

Course Stuff

-Writing Assignment 2 due to Canvas on this Friday May 2 by 5 pm -counterarguments and textual evidence

- -Rubric for the Final Exam is posted on our Canvas site under 'Modules'
- -Exam will be held on Monday May 19 from 4-6 pm in Tawes 1100 (this classroom)

The Title: The Parable of the Sower



- -What does the title mean?
- -What is a parable? Why does Christ speak in parables in the New Testament?

Matthew 13: 11

10 And the disciples came and said to Him, "Why do You speak to them in parables?"

He answered and said to them, "Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. 12 For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. 13 Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand.

-cf. parables to apocalypse as revelation

Matthew 13: The Parable of the Sower (New King James Version)

13 On the same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the sea. 2 And great multitudes were gathered together to Him, so that He got into a boat and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore.

3 Then He spoke many things to them in parables, saying: "Behold, a sower went out to sow. 4 And as he sowed, some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured them. 5 Some fell on stony places, where they did not have much earth; and they immediately sprang up because they had no depth of earth. 6 But when the sun was up they were scorched, and because they had no root they withere'd away. 7 And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them. 8 But others fell on good ground and yielded a crop: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. 9 He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"



- -What is the meaning of the seed in relation to Earthseed?
- -Why does Butler choose this parable?
- -How does Butler use parables in her novel?

Something new is beginning—or perhaps something old and nasty is reviving. ...

Parts of [Olivar] sometimes crumble into the ocean, undercut or deeply saturated by salt water. Sea level keeps rising with the warming climate and there is the occasional earthquake. Olivar's flat, sandy beach is already just a memory. So are the houses and businesses that used to sit on that beach. ... The voters and the officials of Olivar permitted their town to be taken over, bought out, privatized. KSF will expand the desalination plant to vast size. That plant will be the first of many. The company intends to dominate farming and the selling of water and solar and wind energy over much of the southwest. ... Anyone KSF hired would have a hard time living on the salary offered. In not very much time, I think the new hires would be in debt to the company. That's an old company-town trick—get people into debt, hang on to them, and work them harder. Debt slavery. That might work in Christopher Donner's America. Labor laws, state and federal, are not what they once were. (Oct 20, 2026; Chap 11; 118-121).

Olivar, A Parable for Butler

- -what is a company town?
- -the company that buys an environmentally fragile coastal town, taking over its resources in exchange for giving its educated workforce some security
- -why do Lauren's parents argue over Olivar?
- -what is the ethical message of Olivar?
 - -its racial politics
- -the relation of slow violence to economic dependence
- -for Butler, what is the relation between economic, racial, and environmental justice?
- -Are there places like Olivar today or is this still in the realm of fantasy?

Pyro and Paints

Then there's that fire drug with its dozen or so names: Blaze, fuego, flash, sunfire... The most popular name is pyro—short for pyromania. It's all the same drug, and it's been around for a while. From what Keith said, it's becoming more popular. It makes watching the leaping, changing patterns of fire a better, more intense, longer-lasting high than sex. Like Paracetco, my biological mother's drug of choice, pyro screws around with people's neurochemistry.

Pyro worked its way west without making nearly as much trouble as it could have. Now its popularity is growing. And in dry-as-straw Southern California, it can cause a real orgy of burning. "My God," Cory said when the radio report was over. And in a small, whispery voice, she quoted from the Book of Revelation: "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils..." And the devils set fire to the Payne-Parrish house. (December 24, 2026; Chap 13; 143-144)

-Effect of pyro? Parable/ allegory? Reaction of readers in the 1990s?

Keith: "Paints. They shave off all their hair—even their eyebrows—and they paint their skin green or blue or red or yellow. They eat fire and kill rich people. ... They take that drug that makes them like to watch fires. Sometimes a camp fire or a trash fire or a house fire. Or sometimes they grab a rich guy and set him on fire." (June 15, 2026; Chap 10; 110)

-how do the drugs highlight economic disparities?

The Burning of Lauren's Neighborhood

Everything was chaos. People running, screaming, shooting. The gate had been destroyed. Our attackers had driven an ancient truck through it. They must have stolen a truck just to crash it through our gate. I think they must have been pyro addicts—bald people with painted heads, faces, and hands. Red faces; blue faces; green faces; screaming mouths; avid, crazy eyes, glittering in the firelight. They shot us and shot us and shot us. I saw Natalie Moss, running, screaming, then pitching backward, her face half gone, her body still impelled forward. She fell flat on her back, and did not move again. I fell with her, caught up in her death. I lay there, dazed, struggling to move, to get up. Cory and the boys, running ahead of me never noticed. They ran on. ...

Someone screamed near me, then tackled me, pulled me down. I fired the gun in reflexive terror, and took the terrible impact in my own stomach. A green face hung above mine, mouth open, eyes wide, not yet feeling all his pain. I shot him again, terrified that his pain would immobilize me when he did feel it. It seemed that he took a long time to die. (July 31, 2027; Chap 14; 153 ff)

- -What is the attack like?
- -What saves Lauren?

The Aftermath

There was a dead green face on our front porch. I went up the steps and stood looking at him—at her. The green face was a woman—tall, lean, bald, but female. And what had she died for? What was the point of all this?

"Leave her alone." A woman who had a pair of Cory's shoes in her hand strode up to me. "She died for all of us. Leave her alone." I've never in my life wanted more to kill another human being. ...

"She died for us," the scavenger woman had said of the green face. Some kind of insane burn-the-rich movement, Keith had said. We've never been rich, but to the desperate, we looked rich. We were surviving and we had our wall. Did our community die so that addicts could make a help-the-poor political statement? (July 31, 2027; Chap 14; 159-163)

- -how is the language of social justice used here?
- -how are the Paints another parable for Butler?
- -what are the politics of this part of the novel?

The Road North: What are its Lessons?

- -Zahra Moss and Harry Balter
- -where are they going? What does "going North" represent? -Lauren's disguise? Effect?
- -conditions and conflicts?
- -Zahra's experience living on the outside as a child with a prostitute mother
- -the debates over helping people? Harry vs Zahra and Lauren?
- -the dangers of the road?
 - -"coyotes" and wild dogs
 - -roving armed bands and the constant threat of robbery and violence (including sexual violence)
 - -earthquakes and fires
- -Travis, Natividad and 6 mo old Domingo
 - -they fled indentured servitude in a house where Travis was a handyman and Natividad was a maid
- -Bankole-57 yr old enigma
- -the sisters Jill and Allie
 - -they left a life of violence and prostitution where their father was their pimp
- -3 yr old Jústin Rohr

She is hagridden. Earthseed is Positive PARABLE OF THE SOWER is a story of death and rebirth More In this story, a woman strives to create a new religion EARTHSEED must touch on everything, delve into everything, Sustainee must offer strength, guidance, and purpose to Lauren and through Lauren without demanding faith in the supernatural Add more Hispanics. Most of neighborhood should have Hispanic relatives. More Hispanic surnames on people like Mora who seem ordinary blacks, or ordinary whites. Racism They drop away, refusing to comply with group They try to push her away to take over leadership. (0) They try to settle in the stones of the small towns an cities they pass through. These things must happen at least once each. Incidents will bunch up, two or three at once. Some people may leave the group because they've lost a child, a wife, whatever. More "old" new stuff--computers--talking notebook-library photovoltaic (solar) strips, Hydrogen or electric vehicles. In Book I, She learns to be a careful, adaptable, forsighted In Book II, She applies what she has learned to collect and protect a new moving community, then lead these to find and

Butler's Archive The Huntington Library, San Marino CA

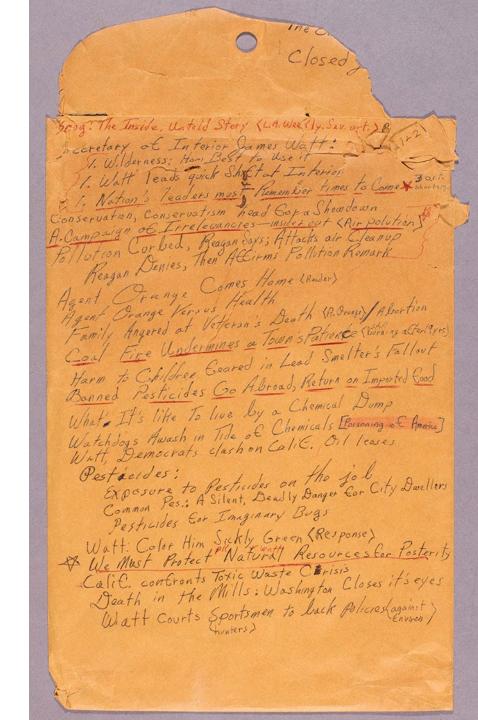
Outline and notes for *Parable of the Sower*, ca. 1989. The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens.

Butler's Environmental Memory Archive

- -This image is of the outside of an envelope Butler used to file away the articles she collected on climate and the environment beginning in the 1980s. (The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens).
- -beginning at age 18 and over the rest of her life, Butler amassed a huge collection of clippings and notes on science, the environment, climate change, and politics
- -according to the literary critic Shelby Streeby, "Butler coined the word HistoFuturist to describe herself as a memory worker and "historian who extrapolates from the human past and present as well as the technological past and present.""

(Source: Streeby, S. (2018). *Imagining the future of climate change: World-making through science fiction and activism*. University of California Press. 72)

- -Butler can be considered an early climate change theorist and activist much like Rachel Carson (Silent Spring)
- -Butler: "They spend their tomorrows today."
- -Butler linked climate change (air pollution, desertification, water scarcity, etc) to economic and political policies that prioritized short term profit or gain against long term sustainability



Tell stories Filledwith Facts. Make People Touch and Taste and HNOW. Make People FEEL! FEEL! teeL!

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I shall be a bestselling writer. Offeter Imago, each of my looks will be on the bestseller lists of LAT, NYT, PW, WP, Mille etc. My novels will go onto, the above lists Whether pullishers push them hard or not, Whether I'm paid a high advance or not, Whether I ever win another award or not. This is my lite. I write bestselling novels. My novels go onto the best seller lists on or shortly after publication. My novels each travel up to the top of the best seller lists and they reach the top and they stay on top for months (at least two). Each of my novels does this. So be it! Twill find the way see to it! See to it! My books will be read by millions of people! I will buy a beautiful home in an excellent neighborhood I will send poor black youngsters to Clarion or other writer's with shops I will help poor black youngsters broaden their horizons I will help poor thack youngsters go to college I will get the best of health care for my mother and myself I will fire a car whenever Dwant or need to. I will travel whenever and wherever in the world that I cho My books will be read by millions of Deople!

In class writing: Jesmyn Ward's Salvage the Bones and Butler's Parable of the Sower

Work with a partner but write down your answers separately with your name on it so you can turn it in at the end of class (unless you are both in the same section).

Consider the ways in which Ward and Butler each dramatize the effects of natural disaster and climate change.

- 1. Which novel did you enjoy reading more?
- 2. Which novel do you think is more effective at getting people to recognize the social and environmental costs of climate change? Why?