

Public Abstract

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Octavia Butler's *Parable of the Sower* and *Parable of the Talents* tell the story of a young African American girl, Lauren Olamina, and the religious philosophy she creates that eventually becomes a world movement. Lauren reveals a philosophy called Earthseed as a means of helping her community deal with their circumstances in Los Angeles in 2024. Earthseed is progressive and appears to be a complete departure from traditional African American religion. However, upon closer inspection, it is apparent that it helps its followers deal with the harsh realities of life so it has a lot in common with the religion practiced by slaves in the United States.

The purpose of this research was not just to prove that Octavia Butler creates an allegory for slave religion in a futuristic society. This thesis argues that in order for any religion, not just African American religion, to meet the needs of its followers in centuries to come it has to be functional, practical, but above all it must be flexible. In this way, it can adapt to meet the needs of its practitioners despite their circumstances.