

Introduction:

Our modern world is immersed in environmental and social troubles. Since the very beginning of the 1990s, the African American science fiction author Octavia Estelle Butler could recognize the jeopardy that would result from the oppression of both woman and nature by androcentrism. Butler considers the exploitation of nature by men a continuation of the subjugation of women. In *Parable of the Sower*, Butler exposes and critiques the contemporary environmental and social crises. In an interview with the *Essence* magazine, the author Octavia Butler was looking for problems that they were neglecting in their time and imagined how it will be. Butler herself declared that the major concern of *Parable of the Sower* is the degradation of the environment especially the global warming that results from what scientists call the greenhouse effect. The fact that she was writing in a newspaper helped her to raise such thoughts and ideas. Likewise, the greenhouse effect that has been intensified. Butler was aware of the amount of starvation and agricultural displacement in the future.

Since literature has a supreme power to change the gloomy picture that the male society build for women, the black women writers became able to present themselves as individuals who participate in the development of life, through political, cultural, and economical fields. Thus, these feminist and activists such as Harriet Jacobs, Toni Morrison, Margaret Atwood, Maya Angelou, and Octavia Estelle Butler, and many others, achieved equalities and self-realization for the black women in the world of literature. Moreover, they tackle the problems and threats that the nature faces.

Science fiction is a literary approach that allows the black authors and particularly the African American woman to express their issues of slavery, sexism, rape and marginalization. The use of supernatural and brilliant protagonists who are able to rebuild the deconstructed societies and to find solution to protect the environment. They tend to create fair world to human beings, where they live and share similar qualities and are treated fairly. The use of two subgenres, utopia and dystopia, of this kind of literature adds an artful and special touch.

This research is based on many resources that helped us to make and to shape the framework and the main questions of our study, *Parable of the Sower* has been the subject of various studies yet separately. One of the resources that add a clear touch in our research is the journal article of Mrlene D.Allen "*Octavia Butler's "parable" Novel and the "boomerang" of African American history* " which includes a deep analytical study about both the noval and the writer. In fact it helped us a lot to depict a clear image of the interrelation between science fiction and ecofeminism.

After the death of Octavia Butler, she left behind her a huge heritage represented in twelve novels, short stories, essays and many works in progress available in the Huntington Library. In the Huntington's latest exhibition, *Telling My Stories*, Octavia Butler's treasured documents are on view to the public, offering a glimpse that only a few were privy to examine. What's remarkable about this collection of items is that they provide important insights into the writer's process. Butler, a self-described pack rat, kept everything: childhood renditions of character sketches that would later inform her writing, scientific and technical research, letters to experts that would help her capture authenticity in her plots and diary entries that were prescient, detailed manifestos that documented her crystal clear vision. She is a researcher. One manilla envelope cover

was adorned with a color coded series of words that indexed the clippings and articles contained within the envelope. This helped to make the author biography as the first female African American science fiction writer (The Physical Writing Process: Octavia Butler - Inspiring Oneself).

In addition to the previous mentioned work , Dr.S.Nalini and Manju's " *The style and techniques of the select novels of Octavia E.Butler:A critical study* " another one of our selected literary reviews that gave us a detailed analysis for what Octavia Butler wanted to convey and show to the world , they tries to establish the role of our writer in the genre of science fiction and how science fiction gave her a free literary ability to discuss lots of important issues for her , the study includes the details of how butler deals with science fiction with her special way and manner , also how she used a sub-genre of science fiction wich is dystopia to express her ideas of the future and from this analytical study we can see clearly that the dystopian novels of Octavia are not similar to the other dystopian works of the other writers. In that difference of presentation of the Otavia's dystopia that she tries to bring something different in her dystopian works which is hope what makes her works unique. Hobgood and Oster Laura. "*Ecofeminism: Historic and international evolution.*" work largely explains the truth of ecofeminism as being a theory and not a movement, it represnted almost every detail about this theory such its philosophy, principles, beliefs and its various perspectives. Also how this theory rises the questions for scholars in the reconstruction of early human civilizations , their work tackles the issue of racism within ecofeminism which helped us to a great extent to discover some of the main themes of our topic ,so we cannot deny that this study expresses the ecological feminism in an exemplification way.

The literary theory and criticism that we depended on are feminism and ecofeminism which goes hand in hand with the respected novel and author, to cover the aims of this study. Butler is an African American writer suffering of different kinds of segregation in her life, as a result, she outfaced racism and wrote in science fiction, then she predice upon feminism along with ecofeminism through her protagonist and the environment which are damaged by male character to convey her message in racist patriarchal society. Like other female pioneer writers Octavia used the genre science fiction, dystopian fiction and fantasy as a pagoda to write about gender and social identities and theirs obstructions.

In *Parable of the Sower* Octavia draws the links between environmental and social concerns. She deals with the degradation of nature and the environment in connection with matters of racism, sexism, and homophobia, the increasing gap between the rich and the poor and the specific problems that social injustice creates. The link between environmental and social crises has been treated in a futuristic context. The events of the story take place in 2024 in future California. The subgenre of science fiction- the African feminist science fiction- provides the means for the writer to expose questions of racism, sexism, social injustices, the ideas of utopia and dystopia, the gaps between the social layers, the environmental degradation and the global warming freely and in limitless ways. By means of prominent Science fiction methods such as Utopias and Dystopias, Octavia found her own way to creatively represent things that she thinks important.

We had chosen the African American novel *Parable of the Sower* since it comes as an alarm to our modern world, especially, by the coming of Trump's presidency revive the novel as an already predicted tumult. We were fascinated by mostly everything

about the novel, starting by the writer's life as a black female who overcomes poverty and racism to become the first to write in science fiction, and to be considered as the dominant author of this field. In addition to, its imaginary settings, events and characters. Through using ecofeminism with science fiction, Butler depicts the subjugation of both woman and nature by androcentrism. In fact, this latter was the mainline that gain our infatuation. So we started reading it because we are interested in the feminist and the environmental movements and we wanted to explore more in them.

We began investigating the literary theories that the novel depends on and reading articles and dissertations about it. Our work is divided into two parts; a theoretical chapter and practical one. In the first chapter, we attempt to shed light on the main literary theories used in the novel. The African American Science fiction and Ecofeminism are our major concerns. We explore them from different perspectives. In the second chapter, we examine the novel from an African American Feminist Science fiction and Ecofeminist standpoints. We reveal the way Butler puts both literary theories together simultaneously and with a great harmony in her work.

This paper depends on both descriptive and analytical methods, the descriptive method in the theoretical chapter and the analytical method in the practical chapter. Descriptive method is represented in the content of the novel, author biography, and the major literary gener and theories about it, such as science fiction and ecofeminism in the novel. Moreover, The analytical method is presented in applying the theories and pespectives on the novel and trying to prove or disprove it according to other specialists claims. Thereby, we will investigate hyperempathy while psychological unbalance as a major theme in the novel.

The aim behind our study is to investigate the way Octavia Butler uses ecofeminism artistically with science fiction to depict the environmental malpractices and the social inequalities caused by the chaos created by the technological development in future America and consequently the whole world. In addition to the study of the main literary theories used in the book. The African American Science fiction and Ecofeminism are our major concern. We will explore them from different perspectives. We will examine the novel from an African Feminist Science fiction and Ecofeminist standpoints, and to reveal the way Butler puts both literary theories together simultaneously and with a great harmony in her work. Throughout this paper we will answer these main questions that it is buildt upon. Does the writer sings the lens of science fiction to project her concerns into the future and reflecting on the past? Is the novel meant to serve as cautionary tale against political inaction and complacency or as a warning? Why did the writer rely on science fiction mixed with ecofeminism to address issues of slavery, racism, and rape? Does Octavia Estelle Butler's life experiences and environmental circumstances of the 90s as a black feminine writer influenced her writing of *The Parable*?

I-Chapter One:

The African-American Science Fiction Novel and Ecofeminism

In this theoretical chapter, we will shed the light on the writer of *Parable of the Sower*; Octavia Estelle Butler and expose the literary theories used in the novel. We will make a detailed presentation of science fiction with special reference to a number of its

subgenres such as Utopia and Dystopia. Ecofeminism is also unfolded from an African feminist angle. We will focus on empathy as a major theme of the story. And this chapter is divided into two sections.

1-Section one:

African American science fiction renaissance

The First theoretical section will be on the history of science fiction more precisely on the African-American science fiction, Harlem Renaissance movement as the launch of the genre science fiction for African-American writers, African science fiction which is named Afrofuturism from feminist perspective, utopia and dystopia as major themes in science fiction.

1-1: Science Fiction: history and insights

The word "attempt" from Old French , means "seek or try to do, make an effort to perform," An attempting is an exploration of ideas in a creative nonfiction format. Throughout a piece of writing a writer might start with an idea that they wish to explore, analyze it from different angles, and bring in different sources and references that support this idea that they're examining. Regarding one form of essay, the personal essay, Phillip Lopate describes it as a "sharing of thoughts, memories, desires, complaints, whimsies" and explains that:

At the core of the personal essay is the supposition that there is a certain unity to human experience. As Michel de Montaigne, the great innovator and patron saint of personal essayists put it, 'Every man has within himself the entire human condition.' This meant that when he was telling about himself, he was talking, to some degree, about all of us. (Lopat, 23)

The essay or attempting can be extrapolative, or speculative. The writers may write about themselves and their own experiences and issues, but ultimately there's a universality of human experience that allows for common themes of the human condition to be drawn from the creative expressions of a single essayist. Science Fiction novels are like essays. An essay is an examination of an idea through creative writing, while science fiction uses its characters and plot as an excuse to convey to the reader an interesting concept.

Among our current conceptions of genre fiction, science fiction stands out as one of the most prominent. Science fiction is practically ubiquitous in popular media today. One of the reasons for this is that science fiction is such a broad, malleable category of fiction that it encompasses many different subgenres. Science fiction falls squarely in the realm of speculative fiction, a genre that essentially encompasses any kind of fiction that asks "what if...?" and explores that idea.

Science fiction often relies on what's referred to as a novum, the difference from its fictional world and ours. A science fiction work is only truly effective as science fiction if this novum actually affects the world in a substantial way. For example, a science fiction story that essentially plays out as a crime drama where the criminals just happen to have energy based firearms instead of pistols, without extrapolating what those energy weapons would mean for society, would be ineffective when compared with a similar work that examines the societal ramifications of not only the existence of readily available, high powered energy weapons, but further the existence of efficient forms of energy that enables their presence. Good science fiction, and by extension speculative fiction, naturally relies on speculation. According to Sherryl Vint in her *Science Fiction: A Guide for the Perplexed*,

sf is often referred to as the literature of ideas. This formulation signals many widely held truisms about the genre: that it works through problems logically; that it is distinct from mainstream fiction of inner life and explores questions of the wider world; that it is a thought experiment that asks *what if?* And works through the possible outcomes. (113)

Both science fiction and fantasy fall within the same umbrella of speculative fiction, they just deal with different aspects of speculation, “It is said that science fiction and fantasy are two different things. Science fiction is the improbable made possible, and fantasy is the impossible made probable.” (bigthink) So says Rod Ultimately. Broadly speaking both genres involve fantastical elements, fantasy tends to explain its phenomena with magic while science fiction tends to explain its phenomena with science, though there are often blurred lines . What all speculative fiction shares in common is the use of metaphors and symbols to use fictional settings and elements to convey an idea. Being human, we naturally write from the perspective of the human experience, and the themes in our writing might reflect that.

It’s important to mention the history of science fiction as a future prediction genre or any imagined world in which the operation of some rule within the universe is bent to create a new world. This would mean that tales of magic and elves and spiritual creatures are indeed works of science fiction, for the magic of those worlds and the workings and biologies of their inhabitants rely on a fictionalization of scientific elements.

1-1-1: American Science Fiction History and Insights

In an interview for New York Times with Kazuo Ishiguro and Neil Gaiman, what drives humans to invent fantastic worlds, whether they be what's considered fantasy, science fiction, or otherwise? Ishiguro states that it's become standard for new writers to think in terms of science fiction or dystopian fiction, and Neil Gaiman replies:

It's a good way to go. I don't think there's a human being on the planet who has not, in some way in the last 15, 20 years, encountered the phenomenon of future shock that Alvin Toffler described: the idea that it's all moving a bit fast, that things are changing, that the world that our parents and grandparents knew is not the world we are living in now. If you're in that environment, then science fiction is a kind of natural way of talking about it, and particularly dystopian science fiction, which always begins when a writer looks around, sees something they don't like and thinks, 'But if this goes on (Let's Talk about Genre ,*newstatesman*).

The pace of technological advancement over the past 50 years, or even only the past 10 or 20 years, has been blindingly fast. If writers tend to write about the anxieties and concerns they have in society, then perhaps the science fiction novel, full of space intrigue and technological wonders, was just as inevitable as the romance novel was two hundred years ago. What is the impulse that leads authors to write within certain genres, to create stories and ideas?

In some ways, tropes of science fiction are not unlike the mythology of ancient times back to its roots in Gothicism through the sublime and grotesque represented in fantastical works such as the Sumerian Epic of Gilgamesh (especially the story of *the calamitous flood*), the ancient literary relics *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, as well as *Arabian Nights*, Lucian's *The True Story*, and others. It is called than proto-science fiction

because SF was born but not yet developed as a distinct literary gener. (*Wikipedia, history of science fiction*). Following the wave of newer scientific discoveries, a fictional island that has a "perfect society" was formed in the book of "*Utopia*" by Sir Thomas More in the early 16th century. This utopian theme continue to be the basis of many science fiction works. Than Science fiction had developed nearly 300 years ago during the time of great advances in science. Since then authors have tried to make sense of their world by imagining what the future will look like.

There exists an internal logic and a prebuilt world around science fiction. Merely by saying the term "teleporter" or "spaceship" the reader already has a preconceived notion, built up by the milieu of many other writers, of how that device might function in the plot of the story. The author may choose to elaborate with the specific details and limitations of the device in his novel, but it's expected that a teleporter will be able to transport matter over large distances by principles currently unknown to science, and a spaceship will generally be able to traverse interstellar space at a rate much greater than is feasible today (unless the work is one of hard science fiction). Such collective concepts are part of what's called the "megatext." Science fiction in particular is a highly participatory genre. One might argue that are merely words whose definitions make those functions obvious, but something interesting happens when a very specific concept, particularly one without a premade label like "teleporter," becomes canonized. Such an example is the idea of the instantaneous interstellar communication device, the "ansible," in the works of Ursula K. Le Guin, later adopted by Orson Scott Card in his *Enders Game* series, or perhaps the popularity of the term "grok," a verb used to describe a deep, intimate understanding of something, which arose from Robert Heinlen's novel *Stranger in a Strange Land*. In the same way, mythical figures like Zeus were prebuilt notions used by ancient storytellers to signify particular elements. Particular deities are

linked to certain aspects of the world. If a teller of a myth needed one of his characters to receive an urgent message from long distance, rather than have an ansible deliver the message, Hermes would bear that duty. Do recurrent elements in ancient works, tropes, make them any less valid?

In the intro to *The Handmaid's Tale*, Margaret Atwood claims that everything within the novel is based on something that has happened in human history. This makes the story somewhat of a plausible fiction, more so than tales of alien invaders. At the very least, the rules of known science aren't stretched much further than is needed to speculate on what dark future could happen if things go in the wrong direction (If this goes on, then...). Speaking in front of an audience of UC Berkeley students she spoke of her novel and its Netflix adaptation at the beginning of the fall 2018 semester during the shaky Trump presidency, she snarkily proclaimed that it was just a novel, and how could we let this happen.

Exploring the crossed roots of science fiction and the gothic genre, including Edgar Allan Poe. The sublime terror of the concept of space travel. Imagine setting out in a vessel where your life depends on the integrity of the vessel, the supply of oxygen and food, and the vessels successful arrival at its destination. This idea of the horrifyingly vast and empty abyss of the ocean of space is just a more extreme version of the sublime terror of the ocean that Herman Melville describes in *Moby Dick*.

1-1-2: Science Fiction between the Inclusive Canon and the Outsider Voice

Despite the roots of the literary genre , science fiction was created by white male writers in the 19th century and its founding father is the English writer Herbert .George Wells referred to as H.G wells "Shakespeare of Science Fiction" or "father of science fiction" along with Jules Verne and Hugo Gernsback as one of the genre innovator. H.M

Wells' novels *TimeMachine* (1895) or *TheWaroftheWorld* (1898). Time traveling, go back in time to correct a fault ,gain time or traveling in time to know about the future and what will happen ,themes that everyone has thought about and wish if it was real. Wells' novel *The Time Machine* had made a turning point in the history of science fiction and it became a source of inspiration for other works and writers. Likewise, the film of *TheTime Machine* (2002), *Backto the Future* (1989) and *Interstellar* (2014) are examples of the prevalence of this topic.

Wells and his fellows had an international readership which led to influence writers in the world and in America, especially. There upon the American science fiction flourished and started to take the leadership of science fiction. European writers found more readers [in America] by selling to the American market and writing in an Americanised style. (*Wikipedia*). Numerous of American readers from all the levels and specially adults were thirsty for reading more about science fiction and things that kittle the imagination and inspire the mind though it was not yet named "science fiction"

The genius writer Edgar Allan Poe is often mentioned as the father of science fiction in America. In 1835 published a short story it is accounted as the launch in sf because describe the strata of the planet earth and the universe "*The Unparalleled Adventure of One Hans Pfaall*" it is about a flight to the moon in a balloon.

In addition to Poe's writings, Secondly, John Leonard Riddell, a Professor of Chemistry in New Orleans, published the short story *Orrin Lindsay's plan of aerial navigation*, it narrates his explorations in the higher ranks of the atmosphere, and his visit to the moon. Thirdly, In 1871 William Henry Rhodes published *the tale The Case of Summerfield* in the *Sacramento Union* newspaper, he introduced the weapon of mass destruction by a mad scientist in the story. Fourthly, the journalist Edward Page Mitchell

would publish his innovative science fiction short stories in *The Sun* newspaper for decade, which they include expressions such as invisibility, faster than light travels, teleportation, time travel, cryogenics, mind transfer, mutants, cyborgs and mechanical brains. Fifthly, in (1888) Edward Bellamy wrote *Looking Backward* One of the most famous bestselling novel in early American science fiction, its novel overstep the literature edges and expected the future baised on the current society observations. Sixth, In 1894, Will Harben published "*Land of the Changing Sun*," a dystopian fantasy of the earth. Seventh, in 1889 in his novel "*A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*" MarkTwain routed themes of science. By using thoughts of "transmigration of souls", "transposition of epochs – and bodies" , later on when the WWI launched the novel seemed to predict its events. Eightly, American author L. Frank Baum's series of 14 books (1900–1920) based in his outlandish Land of Oz setting, contained depictions of strange weapons (*Dorothy and the Wizard in Oz*, *Glinda of Oz*), mechanical men (Tik-Tok of Oz) and a bevy of not-yet-realized technological inventions and devices including perhaps the first literary appearance of handheld wireless communicators (Tik-Tok of Oz). In addition to Jack London wrote many science fiction stories, one of them is "*The Red One*" which is about extraterrestrials, Edward Everett Hale wrote *The Brick Moon*, about artificial satellite, and Edgar Rice Burroughs (1875–1950) began writing science fiction for pulp magazines just before World War I, his first story *Under the Moons of Mars* published in 1912. (*Wikipedia*)

Respected novels and works are all written by white male writers because black people in general were suffering of racism in that decade, black writings in science fictio were margins even they couldn't think about writing or publishing in SF, using black characters too in the writing because white writers believe that using black characters is irrelevant and will change the work somehow unless those characters' blackness was

somehow essential to the plots as a kind of stereotyping and racial issues. Octavia Butler asked in her essay "The Lost Races of Science Fiction". Why is science fiction so white? And commented that: Sf reaches into the future, the past, the human mind. It reaches out to other worlds and into other dimensions. Is it really so limited, then, that it cannot reach into the lives of ordinary everyday humans who happen not to be white?

White science fiction writers seemed to ignore the POC [person of color], Blacks, Asians, Hispanics, Asians, ...minority characters in general. Hence, they have their target readers from white writers to white readers, this kind of writing and thoughts considered as another oppression on the minorities because those oppressed people are not that important to write about. Further, this writing blindness on the POC is like modeling the future and making a political correctness of not mentioning those minorities. At the same time, however, the minorities and specifically African American society rejected the situation of being inferior, invisible and ignored in sf writings and in all the fields of life. Consequently, black intellectuals, poets, musicians, and decided to explore in their cultural identity and demonstrate their racial pride throughout a cultural movement in poetry, art, music..., according to Nathan Huggins:

Despite a history that had divided them, art and culture would reform the brotherhood in a common humanity... was an attitude of cultural elitism. But it is wrong to assume that these black intellectuals, because of it, were not related to the black common man in Harlem. I think ... most Negroes were apt to agree that [the artistic output] was a good... And such an achievement, because it was elite in character, was a source of race pride and an argument against continued discrimination.

(5-6)

Indeed, the cultural movement/ period termed as "The Harlem Renaissance" Started in the 1920's during the WWI . Firstly in poetry than to other fields The lack of a political voice and the prevalent racial hatred led many African Americans to express themselves via artistic means at the same time profit from wealthy whites to contribute to the success of their shows. The African American writer Alain Locke, was the first who innovate "New Negro" speaking about a young black artist who is representing the model that will change the racist thinking by proving that African Americans are not just obsequious and kindhearted. Others such as James Weldon Johnson, Marcus Garvey and W.E.B. Du Bois aided in the devastating of the movement by being believers in the importance of racial pride and real heritage.

The Harlem Renaissance was a turning point in the history of African American people and golden chance for writers like Nora Zeale Hurston, jazz artists like Louis Armstrong and entertainers like Josephine Baker to demonstrate that the African American culture not only belonged in American history but proved that the idea about black inferiority was a social construction. It also gave the opportunity to some black theater actors to perform among whites and which in turn aided in the rejection of blackface and minstrel shows.

The racial awakening ended during the Great Depression mostly because the African American community counted on wealthy white patrons to contribute to the success of their shows. Nevertheless, the movement inspired new authors, musicians and black intellectuals during the civil rights movement. Furthermore, many believe that the movement has paved the way towards social equality in the arts and within the American society, a handful of artists produced groundbreaking work that helped to define and direct black literature such as Phillis Wheatly poems on different subjects, Alice walker wrote the Pulitzer Prize winning novel and Octavia Butler as the first

African American female science fiction writer who shed the light on gender and race issues through writing the future in her works like *kindred*, *Down Grapple*, *parable of the Talent and parable of the Sower*. This later novel is our case study in this research which we will discuss the next sections of the work. (2).

1-2: The Feminist Afrofuturism: Black Science Fiction and Fantasy Fiction

Writers defined science fiction from different perspectives: Octavia Butler says that “science fiction must have internal consistency and science.” She also referred to it as belonging to the same family with fantasy. (qtd in Dreserova). Gregory E. Rutledge believes that there are similarities between science fiction and African literature: morality, religion, the supernatural and the human condition (in Dreserova). Other writers and critics such as Nalo Hopkinson define science fiction as a mixture of fantasy, speculative fiction, and futuristic fiction (Dreserova). Hopkinson states that: “science fiction is often used as an ‘umbrella term’. She calls for a move to subvert the genre of science fiction/fantasy” (Qtd in Dreserova). Scholars use the terms science fiction, speculative fiction, futuristic fiction, fabulist fiction, fantastical science fiction interchangeably. Science fiction seems to “resemble its incomplete definition” (Dreserova). Science fiction according to the Afro American science fiction writer Nalo Hopkinson “has always been a subversive literature”. It has the power to incite the reader to “think twice and thrice about a whole bunch of things in relation to each other: sexuality, race, class, color, history.”

Science fiction works are often confused with other genres such as fantasy and horror. Science fiction readers generally do not worry whether a given work belongs to the science fiction genre or not whereas,

scholars and critics tend to be more cautious (and finicky) about categorization so that many studies of science fiction as a genre begin with lengthy meditations on its definition often in order to distinguish it from other forms of 'speculative' fiction, such as fantasy and horror (Thomas 17).

Scholars talk about the relationship between fiction and science fiction. "Many scientists trace their inspiration to science fiction (SF), but as Carl Sagan (1996) notes, "the relationship between science and science fiction is cyclical and mutually reinforcing" (qtd in SVEC and Winiski). It's largely believed that:

Science and science fiction have done a kind of dance over the last century, particularly in respect to Mars. The scientists make a finding. It inspires science fiction writers to write about it, and host of young people read the science fiction and are excited, and inspired to become scientists to find out more about Mars.

As opposed to other genres, science fiction is perceived as 'low- status'. The magazines contributed to an unfortunate heritage of science fiction (Dreserova). The technological development and the advance in paper production made science fiction works accessible to readers. Science fiction is a popular genre "as opposed to high status (modernist) literature" (qtd in Dreserova 12). Science fiction readers find themselves in dialogue with the writer. This allows them to become writers themselves (Yaszek).

The African American science fiction is also referred to as Afrofuturism. The term was coined by Mark Dery in 1994. It refers to "the philosophy that combines elements of

science fiction, historical fiction, fantasy Afrocentrism and magic realism” (Alonso) with Western science fiction for the sake of criticizing the African people’s problems throughout history. “Traditionally, African American science fiction has been viewed through the lens of Afrofuturism” (Alonso) Afrofuturism is concerned with “themes and concerns of the African diaspora through a techno-culture and science fiction lens encompassing a range of media and artists with a shared interest in envisioning African futures that stem from Afro- diasporic experiences”(Allen 1353). Marlene D. Allen argues that:

Science fiction and the African culture are changing to embrace one another.

Science fiction is a powerful figurative tool ... its characteristics make it suited to addressing past and recent African- American experiences and confronting issues of the day. It is a significant distortion of the present It should be taught with attention historical context....It’s a tool for thinking about the here and now, and also for imagining alternatives – how the world might be different. (1353)

Samuel R. Delany, Greg Tate, Tricia Rose, Kodwo Eshun and Octavia Estelle Butler are among the most prominent “Afrofuturist” writers whose works drew scholars’ attention to the fact that all the African – especially the African American- writers share the same themes and techniques. Liza Yaszek in her *Afrofuturism, Science fiction and the history of the future* asserts that “over the last three decades both science fiction and Afrodiasporic scholars have become increasingly interested in what Sherrie R. Thomas calls Speculative fiction from the African diaspora”. Dery created the term Afrofuturism to refer to the speculative fiction that treats the African- American themes and addresses African American concerns in the 20th century. He presents it not only as a subgenre in science fiction but rather as a “larger aesthetic mode that encompasses a diverse range of artists

working in different genres and media who are united by their shared interest in projecting African futures derived from Afrodiasporic experiences” (qtd in Yaszek 41). From a sociological perspective, Afrofuturism is seen as the means to “explore futurist themes in African cultural production and the ways in which technological innovation is changing the face of African art and culture.” (Qtd in Yaszek)

Since its appearance in the 17th century, science fiction has always been controlled by male writers. The first African American science fiction works were as well written by men. This shows the sexism within the genre. This made it difficult for feminist writers to contribute to the development of the sci-fi genre. The feminist science fiction emerged around the 19th century (qtd in Agraso). Shelley Frankenstein could face the male dominance over the genre and give birth to many Feminist sci-fi works. The intervention of feminism in Science fiction was not an easy task for the white as well as the African feminist writers who had to confront the male centeredness as well as the political and cultural male domination over it. Some scholars see that:

The feminist intervention in science fiction has not been an easy one: writers have had to struggle not only against the weight of the male bias of the form but also against the weight of a cultural and political male hegemony that underpins the form itself. (Agraso, 6)

The origins of feminist/ female science fiction are traced back to the 1818s by Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein or the Modern Prometheus*. They paved the way for the 1930s and 1940s writers. Although Shelley’s *Frankenstein* did not include strong women characters, it could provide a critique to the notion of silenced women by male characters. In the 1960s, the Civil rights movement came up with major changes in the US society as well as its literature. The period is considered as a distinct one in the

history of the African American literature in terms of production and the themes that women dealt with, “the female authors who were previously silenced and disregarded were motivated to gain voice specific for their position in the society in order to speak about what they deemed important” (Dreserova 10). The topics that the African women writers dealt with depict their experience. These themes came to the forefront as well as their producers. This movement of African women literature is “associated with the African feminist thought” (10).

In the 1970s, greater numbers of female authors and ‘authors of color’ produced science fiction works. African female writers after the Civil Rights movement became aware of the oppression exerted on women. So, they attempted to challenge the genre’s traditions. “Octavia Estelle Butler is one of the most prominent science fiction figures and the pioneer of African feminist science fiction. She successfully used the genre to talk about the problems of women in patriarchal societies.” (14) The oppression of the African women in the American society is doubled. They are subjugated by men and the racist mentality of the Americans. African female writers found larger possibilities in science fiction to deal with their concerns. When asked about the secret behind her interest in the genre of science fiction, Butler answered that it “is supposed to be about exploring new ideas and possibilities. Nalo Hopkinson said I love science fiction and the ways in which it speculates on our world and social systems” (qtd in Dreserova).

1-2-1: A Perfect Future Makes a Boring Story

The only reason that utopian fiction isn’t more common, and generally tends more towards dystopian fiction, is for the simple reason that plot requires conflict; a perfect society where nothing goes wrong leaves little room for plot development. In a series like *Star Trek*, where the Earth has become a utopia and interstellar alliances are

formed, the plot must center on voyages in the *final frontier* of space to places that have not already achieved this utopia in order to be interesting. In something like the recent *The Wandering Earth* by Liu Cixin, a utopia of sorts regarding world unity, every nation working together towards a common cause, is only brought about through the looming, inevitable threat of the destruction of the planet. It's interesting to note that Thomas More's original story from which we get the term utopia was a satire. The word itself derives from bases meaning "no place," as in there isn't such a place as this that exists, but further, if you look more deeply into the workings of the "perfect" civilization shown in *Utopia*, it really doesn't appear to be one by our standards. Everyone thinks the same way and follows the same rules leading to a lack of imagination. Slavery and indentured servitude is a strong factor of this civilization. These elements tend to be more dystopian than utopian, a repression of idealism in favor of uniformity

Nowadays, technology becomes the dominant norm in the societies, which controls the political, religious, and legal aspects of humanity. These ones may be understood differently by individuals. People do not share similar ideas of living peaceful life because of their comprehension of utopia. Utopia has multifaceted views, those who see it as a model that resembles the "Garden of Eden" and others who illustrate it as an insignificant concept like the "diamond flowers", however, what mankind needs are the virtues and moralities. Utopia is an ancient notion; nevertheless it participates in the advancement of life through the embodiment of the technological innovations in mental and physical situations. Literature demonstrates the importance of the utopian concept (Dima-Laza 12).

In order to achieve a perfect life, humans should exceed their passive conflicts and the idea of "the survival for the fittest"; rather, they may be conscious of the

fundamental rules which make the world unique. Firstly, they must defeat jealousy and hostility, then, replacing them by kindness and intimacy. Probably there are naughty individuals who impede the society's amelioration because of their deeds, thence; they must marginalize them from (13).

These 'weeds' and 'rebels' portray the gloomy future of t human life. Their substitution of religion by political power prevents them their rights like choosing jobs and expressing their thoughts or points of view. In the dystopian fiction, the heroine destroys this authority, since she was born free from these social constraints. Anthony Burgess is the writer of the twentieth century who shows the human frustrated future with the endeavor to tackle the issues of rape, racism, and being free through his book *A Clockwork Orange* (13). Dystopian characters have restricted human rights under the power of the State. Consequently, society becomes an "illusion", the free will is deprived, the "inhabitant" looks for salvation through his acts in the dystopian community, the reader becomes aware of this situation (14). Since knowledge has a relation to utopia, it affects the human awareness to live peacefully, cooperatively, sharing the same ideas of building a typical world. The Church and the government participate in aiding people. Humanity must focus on nature too, to protect it by eliminating animal extinction, pollution and planting trees order to live in a utopian society (14).

Harlem Renaissance is the launch of the African -American science fiction in another expression it refers to the turning point that allows African-American writers to write about science fiction.

2-Section Two:

The Ecofeminist and Afrofuturist Writer Octavia Butler

The Second theoretical section will be on ecofeminism, hyperempathy and the presentation of the author as an afrofuturist writer, we will define ecofeminism and its principals, in addition to the author biography and her works in general.

2-1: The Overlap/the Outspring of Feminism and Ecology

Ecofeminism appeared in the 1970s and 1980s as a result of the overlap of environmental and feminist theories and activism. It is both a philosophy and a kind of literary criticism. It also refers to the link between ecology and the Feminist theory. The French writer Francoise Deaubonne first used the word in her *Le féminisme ou la mort* (1974). Ecofeminists claim that the scientific development led to a rupture between nature and culture. The ecofeminists' major concern is the investigation of the link between the oppression of women and that of nature by man. This oppression is believed to be justifying other kinds of domination of subordinate groups. Other feminist theories call it "the third wave feminism". It is also referred to as "deep ecology". Ecofeminists assert that ecofeminism is the outspring of the overlap of feminism and environmentalism. Ecofeminists assert that: "Ecofeminism provides an environmental critique of feminism and a feminist critique of Environmentalism" (in Hobgood). Ecofeminism aims to critic all forms of oppression of both humans and non-human creatures such as the domination, exploitation and subjugation of an 'other' (Alonso). The patriarchal systems stand behind the oppression of both women and nature. Androcentrism has long been justifying this domination. According to ecofeminists, all types of oppression are so linked that it became obligatory for them to address them all at once for efficiency. The patriarchal systems can only be fought with the combination of the force of Women's movements and that of ecological movements. Ruther in her *New woman/ New earth* states:

Women must see that there can be no liberation for them and no solution for the ecological crisis within a society whose fundamental model of relationship continues to be of domination. They must unite the demands of the woman's movement with those of the ecological movement to envision a radical reshaping of the basic socioeconomic relations and the underlying values of this [modern industrial] society (204).

One of the central tenets of ecofeminism is that: "Earth and the other-than-humans experience the tyranny of patriarchy along with women: Classism, racism, sexism, heterosexism, naturism, (a term coined by Warren) and speciesism are all intertwined" (Ruther qtd in Hobgood). Not only women are the victims of patriarchy; Animals, plants and earth are as well oppressed by androcentrism. Ecofeminism holds that patriarchy justifies its dominance through "Categorical or dualistic hierarchies: heaven/ earth, mind/ body, male/ female, human/ animal, spirit/ matter, culture/nature, white/ non- white" (Hobgood).

The justification of androcentrism through dualism must be ended otherwise humanity will constantly be "divided against" itself as Griffin explains the impact of dualism on people's minds. Ecofeminism rejects the division of culture through dualism because ecofeminists consider themselves advocates for justice on earth. In her *Introduction of Feminism: Women, Culture, Nature*; Warren claims: "What makes ecofeminism distinct is its insistence that nonhuman nature and naturism: that is to say the unjustified domination of nature) are feminist issues. Ecofeminist philosophy extends familiar feminist critiques of socialisms of domination to nature (qtd in Hobgood 3). Ecofeminists ask for the substitution of dualism by "radical diversity and relationship on both biodiversity and the feminist emphasis on strength of difference"

(Hobgood 3). Some Ecofeminists talk about the effect of the “shift from Neolithic villages to city-based states with the accompanying rise of patriarchal cultural systems” (4).

Ecofeminism is tightly linked to political activism. This makes the field open to development and permits its evolvement by the advances in both ecologist and feminist theories. Sue V. Rosser in her *Eco-feminism: Lessons for Feminism from Ecology* states: “Feminists have successfully used the lens of Gender to critique the extent to which androcentric bias has distorted the theory and practice of science” (143)

The feminists’ critique to science and environment provided more humane approaches to science. Ecofeminists linked the abuse of nature and woman to the abuse of the theoretical as well as the practical sides of science. They documented that in the past – the 17th century-, men considered themselves parts of nature with which women were identified. This is called The Organic Hermetic Approach to science (Merchant 1979 and Griffin1978-1989). Then they shifted to a mechanistic, objective approach where both the environment and nature were exploited by man (Keller 1985). Ecofeminists suggested a third approach to science based on feminist “interdisciplinary” (Rosser 1989), “holistic” (Hubbard 1985) and “qualitative” (Harding 1986) methods. Feminists believe that women are less likely to harm or exploit the environment and nature (Keller 1983 and Goodfield 1981). Other feminists speak about “the male as norm” protocol of research which led to the exclusion of women from being subject to experiments. This exclusion is mainly protective to women as it is based on the biological recognition that pregnant women as well as their offspring are sensitive to such kinds of tests. Sue V Rosser wrote:

Other Feminists in science (Hamilton 1985 and Lancaster1975) have revealed the hidden “male-as-norm” research protocols that have led to women’s routine

exclusion as experimental subjects in drug trials, and in testing of effects of hazardous materials, such as pesticides and radioactive nuclear waste. (Rosser, 143)

The importance of interdisciplinary approaches to science and the environment and the use of qualitative and quantitative methods lie especially in matters of women's health: pregnancy, child birth and the menopause (Hamilton 1985 and Rosser1975).The application of qualitative and quantitative methods to environmental issues proved very beneficial and gave good results (Hynes). All feminist eco-criticism to science calls for the blurring of all sorts of borders between the basic and the applied sciences. They assert that exploitative and destructive researches to people and to the environment are allowed by androcentrism because their permission justifies the oppression of nature and of groups of people by other dominant groups on the basis of "race, gender, class, sexuality or nationality" (Bleider 1984). "In this sense, both ecologists and feminists share the same commitment to political and social action based on their principles" (Rosser 143). Ecofeminists made clear links between the oppression of women and that of the environment by the androcentrism of modern science (King 1983-1989 and Harding 1986). They proposed an improved science that would result from less androcentrism (Keller, 1982). Ecofeminists draw a great attention to the woman nature relationship. On this basis, scholars distinguish between different types of ecofeminism; liberal, cultural/radical, spiritual, social and socialist ecofeminism (Alonso 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74)

Literary critics have different responses to ecofeminism. Its supporters claim that it is a new way of criticizing domination. They propose "gendered and natured religions (Sandilands in Alonso). The movement has also been attacked and criticized

first because of its name. Some scholars refuse the nomination 'ecofeminism'. They see that there is no need to add 'eco' to feminism. They argue that feminism is already concerned with all kinds of oppression (Alonso).

2-2: Sharing People's Pain (Hyper-Empathy)

Empathy has been defined in various ways, psychologically, philosophically, and neuroscientifically, as well, its connection to ethics. This term participates in building a mutual society based on respect and forgiveness, since it makes them value and support each other, but these functions in moral cases. Empathy is linked to "feeling" and "thinking". Justin Dams, for instance, sees that empathy is someone's ability to trigger or transmit feelings, and it is the indirect reflection toward the conception of another. Hence, empathy is related to the 'congruent emotion', which means that the individual tests similar situation of the other, but not his feelings, "empathy involves responding to the perceived feelings of another with vicarious emotional reactions of one's own, and empathy is the capacity for, or the occurrence of, such a vicarious experience". However, in some cases, empathy would be misunderstood if somebody causes sufferings to another with enjoyment, and he views him/herself in the same situation, that simulation cannot be considered as empathy, since he/she never 'feels' what the other feels (Oxley 15-16).

According to Peter Goldie and Robert Gordon, empathy denotes the human being's imagination and "simulation" of thoughts and feelings for another one, and he follows similar footsteps, but this disregards the awakened emotion to get influenced by

another case, it is the 'affective dimension of empathy', what the psychologists see as a condition of empathy. For Goldie, it is "a process or procedure by which a person centrally imagines the thoughts, feelings, and emotions of another person", whilst, Gordon sees it as "an imaginative shift in the reference of indexicals' where the imaginer 'recenters his egocentric map'" (15-16).

The idea of empathy has appeared in the twentieth century; psychologists defined it as a "functional account", which contains two distinctive notions "emotional contagion" and "an imaginative perspective-taking". The first one illustrates the person who reacts or transmits his/her feelings toward the other automatically, David Hume, for example, portrays empathy as an emotional contagion like someone's ability to "receive by communication" the "inclinations and sentiments" of others, "however different from or even contrary to our own" because he wants the humans to feel both the enjoyment and anxiety of the others, but it does not include the whole figures of empathy. However, the second is about one's imagination to occupy or to exchange the position or function of another, thence, he can feel him. Adam Smith views that "someone is balanced on a tightrope",

By the imagination we place ourselves in his situation, we conceive ourselves enduring all the same torments, we enter as it were into his body, and become in some measure the same person with him, and thence form some idea of his sensations, and even feel something which, though weaker in degree, is not all together unlike them (qtd in Oxley 16-17-18-19).

2-3: Octavia Butler: A Prescient Visionary

Octavia Estelle Butler is a very successful writer of African American origin who plunged skillfully in the scope of science fiction. She was born on 22 June, 1947, in Pasadena, California (Butler, *Voices* 1). She experienced a harsh life because of poverty and racism. Her African father, Laurice was poor and worked as a shoe shiner; what is more sorrowful is that he died when she was very young. Since Octavia M. Butler had no one to let her daughter with while working, then she took her with. Here, Butler confronts the unfairness and racism because of her mother's job:

“My mother was a maid and sometimes she took me to work with her when I was very small and she had no one to stay with me”. Butler realized the circumstances of this conventional job became intergenerational ones, “I used to see her going back doors, being talked about while she was standing right there, and basically being treated like a non-person”(Alonso, *Redefining humanity in science fiction* 1).

Octavia M. Butler would not let her daughter taste the same ruthless life as hers; however, she conceptualized a respectful avocation for her. Butler exceeded dyslexia and figured out her talent of writing at premature age in which she found a refuge and a good mean to escape her dystopia, “I was writing when I was 10 years old” (Butler, *Telling* 1).

In 1968, Butler extradited an Associate of Arts degree from Pasadena City College, and then she presented California State University. Her hope to be an author accomplished early up to the “Open Door Program for minority writers sponsored by the writer's Guild of America, West, and then through the Clarion Science fiction & Fantasy Writers' Workshop”. Here she met Harlan Ellison and Samuel R. Delany who are valued and be spoken about her achievements (Butler, *Telling* 1).

The film "Devil Girl from Mars" (1954) has affected Butler to write, "I was writing my own little stories and when I was 12, I was watching a bad science fiction movie [Devil Girl from Mars] and decided that I could write a better story than that. And I turned off the TV and proceeded to try, and I've been writing science fiction ever since" (Alonso,1). Since Butler was very poor, she wrote in the night and worked in the day. The first novel to be sold for her was *Patternmaster* (1976), then *Doubleday* (1975), rapidly pursued by two others which were *Mind of My Mind* (1977) and *Survivor* (1978) (Butler, *Telling 3*). These novels originate the superpower of human beings by Butler the child in the *Patternists* series. She wanted to picture the widespread themes of these novels like power and its use, the position of women in society, and the problems of people classification (*Telling 3*).

Blood child and other stories, which was proclaimed 'Notable book' by the New York Times, set up Butler as the vigorous contemporary literary writer. The short story had gained all of the Nebula Award for Best Novelette in 1984, the Science fiction Chronicle Award in 1985, and the Locus Award for Best Novelette in 1985. Butler's novel 'Speech Sounds' gained the Hugo Award for Best Short Story in 1984, also the Nebula award for her novella *The Evening and the Morning and the Night* in 1987 (Alonso, 1).

Butler, late 1980's, went up in other series of novels illustrate the human beings' dilemma, who select their crossbreeding and end racially, started by *Dawn: Xenogenesis* in 1987. *Adulthood Rites* was written in (1988) and *Imago* in (1989). The critic Rosemary Stevenson sets dawn; "character development, human relationships, and social concerns predominate over intergalactic hardware" (Butler, *Voices 2*). *Parable of the Sower* (1993) and *Parable of the Talents* (1998) were the first books of two volumes that were appointed for the Nebula Award of Best Novels. In 1995, she won the

MacArthur Foundation 'Genuis' Grant which pays \$295, 000 over five years (*Voices*, 2).

Butler died in 2006 as a result of fall (Alonso, 105,106, 107).

Octavia Butler becomes the first African American feminist writer who dominates the science fiction genre unlike the other ones. She uses tales in her novels to help the readers understand morals about the human beings' life, history, economic crises, sexism, and race. Butler's simple style makes the readers grab easily her intelligible messages. She plays the history demonstrator in her writings in the true world, essentially the African American one –texts in the future – in order to appear both modern and authentic modes. Because the world of science fiction submits the African American author's boundless options, Butler and other contemporaneous colleagues like Walter Mosely, Samuel Delany, Steven Barnes, and Nalo Hopkinson become qualified to discuss issues of history and race in their writings (Allen 1354).

Butler aims to make the heroines stand up in front of their predecessors to see both the sufferings and the alienations that they are faced relying on time travel. She indicates the unfairness and the injustices that are continuing nowadays for the African Americans and the minorities as symbolized in Ralph Ellison's word 'boomerang' (1354). The successful and most notorious works of Butler in the twentieth century, best represented in four novels: *Wild Seed*, *Kindred*, *Parable of the Sower* and *Parable of the Talents* (Manju and Nalini 84).

... Octavia Butler's *Kindred* share the subject of slavery. Butler in her works presents nightmare, science fiction, and imagination unlike what the opponents were waiting from her. She foresees a refuge and a safety in the world of science fiction. Butler has interests too in scientific fields such as genetics, physical science, and biology (84-85).

Butler's novels are not only about science fiction or reading for pleasure. She wrote to address people, critic a situation spread a culture or an idea, racial issues and slavery in an intelligent way and a brilliant plot like what she did in her novel *Kindred* where she is depicting the historical enslavement culture of Americans, that a black women cannot marry a white man and the opposite. In *Kindred* the main character is a black woman named Dana who is drawn into the past of her distant ancestors, but she likes Rufus Weylin, the son of a plantation owner, is endangered. She knows from her family Bible that is not good in their culture, but she was forced to accompanied her owner Kevin Franklin. Butler's narrative not only tells the history of Dana and Kevin's relationship, but she narrates and comments the conditions of the past of enslavement and racism which are the conditions of 1976 America. (*Elisabeth, 258,259*)

Likewise, *Parable of the Sower* (1993) and its continuation *Parable of the Talents* are an apocalyptic science fiction novels inscribed in a memoir model. The stories own a religious style because they are picked out from the Bible, thence; Butler shows the readers instructions about life and methods to escape the threats around us because of our conducts. The Parables are almost placed in the future to clarify our immediate deeds and their influences in the different fields.

The novels symbolize both the powerless government of the United States and the nominal position of the feeble President, till the President Andrew Steele Jarret comes in *Parable of the Sower*. America becomes in a miserable situation, no food, no drinkable water, the gasoline price increases. Its citizens are ignorant; the scarceness of works makes them live the submissive poorness. Hence, Butler indicates the terrifying future in the Parables novels as Robert Butler explicates "Robledo becomes a frightening

metaphor of America in gridlock, a world that closely resembles the nineteenth century plantation that trapped Frederick Douglass and the twentieth-century ghetto that immobilized Bigger Thomas" (Allen 1355-1356).

Therefore, the fall of the government moderates a vicious and polymorphous slavery in Butler's novels. According to the theories of Ralph Ellison about the impacts of African American history and the American culture, he says, "First, something happens to us; and then, just wait, it happens to every other group in America" (qtd. in Fabre and O'Meally 4). The twentieth century witnesses an integration of the technological progress and the permeable capitalism in the novels which will drive human beings, whatever their race to be weak and to get enslaved. Economic effects of capitalism exercise upon the African American that are what Butler reviewed, the case of the Invisible Man who stands up to the mistreatment in Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* (1952).

Since subjugation in the novels has many aspects such as the leaders who are exploiting the farmers and are selling the slaves, Butler exemplifies the KFS Company, Stamm, and Frampton which dominate the seaboard in order to make potable water. For FRS, it announces an investigation for masterful workers who are literate and cultural, with presenting secure lodging in front of their jobs with minimum wages. Cory was attracted by the KFS Company, and because of the animosity and trauma that the family suffers from, she wants Olamina to engage in. The company carries viscous aims, especially that the President Richard Donner has disrupted the fairness of the workers. Lauren apprehends their pitfall "Anyone KFS 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 dept, hang into them, and

work them harder. Debt slavery” (*Talents 107*). Thus, its workers are enslaved to the company’s debt (1356-1357).

To substitute the capitalist companies by the vulnerable government as prevailing power, this becomes in science fiction a mutual trait in which the writers enunciate it as a modern scare like KFS Company. Butler asserts of slaves debt in *Parable of the Sower* through Lauren Olamina, who is aware of the risks and marks that:

Maybe Olivar is the future-one face of it. Cities controlled by big companies are hold hat in science fiction. . .The company- city sub-genre always seemed to start a hero who outsmarted, overthrew, or escaped the “the company”. I’ve never seen one where the hero fought like hell to get taken in and underpaid by the company. In real life, that’s the way it will be. That’s the way it is (1357).

Butler illustrates the KFS issues in the future and its persecution for the African American as slaves through history by using three tenses (past, present, and future). She also includes the employees in the undeveloped countries, who work for scrimpy pay in their homeland to the Americans. Capitalism cause segregation and starvation to humanity under the sense of promoting democracy as Butler indicates in her terms. This view is not ultimately pessimistic, but through Olamina and her *Earthseed* book, Butler gives chances of variation toward the effects of slavery. Lauren by nature is able to direct her fellows, that way, she wants to cross the planet with them, however, they must confront and move forward their grievous past (1357-1358).

The African-American writer Octavia Estelle Butler depends on ecofeminism theory to depict the image of America in the 90s and makes predictions using a futuristic vision.

The theoretical part of the research could be more detailed, but we tried to grasp what is more important from the history of science fiction , why do we write it, the Harlem renaissance as turning point in the history of African American history. Our respect novel and author in addition to our major focus ecofeminism and hyperempathy.

II-Chapter Two:

Science Fiction under Ecofeminism Lens

Our practical chapter is concerned with the investigation of illustrations of the studied literary theories in the text. Different examples will be taken from the novel to demonstrate the presence of the theories we dealt with in the theoretical chapter. Examples of science fiction, utopia, dystopia and ecofeminism as well as the theme of hyperempathy will be explored to reveal the aim behind their use by the author. And this practical chapter is divided into two sections:

1-Section One:

Science fiction in *Parable of the Sower*

In this section we will talk about the novel as science fiction genre, how did the writer predicted the near future and we will explain how the two notions of utopia and dystopia; where the world is collapsing down because of global warming and degradation of the environment. While, utopia in the idea of earthseed in order to travel out of the earth to another planet.

1-1: The Prophetic Vision of *Parable of the Sower*

Albert Einstein stated that time travel could never be possible for humans, but people throughout their imagination have made things come true in tales, stories, novels...they went beyond times and places to the future. Science fiction was their genuine contrivance to prove that the human mind and imagination cannot be limited whether those people, tellers, or writers were time travelers or not. Our focus is writers who by their novels makeshift in the history of humanity, but it's safe to say they all had experiences reminiscent of the next phase in history. Their detailed storytelling foretold many events, or more specifically, the very machinery that revolutionize our time. At least, for what it's worth, they saw into the future and idealized worlds, facts, concepts that we never expect or imagine. They shaped such imaginary things. That is what makes some of the science fiction novels predicting the future some of the best pieces of literature, for not only have they outlasted the test of time, but literally saw through it.

The rise of the novel is only a semi-recent invention, in its current form. I say semi-recent as anthropologically two or three hundred years is not a very long span in human creative history. With the rise of the novel came a debate over whether such

fictions could be harmful. If a piece of writing so authoritatively states something to be true, who's to say that some won't be hoodwinked into taking it for fact? Thus the inception of the novel form was inevitable, a label used to indicate "extended pieces of prose fiction" generally agreed to be "between 60-70,000 words and, say, 200,000" (Cuddon 160) according to Penguin's Dictionary of Literary Terms. Much like literature, the definition of the novel is very broad and vague, allowing for a lot of permutations and subjectivity. The definition here extends for nearly 40 pages, while other definitions might have merely a sentence or paragraph. One particular aspect of the definition that is salient is when it continues, "broadly speaking, the term denoted a prose narrative about characters and their actions in what was recognizably everyday life and usually in the present, with the emphasis on things being 'new' or a 'novelty.'" (Cuddon 160) and "it is a form of story or prose narrative containing characters, action and incident, and, perhaps, a plot." (Cuddon 160) Thus, a novel is a piece of longer fiction that has a degree of verisimilitude and contains characters and events. This could be literary fiction, genre fiction, or any story of adequate format and length. No one is arguing over whether genre fiction can be considered novels, of course. But the distinction comes from the vague notion of "literature," and the contrast between what is seen as a "literary" novel and a piece of genre fiction. There is not a huge amount of crossover. The difference that I've seen is that, there tends to be an academic disdain for science fiction as a genre, as well as genre fiction in general, and works that tend to be considered "literary" (containing powerful motifs, being widely respected, etc.) are almost never science fiction, and in fact tend more towards realistic fiction and strongly character based plot. There are a few notable exceptions like Orwell's *1984*, Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* and Octavia's *Parable of the Sower* but works like those and other works containing sci fi elements that are accepted as literary tend more broadly to fall into the

category of speculative fiction than specifically science fiction. The fantastic, science fictional elements in those novels only go so far as they are required to express an idea or motif; in Fahrenheit 451 the television walls represent societal distraction and loss of substance, while the fast cars symbolize human carelessness. Essentially, the science fiction works accepted as literary are those with a very effective novum.

Parable of the Sower is a science fiction novel more than speculative fiction, the writer Octavia Butler imagined the future of America where racial and ethnic issues are present throughout the novel. Octavia Butler predicted in her post modernism novel (written in 1993). Butler created a future America in 2024 in which the country has fallen apart and the American society is rapidly breaking down thanks to global warming, economic stagnation and wealth disparity. The scary thing is that how 2024's Butler imagined twenty years ago what could easily happen within ten years?

Parable of the Sower takes place in the US where societies are disintegrating. So many science fiction novels describe world changing events; but in Octavia's *parable* include nearly everything such as shortages in gas, water, food, governmental collapse, pollution, climate change. . . There are police, but they investigate and then charge user fees; there are property taxes and there are colleges; there is electricity and there are entertainment outlets (like televisions, etc.); there are insurance companies and resources, but everything for an elevated price and most people do not have the ability to pay for these items and services. What happens is that these institutions are not efficient, they are not accessible to most individuals and there is a heavy cost to purchase their services. There are still jobs and corporations and apparently very successful corporations. People without education and without jobs, crowd in to smaller housing and share space. Corporations dominate certain sectors of society and provide

protection and infrastructure to those who can afford it. Punitive debt policies and employment policies are in place that hurt individuals but benefit corporations.

These details are describing the current state of some countries in this world right now, where there is no protection for the individual beyond what they can obtain from people in their community and families, people already go on migrations to new places (bordering countries, mega cities, factory rich regions) with nothing but a small savings and a hope for anything different.

Butler extrapolated her vision of a near-future dystopia from what she read in the news, forecasting what kind of collapse might result if the forces of late-stage capitalism, climate change, mass incarceration, big dharma, gun violence, and the tech industry continued unhampered. She also thought social progress was reversible. As the public sphere became hollowed out, a fear of change would create an opening for retrograde politics. With collapse, racism would become more overt.

In the novel in 2024 People are desperate and empty of any hope, struggling to live in small communities behind walls which they need for protection. Police and fire fighters only come to help if you have the money to pay them, and even then they are more likely to arrest you than assist you. Few jobs pay money. Most people are slipping into the factories, slaves as servants to the wealthy or employees in company-run towns. The new president promises to "Make America Great Again," — sound familiar?

Octavia stated in her novel a naughty president says that "he will make America great again". For more than decade it came the president Trump and he used the same slogan of making America great again but the shaky Trump unfortunately he is doing the opposite. He do so by eliminating the space program and loosening all labor protections,

which only gives large corporations a freer hand in cutting up the carcass of the United States. Furthermore, what he is doing today against the poor immigrants and of threatening the world peace. Hence, he is immoral and shiftless because all he cares about is money no matter how.

The United States President is rather a Baptist minister, like Lauren's father, he is the chief of the Christian American society. Andrew Steele Jarret put policy endeavors America to get back its "glorious past" and "reeducating" those who belong to different minorities, and make them believe the "traditional" Christianity. This is Butler's fear pictures on Jarret, who shows the past as gloomy and says,

America was God's country and we were God's people and God took care of his own . . . These people . . . These pagans are not only wrong. They are dangerous. They're destructive as bullets, as contagious as plagues, as poisonous as snakes to the society they infest. . . They are lovers of Satan, seducers of our children, rapists of our women, drug sellers, usurers, thieves, and murders" (qtd in Allen 1361).

Andrew wants to enslave the Acorn through the aggression of the Crusaders, in this moment, Lauren and Acorn's group should confront the history to pick up morals represented in *Parable of the Talents*. The Crusaders disconnect the wives and their kids to be reeducated and erected under the Christian America. The whites represent civilization for "heathen and subhuman" Africans; it is a kind of racism in order to exploit them. Olamina and Bankole' house is destructed because of the Crusaders. Her daughter, Larkin was taken away from her to live in the middle class family who are African and Christian (Allen 1361-1362).

Larkin is a fifteen years old, a weak young girl abused sexually as the story of Harriet Jakobs. She does not believe in Christianity of America, or the faith of her mother, also she becomes disaffected lady because of the disconnection and the growing up far away of her family. Lauren cannot teach her daughter language, culture, and religion, the same for the African Americans who are separated of their identities after coming to the new world. Both the mother and the daughter do not agree the result of the social constraints. Butler indicates that we must change the world vision to the solidarity and the cooperation between us (1362).

After publishing the novel people started to ask about what is called dark future could really happen if things go in the wrong direction (If this goes on, then...). In her lifetime, Octavia snarkily proclaimed that it was just a novel, and insisted that the Parable series was not intended as an augur. "This was not a book about prophecy," she said, of "Talents," in remarks she delivered at M.I.T. "This was a cautionary tale, although people have told me it was prophecy. All I have to say to that is: I certainly hope not."

The protagonist is an African American girl 18 years old is born with a dangerous condition, hyper-empathy, which means she feels whatever pain she witnesses inflicted on others. When her neighborhood is finally breached and she is forced out into the harsh new world, this empathy is only one of her great challenges. Lauren has an idea for a new kind of society, a new religion that will teach self-sufficiency and a new understanding of what God is, but to realize her dream, she first has to stay alive and learn who she can trust.

Lauren Olamina lives with her family in a walled-off middle class neighborhood outside California, but she knows that their little island of relative safety will not last. No one can leave the compound without risking their lives. Laura's father is a Baptist

minister. She rejects his religion. She keeps a diary and begins to write poems about what she believes about God. God is change. She calls her beliefs by the name "Earthseed". When her father goes missing and the walled town is attacked, Laura escapes with her life and a small pack with some food, a change of clothes, money and her diaries. She finds two others from her town and they begin a long journey north adding others to their group as they travel. Laura's group grows and continues to evade the worst thugs while settling down on land owned by one of the members. The community grows and Earthseed grows. Danger from the outside world, especially the politician Jarrett's followers, finally catches up to the community which endures more than a year of captivity.

The story ends near here and continues on in *Parable of the Talents*. Together, these two books are extraordinary. The characters are real and compelling and Butler could foresee some of the problems we face today. Therefore, she became the first African American woman who wrote on science fiction along with predictions and some solutions using ecofeminism and science fiction to address the environmental and social issues from an African American perspective .

1-2: The Novel as an African American Landmark

Octavia Butler in all her works attempts to transmit messages to her readers. She teaches lessons about life, history, and the continuous threats to humanity through her characters and imaginary futuristic setting. In *Parable of the Sower*, Butler creates her characters to talk about the inequalities that she herself went through. Set in a chaotic society in 2024? The story gives an image of the effects of the damage generated by the technological development on the environment as well as the people. The writer is specialized in the African American history. She creatively resorts to science fiction

techniques of futuristic thought and life on other planets to talk about real African American history, events and social imbalances. Octavia Butler excelled in generating “highly original ways” to depict them. Lauren Oya Olamina creates a religion based on the principle of equal chances of education for all the people (rich and poor) as a response to “a futuristic society where only the wealthiest Americans are formally educated”. Although the events of the story take place in 2024, social inconsistencies are there. The technological development did not solve social and environmental problems but rather aggravated them (Allen1357).

The protagonist Olamina does not want to stay in the past, rather, she wants to inspire from its morals. She is a classical hero in the world of science fiction. Gary Westfahl recognizes widespread sorts of protagonists exemplified as the “Self-Reliant Individual” and the “Society-Generating Individual” in the world of science fiction (1358).

Unlike the other figures of science fiction, Lauren Olamina awakens “African, white, Asian, and Latino, rich and poor, gay and straight”, in the apocalyptic world. Harriet Jacobs’ *Incidents in the Life of Slave Girl* and Octavia Butler assert the Afrocentric notion for decisive society; they show how their companions support them to obtain the independence. Butler breaks up the foreign sample version, and she makes it as standard “alien”; the humans are strangers because of their reflection to admit the deep rooted and diverged shift in Lauren book. Lauren intends to batter against the capitalist questions because of its mistaken authority, and her passive surroundings as they are attached to the modern world without paying attention to their history; which make them find better resolutions for their traumas, she constructs a regulation for the hold of humanity (1359).

The American society becomes in jeopardy, so Lauren tends to accomplish a faith which is full of hope that she and her companions can live in clean climate, varied races, and security in a new star. Olamina's father, Laurence is a Baptist, preacher, and the chief of Robledo community who learns her how to write and live, yet he is adhesive to the history of the twentieth century. He believes in the "good old days come back". Laurence ratifies "a big-daddy-God or a big-cop-God" that turns out matters to the correct way (Parable, 13). The baptism is necessary for babies; they do so in hard conditions completely dangerous from the outsiders' wall. Laurence stands against the "scientific principle of adaptation", rather he expects the "good old days" will back which makes his death (1359-1360).

Olamina loses her family in the "crazies" spike of the walled city that her father Laurence built to protect themselves. These events are the reasons to start her journey toward the North, and she attains her faith "the modern underground railroad" which is finally the Earthseed, and her losses illustrate the twentieth century's remains which impact the life of Lauren and the gracefulness that she finds. Gant Britton notices that, "It is significant that ...all of the elders in the Olamina community are killed off or move away, whereas Lauren ... is one of the few to survive. Here Butler seems to be dramatizing the death of an old world-view living Lauren alive to pursue the work of creating a new one" (285)? (1360).

Throughout, multiple circumstances we find the protagonist suffer of everyone and everything around her. Thus, Lauren breaks up the conventional religion to an Earthseed which is an amalgamation for both science theories and faith "to embrace diversity" as well as Hinduism, Christianity, Judaism, and Buddhism. In the Parables series, Butler seeks liberty throughout crossing space. Lauren suffers from

hyperempathy because of her mother's drug addiction during pregnancy, so she is the only one who can guide people outside their slavery. Although this syndrome gets weak its sufferers, but it has favorable effects to be "sharers" as Lauren tells "very slow to cause pain to other people. We hate pain more than the most people do" (Talents94). Butler denotes the empathy in *Incidents in the Life of Slave Girl* by Harriet Jacobs because Harriet uses a white female protagonist, in order to make the white readers conceptualize the effects of slavery and get rid of its horrors (Allen 1363).

Therefore, Butler asserts the past lessons in order teach from it, but not to stay in. Both Butler's *the Parables* and Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* novels have a mysterious end. The *Earthseed* book is not typical for utopia because Lauren could not establish a model community as it registered. In addition, Olamina did not accomplish her faith to cross the stars; however, it ends in a starship called *Christopher Columbus* with a very old lady who led them. For Butler, people may quit the earth but not their past. The moral from this novels is that the creation of multifaceted community as Jerry Phillips 'depiction to it "is an experiment in enlightened communalism (a communalism that transcends differences in race, class, gender, and sexuality)" (309). Butler's issue in her novels is that the readers are speculating if the fellows of her religion like what Ralph Ellison illustrates "boomeranged by history", or they will be educated by it (1364).

Butler recounted about the protagonist Lauren Oya Olamina who lives in an oneirodynia world, Robledo, California. Lauren misses her family and becomes alone to defend herself in front of many obstacles in the world around her. Olamina travels with her fellows to the North where they adopt a new religion that she creates: "All that you touch, you change. All that you change, changes you". The discovery of the *Earthseed* sows a hope in her partners, and they become aware of the best and the worst of human

issues. The novel depicts the frustrated future of the United States characterized the climate change, social issues, politics, illiteracy, and drug addiction. Olamina future husband, Taylor Bankole portrays the reasons of the awful variations that happen in the series of parables when he mentions:

I have read that the period of upheaval that journalists have begun to refer to as “the Apocalypse” or more commonly, or more bitterly, the “Pox,” lasted from 2015 to 2030— a decade and a half of chaos .This is untrue. The Pox has been a much longer torment. It begun well before 2015, perhaps even before the turn of millennium . . .

She adds that:

I have also read that the Pox was caused by accidently coinciding climactic, economic, and sociological crises. It would be more honest to say that the Pox was caused by our own refusal to deal with obvious problems in those areas. We caused the problems: then we sat and watched as they grew into crises . . . I have watched a convenience, profit, and inertia excused greater and more dangerous environmental degradation. I have watched poverty, hunger, and disease become inevitable for more and more people. Overall, the Pox has had the effect of an installment –plan World War II (qtd in Allen 1354-1355).

Parable of the Sower is written in diary form and its action is divided into two parts spanning from July 20. 2024 to October 10. 2027. In the first part, Lauren Oya Olamina lives in a walled, besieged community where families and individuals come apart little by little, like "a rope, breaking. a single strand at a time" (*Parable*. 107) and where "things are unraveling, desintegrating bit by bit" (113). The second part of the

novel -the flight to the North toward Canada that stands for " anywhere where I can be paid for my services and allowed to live among people who aren't out to killing me for my food or water" (242). When Olamina went there, Butler addresses an important theme of slavery as a major tradition of Afro-American literature "as some kind of twenty-first century slave" (155)

Slave narratives show the early connection between the physical journey and the process of psychological self-recognition of the individual. The motif ex-slaves reconstruct their history and shape the experiences of their lives to validate their identity. The journey North -the road to freedom-becomes, thus, a central experience in the autobiography of women slaves. An experience which facilitates both the physical and spiritual liberation (Álvarez 264). Furthermore this novel can be tackled from an autobiography perspective as Susan Willis argues that "journey in the novels by black women is not just a structuring device upon which the author might conveniently string the incidents of plot. Rather, the riot of travelling through space is integral to the unfolding of history and development of the individual's consciousness with regard to the past" (*BlackWomenWriters*. 220).

Hence, the voyage over geographic space is an expanded metaphor for the process of one person's coming to know who she is -not as an individual, but as a subject who gathers up the collective experience of black Americans, who then, in writing about that experience, gives shape and substance to the self in history. (Susan 1)

Through "time or interplanetary travel, encounters with alien beings, characters with poisoned powers and futuristic settings", Octavia Butler is able to deal with "the many wounds of the past of the African Americans and other marginalized groups" (Allen 1356). Butler's conceptualization of time reflects the "Afrocentric notion" that the

hardships of “racism and sexism” that the ancestors (slaves) witnessed in the past are “ever- present and continue to affect the psyche of the African Americans today” (Allen). The story reveals to the reader “that technology permits a false sense of freedom”. The characters want to escape from the “chaotic technologically and monetarily motivated societies” (Marotta) they live in. Technology is destructive to human life and nature. It can ensure life on earth only when used in harmony with nature. Lauren was the first to grow the awareness that survival on the planet earth can only be achieved via change. Her journey to Bankole allowed her to transmit her knowledge to others.

Parable of the Sower shows the writer’s commitment to the “Afrocentric aesthetic in her science fiction worlds” (Allen). Through Olamina’s Earthseed religion that emphasizes the idea of change “Something purposeful and constructive” (*Parable* 253) and “whose destiny is to find freedom in the outer space”; Butler teaches the reader how to create techniques to survive despite “the environmental, social and economic crises” (Allen 1354). The novel is –in a way or another- a continuation to the slave narratives. Lauren’s “quest to plant the seeds of her religion “Earthseed” joins her to previous “heroes and heroines in African American literature beginning with the earliest slave narrators and simultaneously advocates for the enlightenments and insight that science fiction can provide as a prophetic tool for change” (1355). Octavia Butler asserts that people’s “current actions and inactions” upon economic, environmental and social affairs determine the future of future generations. The novel depicts the futuristic California in the near future (2024) differently from other science fiction texts. The situation is not caused by a catastrophic event like nuclear wars, evasion by alien beings. The destruction of the environment as well as the human, economic and social decomposition result from humanity’s refusal to act appropriately upon issues that threaten peoples’ lives.

Being an Afro-American writer, Butler focuses on the idea of the necessity of education for African Americans and other ethnic groups to escape their subjugation by the whites. Olamina's father holds a ph D. He provided education for his daughter according to Olamina's father, sounds like "half antebellum reviva! and half science fiction", and he adds, "freedom is dangerous ... but it's precious, too. You can 't just throw it away or let it slip away. You can't sell it for bread and pottage." (*Parable*112). In this state things, Olamina envisions her task as that of a "crew of a modern underground railroad" (268), and she emerges in the text as a liberator of oppressed people -"Things are breaking down more and more ... I'll tell you, though, if we can convince ex-slaves that they can have freedom with us, one will fight harder to keep it" (268).. This allowed Olamina to prove herself as "fathers daughter" and to become a leader in a community where the majority is illiterate. Education and life experiences- journey to Bankole's land- rendered the protagonist more equipped with knowledge to transmit to others in the story. In *Sower*, Butler wants to convey that technology and nature must be interlinked for the preservation of human existence on earth.

1-2-1: White and Black Future in *Parable of the Sower*

Butler astutely joins two subgenres of science fiction, utopia and dystopia, in order to debate the African Americans' dilemmas such as the unfairness and the disparities which they were suffering from. This kind of writing allowed her as a feminist writer to free women and to invent a new personality for them like brilliant, miraculous, travelers through time, and for herself too as she said " I can write my own stories and I can write myself in" (Manju and Nalini 84).

Butler writes about the frustrated future of the United States and the world in general, so she transmitted suitable messages within her dystopian novels. In *The*

Parable series, Butler pictures the immured society of Los Angeles who experiences starvation, diseases, rape, classification of people, and the effects of the industrial revolution and technology caused by the upper class. Lauren Olamina is an audacious protagonist of *Parable of the Sower*. She lost her family and went to the north with her fellows. Thus, apparently the novel carries dystopian characteristics, but they still have seeds of hope, making of Butler a dynamic writer who amalgamates utopia and dystopia. The miserable situation of the contemporary life is remarkable in *Parable of the Sower*. There are a lot of novels that resemble *Parable of the Sower* sharing the same themes of gloominess, enslavement, and global warming whereas they hold despair, the case of *the Road* by McCarthy and *Oryx and Crake* by Margaret Atwood (86-87).

Science fiction is an approach to literature which liberates the African American writers to express questions of race independently, they also tackle the issues of Americans from different races, extending their writings to policy and sorting people as Octavia Butler did. Since dystopia in science fiction is designed for the future and its technological inventions, also for time and space, the benefits of technology are restricted for the upper class. However, the inferior norms of life and the bounded technology are for the proletarians and the middle class as represented in 'dystopian literature'. This latter gives a passive description for the prospect of the humanity because it covers mutual topics as the domination of nature and the technological progress effects versus the subjugated individuals and their controlled existence. Thus, dystopian literature prospered in the twentieth century, and its conversational aspect shows the strength of mankind to the oppression and the impacts of technology on life (87).

The twentieth century states the main fulfillment of dystopian literature for it becomes a modern stand such as *Brave New World* by Huxley, *Nineteen Eighty Four* by Orwell, *Time Machine* by Wells and *We* by Zamyatyn; Butler's writing impresses writers, as well as, Chinua Achebe, Ursula K, Isaac Asimov, Anthony Burgess and Ray Bradbury. Dystopian fiction may make people react or not depending on the explanation of everyone, for them literature is the amusement tool (88).

In a field dominated by white male authors, Butler ignored and criticized the received idea that black people belonged in science fiction only if their blackness was crucial to the plot. Therefore, her African-American vision transforms and reshapes the conventions and limitations of this genre. Deeply protest the political developments of America. she defends a literary perspective which presents politics by indirection. Yet far from being a mere political allegory wrapped up in science fiction mores, *Parable of the Sower* draws its inspiration from the most biblical rhetoric. Even the title of the novel is quoted from a parable of Jesus found in the three Synoptic Gospels in Matthew 13:1-23, Mark 4:1-20, and Luke 8:4-15. In the story, a sower sows seed and does so indiscriminately. Some seed falls on the path with no soil, some on rocky ground with little soil, and some on soil which contained thorns. The seed represents the gospel (the sower being anyone who proclaims it), and the various soils represent people's responses to it (the first three representing rejection while the last represents acceptance). Butler's trick in the novel is in making themes, motifs, and Symbols about nearly everything as seeds of rights, equalities, empathy... about everything on the planet. Those seeds thrown in readers mind, and one of the main raisons behind using an African American protagonist Butler is focusing more on changing the racist mentality of white people against the black in the 90's.

Octavia's Parable is about the seeds are ideas within the novel and the soil is the readers heart ,mind and affection, however it depends on the nature of readers maybe the affected maybe not. The crucial role of the Bible in African American life is unquestionable. Afro-American history with bible is a sacred cement in various times and ways, to sanction the subjugation and enslavement of oppressed people or to collaborate efforts to gain freedom. Lauren Oya Olamina explains the influence of the Bible on the formation of her new confession and on her writing:

A lot of it isn't very poetical. . . But it's what I believe. and I've written it as well as I could, I showed him four verses in all -gentle, brief verses that might take hold of him without his realizing it and live in his memory without his intending that they should. Bits of the Bible had done that to me. Staying with me even after I stopped believing. (*Parable*. 183)

Butler strategy in depending on bible in her writing is because she regards it as a meaningful for understanding the life and shaping the existence. Moreover, when ever people get away from religion they will lost their human nature to be more devilish. Butler perceives that people's attitudes and reflections caused by scare, so she focuses on religion. Hence, *Parable of the Sower* and *Parable of the Talents* show the reaction to the Christian America's consolidation of religion and politics; and the Earthseed as a modern faith. Butler records that:

Religion is everywhere. There are no human societies without it, whether they acknowledge it as a religion or not. So I thought religion might be an answer, as well as, in some cases, a problem. And in, for instance, *Parable of the Sower* and *Parable of the Talents*, it's both. . . (qtd in Jos 409).

Butler aims to make the readers see the difference in the *Parables* between the “Earthseed” and “the authoritarian fundamentalist” movement’s horrible deeds. Christian America is an enthusiastic religion, and any reaction versus it would be the deadly end. According to Altemeyer and Hunsberger, this monarchical religion becomes mankind and divinity’s sample because of the major and principal faithfulness components from the past to be continued nowadays, and any objection toward it should be controlled. Its adherents obtain a particular status (Jos 410-411).

In *Parable of the Sower*, for instance, the President, Andrew Steele Jarret takes the advantage of the horrible political, economical, environmental situation in Robledo, and he asserts to offer the help and to make a unique belief. The predictability of Butler has confirmed politically and psychologically; the cruelty and rehabilitation are ambiguous deeds that the President or the Church seem irresponsible to it, and the criminals cause the sorrows as an enjoyment, while others are careless concerning the events. Butler depicts those in the psychology of Marc who attends the murder of his family and sustains subjugation. Marc should disregard the “barbarous” Christian America, and trust that the “unchanging God” will cure his injuries afterlife, but the concept of “God is Change” cannot help him (410-411).

The social constraints in Robledo become unsustainable, what make Lauren and her family confronts the “evil and good” world around them: “All that you love or hate. Need or Fear. Will teach you” (*Parable* 251). Lauren experiments that joys and passion have relation to conflicts, and the idea of “God is Change” comes as a reaction to deal with scare by kindness and invention. Lauren refuses “Big-daddy-God”, “Big-cop-God”, and “big-King-God” who defeats evil and helps who are tortured because its psychological dualism, and she researches for “theological ground” as Butler’s

indication, and Earthseed concentrates on the subject that “God is moving beyond our adolescence” in the Parables.

We've been children
 Fighting for the full breasts,
 the protective embrace
 The soft lap.
 Children do this.

But Earthseed is adulthood (qtd in Jos 416-417).

Life is a combination between evil and good, and humans who cause them, if someone wants to live peacefully, he must eradicate viciousness. Actually, the perfect life which is happy, righteous, and pleasant is just at heaven, place of “no opposites”; however, wars cause illnesses, psychological effects, and damages to mankind in order to satisfy people’s greediness and their brutal fierceness. Hence, to live in utopias, humans must put an end to these horrific deeds that is what “the Book of Martha” says. Earthseed becomes the reference to Lauren, in which she wants people to get in adulthood’s world; she says that “adulthood is both sweet and sad. It terrifies. It empowers” (qtd in Jos 417).

“Earthseed’s destiny in the stars” is the portrait to politics in the actual world, in which humans should hold off the dread and gloominess that they live, and emphasize an object similar to the heaven’s concept, this is what the readers and the *Parables’* figures view. Butler’s political depiction of fear is denied, she refuses the idea that God makes a place for us; it is an irrational explanation, exemplified in the contradiction between Lauren and Marc, whose aim is the recognized and proven future. Earthseed confirms the immortality to his followers, and this is also another misinterpretation,

what makes Lauren set: "Earthseed promises its people immortality only through their children, their works, and their memories" (qtd in Jos 425).

Consequently, Earthseed becomes attractive "a sweet and powerful positive obsession"; it results from the miserable situation that they live. Earthseed becomes fundamental to human existence, and for the prosperity. According to Glenn Tinder, whose marks that "hope is as necessary to life as light and air. Fear weakens and paralyzes us. These are matters of common experience. Hopelessness is a kind of death; one is immobilized by the dark and threatening visage of the future. But hope is enlivens us". Tinder's view that the future "be inviting" is essential, whilst others are "sufficiently inviting". Likewise, Marc, who is trustful and self-confident, faces the world around him without giving up unlike his sister (Jos 426).

This section concludes that the writer creates utopian world as an escape to her protagonist in order to hideout from the corrupted world that she lived of what is called dystopia.

2-Section two:

Ecological-Feminism in *Parable of the Sower*

The last section will be about the application of ecofeminism and the malpractices on both women and environment, in addition to the application of hyperempathy on the protagonist as major theme in *Parable of the Sower*.

2-1-Ecofeminism in *Parable of the Sower*

Ecological feminism is a feminist school of thought made distinct by "its insistence that unjustified domination of nature are feminist issues. And making the link

between the Earth genders is an ecofeminist because of nature suffering of degradation that Nature in a world ruled by patriarchy; which is the same representation with women commended by man. More simply, nature is the mother, the shelter, the respiratory and women are the first planet we knew in the womb it is the same as nature, these two mothers are suffering nature by pollution and women by oppression.

For ecofeminist scholars the solution to such domination is clear. If male supremacy is what cramp the growth of the feminine force, both with regards to womankind and Earth, wrenching power to female supremacy became a must from the hands of those who work to smash and suppress her. This core belief of some ecofeminist scholars—that Mother Nature requires the guidance of a woman to truly blossom—is based on the belief that women are more trend to caring, born or perhaps made nurturers not only by birthright but also as a result of their own suffering. But inasmuch of suffering they adapt nurturing. To Butler's view of nature. If we think earth is mother truly, it is obvious that she will not accept the oppression of her daughters and it will not blossom. Consequently, the planet is destroyed to the point of no return. Leaving our protagonist dreaming of not only healing the world that mankind has destroyed, but of leaving it altogether. She dreams of untainted world far from Earth as “a multi-light-year umbilical,” in the novel Butler claims that earth is not only mother but a womb desecrated by patriarchy.

The story begins in a society in the future but the same and worst from the rotten gilded age where America has become the very definition of dog eat dog; emotion is weakness, womanhood is weakness, and color is weakness; in the Robledo suburb, California, Los Angeles. The protagonist is a fifteen years old middle class girl used by the author to expose the social and environmental inequalities witnessed by people.

Ecofeminism is clear from the very beginning of the story. Different scenes described by the protagonist and the other characters can serve as examples. Olamina portrays the violence and the extent to which minorities are abused by dominant groups. Both woman and nature are most likely to be harmed. Olamina says: "A woman, young, naked, and filthy stumbled along past us. I got a look at her slack expression and realized that she was dazed or drunk or something. Maybe she had been raped so much that she was crazy. I'd heard stories of that happening..." (*Parable 9*).

Laura lives in "a world thrown into chaos by environmental and social disasters" (Vargas 4). Laura describes the suburb as "a walled community that protects its members from "outside where things are so dangerous and crazy" (*Parable 7*). People are so fearful that they rarely go out for work and no longer send their children outside the community for school" (Vargas 4). "When they go outside, they travel armed and in groups" (4). Depicting the danger people are exposed to if they get out of the walled residence Laura says: "I think if there were only one of us, or if they couldn't see our guns, they might try to pull us down and steal our bikes, our shoes, whatever. Then what? Rape? Murder?" (*Parable 10*). Another image of the risks that the citizens confront if they leave their walled community is in "my stepmother says she and my father stopped to help an injured woman once, and the guys who had injured her jumped out from a wall and almost killed them" (10). The girl witnessed hard images of violence:" in the faces of beaten, desperate people" and in the rotten corpses without eyes" (Vargas 4).

Lauren's age, race, middle class belonging, and gender all together enable her to give a more realistic image and critique of contemporary America. Contrary to her parents who witnessed the prosperity of the 1990s America, the girl – being a teenager-

possessed a fresh look at things around her. Lauren's belongs to the middle class. If she were rich, she wouldn't be interested neither in the social inequalities nor the environmental injustices. If she were poor, she wouldn't have a critical reasoning as the poor are generally illiterate. Being a black African, Olamina already knows about the sufferings of her ancestors and she herself goes through the same hardships. The trauma is intergenerational.

Lauren suffers from "the hyperempathy syndrome" which she inherited from her mother's abuse of drugs. Lauren writes:

I feel what I see others feeling or what I believe they feel. Hyperempathy is what the doctors call an "organic delusional syndrome" [...] thanks to paracetco [...] the particular drug my mother chose to abuse before my birth killed her. I'm crazy. I get all of grief that doesn't belong to me, and that isn't real. But it hurts.

(Parable 12)

The words of Olamina reveal the notion of intergenerational trauma that ecocritics and environmental activists refer to to talk about inherited suffering from one generation to another. Women are generally more exposed to such kind of trauma and responsible for its transfer through generations because of child bearing (Vargas 4). Therefore, Olamina's fear is not unjustified; it comes from her "experience and observation" (4). Hyperempathy makes the girl feel the pain of people and even animals and plants as well. It doesn't allow her to forget about the environmental and social crises that the world experiences. "She can't hide behind her class privilege and community walls and ignore the realities of a world in the midst of environmental and social crises" (4). Lauren is so clever that she could overcome her hyperempathy syndrome. She could use it to understand others and become more comprehensive.

Butler's analysis of environmental and social inequalities through *Olamina* is not limited to the novel context. It can be interpreted in connection with the "current struggles of environmental justice activists, the social activists who expose and challenge the connection between environmental degradation and social inequality" (8).

By the novel's end, it is clear that Lauren is more than merely a participant in the chaos that is happening around her. She is feminine stability, a pillar of ecofeminist belief, and a figurehead for a new Mother Earth. Butler illustrates this principle time and time again, first in allowing Lauren to display her hyperempathy as a perceived patriarchal weakness rather than a matriarchal strength, then by introducing her abilities as a leader and organizer of the Earthseed initiative. All that she is and all that she can be is feminine and forceful in equal measure; her strength is never viewed through the lens of masculinity, as it is bookended by her hyperempathy and familial caring. In a world run and ravaged by men, the only answers are in the hands of a woman, and it is she who "buried the dead" and "planted oak trees" at the novel's end (*Parable*. 292). This, then, is the truest start of Earthseed and the clearest display of Octavia Butler's ecofeminist message: woman returns to Earth, just as man takes it away.

Parable of the Sower "belongs to the tradition of apocalyptic ecologism that started in the USA by Rachel Carson's publication: *Silent Spring* in 1962" (qtd in Vargas 9). Scholars assert that Butler uses realist features of a setting close to contemporary society to attract the reader. While environmental justice activists attempt to exhibit environmental justice topics and provide a critique to them, Octavia chooses an artistic way of doing so.

2-2: Hyper-Caring in *Parable of the Sower*

Hyperempathy, is not simply understanding people through Appreciating their sufferance, but with Olamina is an affliction since birth she share the pain with people, hyperempathy in the novel is viewed as an obstacle and a handicap that it must kept hidden out of necessity for our protagonist, Nevertheless , community is seeing whatsoever empathy as a Weakness, thus the wall that she is living in with her family symbols how sensitive people should be protected from others maybe because they can't live in such a society.

Empathy has great impacts in humans' life because it puts them into connection, so they feel the others' emotions, exchange points of view, and comprehend their circumstances depending on fundamental moralities. But what happens to Lauren Olamina, the heroine of *Parable of the Sower* is completely different. She suffers from "hyperempathy syndrome" because of her mother's drug addiction during pregnancy, Lauren says that:

I can't do a thing about my hyperempathy, no matter what 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 thanks to Paracetco . . . the particular drug my mother chose to abuse before my birth killed her (*Parable* 12).

Since Lauren lives in miserable situations where rape, poverty, and theft dominate her society, her illness is just to share sorrows rather than happiness as she says, "I 'm supposed to share pleasure and pain, but there isn't much pleasure around these days"(12). People around Lauren think that she is a strong woman and capable to do her missions unlike the others, whereas her character is totally distinct, she does not want her hyperempathy be known within her society, Olamina notes that, "Better

to have them think anything than let them know just how easy it is to hurt me” (13). According to Lauren, hyperempathy is a “desperate vulnerability” which is “harder on a man” (289). Though Lauren’s father recognizes her syndrome, he does not tell her about instead he waits and prays for Lauren’s so-called disease, and she knows that he “has always pretended, or perhaps believed, that my hyperempathy syndrome was something I could shake off and forget about” (7).

Lauren’s “sharing” not only toward humans who are in pain even animals presented in the novel like squirrels and rats Lauren feels like “getting hit with a huge ball of air, but with no coolness, no feeling of wind” (31). In addition she declares that she fears, if she must kill a living person she will die too (31). To feel the animal’s death is something unbelievable for us, but that emotion has happened to Lauren Olamina. When she and her fellows went to bring water for baptism, they have found dogs in their roads. In order to save their lives, they have shot one dog. Lauren has felt his pain and tells that, “I bit my tongue as the pain I knew it must feel became my pain” (44). Joanne keeps calming her, and she says that “It’s still alive. Lauren cannot complete her way, she becomes powerless because her thought that the bullet has been shout on her, she reveals, “I felt the impact of the bullet as hard, solid blow-something beyond pain” (45). Sharing the pain is obviously a negative in the novel yet still innately “female” affliction.

Simultaneously, there is a different, more aggressively masculine approach to her affliction as displayed by her brother, Keith. He debunks Lauren with “red ink as fake blood to make me bleed” because he sees her pain as a childish joke rather than as something worthy of care, concern, or the slightest protection (8). Keith prank is a significant display of his own male imbecility, he wants to laugh with her as brothers

or men do, but he cannot feel what she suffer from pain. He cannot feel her because he is poor of emotions. This incident has affected Lauren when she became certain about her hyperempathy as a hindrance rather than a gift. As she explains her case to her friend and lover Bankole that: “worst of it is, if you got hurt, I might not be able to help you. I might be as crippled by your injury—by your pain, I mean—as you are” (247). Olamina's hyperempathy it is not shared only with people which she cares for, but even when she passes by people in the street their faces, bodies and physical appearance she shares their pain and anguish.

Consequently, Being Lauren is feeling the outreaching toward others, living peacefully without any oppression and violence of any tiny creature. Whereas, being her brother Keith symbolize the careless and insensibility of male supremacy in acting boundlessly in life with nature and female.

Butler's message here is to criticize the patriarchal society and to sow feelings of mercy and empathy in a racist American in that time as an attempt to change the segregation mentalities in the 90's. For us is if we were feeling as Lauren we will review our behaviors before acting. Therefore, treating each other as an object is harmful for the human soul such as racism toward the blacks in the 90's, oppression of women, and depleting the nature.

Ecofeminism is the felicitous theory that leads readers get a clear and real image of the patriarchal dominance on both woman and nature.

Our practical chapter misses many details about the writer and the way she excelled in performing her work, in fact time limitation and the restrictions of pages

forced us to stop at this level

Conclusion

In *Parable of the Sower*, Octavia Butler imagines the future of America and the world. She postulates a fictional future that must be taken seriously by us readers. She may seem exaggerating but our real world's environmental and social crises embodied in the environmental degradation, the social inequalities, and the environmental injustices are getting worse more and more throughout time. If nothing is done to control them, they may get aggravated. People have to change the way they treat each other as well as the way they treat nature around them. The novel is a real warning to us humans.

This study has progressed to show that science fiction at its best perhaps comes closer to the Victorian ideal of the novel as something that can improve the morals and character of an individual than even some of the classics of the novel. At its worst, it can be pure spectacle rather than speculation, poorly executed stories without much depth. Then again, any novel can be bad, regardless of whether it tries to be more literary or follow in a tradition of genre fiction. It is often relies on what's referred to as a novum, the difference from its fictional world and ours. Good science fiction work is truly effective if this novum actually affects the world in a substantial way. And by extension speculative fiction, naturally relies on speculation to unravel the world wide problems.

In addition to, the idea of Earthseed and Lauren and her fellows' failure to travel to the outer space to put their new religion into practice refers to the idea of imperfection of the human kind. The imperfectness of our world as well as our human nature makes it impossible to practice a perfect religion. If people snafued their first plan they will refuge to a second plan but, unlike plans there isn't planet "B". Thus if we

damage our environment we won't be able to live in it. So, the more people neglect and torture the planet the more they lose their lives

Moreover, the open ending of the story exhibits Butler's aim behind her writing of the novel. *Sower* ends in multiple voices. This refers to the fact that Octavia Butler does not want to provide a solution to the world crises but she wants to create a kind of a dialogue on the topic. She wants to draw the reader's attention to the danger of these crises. In his turn, the reader is supposed to provide a continuation to the writer's dialogue. Octavia succeeded to a great extent to make people rethink about their behaviors toward the environment and their feelings while dealing with the surrounding world under of what she called hyperempathy.

It was a great journey to work on African-American literature. Especially in science fiction and ecofeminism. In fact, it was very enjoyable and worthwhile to work on that topic , because we discover many things about the African-American world not just literature ,and after our hamble experience we recommend everyone who has the desire to work on the subject and avoid this because of the common and false fears abandon this view and keep going to ameliorate their cultural account, and that we cannot ignore any person regardless of his status (nationality, race, physical appearance...) because talents can come from the unexpected people so that we have to get read of all what is it racism, stereotypes or gender inequality.

In our study, we missed many details that are worth mentioning. In fact, time limitation and some other constraints obliged us to restrict our research to some points and leave others for further future work. The novel is very rich in terms of both form and content. It tackles a big number of issues and literary theories. This makes it

impossible for a master thesis to cover everything. Such an interesting work by such a great writer deserves being further investigated in a more detailed dissertation.

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