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**Surviving the Anthropocene: Climate
Change and Environmental Collapse in
Octavia Butler's *Parable of the Sower***

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Literature and Civilisation

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Declaration

I hereby declare that this dissertation is my own work and that, it contains no material previously published or written by another person and that it has not been submitted, in whole or in part, in any previous application for a degree except where stated otherwise by reference or acknowledgment.

Ms. Dounya Bourezg

Signature:

Dedication

For my family and the ones I hold dear. And for the climate, our shared inheritance and responsibility.

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Abstract

This dissertation investigates how environmental collapse, social decline, and climate change manifest in Octavia E. Butler's *Parable of the Sower* (1993). It also seeks to examine resilience and the survival strategies developed by Butler's characters to cope with ecological devastation, social instability, and personal vulnerability. To achieve this end, Butler's narrative is analyzed through the ecocritical lens, with particular attention to ecodystopian themes, Anthropocene studies and resilience studies. It also draws on concepts of adaptation and survival to analyze the ways Lauren Olamina and her community respond to climate instability and existential threats. This research reveals that *Parable of the Sower* portrays environmental decline not only as an ecological crisis but also as a psychological, social, and spiritual challenge, which requires transformation, community-building, and resilience. Ultimately, this dissertation hopes to make significant contributions to Anthropocene studies, ecocritical literature, and the growing field of dystopian and climate fiction.

Keywords: Anthropocene, climate change, ecodystopia, resilience, adaptation, environmental collapse.

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General Introduction

General Introduction

In recent decades, awareness of climate change and its consequences has increased. Rising global temperatures, extreme weather shifts, rising sea levels, biodiversity loss, and food insecurity are present examples that shape the human life today. These crises are primarily caused by modern human activities, that have disrupted ecological balance. The excessive burning of fossil fuels since the Industrial Revolution has been the biggest contributor (Crutzen 14). Through the release of large quantities of carbon dioxide and methane into the air, the greenhouse effect and global warming have worsened. In addition, deforestation due to urban expansion reduced biodiversity, while increasing the amount of toxic gases in the atmosphere. Thus, scientists have introduced the term “Anthropocene” to describe this new era, in which human activity has altered the Earth’s climate and ecosystem (Crutzen 14).

Alongside scientific debates. Literature has also responded to the issues of climate change and ecological collapse. Climate fiction, often abbreviated as “cli-fi” has emerged in the recent decades as a literary genre in order to explicitly addresses issues such as climate change, environmental disasters, and their implication on human life. Similar to cli-fi, eco-dystopian literature, a sub-genre of dystopian literature, imagines futures where environmental collapse leads to fall of humanity and social structures. Cli-fi and eco-dystopian narratives often discuss how contemporary crises such as scarcity of food and water, violence, and environmental degradation shape the daily human life. These literary genres also examine how political, economic, and cultural systems fall due to ecological decline.

In literary studies, the field of ecocriticism has emerged to mainly analyze how literary texts depict the relationship between human beings and the natural environment. Additionally, it critiques human exploitation of the environment, and imagines possible futures impacted by

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anthropogenic human practices (Tajane et al 2). Ecocriticism also offers a critical understanding of how literary texts can raise environmental awareness, reshape the human–nature relationships, and examine human adaptation and resilience in the face of major ecological events (Tajane et al 2).

Within this context, Octavia E. Butler’s *Parable of the Sower* (1993) stands out as an important narrative not only in the field of cli-fi but in American literature as a whole. The novel deals with environmental collapse not as a distant possibility but as the actual, lived context of its characters’ lives. This dystopian story infuses ecological devastation with issues of race, class, gender, and power.

Lauren Oya Olamina, the novel’s protagonist, is a fifteen-year-old Black American girl who has a condition known as hyperempathy, a disorder that makes her physically experience other people's joy and pain. Lauren, who lives in a gated community in Southern California, witnesses the steady decline of social order as resource scarcity and climate change make daily life more unstable. When her community is eventually destroyed, she is forced to leave her neighborhood and head north in a journey marked by violence and poverty. Along the journey, Lauren starts to gather companions to whom she explains Earthseed, the belief system she created which is based on the fundamental idea that "God is Change." The Earthseed faith in the novel serves as a survival mechanism and represents resilience and adaptation in an ecologically unstable world.

Parable of the Sower has gained significant attention in the recent years since it resonates with contemporary issues of climate change and environmental degradation. The California of the 2020s imagined in the novel is a speculative reflection to the consequences of living in the Anthropocene era. In her novel, Butler imagined a near-future world that is based on the crises already evident in the modern world, such as global warming, water shortages, and pollution. Her vision emphasizes the relationship between the environment and

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social stability, by depicting how environmental crises exacerbates poverty, inequality, and conflict.

Yet, amidst the environmental and social declines occurring in the story, *Parable of the Sower* reflects glimpses of hope through both individual and collective survivals. Despite her young age, Lauren Olamina embodies resilience through her leadership and embrace of change. Additionally, the formation of her Earthseed community depicts collective resilience and community building in spite of the harsh conditions.

Butler's *Parable of the Sower* has been examined in a number of important scholarly papers, which mainly emphasize the racial, feminist, and dystopian dimensions of the novel. For instance, in her article "Something Beyond Pain": Race, Gender, and Hyperempathy in Octavia Butler's *Parable of the Sower* (2022), Sladja Blazan explores how the protagonist's hyperempathy evolves from being seen as a weakness to becoming a foundation for building community. It highlights how Butler challenges traditional humanist ideas of the self and the human individualism, and reveals that people are deeply connected to each other instead. Additionally, the article explains Butler's version of empathy in a context of race and gender, linking it to modern feminist ideas about relationships, and suggesting that Butler uses science fiction to question unfair systems like racism and capitalism.

Conrad Scott in his PhD thesis entitled: "Here, at the End: Contemporary North American Ecocritical Dystopian Fiction" analyzes the novel through the dimension of ecocritical dystopia. The author discusses how ecological crises driven by human activities in the Anthropocene reshape the everyday life and community structures in the novel. The research also emphasizes how *Parable of the Sower* uses environmental storytelling to create urgency, demonstrating that dystopian fiction is not only about imagining catastrophe but also about confronting the ongoing crises of the human world.

Jerry Phillips, on the other hand, in his research paper entitled: "The Intuition of the

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Future: Utopia and Catastrophe in Octavia Butler's *Parable of the Sower*" (2002) analyzes the novel through the two seemingly opposite lenses of catastrophe and utopia. Phillips argues that despite the massive environmental collapse and the decline of social order, the novel contains themes of utopia, through Lauren Olamina and her Earthseed philosophy, and through the vision of building new forms of community, ethics, and purpose. By calling this dynamic the "intuition of the future," Phillips suggests that Butler's novel is not a straightforward dystopia or utopia, but rather a text that combines the two genres together, where hope is born out of destruction.

Although the aforementioned studies have dealt with the same literary work, emphasizing racial, feminist, religious, and dystopian dimensions, a limited scholarly attention has been paid to resilience and adaptation as central responses to climate collapse and environmental degradation in *Parable of the Sower*. Therefore, this research focuses on the representation of the ecodystopian themes of environmental devastation and climate change in the age of the Anthropocene in Butler's *Parable of the Sower*. At the same time, the scope of this thesis extends to exploring themes of adaptation and resilience in the novel, particularly through the protagonist's faith of Earthseed and her efforts to build a new community in the midst of collapse.

This research is motivated by the urgent need to understand the profound impact of human activity in shaping the natural world in the Anthropocene era. As contemporary societies increasingly experience wildfires, droughts, floods, and scarcity in food and water, Butler's vision resonates strongly with current ecological challenges. The novel's portrayal of resilience and adaptability, offers valuable insights into how solidarity and strong leadership cultivate survival in times of crisis.

The aim of this study is to examine how the novel engages with the challenges of the Anthropocene, particularly climate change, environmental degradation, and their social

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consequences. It also seeks to demonstrate the possibility of human survival not through denial of crisis, but through human resilience, adaptability, and the embrace of change as central strategies to navigate environmental and social decline.

To ensure a thorough and insightful analysis, this dissertation attempts to provide answers to the following main question: How does Butler depict the social and ecological consequences of climate change and environmental collapse in *Parable of the Sower*, and what adaptive mechanisms does the protagonist, Lauren, employ to achieve resilience? In order to answer the main question, this study seeks to answer the following sub-questions: How does environmental collapse cause social collapse and systemic inequalities such as race, class, and gender in *Parable of the Sower*? What role does Lauren Olamina's Earthseed faith play in achieving human resilience and adaptation in the context of climate collapse?

To answer the aforementioned research questions, this study is thoroughly analyzed from an ecocritical perspective, which examines literature's depiction of the Anthropocene and climate change, while suggesting potential adaptation strategies. It also emphasizes the connection between social injustice and environmental degradation, and revealing the link between ecological crises and more general concerns about gender, racism, class, and power. In addition, this study also relies on the dystopian theory in literature, particularly the ecological dystopian "ecodystopian" lens, which analyzes the depiction of dystopian themes like oppression, violence, and systemic breakdown, as a result of environmental crises caused by human activity. While the novel is often labeled dystopian, this dissertation explores how it simultaneously contains utopian themes, particularly through the Earthseed faith, which symbolizes resilience and hope.

This research has a significant contribution to Anthropocene studies, in general, and to the field of ecocritical literature in particular. It portrays how literature can complement scientific knowledge about the Anthropocene, offering ethical, cultural, and political

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frameworks for responding to ecological crises. This study also reveals how literary narratives both reflect contemporary anxieties about climate change and offer speculative scenarios of resilience and survival in the Anthropocene. This study also highlights literature's capacity to shape environmental awareness in response to environmental collapse.

In terms of structure, this research is divided into two main chapters. The first chapter is devoted to the theoretical background of this study. Therefore, definitions and explanations of key concepts, notably the Anthropocene and the impact of human industrial activity on the ecosystem, the theory of ecocriticism, and the ecodystopian theory. Moreover, it provides individual, societal, economic, and psychological strategies of resilience and survival in the age of the Anthropocene.

The second chapter of this dissertation is dedicated to the analysis of Octavia Butler's novel, *Parable of the Sower*, mostly from an ecocritical perspective. It examines the representations of the Anthropocene in the novel, such as resource scarcity, social inequality, and economic devastation. On the other hand, it examines the story's embrace of individual adaptation and collective survival.

Chapter One

Understanding the Anthropocene and Climate

Change in Dystopian Fiction

Introduction

“Men argue. Nature acts.” — Voltaire.

The Anthropocene is a modern concept that describes the current time in history. It suggests that human activities, like industrialization and the excessive use of natural resources, have changed the planet's systems in a major and lasting way. The most dangerous part of the Anthropocene is climate change. This is a growing crisis that has worldwide effects on societies, governments, and the environment. Its impacts range from extreme weather and environmental destruction to major disruptions in global peace, health, and food security. In this context, dystopian fiction has emerged as an essential cultural lens for analyzing the complexity of climate change and the Anthropocene. Dystopian narratives highlight the effects of unrestrained capitalism, ecological collapse, and technological dominance, allowing readers to imagine what could happen in the future while making them confront difficult truths about the present. Thus, the challenges of the Anthropocene indicate the urgent need to develop adaptation and resilience—individually, collectively, and globally—as a means of dealing with uncertainty. Human resilience is not only about enduring hardships, but about adapting to change, recovering from disruption, and developing the ability to thrive in unstable environments. It demands solidarity and the ability to transform crises into opportunities for growth in the face of anthropogenic challenges.

This chapter lays the theoretical foundation for this research. It provides comprehensive explanations of the key concept of the Anthropocene, its impact on humanity, and how it is related to the Industrial Revolution. It shows how human activities have changed the planet's climate, ecosystems, and natural balance. It also explores climate change as an environmental issue and its impact on biodiversity and living creatures.

Additionally, this chapter sheds light on climate change as a dystopian theme in fiction. First by exploring climate change as a theme in literature, and providing some interesting literary works highlighting this theme. Then by exploring the literary movement of Ecocriticism, which is concerned with nature, ecology, and environmental issues in literary texts. And finally by highlighting how dystopian fiction reflect fears regarding modern ecological issues such as climate change, water scarcity, depletion of natural resources, and even technology.

The last part of this chapter explores adaptation and resilience as methods to encounter and survive environmental challenges. It clarifies the importance of resilience for adapting to ecological challenges and creating sustainable futures. It also explains resilience from personal, societal, economic, and psychological dimensions by suggesting solutions to achieve resilience and help individuals and societies cope with uncertainty and thrive despite global issues.

1.1. Understanding the Anthropocene and Climate Change

1.1.1. Defining the Anthropocene

Human activities are causing increasing impacts on the environment on all scales, outcompeting natural processes. According to Paul J Crutzen, the Anthropocene is believed to have started in the latter part of the 18th century, when analyses of air trapped in polar ice showed the beginning of growing global concentrations of carbon dioxide and methane. This period signals the beginning of the development and use of steam engines by James Watt during the Industrial Revolution (14). The rapid expansion of humanity and the human exploitation of earth's resources has grown rapidly. During the past three centuries, the human population has increased to more than 6 billion and is expected to reach 10 billion in this

century. (14). So, the Anthropocene can be defined as the modern era in which human activity is the dominant influence on the environment, which likely began in the late 18th century. This rise corresponds directly with the Industrial Revolution, a period of major technological advancements, especially the improvement of the steam engine by James Watt, which allowed for large-scale burning of coal. In this matter, Yadvinder Malhi claims that human impacts on the Earth's system, range through deforestation, energy use and air pollution, harvesting of fisheries, and climate change (3). In other words, the Anthropocene describes the current geological era where human activities are the dominant force shaping Earth's systems. These human activities include deforestation, energy use and air pollution, harvesting of fisheries, and climate change.

1.1.2. The Industrial Revolution and Its Impact in the Anthropocene

In light of the points discussed above, the Industrial Revolution represents a major turning point in human history and played a key role in starting the Anthropocene epoch. "The Industrial Revolution has opened up a Pandora's Box of unintended environmental change." (Fredrik Albritton 3). The idea of the Anthropocene suggests that the Industrial Revolution did not permanently free humanity from material limits, but rather provided a short-term relief powered by limited fossil fuel reserves, which resulted in climate change and other environmental risks while seeking economic growth (3). Additionally, human activities like industrialization lead to global warming and attendant anomalies in local temperature, humidity, wind speed, precipitation, soil moisture, and sea level (Wandana et al.2). Studies reveal that the ocean has a high contribution to controlling greenhouse gas concentration because the ocean has a storehouse of carbon dioxide, and it controls the movement of this gas to and from the atmosphere (2). The Industrial Revolution had also played a significant role in emitting greenhouse gasses in the past two centuries because human activities led to the use of machines and the mechanization of processes, which were before performed by

hand (3). The shift from hand-based work to machines powered by coal and other fossil fuels lead to immense greenhouse gas emissions over the past two centuries. This shift was driven by technological innovations, the rapid expansion of transportation and economies, and population growth. Wandana et al. further explain the impact of rapid urbanization lead by the industrial revolution. Since the Industrial Revolution, more people have moved to cities, leading to rapid population growth in urban areas (4). As a result, agricultural and industrial activities have expanded, causing higher greenhouse gas emissions. At the same time, deforestation has increased to provide land for farming and urban development, and the burning of fossil fuels has grown to meet rising energy needs (4). Crutzen, similarly, highlights the major consequences that came with the rise in population and technological advancement. Humans exploit almost half of the planet's land surface. The rapid loss of tropical rainforests increases the extinction of species and releases carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. River diversion and dam construction are now routine, and more than half of all accessible fresh water is used by people (14). Additionally, the burning of fossil fuels and agricultural practices led to major rises in greenhouse gases, with carbon dioxide increasing by about 30% and methane by over 100%, pushing their concentrations to the highest levels seen in 400,000 years. These effects have largely been caused by only 25 percent of the world population, and they include acid rain, photochemical smog, and global warming. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) predicts that, as a result of human activity and interference with the environment, global temperatures could rise by 1.4 to 5.8°C over this century (15).

Moreover, land-use changes, deforestation, urbanization, and industrial practices significantly alter both land and sea surface temperatures as evidenced by the Human Climate Forcings theorem (Mose and Kinuthia 3). Activities such as logging, agriculture, construction, and tourism influence climatic conditions by disrupting ecosystems and altering water

dynamics (3). For instance, a study by Sitati et al. (2022), which examined greenhouse gas emissions related to traffic congestion in Nairobi and found that congestion significantly increases CO₂ emissions, particularly during peak hours. The study highlighted the necessity for enhanced urban planning and public transportation systems to reduce these emissions (4). In summary, human activities such as deforestation, urbanization, industrial practices highlight the central feature of the Anthropocene. Driven by the pursuit of economic growth, resource exploitation, and technological advancement, these activities disrupted natural ecosystems and accelerated the release of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere.

1.1.3. Defining Climate Change

Climate change is long-term change in weather, including temperature, precipitation, and storm events, often as a 30-year average (Dietz et al 135). In 2018, the US National Climate Assessment concluded that the Earth's climate is now changing faster than at any point in the history of modern civilization, primarily as a result of human activities. (136). This definition helps to distinguish climate change from everyday shifts in weather; climate change is about long-term significant shifts in the Earth's climate system, which is now progressing more rapidly than at any other point in modern civilization. Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions are defined as the production of gases such as carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane, nitrous oxides, and chlorofluorocarbons that contribute to climate change (Dietz et al 135). Since the industrial revolution, especially starting in the mid-twentieth century, human actions have increased the atmospheric concentration of these greenhouse gasses (136). This explanation shows that climate change is not just a natural process, but is fundamentally driven by human behavior. It's a direct consequence of human choices, particularly those related to energy consumption.

Contemporary climate change is largely recognized as an anthropogenic phenomenon

that began and is sustained by human industrial activities that produce enormous amounts of greenhouse gas emissions, such as CO₂ and methane (He and Silliman 1). The term Anthropogenic is defined as any phenomenon, substance, or effect that arises from human activities. Anthropogenic impacts are often characterized by their negative effects on the natural world, including loss of biodiversity, changes in ecosystem function, and the depletion of natural resources (Environmental Consultants 1). These changes are happening fastest in coastal areas. Since 1880, Earth's surface temperature has risen by almost 1°C, and the pace has sped up since the 1970s. Sea levels have also risen steadily, especially since the 1980s, as a result of human activity (He and Silliman 1). This indicates that modern climate change is not simply the result of natural environmental shifts, but has been actively shaped and accelerated by human activity, particularly since the Industrial Revolution. In overly populated coastal areas, local human impacts are more likely to interact with climate change because local human stressors tend to increase in size with growing human density. Due to greater outputs of sewage and human waste, increasing human density causes pollution and habitat degradation (He and Silliman 26). Thus, as human density increases, so does the intensity of human damage to the environment and other living creatures through waste discharge, pollution, and habitat destruction.

Sociologists must rethink human ecology in light of climate change research in order to consider both the effects of humans on the environment and the effects of the environment on humans, and the concept of the Anthropocene calls for reconsidering the nature/society dichotomy (Dietz et al. 137). In other words, studying climate change requires a major shift in how people understand the relationship between society and the environment. Since Human activity has deeply affected the environment through pollution, gas emissions, etc, it is suggested that sociologists must reinvent human ecology, a field that studies the interaction between humans and their environment. It is also important to acknowledge not only how

human actions shape the natural world, but also how environmental changes, in turn, affect human societies.

1.2. Climate Change as a Dystopian Theme in Literature

1.2.1. Climate Change as a Theme in Climate Fiction

Over the past recent years, climate change has emerged as an important theme in literature, and, correspondingly, in literary studies. Its growing presence in fiction has led to the creation of the term “cli-fi,” short for climate fiction. Several major theater productions dealing with climate change appeared between 2009 and 2011, which sparked more interest in writing plays about the topic (Johns-Putra 2). Poetry addressing climate change also began to gain popularity at the same period. Ecopoetry is a kind of poetry that expresses care for the environment and nature, and the development of significant poetry initiatives in the media that concentrate on climate change are both associated with the rise in climate-related poetry (2). This interesting growth of climate change literature has brought about a greater engagement with climate change in literary studies (3). The defining characteristics of the cli-fi genre are not straightforward, since many climate novels do not mention either environmental degradation or global warming directly. It is instead through the post-apocalyptic setting that environmental issues are explored through the reader’s imagination. (David 18). Additionally, the roots of this genre belong to science fiction (18). Arthur Herzog’s *Heat* (1977) is an early example of this, and the first novel to deal with anthropogenic climate change where humanity’s emissions of greenhouse gases are not only represented as the cause of uncontrollable global warming, but are also framed as a fundamental problem to human existence (22). The release of *Heat* did not immediately lead to more works of cli-fi, nothing significant in the genre of climate fiction in the West appeared to have taken place around the early 1980s (22). In 1993, Anton-Andreas Guha’s *Der Planet schlägt zurück* was published, which is possibly considered the first German work

of climate fiction. Around the same time, during the late 1990s, many different American publications also began featuring anthropogenic global warming as a central theme. Although climate fiction was still mostly a North American phenomenon at this point, Europe started to catch up in the later part of the 2000s (22). In the latter part of the 2000s, Europe began to gradually pick up (Andersen 5). For instance, in 2005 Finnish author Risto Isomäki published the eco-thriller and climate fiction *Sarasvatin Hiekkaa*, which was published in in 2008 in German with the title *Die Schmelze* (5). Moreover, the most significant push came from Britain, where the 2007 release of Sarah Hall's post-apocalyptic novel, *The Carhullan Army*, not only signaled the first feminist infusion into climate fiction but also the start of a wave of climate fiction books on the British book market (6). Andersen mentions more millennial literary works concerned with climate fiction, such as Paul McAuley's science fiction novel *The Quiet War*, which was followed in 2009 by Liz Jensen's eco-thriller *The Rapture*, Marcel Theroux's post-apocalyptic novel *Far North*, Matthew Glass's thriller *Ultimatum*, and in 2010 by Ian McEwan's satirical novel *Solar* and Helen Simpson's collection of short stories *In-Flight Entertainment* (7). However, fiction about climate change has been slower to appear in less-economically developed regions compared to wealthier nations despite the fact that climate change has a stronger and more immediate effects in poorer, less-developed countries (David.29). Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *Petals of Blood* (1977), Mahasweta Devi's *Imaginary Maps* (1993), Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide* (2004), Lü Jiamin's *Wolf Totem* (2004), and Indra Sinha's *Animal's People* (2007) are examples of climate-concerned literature from these regions (29).

Climate fiction has clearly expanded and moved beyond simply being a subgenre of science fiction. In contrast to the conventional, realist fiction, cli-fi might prioritize its purpose, which is to promote change, and encourage engagement with global issues over other considerations (David 24). Similarly, Glass discusses in *The Guardian* how the climate

novel can make climate issues relevant and conceptual to readers. He writes:

Engaging with this subject in fiction increases debate about the issue; finely constructed, intricate narratives help us broaden our understanding and explore imagined futures, encouraging us to think about the kind of world we want to live in. This can often seem difficult in our 24-hour news-on-loop society where the consequences of climate change may appear to be everywhere, but intelligent discussion of it often seems to be nowhere. Also, as the crime genre can provide the dirty thrill of, say, reading about a gruesome fictional murder set on a street the reader recognizes, the best cli-fi novels allow us to be briefly but intensely frightened: climate chaos is closer, more immediate, hovering over our shoulder like that murderer wielding his knife. Outside of the narrative of a novel the issue can seem fractured, incoherent, even distant. (qtd. in David 24-25).

These arguments indicate the potential crucial roles of climate fiction novels, which include educating readers about climate change, involving them in the topic, and giving non-scientific people a sense of purpose and relevance.

1.2.2. Ecocriticism in Literature

1.2.2.1. Defining Ecocriticism

Ecocriticism is defined as an interdisciplinary approach at the intersection of literature and environmental studies, which scrutinizes the representation and influence of nature and the environment in literary works. (Tajane et al, 1). This approach examines the complex relationships between literature and the natural environment (2). This interdisciplinary approach not only explores how literary texts represent nature but also analyses the cultural,

social, and political implications of these representations (2).

Alongside growing environmental issues including pollution, deforestation, and climate change; ecocriticism evolved as a framework to examine how literature reflects, critiques, and shapes human relationships with the natural world. This theoretical approach is rooted in the understanding that literary texts do not only depict nature, they actively engage with environmental issues, offering insights into humanity's interconnectedness with the earth (Tajane et al 2). Ecocriticism, which drew on ecological science, environmental ethics, and cultural studies, emerged in the late 20th century as a component of the larger environmental movement. It provides a thorough analysis of how literature addresses ecological issues and the interaction between humans and nature. (3). According to *Climate in Arts and History*, Ecocriticism emerged in the 1960s with the start of the environmental movement and the publication of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* in 1962, but really began to take off in the 1980s (1). However, Mishra believes that this movement was inspired by the three major American writers whose works celebrate nature and the wilderness as manifested in America. These writers are Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882), Margaret Fuller (1810-1850), and Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862). They are known as the transcendentalists, which is the first major literary movement in America to achieve 'cultural independence' from European models (169).

1.2.2.2. The Three Waves of Ecocriticism

As yet, there have been two waves of ecocriticism: the first in the 1980s and the second in the 1990s. The first wave, according to *Climate in Arts and History*, emphasized writing about nature as both a field of study and as a meaningful practice. It maintained the distinction between human and nature, but promoted the value of nature and the need to speak and stand up for nature. People believed it was the duty of the humanities and the natural sciences

together to raise awareness and come up with solutions for the environmental and climate crisis (1). Whereas for the second wave, ecocritics redefined the term environment to include both nature and urban areas and challenged the distinctions between human and non-human and nature and non-nature. This wave also led to the ecojustice movement by examining the way that the poorest and most oppressed members of a population fall victim to the most adverse effects of climate change and environmental degradation. (2). However, Nuri claims that ecocriticism continues to grow beyond the second wave to embrace newer issues. Which led to the emergence of a third wave ecocriticism (12). He also writes in this regard:

The third wave of ecocriticism aims at a more comparative, trans-cultural approach to ecocritical studies and often likes to explore the ethnicity through the study of environmental literature. Slovic differentiates the third wave from the previous two waves saying that the tendency to study human experience ‘in relation to the more-than-human world and to compare human experience across cultures, in particular, struck us as an altogether different tendency than we had observed during the first two “waves” of the field (6). (12)

This wave is a result to the expansion of ecocriticism to embrace newer, more contemporary issues. This wave appeared shortly after 2000, but was not named ‘third wave’ until 2009 (12).

1.2.2.3. Significance of the Movement

Ecocriticism is crucial in understanding how literature not only reflects but also shapes human perceptions of nature (Tajane et al. 3). Additionally, thanks to this literary approach, scholars can uncover how literature promotes ecological balance, critiques anthropocentrism, and imagines sustainable futures (3). Also, ecocriticism questions the traditional distinctions between nature and culture, promoting an all-encompassing view that acknowledges the

interconnectedness of all life forms (3).

Ecocriticism is considered to be a multidisciplinary field of literature. It intersects with different theoretical frameworks, including postcolonialism, feminism, and critical race theory, to address the complexities of environmental justice. It highlights how environmental issues affect marginalized communities and emphasizes the need for inclusive and fair solutions (Tajane et al. 4). For instance, in the South Asian novels, *The Hungry Tide* and *Imaginary Maps*, ecological issues are examined alongside the politics of power and social injustices (David30). Such texts are arguably more effective in addressing climate change because they maintain a local, pertinent, and nuanced emphasis by outlining a wide range of interconnected environmental challenges. These books offer something different from the usual "cli-fi" story, which is a big, evil force of nature that creates terrible scenarios where action hero stories could take place (31). Similarly, Nuri supports this claim. In which he explains that another important feature of the second wave ecocriticism is its emphasis on the environmental justice issues. Environmental justice literary criticism, according to him, is a literary criticism that recognizes how social issues and environmental degradation are linked and sees literature as an effective tool in voicing multiple perspectives and concerns that are not restricted by place, time or reality (8).

Additionally, ecocriticism along with postcolonialism share common interests and overlap in meaningful ways, since they both are concerned with power, justice, and inequality. According to Nuri, the second wave of ecocriticism and postcolonialism interests in some common areas (9). Graham Huggan also points out the common grounds between ecocriticism and postcolonialism, he argues that "there are grounds here for a productive overlap between the tasks of ecocriticism and those of postcolonial criticism, opportunities for a fruitful alliance between the two critical/theoretical schools that opens up new aesthetic

horizons, as well as offering food for thought” (qtd. In Nuri 9).

Feminism is another field which intersects with ecocriticism. Women fall victims to systems of power such as patriarchy and capitalism that dominate and control women, as well as climate change and modern environmental issues (Nuri 11). Ecofeminist literary criticism is a combination of environmental criticism and feminist literary criticism (Nuri 11). Women are not only the victims of the patriarchy but also the environmental degradation and climate changes. So, ecofeminism believes that the oppression of women, children, people of color, the poor and the environment is linked and therefore must be combated simultaneously (11).

Nuri concludes his article by explaining the major significance of this interconnectedness between ecocriticism and other fields of studies. The ultimate goal of this expansion is to create a field that can contribute to solving real-world environmental problems and climate change issues (12). The focus of the second and third waves of ecocriticism has broadened to include ethnicity, ecofeminism, environmental justice, poscolonialism, and transnationalism into ecocritical studies. By considering the writings of authors from the former colonies as well as authors of color and women, they have made some significant progress. (13).

1.2.3. Dystopian Fiction as a Reflection of Environmental Fears

1.2.3.1. Definition of Dystopian Fiction and Its Main Themes

Purkar defines fiction as “any literary narrative, whether in prose or verse, which is invented instead of being an account of events that actually happened” (1). It is a type of literature describing imaginary or invented events and people. fiction has various sub-genres and science fiction is one of its well-known and popular ones. It explores imaginary worlds, futures, or scenarios shaped by science and technology. Science fiction is defined as: “a literary genre or verbal construct whose necessary and sufficient conditions are the presence

and interaction of estrangement and cognition, and whose main device is an imaginative framework alternative to the author's empirical environment." (qtd. in Purkar 1). It can be categorised into hard science fiction and soft science fiction. Soft science fiction unlike hard science fiction is a subgenre that prioritizes characters, social and psychological aspects rather than technology. It deals with the effect of technology on the individuals and their social, personal and psychological life (2). Soft science fiction authors place a great emphasis on the social elements of science fiction, such as themes related to biotechnology, ecological issues, and technological risks. Under the subgenres of soft science fiction, utopia and dystopia, which are subgenres that deal with a society's social structure, can also be found (2).

Dystopian literature is a genre of fiction set in potential or near-future societies where social structures and life are in catastrophic decline (Kowsalyaa and Arul 2). It discovers the darkest aspects of human nature and the human mind and imagines the worst possible scenarios (2). Utopia both as a concept and term came into existence with the publication of *Utopia* in 1516 by Thomas More, who depicted utopia as an imaginary island with a perfect social, legal and political system (Purkar 1). The English word utopia comes from the Greek "ou-" (οὐ) meaning "not" and "topos" (τόπος) meaning "place." It translates literally to 'no place', or nowhere (Ostergaard 1). So utopia is a place, society, or state of life where everything is perfect, ideal and free of suffering, oppression, and injustice. However, by the 1900s, as humanity progressed, perfection was never achieved. Technological advancement and industrialization only resulted in war, poverty, famine, and chaos. Which led authors to writing dystopian fiction. "Dystopia stems from two Greek words that translate to 'bad place.' It describes a fictional setting that the author finds horrifying. But, unlike other genres, dystopias prod the audience into examining contemporary political and social structures" (Ostergaard 2). This genre is set in societies where social structures and life are in catastrophic decline. Additionally, Kowsalyaa and Arul describe dystopian settings as

Chapter One: Understanding the Anthropocene and Climate Change in Dystopian Fiction

“dehumanising and oppressive” (2). They are usually set in the near rather than far future to generate urgency about real current events (2). This kind of fiction makes predictions about what might happen to society if people don't address existential issues like authoritarianism, nuclear war, climate change, and overpopulation (2). Dystopian fiction also acts as a warning that if people don't change their behavior toward the environment, society, and ecology, things could go wrong (2). This is done by including elements such as environmental harm, economic hardship, loss of personal identity or independence, political influence, survival, and technology (2).

George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is arguably the best known dystopian novel (Ostergaard 2). This novel was written in 1949 in which Orwell describes a province of Oceania, formerly known as Great Britain, as an industrialized wasteland, dirty and rigidly controlled by a political regime known as the Party (2). Other well-known dystopian literary works would be Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, H.G Wells' *The Time Machine*, *War of the Worlds*, *When the Sleeper Wakes*, Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*, Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, Zamyatin's *We*, Koestler's *Darkness at Noon*, Ursula Le Guin's *The Dispossessed*, Ayn Rand's *The Fountainhead and Atlas Shrugged*. (Purkar 3). One of the main themes that characterize dystopian fiction is Dystopian technological control. Which suggests that computers, robots, and other scientific resources control society. As technology allows for the possibility of constant surveillance, dystopias often magnify this idea to show how surveillance erodes freedom (Ostergaard 2). Another recurring theme in dystopian fiction is the downside of human intervention in health and genetics. Dystopian fiction highlights the issues of human interference with health and genetics. In which humans attempt to control disease, enhance human abilities, or manipulate life. These scenarios often backfire, leading to ethical conflicts, social inequality, or even the loss of humanity (2). Furthermore, lack of individuality is another significant theme in dystopian literature (3). *The Handmaid's Tale* is

an example in which a strict dress code is enforced on women. They are forced to wear outfits that correspond to their social status, and no one is given any choice (3). In dystopian literature, lack of individuality can be enforced by governments, social circles and peers, or even corporations. For instance, the 2008 movie *Wall-E*. presents a world without individuality, in which people rely completely on machines to make decisions for them, and humans have become overweight, passive, and nearly identical in their habits, symbolizing how individuality and human uniqueness have been distorted.

1.2.3.2. Ecological Crises in Dystopian Fiction

When it comes to the environment, dystopian novels introduce us to a world in which modern ecological problems have taken over the Earth. Some of the existing ecological problems include things like climate change, scarcity of food and water, global warming, pollution, overcrowding, extinction of species, deforestation and the depletion of natural resources. Dystopian literature highlights the need to address the emerging and existing ecological crises to the expectant society of the future generations. “The goal is to make its pool of readers realize what would happen in a few decades of keeping up with their daily habits. Dystopian novels have a prophetic dimension; they are birds of bad omen.” (Baudriller 59). Dystopian novels are not just for entertainment; they could function as warning signs about the dangerous direction society could take if human beings continue their harmful behaviors. Baudriller illustrates his claim with a quote from *Uglies*, in which nature is represented as dystopian and apocalyptic. He writes,

Tally, the protagonist of the *Uglies* saga, compares the naturalness of the forest with that of the city: “The forest to either side was a black void full of wild and ancient trees, nothing like the generic carbon-dioxide suckers that decorated the city.”⁶ If there is no city, then the dystopian novel is set in an apocalyptic world,

in which nature is nothing but darkness and rot, as in McCarthy's *The Road*, or a dangerous wild place, as in Miller's *A Canticle for Leibowitz* (9).

This reflects how in most dystopian novels, the city is the central setting, as it represents control, surveillance, and human-made systems. Nature is usually presented as remote and inaccessible in dystopian literature. It is also either too wild and dangerous, or uninteresting for human beings. Society in this type of fiction often devalues nature, focusing only on technology and industry. Another example about this would be the savage reservations in *Brave New World*. Which are areas of the world that were too expensive and difficult to modernize so that they became reservations for savages, in which they are left alone to live on their own, and people of the city come visit it like a safari (Baudriller 9). This demonstrates how dystopian novels could treat natural, traditional life as something savage, exotic and inferior. Dystopian novels are also set in highly technological cities, where everything in life has been taken over by machines and artificial systems. In these settings, the human body becomes the only thing that remains genuinely natural, in contrast to the surrounding artificial environment. For example, in Philip K. Dick's novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* the line between what is natural and what is mechanical is blurred, and animals have almost entirely disappeared and been replaced by androids (Baudriller 9). However, after realizing the effects of technology on human life, dystopian authors suggest in their novels that reestablishing a connection with nature away from the comfort of the city and technology, is the only way to achieve true freedom and humanity (13). Dystopian novels highlight the damaging consequences of certain human activities, and how humans will probably cause the end of the earth and the human race as long as they hold on to the belief that they are entities capable of separating from their biological dimensions (13).

Climate Change

When it comes to the ecological issue of climate change, authors of dystopian literature have been focusing on raising awareness and cautioning human society about the need to improve the ecosystem in order to live in a healthy environment. By presenting their novels in an apocalyptic setting, dystopian writers address this important ecological issue of climate change. Some of the most prominent authors of dystopian literature, according to Kowsalyaa and Arul, who concentrate on climatic change and portray its harmful effects, are J. G. Ballard and Octavia E. Butler, although they believe that Margaret Atwood's dystopian fiction is often considered to have been an initial catalyst for this development. Kim Stanley Robinson, Richard Powers, Paolo Bacigalupi, and Barbara Kingsolver have been among the most prominent authors of contemporary literature since 2010 (3). For instance, Margaret Atwood's *Handmaid's Tale* suggests that ecological disasters contributed to the climatic change in society. In this novel, Atwood refers to toxic wasteland and mentions the contamination of radioactive waste and pollution that contributed to the infertility crisis (Kowsalyaa and Arul 3). Also, *The MaddAddam Trilogy* imagines a future shaped by the severe effects of climate change. It is a depiction of a world of high radiation, droughts, raised sea levels, deserts, dead zones in the oceans, a lifeless Great Barrier Reef, and lost lands (3). These depictions warn readers about the consequences of human actions and climate neglect. *The Drowned World* of JG Ballard is another novel that reflect fears about the dangers of global warming on earth's ecosystems. In the postapocalyptic future portrayed in the novel, a large portion of the Earth's surface is uninhabitable due to global warming caused by increased solar radiation. The Earth's ionosphere degraded around mid-22nd century as a result of strong solar storms that expanded the Van Allen radiation belt. The radiation from the sun striking the earth caused

the sea levels to rise and the surface temperatures to rise, creating a tropical climate across most of the planet and rendering most of it uninhabitable by mankind.

Depletion of Natural Resources

Natural resources are elements supplied by nature and utilized by humanity. Biodiversity loss and environmental harm are possible outcomes of unsustainable resource exploitation, which could lead to further ecological crises that could make the earth an apocalyptic place for living, as portrayed in dystopian fiction. The depletion of natural resources and the ongoing damage to the environment put at risk the survival and well-being of people who rely on nature to live. Factors such as overpopulation, pollution, excessive consumption, and rapid technological and industrial growth all play a major role in the depletion of these resources. The excessive use of fossil fuels and oil had been anticipated in the dystopian novel of James Howard Kunstler *With World Made By Hand* (Kowsalyaa and Arul 4). This novel imagines a near future shaped by the collapse of oil production and the disasters that follow. Kunstler depicts how the overexploitation of fossil fuels could bring industrial civilization to an end. In the novel, when the world's oil fields and pipelines run dry, society falls into chaos. highways are closed to conserve fuel, air travel ceases, imported food disappears, and widespread riots erupt. Humanity shifts to violence and survival instincts as a result of loss of technology. This scarcity of resources creates conflicts, food and water shortages, and further environmental decline(Kowsalyaa and Arul 4). This dystopian novel demonstrates to what extent humanity is dependent on fossil fuels while also warning of the urgent need to shift toward renewable energy. Furthermore, Paolo Bacigalupi's dystopian novel *The Windup Girl* is literary work that addresses the consequences of oil depletion and warns readers about the dangers created by human activity. In this dystopian novel, access to energy is limited and international travel is impossible due to the depletion of oil supplies.

Clipper ships and airships are used for trade, and the majority of household appliances are powered by hand. The story highlights the urgent need to preserve oil and other nonrenewable resources, which takes millions of years to replenish. It also shows how the depletion of oil forces a larger reliance on human labour. In the end, Bacigalupi's work demonstrates how crucial it is to preserve natural resources in order to ensure future generations' existence (4-5).

Water Scarcity

Water scarcity is a growing problem that is often neglected. Signs of crisis are visible worldwide, with rivers drying up, regions facing severe shortages, and the rising cost of bottled water. Growing awareness of this issue suggests a grim future where water resources continue to decline. Dystopian writers highlight this ecological crisis by incorporating themes of water scarcity and the effects of negligent water management into their writings, dystopian authors draw attention to this ecological issue and emphasize the need for conservation. Bacigalupi's *The Water Knife* is a perfect example for the theme of water scarcity in dystopian literature. It is set predominantly in an arid, near-future Arizona where climate change has drastically reduced the Colorado River's flow and generated physical and political conflicts over the remaining water rights. The scarcity of water causes severe droughts in the regions, and the depiction of the chances of water wars can be a potential caution for the future generation to preserve water bodies and to make sustainable use of them (Kowsalyaa and Arul 5). This novel serves as a warning to future generations about the urgent need to protect water resources and use them sustainably. *Memory of Water* by Emmi Itäranta is another illustration to the issue of water scarcity in literature. It depicts how this scarcity creates wars and leads people to turn against each other to attain water resources. The story unfolds in a drought-stricken, war-torn future where access to fresh water is limited to a privileged few, while tea masters have long safeguarded natural springs for centuries. The

author says that “the water doesn’t belong to us but we the humans belong to water” and highlights that nothing could make human beings separate from earth (5). This demonstrates how the need for a deep relationship with nature had been depicted in dystopian fiction. It also emphasizes how crucial it is to maintain and safeguard water sources and create a close connection with nature in order to live in harmony and prosperity on Earth.

Technology

One of humanity's greatest inventions, technology, has a profound impact on human civilization and the natural balance of the planet. It can have both positive and negative effects on the environment, which is why it frequently plays a major part in dystopian novels where it introduces new difficulties and complications. Given the importance of ecological resources, technological development could endanger both natural systems and human life. Over-reliance on technology may possibly cause lasting problems for civilization. This fear is reflected in many contemporary global challenges, especially sustainability, which is centered around the idea that current demands must be satisfied without endangering the capacity of future generations to fulfill their own. One of the most common themes in dystopian fiction is genetic engineering and biotechnology. In Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, there are many references to the ecological impacts of technology which are said to have existed in the pre-Gilead civilization when birth control technologies are used by women. Other ecologically damaging technologies such as power plants and sex technologies are mentioned. Atomic power plants in the novel are a result of the high levels of radiation and pollution, which led Gilead's society to experience infertility crises, that may eventually cause the end of human civilization as a whole (Kowsalyaa Arul 6). *Ashes*, written by René Barjavel in 1943, is another dystopian novel depicting the harmful effects of technology on the environment. *Ashes*, formerly called *Rage*, depicts a society that is very technologically advanced, where

magnetic body suits are prevalent, busses and cars can fly, household chores are handled by robots, while the deceased are kept fresh in massive freezer rooms. Ecological sustainability is viewed as the novel's significant problem and has been a major topic of discussion. The novel also discusses the ways in which excessive use of automobiles, air conditioners, technology, airplanes, and other technical innovations are causing climate change (6). Thus, this novel acts as a warning to dystopian literature readers to use less carbon-emitting items in order to avoid catastrophic climate change in the future.

Other contemporary ecological concerns, such as deforestation, soil erosion, extinction of species, and pollution, have also been emphasized in dystopian literature written by contemporary authors. The best illustration of the current ecological challenges can be found in John Brunner's *The Sheep Look Up*. In the near future depicted in the novel, human activity has completely destroyed the environment and ecological systems. In the novel, it is common to see "don't drink" signs because of the extreme level of water pollution. People in urban areas are no longer able to go outside without wearing air masks. The light cannot shine through the dense layer of dark clouds that covers California, and people are forced to wrap themselves with plastic during corrosive downpours to prevent their clothing from being destroyed (Kowsalyaa and Arul 7). These dystopian scenarios may seem imaginary for now and unlikely to occur, but they reflect an urgent necessity to develop a sustainable way of living in harmony with nature before it's too late for humanity.

1.3. Surviving the Anthropocene through Adaptation and Resilience

The Anthropocene is the age in which human activity has become the defining force shaping the Earth. It shows the significant impact that humans have on the earth and its ecological systems. Rapid environmental degradation and intensifying climate change are major signs of this new era, which has resulted in severe social and economic inequality in

addition to environmental stress. Despite being revolutionary, technological developments have caused some unanticipated threats and complications. Also, psychological stress is rising as a result of the stresses of living in such a chaotic time. Thus, human survival and well-being depend on taking responsibility, showing care, and altering human beings' current path of action.

Resilience is defined as “the ability of subjects to absorb disturbances and adapt to change while retaining certain stable attributes and gaining certain benefits under specific conditions, without supposing that things must go back to the way things were. This is so for human beings, non-human species, social, political, and economic organizations, societies, ecosystems, and the planet itself” (Chungyalpa et al. 3). Personal, community, and planetary resilience are interconnected, and none of them can be fully achieved without progress in the other two (3). In relation to human health and mental well-being, inner resilience refers to the ability to recover, adapt positively, and grow in response to challenges and setbacks. (qtd. in Chungyalpa et al. 3). Inner resilience is also understood as the combination of personal strengths, supportive relationships, and available resources that allow individuals not only to thrive and grow but also to “bounce forward” when confronting an uncertain future. (qtd. in Chungyalpa et al. 3). Additionally, inner resilience differs from one individual to another, as each person draws strength from unique aspects of life. It can be rooted in spiritual or religious beliefs, meditative practices, and personal values that have been learned or passed down. It also grows from the skills and behaviors that human beings develop and the support they get from family and friends. These things all help to adapt and create positive change in people's lives (qtd. in Chungyalpa et al. 3).

Another prominent type of resilience is community resilience. It is defined as community's ability to withstand and recover from challenges, including social, economic,

political, or environmental disruptions. In the field of disaster studies, it's often viewed as a community's ability to absorb, adapt to, and respond to a threat to prevent it from turning into a disaster (Chungyalpa et al. 3). This social resilience is used to counteract vulnerability; the greater social institutions are in terms of networking, structure, and economy, the less vulnerable a society and its fundamental operations are. Resilience justice is a new idea in community resilience that examines the connections between systemic injustices, the environment, and elements including racism, poverty, land use patterns, housing insecurity, and more (qtd. in Chungyalpa et al. 3-4).

Planetary Resilience is another type of resilience in which the planet Earth is able to adapt and continue functioning despite the challenges caused by human activity. Ecological resilience was described in 1973 as “a measure of the persistence of systems and their ability to absorb change and disturbance and still maintain the same relationships between populations or state variables” by Holling (qtd. in Chungyalpa et al. 4). The natural systems of the Earth are highly responsive. As the biosphere undergoes changes, caused by climate change, biodiversity damage, soil and water degradation, and other emerging pollutants; planetary resilience becomes crucial to sustaining both human and non-human life. To achieve this, local efforts to lower risks and adjust to continuous changes are necessary in addition to global and systemic measures to prevent additional harm (4).

1.3.1. Environmental Resilience

In the Anthropocene, humanity faces environmental challenges that demand a deep recognition of the human interconnectedness with nature. People are not independent from the natural world but fundamentally woven into it. As a result, human health and well-being are directly dependent on the vitality and balance of the ecosystem. For instance, bees play a vital role in the daily lives of human beings and their economy. Along with other insects and birds,

bees are responsible for pollinating nearly 75% of the fruits, nuts, and vegetables produced in the United States, according to the USDA. Without these pollinators, food systems would face severe disruption. However, bees are increasingly endangered by human-driven factors such as the use of toxic pesticides, the destruction of habitats through urban expansion, and the impacts of climate change (Tavanti et al. 2). Additionally, forests serve as the lungs of the world. They play a crucial part in reducing climate change by removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and releasing oxygen. They also sustain a vast amount of biodiversity by providing habitats for different species. Forests provide many communities with food, medicine, while also aiding in the regulation of regional and global weather. These essential ecosystems are still in danger, though, due to destruction brought on by mining, logging, and agriculture (Tavanti et al. 3). Thus, in order to survive the aforementioned challenges and foster environmental resilience, Tavanti et al. suggest a number of strategies which they believe may bring a positive environmental change.

Transition to Renewable Energy: In order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and address climate change, it is necessary to shift away from fossil fuels and toward renewable energy sources like hydropower, solar, and wind (9).

Encourage Sustainable Agriculture: Using environmentally friendly farming methods, such as permaculture, agroforestry, and organic farming, may help preserve biodiversity, reduce chemical pollution, and stop soil erosion (9).

Reforestation and Afforestation: Increasing the amount of forest cover through tree planting and restoration helps in habitat regeneration and biodiversity conservation. Supporting responsible forest management is equally important (10).

Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle: By adopting the circular economy principles of reducing

waste, reusing materials, and increasing recycling, pollution and resource depletion can be significantly decreased. Limiting single-use plastics, for instance, aids in the fight against marine plastic waste (10).

Sustainable Water Management: While better wastewater treatment lowers pollution, practices like rainwater collection, water-efficient technology, and the preservation of natural water bodies help to ease water scarcity (10).

Protection and Restoration of Marine Ecosystems: Addressing ocean acidification and rising sea temperatures requires the creation of marine protected areas, the promotion of sustainable fishing, and the restoration of coral reefs (10).

Use of Public Transportation and Electric Vehicles: Promoting public transportation, bicycling, walking, and electric mobility reduces carbon emissions and air pollution by reducing reliance on fossil fuel-powered automobiles (10).

Education and Promotion for Environmental Policies: Two effective strategies for systemic change are advocating laws that give environmental protection first priority and increasing public understanding of ecological challenges. People can ensure long-term sustainability by political participation, such as voting for leaders who share their commitment to the environment (11).

1.3.2. Societal Resilience

“There is no question that climate change is happening; the only arguable point is what part humans are playing in it.” (David Attenborough). As societies experience rapid global revolutions, they face difficult concerns including inequality and the digital divide, as well as chances for adaptation and constructive development. Understanding these difficulties is both a responsibility and a call to action. Individuals may actively shape a more resilient and

hopeful society by personalizing these concerns and committing to significant solutions, ranging from healthcare to cultural preservation. Today's societies face several difficulties such as wealth inequality, limited access to education and healthcare, mental health crises, political instability, human rights violations, employment insecurity, demographic transitions, migration, and the digital divide. These challenges are getting worse due to a number of factors, such as lack of faith in institutions, misinformation, nationalism, and the cultural consequences of globalization. Additionally, privacy concerns, ethical dilemmas from emerging technologies underline the critical need for resilience and solutions (Tavanti et al. 18-20). In order to address the aforementioned problems, a number of solutions are suggested in order to build resilient societies in the Anthropocene.

Education Investment: Investing resources to high-quality education, particularly in marginalized areas, fosters an educated and capable population capable of driving societal growth (21).

Universal Healthcare: Creating healthcare systems that ensure equal access to all, regardless of financial resources, improves public health and increases collective productivity (21).

Sustainable Employment and Basic Income: Improving welfare systems and improving universal basic income can protect vulnerable groups from poverty while also promoting economic security and mobility. Increasing access to better job possibilities and providing skills training also boosts workforce resilience and lowers unemployment (21-22).

Promoting Civic Participation: Encouraging active civic engagement and inclusive democratic practices empowers citizens to make decisions, resulting in more fair and effective governance (22).

Promoting Mental Health Awareness: Promoting open talks and educational programs about mental health, as well as integrating mental health services into primary care, helps to eliminate stigma and assures greater access to vital support (22).

Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding: It is critical to support community-based and international peacebuilding activities, as well as conflict resolution programs, in order to reduce violence, resolve disputes, and promote long-term stability (22).

Aside from the aforementioned solutions, additional techniques are suggested by Tavanti et al. to boost societal resilience. Media literacy programs help in the fight against misinformation, and the ethical application of AI can improve service delivery while avoiding bias. Expanding telemedicine improves healthcare access, while advancing gender equality promotes inclusive progress. Public-private partnerships and ethical consumerism mobilize resources and enable individuals to be responsible. Also, global collaboration on concerns like climate change, pandemics, and human trafficking is critical in today's interconnected globe. In addition, building resilient societies requires collaboration between governments, communities, and individuals. Governments must lead with clear policies, communities should drive grassroots initiatives, and individuals can impact change through their daily decisions. Though development may be slow, perseverance and collaborative learning are essential. These collaborative activities boost societal resilience for current and future generations, reminding people that the pursuit of knowledge and action is a continuous journey (23-24).

1.3.3. Economic Resilience

The strength and flexibility of economies nowadays are more crucial than ever. Economic resilience is more than just maintaining growth or preventing financial crises; it requires developing systems that can adjust and thrive through complex challenges. Thus, it is

important to rethink and redesign economic models that, for too long, have been dominated by an endless drive for profit while neglecting the social and environmental impacts of such pursuits. Economic resilience requires institutions capable of adapting to global issues such as climate change, inequality, and geopolitical tensions (Tavanti et al. 28). This means reconsidering profit-driven approaches. Because economies are internationally integrated, international collaboration in sharing resources and solutions is critical. Building resilience also requires financial inclusion, equitable wealth distribution, and increased access to education, skills, and entrepreneurship, which ensures that prosperity benefits everyone and supports long-term, balanced growth (28).

There exist a number of economic challenges faced by humanity in the Anthropocene era. First, economic diversification, which signifies the heavy dependence on a single industry or resource, makes the modern economy fragile. By expanding into multiple sectors, nations can protect themselves from industry-specific downturns, create more stable growth, and generate consistent job opportunities (30). Second, debt sustainability and management. Meaning that excessive public or private debt can weaken economies. By maintaining manageable debt levels through careful and responsible budgeting, while passing strong financial regulations to prevent economic crises (30). Additionally, labor market flexibility and workforce adaptability. This is another economic challenge that appeared with fast-paced technological change. Employees and labor systems must remain adaptable, by updating education, and encouraging policies that allow workers to move between jobs and industries more easily (30). Another challenge encountering modern economy is market competition and monopolies. The rise of tech giants raises concerns about market monopolies, which can dominate markets can limit competition and innovation. For instance, they can set unfair prices, block smaller competitors, and control consumer choices (30). To overcome the aforementioned economic challenges, Tavanti et al. suggest a number of solutions that aim to

strike a balance between economic development and environmental sustainability.

Transition to Renewable Energy: Switching from fossil fuels to solar, wind, and hydropower can considerably reduce carbon emissions and promote sustainable economic growth(34).

Sustainable Agriculture and Agroecology: Implementing sustainable farming practices, such agroecology, can improve food security and reduce environmental damage. Crop rotation, pesticide reduction, and biodiversity promotion are among the recommended practices in sustainable agriculture (34).

Circular Economy and Minimizing Waste: Shifting toward a circular economy, where materials are continually reused, repaired, or recycled, helps reduce waste and environmental harm. This transition can be supported by effective regulations, to boost both economic growth and consumer awareness (34).

Carbon Pricing and Emissions Trading: Implementing carbon pricing, such as taxes or cap-and-trade systems, can provide economic incentives to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote investment in cleaner technology (34).

Implementing Universal Basic Income (UBI): This can minimize poverty, eliminate income inequality, and encourage individuals in shifting away from ecologically hazardous businesses (35).

Alongside these suggested solutions, adopting digitalization and Industry technologies can improve efficiency and reduce resource use. Another effective solution can be education and reskilling programs to prepare workers for green jobs. Social entrepreneurships encourage businesses to balance profit with social and environmental responsibility, fostering a sustainable business ecosystem. Finally, adaptive, data-driven governance ensures policies

remain effective in addressing evolving global challenges, making economic resilience dependent on innovation, collaboration, and adaptability (36).

1.3.4. Psychological Resilience

The Anthropocene brings not just environmental and technological concerns, but it also places tremendous psychological strain on individuals and societies. Climate change, resource scarcity, social injustice, and global health problems have a direct impact on human mental and emotional wellbeing. However, the human mind has a great potential to adapt, cope, and even grow in the face of Anthropocene-related challenges. Recognizing that its difficulties are psychological, as well as environmental and technological, mental strength, adaptability, and communal bonds play a major role in building resilience. Tavanti et al. highlight some of the challenges faced by psychological resilience in the Anthropocene. The modern world faces a mental health epidemic, caused by the fast-paced lifestyle and constant connectivity. This led to a surge in mental health issues such as anxiety, depression and burnout, which are exacerbated by the uncertainties and environmental challenges of the Anthropocene (57). Information overload and decision fatigue is another psychological challenge characterizing the modern world. Constant access to conflicting information can cause cognitive overload and decision fatigue (57). Additionally, despite the modern technological advancements and human connectivity, social isolation and loneliness are among the mental issues that can negatively impact psychological well-being (58). Furthermore, in this age of rapid change and economic uncertainty, economic insecurity can cause stress due to fear of job loss, income inequality, and financial instability (58). Finally, cultural identity crisis is another challenge in which the Anthropocene's global interconnection can dilute cultural identities, leading to psychological issues for individuals who try to navigate between traditional values and global influences (58).

In order to get through the aforementioned challenges and achieve resilience in the psychological dimension, the following solutions are suggested.

Promotion of Mental Health Literacy: Raising awareness of mental health in individuals and communities, challenging stigma, and cultivating understanding can motivate people to seek mental help and support one another. Ensuring that mental health services, such as therapy, counseling, and psychiatric care are accessible and affordable is also critical (60).

Technology-Based Mental Health Support: Digital solutions like smartphone apps, teletherapy, and online self-help platforms can improve access to mental health care, especially in distant or disadvantaged areas (60).

Programs for Stress Reduction and Mindfulness: Promoting techniques like yoga, meditation, and mindfulness can help people in managing their stress, depression and anxiety (60).

Community Building and Social Support: Establishing areas and chances for social contact and community involvement can help fight loneliness and provide emotional assistance(61).

Workplace Mental Health Programs: Employers ought to put in place mental health initiatives that support staff members, create a safe workplace, and encourage work-life balance (61).

Healthy Living and Physical Activity: Promoting a healthy lifestyle and physical activity can have a big impact on mental health (61).

The psychological techniques discussed above address the various issues of the Anthropocene. Psychological resilience requires community support, easily available

resources and mental health awareness. Building psychological resilience is essential for both individual and societal well-being, particularly in a time of uncertainty and continuous change.

Conclusion

This chapter has established the fundamental concepts required for comprehending the Anthropocene as a defining epoch in which human activities caused lasting marks on the Earth. It reveals that the challenges of this era, such as climate change, ecological collapse, inequality, and technological disruption, demand urgent intervention and action. Dystopian fiction, as discussed in this chapter, provides a valuable insight to imagine possible futures during the Anthropocene and the ecological crises related to it. Ecocriticism also offers important insights into how literature engages with environmental issues. This literary approach also deepens our understanding of the human–nature relationship. Ultimately, this chapter has shown that survival in the Anthropocene requires more than recognition of the issues; it calls for resilience and adaptation at personal, societal, economic, and psychological levels. By strengthening resilience, individuals and communities can not only survive crises but also transform uncertainty into opportunities for future growth and collective well-being.

Chapter Two

Climate Change, Environmental Collapse and Survival in *Parable of the Sower*

Introduction

Octavia E. Butler's *Parable of the Sower* (1993) has emerged as an interesting eco-dystopian narrative that captures the concerns of the Anthropocene. The book explores how environmental degradation and climate change pose a threat to survival and social stability. Additionally, it examines the connections between literature, climate change, and surviving in dystopian settings; As it functions as both a cautionary story and a critique to the Anthropocene. By dramatizing the fall of moral, ecological, and social structures, *Parable of the Sower* invites readers to contemplate the consequences of humanity's negligence toward the environment while highlighting the urgent need for adaptation and resilience.

Parable of the Sower is written in the form of a diary between the years 2024 and 2027. Lauren Oya Olamina, the protagonist, is a fifteen-year old African American girl who suffers from hyperempathy syndrome, the involuntary sharing of others' pain. Lauren lives in a walled neighborhood called Robledo in California, in what she describes as a "cul-de-sac community" (Butler 14). The United States in the story is wrecked by climate change, crime, and social inequality. When her community is destroyed by fire and violence by drug abusers, she is forced to travel north in search of survival and stability. Along the way, she gathers a group of companions who share her struggles and ultimately begin to embrace her philosophy of Earthseed, a belief system centered on adaptability and change.

This chapter examines *Parable of the Sower* from an Ecocritical lens, labeling it within the genre of climate fiction and eco-dystopia. It first examines Butler's depiction of climate change and environmental collapse, emphasizing the scarcity of resources such as water, food, and energy. The chapter also explores the implications of climate change on society, including the collapse of law and order, class inequality, and gender-based violence. Finally, the chapter highlights individual, spiritual, and community resilience in the novel. By analyzing Lauren's

leadership, hyperempathy, and the creation of the Earthseed community, as responses to environmental and social collapse.

2.1. *Parable of the Sower* as an Ecodystopian Depiction of the Anthropocene

In recent decades, dystopian literature has increasingly highlighted the consequences of the Anthropocene and climate change. Octavia E. Butler's *Parable of the Sower* stands out as a powerful narrative that blends these concerns with dystopian storytelling. The story captures the growing issues of the Anthropocene, when human exploitation and climate change become a threat to survival. By combining dystopian elements with ecological critique, Butler creates a story that is both cautionary and prophetic. This makes it essential to study how *Parable of the Sower* as an Eco-Dystopian text, reflects the Anthropocene.

2.1.1. Environmental Collapse in Butler's Dystopia

Octavia E. Butler's *Parable of the Sower* envisions a dystopian world where environmental degradation and ecological collapse are driving forces that shape the characters' struggles for survival. The story is set in a near-future America where society has collapsed under the pressures of climate change, scarcity of resources, and social inequality. Mølgaard and Haugaard state that "the novel's thematic content is fitting to the genre category of climate fiction, as the novel explores the tension between awareness of climate science and inaction on environmental issues, by depicting a world in which this tension has been left unresolved" (51). Mølgaard and Haugaard proceed to explain that the citizens of Lauren's dystopian America recognize the reality of the anthropogenic climate change that they experience, yet, they take little to no action against it. This stems either from being preoccupied with the collapsing economy, which is illustrated in the novel by the newly elected President "Donner", or from a sense of helplessness, believing that climate change is too vast a problem for them to resolve (52). Lauren says: "People have changed the climate of the world. Now they're waiting for the old days to come back" (Butler 74). This indicates that

society in the novel tend to respond with denial and passivity to the environmental crises that it faces, hoping that these crises will somehow end and life will return to normal.

2.1.1.1. Scarcity of Natural Resources

Resource scarcity is one of the important themes that reflect the Anthropocene in *Parable of the Sower*. “Dad says water now costs several times as much as gasoline” (Butler 21). This demonstrates the extreme water scarcity in the story, where something as crucial for existence as water, has become more expensive and difficult to obtain than gasoline. This shift reflects the harsh effects of droughts and environmental collapse. Additionally, people who sell water are often targets to theft and even murder. “The cost of water has gone up again. And I heard on the news today that more water peddlers are being killed. Peddlers sell water to squatters and the street poor-- and to people who've managed to hold on to their homes” (Butler 22). Water peddlers are informal sellers who distribute water to the homeless and struggling homeowners. The murders of these peddlers illustrates the desperation for water in this dystopian story, which can lead communities to violence and conflicts to obtain something as essential for living as water.

Another major issue in the novel is food scarcity. In the dystopian setting of the novel, climate collapse and economic breakdown are so severe that food is very difficult to find, and people often have to grow their own fruits and vegetables. “Food prices are insane, always going up, never down. Everyone complains about them.” (Butler 104). Economic collapse is a central feature in the novel where food prices are in constant rise as a result of extreme economic inflation caused by environmental degradation. Additionally, Butler shows how harsh it is for people to live outside the walled communities. Lauren describes the homeless people on the streets outside her gated neighborhood as “poor-- squatters, winos, junkies” (Butler 12). “They don't get enough to eat so they're malnourished—or they eat bad food and poison themselves” (Butler 12). Hunger, due to severe food shortage, forces people into

desperate choices, where even food becomes a danger rather than a way of survival. Another brutal reality of resource scarcity is when some thieves violently attacked and raped an old woman, Mrs. Sims, to steal her food and clothing. “They grabbed all her food, her jewelry that had once belonged to her mother, her clothes, and worst of all, her supply of cash” (Butler 27). The fact that her food is taken first highlights that in this wrecked dystopian society, nourishment is the most precious asset, which can drive people to violence and theft. In Butler’s vision, food scarcity doesn’t just mean hunger, it encapsulates other issues like illness and the fall of morality.

Furthermore, scarcity of energy is another key element of this novel, where people are forced to adapt to life without steady electricity and gasoline. Lauren states that:

People go to bed soon after dark to save electricity, but between dinner and darkness they spend time on their porches or in their yards where it isn't so hot. Some listen to their radio on front or back porches. Now and then people get together to play music, sing, play board games, talk, or get out on the paved part of the street for volleyball, touch football, basketball, or tennis. People used to play baseball, but we just can't afford what that costs in windows. A few people just find a corner and read a book while there's still daylight. It's a good, comfortable, recreational time. (Butler 89).

Electricity in this setting is very expensive and people cannot afford to keep lights on at night, so they adapt by aligning their routines with natural daylight. “Except for arsonists and the rich, most people have given up buying gasoline. No one I know uses a gaspowered car, truck, or cycle. Vehicles like that are rusting in driveways and being cannibalized for metal and plastic” (Butler 21). Gasoline in Butler’s novel has become so expensive that only the rich, or criminals like arsonists, can afford it. For ordinary people like Lauren’s family and

community, fuel is unattainable, and gas-powered vehicles have become useless. The loss of technological advancement and the shift to more primitive forms of living is a major marker of dystopia.

2.1.1.2. Climate Change and Ecological Crises

Butler emphasizes the catastrophic consequences of ecological crises and climate change in the novel. Society collapses due to severe weather patterns, rising sea levels, droughts, storms, and wildfires' spread. In a lecture at MIT in 1998, Butler said the following about her representation of climate change in her novel:

A character in the novel is Global-Warming. This is something that I really wanted to pay attention to, and it's odd how it went in and out of fashion while I was working on the novel. ... It seems to me that a thing as important as global-warming should get a lot more attention than it does. So I portray a world in which global-warming is doing things like creating a lot of erratic weather and severe storms and drought in California, and other things like that. This was not a book about prophecy; this was an if-this-goes-on story. 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. (qtd. in Mølgaard and Haugaard 50).

Butler emphasizes that climate change is not just a theme but an active force shaping the story, almost like a living character. She also expresses her frustration about how global warming received inconsistent public attention despite its obvious importance. She also wrote her novel to warn readers about the dangers of anthropogenic ecological crises, and what could happen if society continues to ignore climate change. "But everything was getting worse: the climate, the economy, crime, drugs, you know." (Butler 222). This quote highlights how climate change in the novel leads to social and economic decline. The more climate gets

worse, through heat, droughts, and fire, the more it leads to economic instability. Also, spatial setting of the novel forms a risk to society where people must constantly deal with the uncertainty imposed by man-made threats (Mølgaard and Haugaard 53). This could be seen when Lauren says, “People are setting more fires to cover crimes-- although why they would bother these days, I don't know” (Butler 172). “We had a fire today. People worry so much about fire, but the little kids will play with it if they can” (Butler 36). Fire becomes a constant threat in the novel. It is no longer just an accident of climate but also a result of human activity. “The water wasted on putting out the fire was going to be hard enough to pay for” (Butler 38). Along with the crisis of constant fires in the city, water is too scarce and expensive to be wasted on extinguishing these fires. Furthermore, Butler in the novel depicts how climate change leads to rising sea levels on coastal areas:

Parts of it sometimes crumble into the ocean, undercut or deeply saturated by saltwater. Sea level keeps rising with the warming climate and there is the occasional earthquake. Olivar's flat, sandy beach is already just a memory. So are the houses and businesses that used to sit on that beach (Butler 141).

Rising water levels in the city of Olivar erased parts of it. Lauren even describes the beach, along with its homes and businesses, as “just a memory”. This highlights the permanent ecological loss and destruction that climate change can cause. Another indicator of climate instability in the novel is storms, which cause mass destruction and massive deaths. Hurricanes also destroy crops and cause starvation in the novel. “There are over 700 known dead so far. One hurricane. And how many people has it hurt? How many are going to starve later because of destroyed crops? That's nature.” (18). Lauren’s statement, “that’s nature” reveals the harsh reality of the Anthropocene, when climate change has made nature unpredictable and violent. The statement also suggests that natural disasters are expected and normalized. “I awoke to the jangling of the bell: Emergency! Earthquake? Fire? Intruders?”

(173). The constant recurrence of natural disasters and thefts has left the people in the novel in a state of constant fear and sense of insecurity. Lauren's reaction to the alarm bell shows that danger has become an ordinary part of their life. Lauren also expresses her helplessness when it comes to fixing the environment and reversing the damage. "We can't make the climate change back, no matter why it changed in the first place. You and I can't. The neighborhood can't. We can't do anything." (74). Climate change has become irreversible and overwhelming according to Lauren, but she believes while people cannot stop climate change, they can learn better ways of survival and adaptation.

2.1.2. Social Fragmentation and Injustice

2.1.2.1. Walled Communities and Gated Survival

In the Californian city of Robledo, Lauren lives with her family in a gated community, and outside that community, society has fallen out of civilization. Interracial relations are impermissible; the gap between the rich and the poor is even wider, and the rich communities are mainly white (Chebel 28). "Crazy to live without a wall to protect you. Even in Robledo, most of the street poor-- squatters, winos, junkies, homeless people in general—are dangerous. They're desperate or crazy or both." (Butler 11). Neighborhood walls represent a crucial means of survival in the story, and exposure to the outside world may lead to violence, theft, and even murder. "Then there were the pitiful, unwalled residential areas. A lot of the houses were trashed-- burned, vandalized, infested with drunks or druggies or squatted-in by homeless families with their filthy, gaunt, half-naked children." (10). Butler portrays the unwalled communities in the novel as unprotected and unsafe, with a degraded quality of life. "In L.A. some walled communities bigger and stronger than this one just aren't there anymore. Nothing left but ruins, rats, and squatters. What happened to them can happen to us. We'll die in here unless we get busy now and work out ways to survive." (72). Lauren explains that despite the existence of strong walls, communities are still vulnerable and fragile, and city

walls provide only temporary safety and cannot prevent destruction. “Mr. Yannis, a dentist, was killed while riding his electric cycle home from the walled, guarded clinic where he worked” (23) Mr. Yannis, despite working in a “walled, guarded clinic”, still got murdered, which shows how security is just an illusion in this dystopian novel, and nothing can guarantee survival. Lauren, despite her young age, is aware of the fact that the safety of her community can vanish at any moment. She understands that walls are fragile boundaries and that the violence of the outside world always threatens to break in.

2.1.2.2. Collapse of Law and Order

The collapse of law and order is one of the primary dystopian themes in *Parable of the Sower*. Butler demonstrates how police, governments, and legal systems have lost control leaving individuals and communities to fight for themselves. According to Worldmaking, “climate crisis has circumstances that have worsened so much that old laws no longer apply or new ones kick in” (qtd. in Haugaard and Mølgaard 28). Lauren’s reality is totally contrasted to life in present-day America, as laws has become ineffective and order outside of her gated community is shown to be completely dissolved.

People tend to give in, to fear and depression, to need and greed. When no influence is strong enough to unify people. They divide. They struggle, One against one, Group against group, For survival, position, power. They remember old hates and generate new ones, they create chaos and nurture it. They kill and kill and kill, until they are exhausted and destroyed, until they are conquered by outside forces, or until one of them becomes, A leader. Most will follow, Or a tyrant, Most fear (Butler 124).

Lauren’s Earthseed verses from her diary capture how people fall into fear, greed, and division in times of crisis. Lack of insecurity in the story drives people to turn against one another, leading to violence and crimes. “Addicts are running wild, setting fires in areas that

the earthquake didn't damage. Bands of the street poor precede or follow them, grabbing whatever they can from stores and from the walled enclaves of the rich and what's left of the middle class." (285). The collapse of social order in the story is accelerated by the spread of drugs and addiction. With authority laws being almost absent, drug users have turned to violence and destruction, and their actions intensify the chaos already caused by natural disasters like earthquakes. This could be viewed as a warning from Butler of how drug addiction could fuel violence and destruction.

"And what about those suspended laws? Will it be legal to poison, mutilate, or infect people-- as long as you provide them with food, water, and space to die? Dad decided not to vote for Donner after all. He didn't vote for anyone. He said politicians turned his stomach." (34-35). The political system in the novel has become so corrupt and greedy that the government decides to temporarily remove basic protection laws in the workplace, making it possible to mistreat, exploit, or even kill people in exchange for minimal wages, food, water, and a shelter. As a result, Lauren's father's chooses not to vote for Donner or any other candidate. This reflects people's loss of faith in the government which no longer represents solutions or leadership, but instead symbolizes corruption. "I had begged him not to go, not to trust any police or government official. It seemed to me such people were no better than gangs with their robbing and slaving." (359).

Lauren even expresses her loss of faith in law enforcement and police. Officials, usually symbols of order and protection, are viewed as corrupt and dangerous. "But. . .couldn't we just call the police?" "For what? We can't afford their fees, and anyway, they're not interested until after a crime has been committed." (92). "The police," my father told them, "may be able to avenge you, but they can't protect you" (49). Police officers are not only portrayed as useless and inefficient, they even go as far as charging fees for their services, which most people cannot afford. "If the police have ignored what's been done to my neighborhood so far, if such a fire and so many corpses can be ignored, why should I go to them? What would they

do? Arrest me? Take my cash as their fee? I wouldn't be surprised. Best to stay clear of them.” (198). “What had cops done for my community when it was burning? Nothing” (275). After the destruction of her neighborhood, Lauren expresses her deep mistrust toward the police, which has done nothing despite the fires and deaths. Their absence reflects the collapse of public institutions and the inability to maintain order in dystopian settings.

The National Guard has been activated to restore order, and I suppose it might. But I suspect that in the short term, it will only add to the chaos. What else could another group of well-armed people do in such an insane situation. The thoughtful ones might take their guns and other equipment and vanish to help their families. Others might find themselves at war with their own people. They'll be confused and scared and dangerous. Of course, some will discover that they enjoy their new power-- the power to make others submit, the power to take what they want-- property, sex, life. (Butler 286)

Lauren recognizes that activating The National Guard only worsens instability in the community. In the dystopian society of the novel, guns equal power, and this power is easily abused. The quote even represents the blurred line between protectors and enemies, since the absence of strict laws and justice allows the ones in powerful positions to practice exploitation and abuse.

As a result to the collapse in order and frustration with the law enforcements; Lauren, her parents, and the rest of her community members practice weapons training for protection. “Most of us have practiced at home with BB guns on homemade targets or on squirrel and bird targets” (47). It has become normalized for people and even teenagers to hold guns and learn how to shoot them in the novel. “I think he wanted to see whether or not I could do it-- whether shooting a bird or a squirrel would trigger my hyperempathy” (47). “Besides, just because I can shoot a bird or a squirrel doesn't mean I could shoot a person-- a thief like the ones who robbed Mrs. Sims. I don't know whether I could do that. And if I did it, I don't know

what would happen to me. Would I die?” (48). Despite Lauren’s hyperempathy syndrome, which makes her physically feel the pain she does to others, she is still obliged to practice shooting on animals like birds and squirrels. Additionally, her father is worried about whether she can control this condition in a life-or-death situation. “He carries a nine millimeter automatic pistol whenever he leaves the neighborhood. He carries it on his hip where people can see it. He says that discourages mistakes” (48). Lauren describes her father, who always carries a visible gun whenever he leaves their gated neighborhood. The fact that he keeps it visible to people reveals how weapons in the novel are not just tools of defense, but they are also used to warn others not to attack, showing that survival depends on being perceived as dangerous.

2.1.2.3. Class Division and Economic Inequality as a Result of Climate Crises

In *Parable of the Sower*, Butler highlights how climate crises intensify class division and economic inequality as another form of social injustice. Feist explains that disadvantaged populations, such as people in poverty are more vulnerable to the effects of global warming, according to a 2018 IPCC report (1). Environmental collapse in the novel, through droughts, storms, and rising sea levels, makes access to simple necessities like water, food, and energy increasingly difficult. Lauren describes the homeless people whom she passes by in a car ride outside her neighborhood as “street poor-- squatters, winos, junkies” (Butler 11). “They carry untreated diseases and festering wounds.” (12). “They have no money to spend on water to wash with so even the unwounded have sores. They don't get enough to eat so they're malnourished—or they eat bad food and poison themselves.” (12). Lauren’s description to the homeless shows their severe struggle with food and water scarcity. “For the street poor, unable to afford medical care, even a minor wound might be fatal” (186). Additionally, the poor have no access to basic necessities like healthcare and sanitation

according to Lauren. Despite belonging to a struggling class herself, Lauren and her community are considered privileged for having enough food, water, and basic education. Also for living in a relatively safe walled area. “We've never been rich, but to the desperate, we looked rich. We were surviving and we had our wall.” (196).

Security is also a privilege in the novel, reserved for rich people who can afford walls and weapons. Lauren asks herself “what must it be like for people who are really rich-- although perhaps with their big guns, private armies of security guards, and up to date security equipment, they're better able to fight back. Maybe” (139). She also states that “The rich have plenty of other security devices, but the dogs are extra insurance. Dogs scare people.” (50). She also mentions that “in some places, the rich are escaping by flying out in helicopters” (285). Poor people on the other hand, without access to weapons or any police security, are big targets to violence and murder. “The penalty for being too poor to be worth robbing is a beating, a rape, and/or death” (285).

Furthermore, Racial division is normalised in Butler’s world, where “people are expected to fear and hate everyone but their own kind” (Feist 7). “People are setting fires to get rid of whomever they dislike from personal enemies to anyone who looks or sounds foreign or racially different” (Butler 172). Economic inequality due to race and social class is also demonstrated in the story. “Robledo's too big, too poor, too black, and too Hispanic to be of interest to anyone--and it has no coastline” (144).

Butler also highlights the white privilege in the novel. “Of course, it didn't help that he was black. Being white might help you win people over faster than he did.” (364) . Being white gives individuals better access to job opportunities and gaining people’s trust. Lauren wonders to herself “Is it a sin against God to be poor? We're almost poor ourselves.” (18). She proceeds to say “There are fewer and fewer jobs among us, more of us being born, more kids growing up with nothing to look forward to” (18).

According to Feist, in *Parable of the Sower*, Butler expresses her opposition to

capitalism and criticizes the ideology of neoliberalism (4). President Donner, who won the elections in the novel, has planned to “suspend "overly restrictive" minimum wage, environmental, and worker protection laws” (Butler 34). According to Streeby, president Donner in the story is a caricature of Ronald Reagan purposely written by Butler. Butler was known to be “harshly critical” of Reagan’s policies that pushed deregulation, and prioritised untrammelled economic growth over confronting environmental harms (qtd. in Feist 5). Lauren describes how under Donner’s policies, “the workers are more throwaways than slaves. They breathe toxic fumes or drink contaminated water or get caught in unshielded machinery. . . . It doesn't matter. They're easy to replace-- thousands of jobless for every job.” (Butler 368). This reflects to what extent middle class workers have been exploited and dehumanized. Lauren even described the new work policies as “president-elect Donner's version of slavery” (46). The new laws in Butler’s dystopian world also legalized debt slavery. Lauren states that:

Such debt slaves could be forced to work longer hours for less pay, could be "disciplined" if they failed to meet their quotas, could be traded and sold with or without their consent, with or without their families, to distant employers who had temporary or permanent need of them. Worse, children could be forced to work off the debt of their parents if the parents died, became disabled, or escaped (331).

This illustrates how the collapse of law and order has not led to total freedom of laws, but instead to laws that protect the rich and dehumanize the poor. The greed of capitalistic politicians has even led to the collapse of children’s right by legalizing child labour in order to serve their economic interests.

Women's struggle in *Parable of the Sower* is another form of social injustice. Women in the novel are constantly exposed to threats of sexual assault and trafficking. For instance, Lauren sees a woman whom she describes as “young, naked, and filthy” (9). The woman

seems like “she had been raped so much that she was crazy” (9). Lauren also has a neighbour, Tracy, who was raped and impregnated by her uncle at the young age of thirteen, then forced to keep the baby because she had “no money for prenatal care or an abortion” (39). Women and girls, especially those who are poor and homeless, are even sold as property to men for domestic labour or pleasure. For instance, Lauren’s friend Zahra, whom she meets after the destruction of her walled community, was sold to her husband by her homeless mother when she was only fifteen. He took her to live in the first house she had ever known. He gave her enough food and didn't beat her, and even when her co-wives were hateful to her, it was a thousand times better than living outside in starvation with her mother (Butler 204). Tüzün argues that Butler is demonstrating how climate change conditions “cause and perpetuate the subordination of women” due to “a particular kind of hierarchical and dualistic thinking that is rooted in oppressive patriarchy.” (qtd. in Feist 9). Another example of this is a girl named Emery who meets Lauren on her journey to the north. “The mother pushed Emery into marriage to save her from victimization and starvation in the streets” (Butler 330). Emery’s survival, along with the other poor women in Butler’s dystopia, depends on male control and ownership. This shows how systemic inequality and the collapse of social order leave women with almost no choices except exploitation or death.

2.2. Resilience and Adaptation as a Response to the Anthropocene

2.2.1. Individual Resilience in the Face of Environmental Collapse

In *Parable of the Sower*, Butler emphasizes the importance of individual resilience as a response to environmental collapse. Lauren, the protagonist, represents a symbol of survival, adaptability and strength in the novel. Despite the dangers she encounters in her journey, such as violence, poverty, and ecological disaster, Lauren’s determination, leadership, emotional

strength and hyperempathy are what makes her a model of resilience in the story.

2.2.1.1. Lauren's Hyperempathy

Lauren's hyperempathy enables her to literally feel the happiness and pain of other people. "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" (Butler 14). Lauren's Hyperempathy is a medical syndrome that she got because of a drug her deceased mother used to abuse named Paracetco (14). "I get a lot of grief that doesn't belong to me, and that isn't real. But it hurts." (14). Even though Lauren's condition forces her to feel both pain and pleasure experienced by others, the reality of the world around her is filled with violence, hunger, and suffering; so she rarely feels moments of joy or comfort because of her syndrome. "I'm supposed to share pleasure and pain, but there isn't much pleasure around these days." (14). Lauren even mentions that she used to bleed when she saw someone bleed due to her condition but this eventually stopped (12). Because of her hyperempathy syndrome, Lauren is constantly aware of the pain experienced by people around her. She is unable to rely on her walled community to protect her from the harsh realities of the environmental and social collapse. Her hyperempathy allows her to feel deep compassion for those who are less privileged, and her journals often reflect their struggles. However, Lauren mainly sees her condition as a weakness. "Being the most vulnerable person I know is damned sure not something I want to boast about" (14). In her dystopian society where showing any vulnerability can lead to rape, attack, or death, her hyperempathy makes her more susceptible to harm and abuse. In a world where survival depends on strength, her disorder increases her chances of being targeted and hurt. Vargas states that "Indeed, empathy has become so entirely devalued in Sower that even Lauren's father, a Baptist preacher who would seemingly be compelled by his faith to appreciate empathy, has no patience for her disorder." (7). In Lauren's world, empathy is no longer seen as a virtue but as a weakness. Even her father

whose religious morals should encourage kindness and empathy cannot accept her disorder since he views it as a dangerous flaw.

Nevertheless, Roy argues that Lauren's hyperempathy is what motivates her to end human suffering. Her disorder helped her create a new belief system and a community that could reduce pain and allow people to live together in peace and harmony (587). Even though Lauren often sees her hyperempathy as a burden, Butler encourages readers to consider how it provides a positive influence on the growth of Earthseed. Lauren's awareness that her walled community will eventually collapse originates from her syndrome, so she feels an urgent need to expand her capacity for adaptation (Thaxter 10). Vargas argues that even though Lauren's hyperempathy creates many challenges for her in her journey, her ability to feel others' pain, along with her intelligence and education, makes her an ideal protagonist in this dystopian story. Her condition, along with her position as a young African American woman, enables her to recognize the roots of her society's decline and to offer both criticism and possible solutions (8). "Because of her hyperempathy, Lauren is forced to cross into the subjective positions of others and experience their realities as they experience them" (Vargas 8). Her intelligence then allows her to turn those subjective experiences into a basis for her rhetorical analysis. Her hyperempathy allows her to freely question current conditions and systems of power (8). Vargas also argues that Lauren's hyperempathy allows her to see the truth behind human behavior, but her insights are shaped by more than just pain and suffering. She relies on logic to interpret the actions she observes and to imagine a more compassionate way of living (54). In this regard, Miller highlights that Lauren's hyperempathy syndrome strengthens her sense of compassion and solidarity in a dystopian world where most people act selfishly in order to survive (qtd. in Araar and Djebbar 45). Miller also describes Lauren's syndrome as "a source of wisdom and cure for the worst of our nightmares." (45).

Lauren's hyperempathy syndrome is central in the novel. Even though Lauren often views it as a weakness, it is also her greatest strength. Her condition fuels her compassion

towards the weak, and determination to build a better future. It also inspires her vision of Earthseed, a religion that emphasizes change and collective survival.

2.2.1.2. Lauren Olamina's Resilience and Psychological Endurance

Butler portrays individual resilience through the protagonist, Lauren Olamina, who illustrates how determination, adaptability, and refusal to remain passive allow individuals to survive chaos and collapse. "Her father is the source of knowledge, yet she is the source of change" (Chebel 29). Lauren believes her father's dependence on "a big-daddy-God or a big-cop-God is harmful, since she understands God to be "another word for nature" (Butler 18) (Chebel 29). The need for such a powerful protector that provides people with a false sense of safety from destruction and disorder is a patriarchal mindset, according to her understanding, even while they remain trapped in a collapsing community (Chebel 29).

García states that "Lauren has the soul of a leader" (21). She describes her as "a teacher and a learner at the same time" (21), as she finds inspiration everywhere and from anybody (21). Lauren's leadership demonstrates through her ability to form relationships and build community. She listens actively, communicates clearly, and mediates conflict essential social skills (AbdulSahib 1451). Additionally, thanks to her hyperempathy syndrome, Lauren values emotional openness rather than punishes it. She allows the people around to grieve, talk about their concerns, and ask questions. She is able to create a balance between compassion and authority because of her emotional intelligence (AbdulSahib 1452).

Furthermore, Lauren's self-regulation and emotional control are important factors in journey of survival (AbdulSahib 1450). As Lauren navigates the dangers of a collapsing society, her ability to survive often relies on controlling her emotions. Unlike the rest of her community members, Lauren does not give in to fear or hopelessness and learns to manage her reactions. This becomes evident after her neighborhood is devastated; despite her loneliness and grief, she maintains her composure and her ability to think coherently.

(AbdulSahib 1450).

Lauren writes in her journals “I’ll adapt where I must, take what opportunities I can find or make, hang on, gather students, and teach.” (Butler 149). This line highlights her determination and resilience, as she is ready to adjust to whatever circumstances come, even if they are harsh or unexpected. Survival for Lauren also means building a community and sharing knowledge that can guide people toward a better future, which indicates her strong personality and high leadership skills in a world where everyone else only care about their own survival.

Lauren realizes that the fragile stability of life inside her walled community is temporary, since the arsonists and criminals beyond the walls are able to break through. She believes her community should start preparing for its collapse as soon as possible. In a conversation with her closest friend, Joanne, she says,

I’m trying to learn whatever I can that might help me survive out there. I think we should all study books like these. I think we should bury money and other necessities in the ground where thieves won’t find them. I think we should make emergency packs-- grab and run packs-- in case we have to get out of here in a hurry. Money, food, clothing, matches, a blanket. . . . I think we should fix places outside where we can meet in case we get separated. (Butler 75-76).

While others in her neighborhood rely on walls and her father’s leadership for safety, Lauren believes that disaster is inevitable. Lauren takes responsibility for her survival rather than depending on fragile structures for safety. “This is just more denial: A dumb little game of “If we don’t talk about bad things, maybe they won’t happen” (80). Lauren’s mindset is different from those around her. Instead of denial, she chooses preparation and adaptability as a path to survival.

Keith, Lauren’s brother, is the first to reject their father’s strict safety measures. Unlike Lauren, his rebellion is destructive and leads to his tragic death. Lauren’s defiance, by

contrast, is constructive. Her determination for survival and freedom is marked by patience and faith, while Keith's actions are driven by a hunger for power.

Additionally, Lauren's view to marriage and raising children in a collapsing world of hunger and violence is another example of her selection for survival over most of the other members of the gated community. (Chebel 30). Marriage for Lauren is viewed as a threat to her survival and freedom. Despite her love for Curtis, her boyfriend in her first community, she mentions that "if I had to look forward to was marriage to him and babies and poverty that just keeps getting worse, I think I'd kill myself" (Butler 112). Marriage and motherhood are restrictive to Lauren's survival especially under the poverty and helplessness of Butler's world that keeps getting worse.

2.2.2. Spiritual Adaptation through Earthseed Faith

The opening lines of *Parable of the Sower* present Lauren's philosophy of survival, Earthseed, which emphasizes adaptability, persistence, and constructive purpose. Lauren believes that passion without persistence fades or turns into destructive fanaticism. The book starts with the following lines:

Prodigy is, at its essence, adaptability and persistent, positive obsession. Without persistence, what remains is an enthusiasm of the moment. Without adaptability, what remains may be channeled into destructive fanaticism. Without positive obsession, there is nothing at all. EARTHSEED: THE BOOKS OF THE LIVING by Lauren Oya Olamina (Butler 1).

Lauren mentions that the inspiration behind naming her religion "Earthseed" comes while she is working in her garden, she notices how seeds manage to travel vast distances despite being seemingly small and powerless. They adjust to influences beyond their control such as water, wind, and animals. In the novel, seeds symbolize human potential. People don't have to stay imprisoned in a harsh world. Instead, they may spread, adapt, and grow in new places, just like seeds.

Additionally, Earthseed greatly emphasizes that change is constant and inevitable in their dystopian world. Butler introduces this notion as an epigraph to the first chapter “All that you touch You Change. All that you Change Changes you. The only lasting truth Is Change. God Is Change. EARTHSEED: THE BOOKS OF THE LIVING” (1). Chebel argues that “God is a direct reference to nature” (29) in Lauren’s new religion, and that for Lauren, true intelligence is found in the ability to adapt, as she sees adaptability as the highest expression of civilization (Chebel 29). According to Lauren, humans have the ability to influence the things they touch in some way, and in turn, those changes also transform humans. Lauren rejects the idea of a fixed, traditional God. Instead, she views God as the force of change itself. Her God doesn't love her or hate her or watch over her or know her at all, and she feel no love for or loyalty to her God (Butler 32).

Additionally, in Lauren’s view, “God is Trickster, Teacher, Chaos, Clay.' We decide which aspect we embrace-- and how to deal with the others.” (261). The religion of Lauren’s father, which emphasizes stability and refusal to change, reflects the values of the old, traditional society, which contradicts with the “God is Change” philosophy. Earthseed, on the other hand, aspires to a resilient society in which every individual contributes to the creation of God by being open to change rather than resisting it. Denying change, in Lauren's opinion, indicates inaction, which always leads to disaster (Chebel 29). The way in which Lauren views survival is shaped by embracing hope, resilience and action rather than fighting change or holding onto outdated structures. “We adapt and endure, for we are Earthseed, And God is Change.” (Butler 20).

“The destiny of Earthseed is to take root among the stars” (109). Another core principle of Earthseed, according to Lauren, is humanity’s future beyond Earth. Since the planet has become environmentally ruined, survival depends on expanding to the outer space. “Space could be our future” (24). For Lauren, travelling to space is part of her Earthseed faith rather than just a means of escape. “The galaxies move through space. The stars ignite, burn, age,

cool, Evolving. God is Change.” (263). Humans must embrace change by looking for other planets where life can persist. This concept ignites hope in Lauren after she lost faith in the government and traditional religious structures.

2.2.3. Community-Building and Collective Survival

Collective survival and community building are central factors of survival in Lauren’s journey. In a world wrecked by violence, poverty, and environmental collapse, Lauren’s gated community represents an attempt to preserve safety through isolation. The eventual collapse of this walled neighborhood highlights the fragility of survival when it is based on social isolation and denial of broader social connection. Lauren, on the other hand, views connection, cooperation, and sharing common purpose as vital factors for survival. She meets two survivors from her community after it is destroyed, Zahra and Harry, and they unite and decide to head north together. As Harry, Lauren, and Zahra establish a new kind of community, hybridity becomes an essential tool in the characters’ diasporic journey (Chebel 30). Zahra’s practical survival skills combined with Lauren’s intelligence reshape and challenge traditional gender roles, enabling them to better adapt to the hostile world around them. Harry, on the other hand, shows a great lack of adaptability and survival (Chebel 30). “I almost hit him. Maybe Zahra and I would be better off without him. But no, that wasn’t true. Numbers mattered. Friendship mattered. One real male presence mattered” (Butler 218). Despite Lauren’s frustration with Harry because of his mistakes, she realizes that his presence is still valuable. In their dystopian world, survival depends on numbers, trust, and solidarity. “Harry stepped up beside me. I was glad to have him there. We looked more intimidating together” (238). Lauren understands the importance of solidarity. She feels stronger and safer in Harry’s presence because their unity makes them look intimidating to attackers. “If we’re a good pack, and we work together, we have a chance” (218). By referring to themselves as a “pack,” she emphasizes the importance of cooperation, trust, and mutual protection for

survival, much like how animals rely on one another to survive in harsh environments. Over time, they slowly build trust as they come to understand one another. Old stereotypes, such as seeing Olamina only as the “preacher’s daughter,” are no longer valid in their small community (Stillman 23).

Lauren and her two friends discuss and eventually agree on crucial rules related to survival, for instance, she rejects the idea of becoming a “gang”, “We aren't gang types. I don't want gang types with their need to dominate, rob and terrorize” (Butler 262). However, the group could need to use force to protect itself (262). “We'll have to be very careful how we allow our needs to shape us” (262). Lauren emphasizes the need to maintain survival without becoming like the predators and gangs they fled, which highlights her wise leadership and morality despite living in a world of violence and social injustice.

Lauren's other companions have diverse backgrounds, but they all seek security and acceptance. What starts as a group of fragile strangers gradually becomes a community united by trust, collaboration, and Lauren's Earthseed faith. When Lauren says “I am Earthseed. Anyone can be. Someday, I think there will be a lot of us. And I think we'll have to seed ourselves farther and farther from this dying place” (101), it indicates that she does not discriminate according to race, gender, or other assigned traits when choosing her community members, nor does she limit the group to traditional nuclear families; instead, she embraces diversity by bringing together both individuals and family units. (Stillman 22). As she travels north, Lauren brings together a small group of twelve homeless wanderers, men, women, and children, who agree to the unity, safety, and companionship that Lauren offers, along with the Earthseed faith that shapes her life (Stillman 22). She takes the initiative by making offers, such as offering food to the hungry and extending specific altruistic assistance to others (Stillman 23). Sometimes, Lauren even takes calculated risks and makes herself vulnerable to gain more community members (Stillman 24).

Lauren’s leadership balances respect and discipline. Tasks like night watches are shared

by all her community members and the guns can be used only to the trained and skilled members. She insists that everyone must be willing to kill in self-defense, regardless of personal or religious beliefs. Because according to her "A community's first responsibility is to protect its children-- the ones we have now and the ones we will have." (Butler 365). At the same time, Lauren is not a tyrant. She participates in all group activities and welcomes discussion on anything else (Stillman 24).

Lauren and her group ultimately make it to Bankole's land in northern California after a long and violent journey. Bankole has hoped to live there with his relatives, but they discover that they have been slaughtered, leaving the land abandoned but available. "Nothing we find farther north will be any better or any safer than this... It will be hard to live here, but if we work together, and if we're careful, it should be possible. We can build a community here." (Butler 362). Lauren's words express her frustration after the loss of some of her community members. She understands that there is no other place to find protection since the entire country is collapsing, so she urges her fellow travelers to establish a community on Bankole's land. This moment represents the birth of "Acorn", where Lauren's philosophy shifts from theory to practice. Through Earthseed, Lauren creates not only a belief system but also a plan for collective resilience.

Conclusion

Parable of the Sower serves as a testimonial eco-dystopian narrative that examines the danger of the Anthropocene, in which Butler transforms climate change from an abstract scientific issue into a lived and brutal reality. Resource scarcity, social inequality, and economic devastation are inextricably linked to ecological catastrophes in the novel. On the other hand, through Lauren Olamina's resilience, leadership, and Earthseed philosophy, the story embraces adaptation, collective survival, and the possibility of renewal. Her insistence

on change and creating new forms of community depicts Butler's call for resilience within ecological and social crises. Thus, it is safe to say that *Parable of the Sower* functions as both a cautionary tale and a vision of hope. It warns of the dangers of denial and passivity in the face of ecological disaster, while encouraging adaptation and growth.

General Conclusion

General Conclusion

Octavia E. Butler stands as a pioneer of climate fiction, and her 1993 novel *Parable of the Sower* is considered one of the most famous works in this genre. Butler's novel anticipates the realities of the Anthropocene with remarkable precision, emphasizing climate change, economic inequality, and violence not as abstract threats but as lived, everyday conditions.

This research has examined the representation of environmental collapse, climate change, and social instability in Octavia E. Butler's *Parable of the Sower*. It has also examined the ways in which the novel illustrates adaptation and resilience as crucial strategies for survival in the Anthropocene.

The analysis has proven that Butler's *Parable of the Sower* demonstrates the realities of climate change, environmental degradation, and social violence by embedding these themes within the lived experiences of her protagonist and the rest of the characters, showing how resource scarcity, insecurity, and systemic collapse shape the decisions, relationships, and ethical choices of ordinary people. Besides, the analysis has illustrated the emotional, societal, and spiritual dimensions of survival in the collapsing world of the novel. Her portrayal of resilience emphasizes the ability to transform suffering into collective strength. Adaptation is depicted as an active and ongoing process which demands flexibility of belief, openness to change, and the courage to lead and engage in new forms of community.

This study applies the literary theory of ecocriticism, which has provided fundamental framework for analyzing the depiction of the Anthropocene in the novel, as well as the relationship between social injustice and environmental degradation. The study also examines how the major themes of the ecodystopian genre, such as oppression, violence, and social breakdown are portrayed in the novel. Moreover, this dissertation examines how *Parable of the Sower* has utopian aspects to it, especially in the Earthseed faith, which represents resilience and hope.

General Conclusion

Unlike previous studies that focused on the racial, feminist, religious, and dystopian dimensions of the novel, this dissertation has provided an in-depth analysis on the representation of the ecodystopian themes of environmental devastation, climate change, and social instability in the age of the Anthropocene. It also focuses on resilience and adaptation as central responses to environmental collapse and urban decay through the protagonist's Earthseed philosophy and her efforts to build a new community.

One of the notable obstacles faced while analyzing the selected topic was the limited availability of scholarly sources that directly address the selected text. Despite the availability of research on issues of race, gender, and power, fewer studies profoundly examine the environmental aspects in the novel in relation to adaptation and resilience.

further studies on Octavia E. Butler's *Parable of the Sower* could be done by future researchers to investigate how Earthseed's principles might resonate with contemporary movements of environmental activism and sustainability practices, which could serve in bridging the gap between literature and real-world environmental justice. Another interesting lens for further studies would be examining the pedagogical implications of Butler's book in classrooms to promote ecological literacy and awareness about the impact of human activity in the Anthropocene.

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المخلص:

تبحث هذه الأطروحة في كيفية تجلّي الانهيار البيئي، الانحطاط الاجتماعي، وتغير المناخ في رواية أوكتافيا إي. بتلر *مثل الزارع* (1993). كما تسعى إلى دراسة مظاهر الصمود والاستراتيجيات التي طوّرتها شخصيات الرواية للتأقلم مع الدمار البيئي، وعدم الاستقرار الاجتماعي. ولتحقيق هذا الهدف، تم تحليل الرواية من خلال نظريتي النقد البيئي ونظرية الديستوبيا البيئية، مع إعطاء اهتمام خاص بدراسات الأنثروبوسين. كما تتطرق الأطروحة إلى مفاهيم التكيف والبقاء لدراسة الطرق التي تستجيب بها لورين أولامينا ومجتمعها لحالة عدم الاستقرار البيئي والتهديدات الوجودية. وتكشف هذه الدراسة أن رواية *مثل الزارع* تصوّر الانهيار البيئي ليس فقط كأزمة إيكولوجية، بل أيضاً كتحديّ نفسي واجتماعي وروحي يتطلّب إعادة بناء المجتمعات والتخلي بالصدوم. وفي النهاية، تأمل هذه الأطروحة أن تسهم إسهامًا مهمًا في دراسات الأنثروبوسين، الأدب البيئي النقدي وكذا أدب المناخ.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الأنثروبوسين، تغير المناخ، الديستوبيا البيئية، الصمود، التكيف، الانهيار البيئي.