 — Maurois, André. "If Louis XVI had an Atom of Firmness"

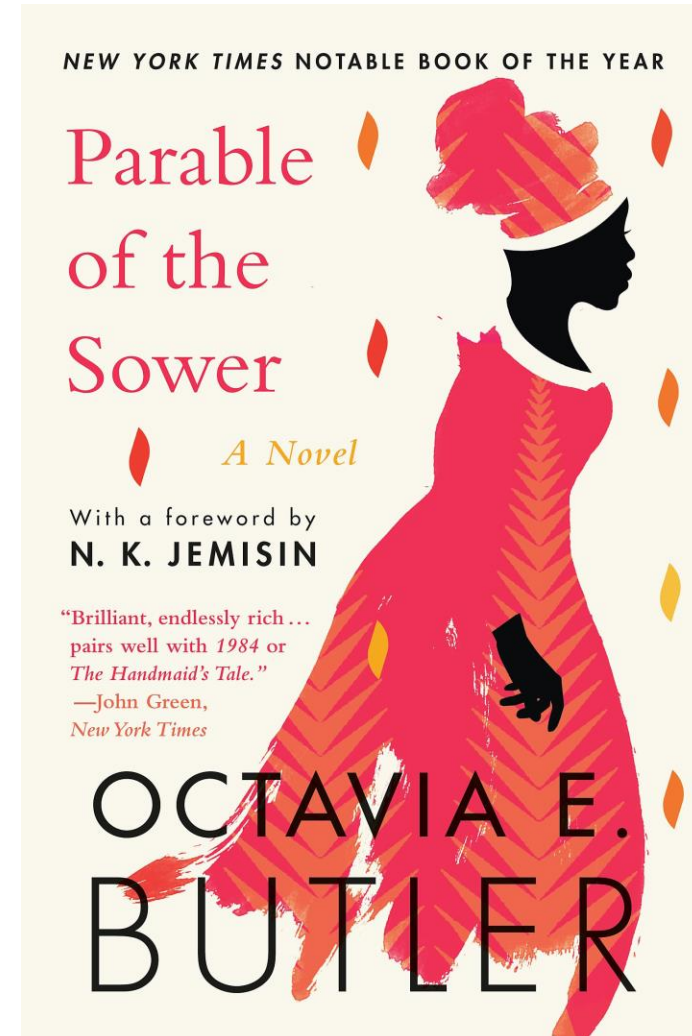
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PARABLE OF THE SOWER (1993)

"All that you touch
You Change.
All that you Change
Changes you.
The only lasting truth
Is Change.
God is Change.

EARTHSEED :THE BOOKS OF THE LIVING

Saturday, July 20, 2024 "



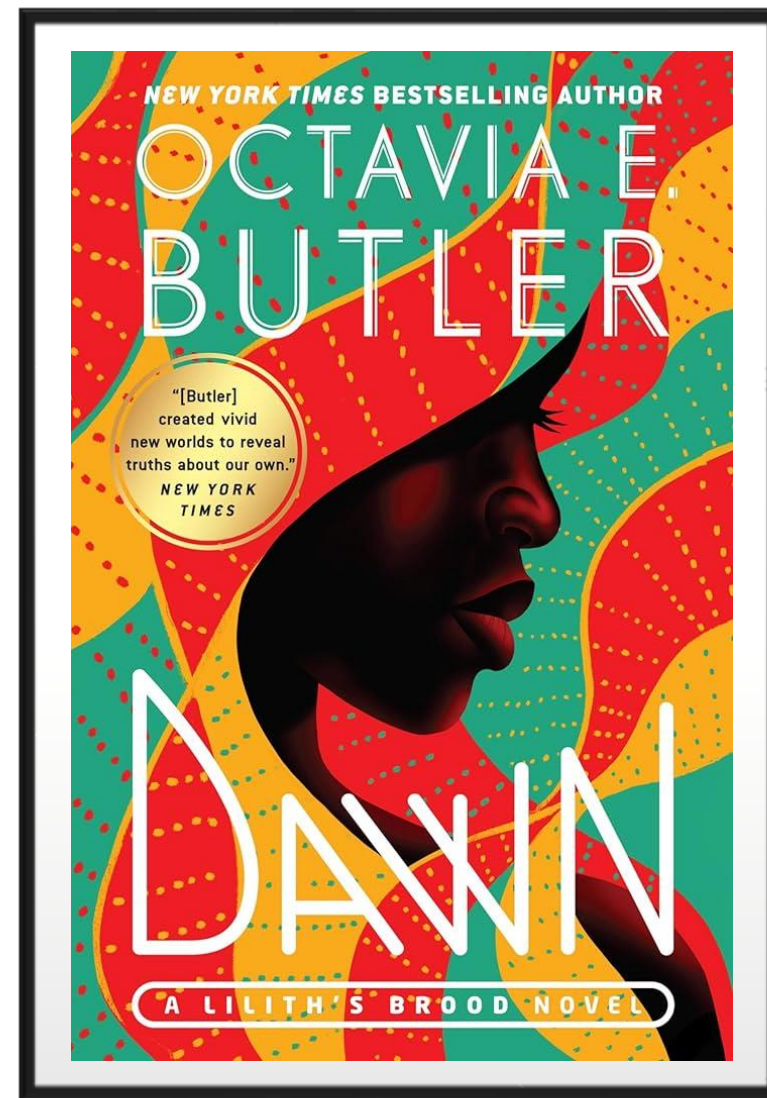
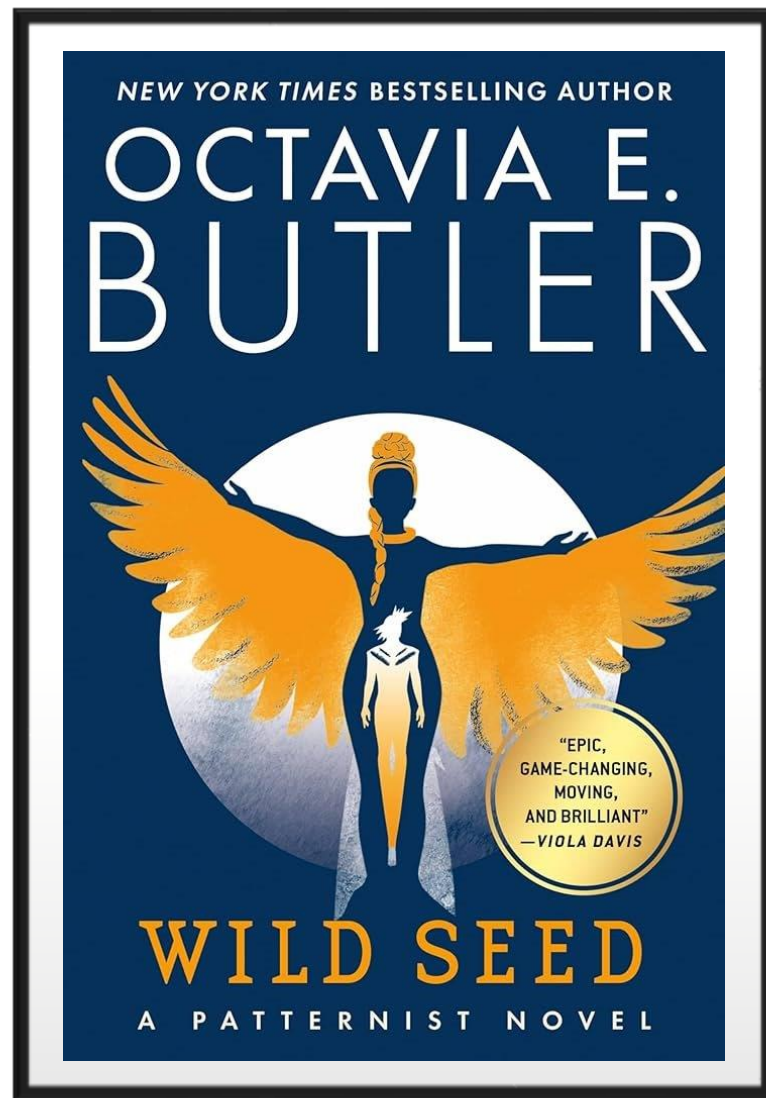
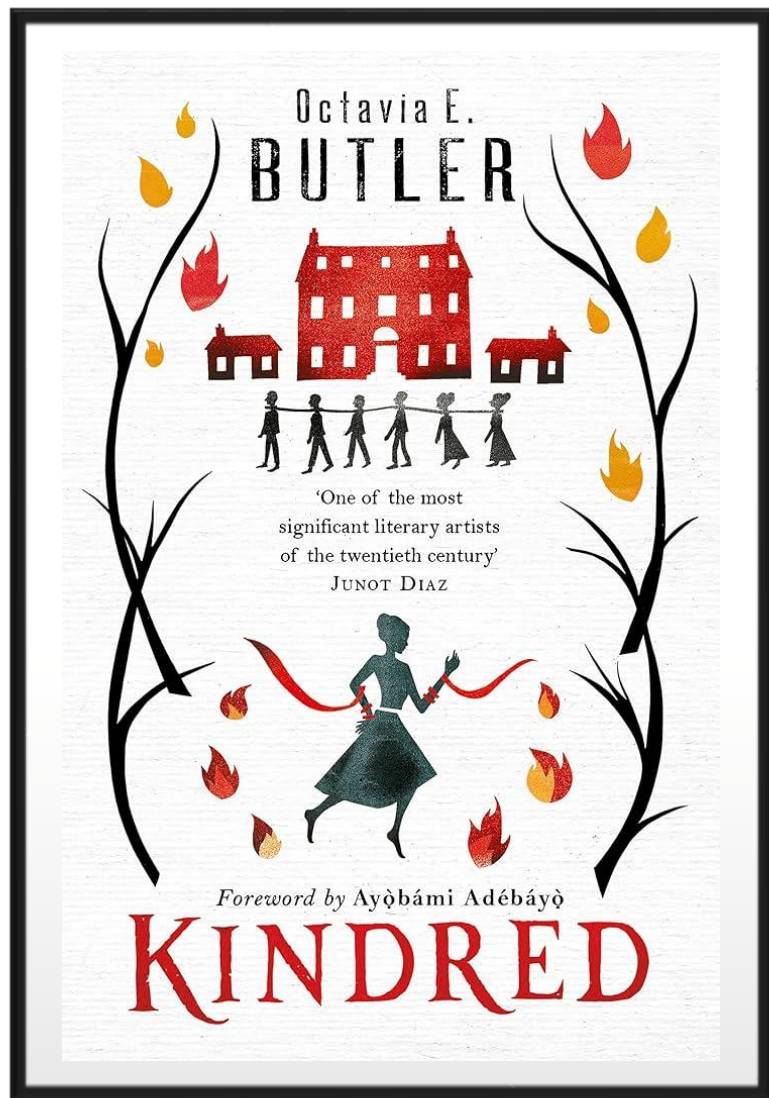
OCTAVIA E. BULTER
(1947 – 2006)





- Born in Pasadena, California in 1947
- First black woman to win the Hugo award (1984, 1985) and Nebula award (1984, 1999)
- First science-fiction writer to win the McArthur fellowship (or "Genius Grant")
- Became a *New York Times* bestseller author in 2020 (15 years after her death)

"I never bought into my invisibility or non-existence as a Black person. As a female and as an African American, I wrote myself into the world. I wrote myself into the present, the future, and the past."



AFRO-FUTURISM

A cultural aesthetic that combines science-fiction, history and fantasy to that reimagines, reinterprets, and reclaims the past and present for a more empowering future for African-Americans (originally)





OCTAVIA BUTLER, *PARABLE OF THE
TALENTS*
(READ IN 2005)

“Hard times are coming, when we’ll be wanting the voices of writers who can see alternatives to how we live now, can see through our fear-stricken society and its obsessive technologies to other ways of being, and even imagine real grounds for hope. We’ll need writers who can remember freedom — poets, visionaries — realists of a larger reality.”

Ursula K. Le Guin

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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- History and speculative fiction, John L. Hennessey
- Memory, History, Forgetting, Paul Ricoeur
- Alternate History 101, compiled by Evelyn C. Leeper (2001)
- "Conspicuous fabrications: speculative fiction as a tool for confronting the post-truth discourse", Elise Kraatila
- Uchronia.net, <http://www.uchronia.net/diverge.html>
- Octavia Butler :
- Democracy Now : Remembering Octavi E. Butler <https://youtu.be/e0UgiE8vYul?si=kXRzits48ijdMjJC>