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**Beyond a Dystopia: Afrofuturist vision in Octavia Butler's *Parable of the Sower* and *Parable of the Talents***

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**Abstract**

*The consequences of transatlantic slavery and colonialism in Africa have lingered six decades after independence. Development has been constrained by complex social, political, economic, and ideological challenges which have perpetually relegated the continent to a "Third World" status. This condition has persisted to the 21<sup>st</sup> century and has been the subject of literature and other intellectual and cultural products both in Africa and the African diaspora. It has particularly been the subject of Afrofuturist writers who often employ Afrofuturism to navigate the African postcolonial condition and project a possible future for the Black race. While some of these writers over-romanticise Africa and create imaginary and fantastic futures, others have created a dystopic image but envisioned realistic parts to Africa's redemption, especially drawing on its Afropolitan heritage and the potential of its diaspora. This paper explores these images and the Afrofuturist vision in Octavia Butler's *Parable of the Sower* and *Parable of the Talents*. Octavia's Afrofuturist vision of Africa and its diaspora, though dystopian, is also pragmatic. It projects a possible Afro-renaissance defined by constructive exploitation of its natural resources and human capital both at home and in the diaspora.*

**Keywords:** Afrofuturism, Afropolitanism, dystopia, Earthseedism, *Parable of the Sower*, *Parable of the Talents*

**Introduction**

Over fifty years after independence, African states remain hindered by social, political, economic, and ideological problems that have made steady progress impossible. M'Baye's assertion that "[t]he Transatlantic slave trade radically impaired Africa's potential to develop economically and maintain its social and political stability" (607) remains irrefutable in light of contemporary predicaments in Africa. An additional factor believed to be responsible for Africa's current difficulties is colonialism, as it resulted in the underdevelopment of the continent in various senses (Ocheni and Nwankwo

51). The difficulties of Africans in the 21st century have been the subject of cultural, academic, and literary works. Prominent among literary traditions that have addressed social maladies in Africa is Afrofuturism. It attempts to navigate the African postcolonial conditions in Africa and its diaspora, by reflecting on the forces that have shaped these conditions, both positive and negative, and using this as the bases of positive fictional projections into Africa's future.

Afrofuturism is the generic term for futuristic literature with black at the centre. Although, when Mark Dery coined the term in 1994 and defined it as, "[s]peculative fiction that treats African-American themes and addresses African-American concerns in the context of 20th-century technoculture . . . and, more generally, African-American signification that appropriates images of technology and a prosthetically enhanced future. (Anderson R. and Jones C. 45), he did not appear to have continental Africans, new diaspora Africans, and other black people outside of America in mind. Yet, the contribution of African writers (Nnedi Okorafor, Deji Olukotun, Dilman Dila, Mame Bougouma Diene) and Caribbean writers (Nalo Hopkins, Karen Lord, Tobias Buckell) to Afrofuturism demonstrates that it is in fact not restricted to the African Americans literary landscape.

With this in mind, Afrofuturism may be comprehensively defined as "aspects of cultural history with futurologies both fanciful and technologically grounded . . . pos[ing] a progressive question: What would a positive future for Africa's citizenry and diaspora actually look like?" (Capers 11). This question strongly suggests that Afrofuturism is visionary. Afrofuturists, in a bid to transform the social realities of black people all over the world, attempt to produce futuristic antidotes that can upraise Africa and its diaspora from its retrogression.

The visionary quality proposed by Capers arises, perhaps, from the Afrofuturist convention of counter-discursiveness. Anderson R. and Jones C. (47) expatiates on reasons why Afrofuturism is counter-discursive:

The problem with sci-fi, as expressed extensively by numerous writers, pop cultural and cinematic critics, is that the future seemingly expunges race— and in particular, African-diasporic peoples— from the equation...In many ways, race fills the future space as yet another "ghost" in the machine, haunting the paradigmatic ethos, revealing a problematic core in fantasies which reveal themselves as extensions of today's dominant white imaginary in society and culture.

Sci-fi (science fiction) is seen as problematic due to the form of futurity it promotes, a futurity that instead of addressing problems of white hegemony in the imaginative construction of social progression, sentences Africans at home and in diaspora to a jinxed future; thereby, extending the problems of racism where the Caucasian is depicted as superior the Negro, to the future. Under these circumstances, Afrofuturism creates an imaginative space situated in an alternative future. To construct this space, black people in every sphere of

existence are included. Again, a relationship between Africa and its diaspora is established. Hence the significance of Afropolitanism to Afrofuturist fiction, art, music, and criticism.

Afropolitanism remains a vital component of Black literature – Literature of Africa and its diaspora – in view of the frequency of migration from Africa to other parts of the world, both during the slavery and colonial period and afterward. Also, it is vital because of the interactions between the African diasporas (old and new) and Africa (its people, culture, politics, problems, etc.); then, the aftereffects of these and their representations in literature. Afropolitanism may be described as “a state of cultural hybridity – to be of Africa and of other worlds at the same time.” (Wawrzinek and Makokha 9). In addition, it can be understood as “the spirit that emanates from those cultural narratives and fictional memories being generated by... the immigrants (and their descendants) of African descent currently located in the Diaspora.” (19). In the two viewpoints given above, the hybridity of the Afropolitan is acknowledged. Again, it is noted that the Afropolitan spirit begets literature, which reflects upon the experiences of migration, cultural interaction and cultural hybridity, social and political situations of Afropolitans, and so on.

If Afrofuturism is concerned with the auspicious revision of the future of people of African descent located in diaspora, as well as African people who currently exist in the intersection of two or more cultures, then, it could be safe to reason that it is Afropolitan in nature. No wonder “Afrofuturists [seek] to unearth the missing history of people of African descent and their roles in science, technology, and science fiction. They also [aim] to reintegrate people of colour into the discussion of cyberculture, modern science, technology, and sci- pop culture.” (Womack 20). Womack suggests that the central focus of Afrofuturist representation and ideologies is the African or its descendant. The project of returning agency to people of African descent through research on African history, heritage and contributions to global civilisation and the transmission of this body of knowledge for the emancipation of Black people in the context of technological and cultural advancement, indicates that Afrofuturism is Afropolitan. This is validated by the intricate links the Afrofuturist project creates among Africans globally and the resistance to the Afrocentric impulse which insists on the invention of a purist Africa that should resist cultural influences from the rest of the world. Afrofuturism endorses the African’s embracement of their cultural hybridity, while constantly revising it.

Another key concept and trope in this study is dystopia. It is a trope frequently deployed in Afrofuturist works. It can be defined as “an imagined universe in which oppressive societal control or an apocalypse has created a world in which the conditions of life are miserable, characterized by human misery, poverty, oppression, violence, disease, and/or pollution.” (ReadWriteThink.org). It is a misconception to assume that Afrofuturism in its depiction is essentially fantastical and utopic. Many times, Afrofuturism is a blend of horror and recovery. Put differently, Afrofuturist writers like Octavia Butler, Deji Olukotun, N.K. Jemisin and Rivers Solomon in their fictional worlds represent dystopic conditions in which human kind is in a state of anarchy and

devolution, as a metaphorical method of addressing contemporary problems in the world. However, they do not stop there; they also suggest solutions to these, and such solutions are proffered in their fiction by people of colour. Therefore, dystopia is an important aspect of Afrofuturism, utilised as a framework for tackling importunate issues affecting Black people.

#### Literature review

Afolayan S. (2011) in *A Marxist Interpretation of the Dystopian Society in the African Novel* examine the African novel (works by Biyi Bandele-Thomas and Lekan Oyegoke). Having analysed the works with the Marxist framework, the scholar concludes that the fiction of the selected writers demonstrates the Marxist conception of alienation between the haves (bourgeoisie) and have-nots (proletariat) in African societies. The strength of the article is that it considers the works of less-known writers thus providing valuable insight into the ideological representation of relatively unknown works. The work is related to the present study, in that it explores dystopia in African society. Nevertheless, the present study is distinguished by the fact that it does not just explore dystopia in Africa but includes the African diaspora and also proffers solutions to the dystopic condition of Africa and its diaspora.

Capers B. (2019) focuses his paper *Afrofuturism, Critical Race Theory, and Policing in the Year 2044* on ways Afrofuturists and Critical Race Theorists have imagined the future, to answer such questions as: What might the future look like in year 2044, when people of color make up the majority in terms of numbers, or in the ensuing years when they also wield the majority of political and economic power? what might policing look like? What can we learn from Afrofuturism? And what can we learn from Critical Race Theory? No definite answers are provided to this question. Still, the scholar claims to offer a vision of the future. Therefore, the strength of the paper is that it reflects on possibilities about the judicial system in America in the future. However, it is too speculative. The work is related to the present discourse because it considers the portrayal of the future by Afrofuturists. However, the present discourse is not concerned with policing and the judiciary in America, but with the envisioning of a positive future for Africa and its diaspora in the fictional works of Octavia Butler.

In an attempt to discuss the concept of Afrofuturism and decolonisation as temporal dislocations and discursive disruptions, Becker D. (2019) analyses the film *Black Panther* in view of its plentiful references to historical African art and visual culture. She offers that Afrofuturism can be construed as a method for studying contemporary artistic forms based on history, and consequently, can be a potential approach to discursive decolonisation. The article is prominent in its establishment of a relationship between Afrofuturism and decolonisation. Furthermore, it shares with the present study the discussion of Afrofuturism in artistic works. Still, the current study differs because it is based on the works of Octavia Butler.

*Lived Afropolitanism: Beyond the Single Story*, written by Ankobrey A. (2019), investigates how Afropolitanism negotiates the African diaspora discourse in relation to Pan-Africanism, by examining the lived experiences of twelve black Londoners with Afropolitanism and Pan-Africanism. It is concluded that Afropolitanism and Pan-Africanism are constructed and deconstructed in both diverse and overlapping ways. Since this essay and the present study are concerned with Afropolitanism, they share a similarity. Having said that, the current study is primarily concerned with Afrofuturism.

Balakrishnan S. (2018) in the essay *Afropolitanism and the End of Black Nationalism*, attempts to validate the stance that Afropolitanism is a deviation from a long genealogy of Afro-emancipatory thought. In her conclusion, she proposes that Afropolitanism remains incapable of explaining the ethic of migration until it engages in the question of diaspora. The essay, like the present discourse, focuses on the notion of Afropolitanism. Nevertheless, the present discourse stands out in its predominant focus on Afrofuturism in literary works. While the first work is sociological in outlook, the present discourse is both literary and sociological in outlook.

### **From Dystopia to Afro-Renaissance in the *Parable Series***

The *Parable Series* may be regarded as a dystopian allegory representing the contemporary predicaments of African societies. In the selected texts, America is a failed state. It is submitted that there is a link between Butler's portraiture and the social, political, economic, scientific and ideological adversities in Africa, implying that Africa is in a dystopian situation. Nevertheless, Butler's dystopian allegory is fused with assurance as she proffers pragmatic solutions to the excess, she critiques in her text. Hence, it is proposed that her pragmatic solutions are relevant to current plights in African states. Her fictional antidote reveals that Africa's redemption can be engendered by an ideological revolution and pragmatism (application of progressive ideologies). This argument is developed in subsequent sections.

### **African Dystopia in the *Parable Series***

Similar to the illusion of social order that exists in the selected texts is the illusion of freedom and possible progress hinged on the euphoria of independence which pervaded African states between the 1950s and 1960s. This illusion was soon shattered after the post-independence disillusion faced in many aspects of social life such as politics, economy, social harmony (the particular focus) among others. Using Butler's fictional blueprint, the stance in this section is that the inability of African states to sustain social harmony is the root cause of their challenges. The factors that actuate social discord in Africa are multitudinous and intricate. Among them, the manipulation of civilians, bad governance and terrorism will be discussed.

Social conflicts have troubled the African continent since independence. According to a survey concerning conflicts in the region between 1946 and 2006, Africa has recorded more conflicts (74), Asia (68), the Middle East (32),

Europe (32) and the Americas (26) (Francis 20). As may be expected, the civilians are most exposed to violence. Poverty in Africa which may be material or psychic, enables manipulative individuals and groups to exploit civilians for the fulfillment of political agendas and for the maintenance of the status quo of power hierarchy, both fuelled by conflicts in several guises.

In this wise, it is submitted that African civilians are symbolised by the street poor and other common people in the selected texts. In P1, the street poor, also known as maggots, are so-called because of their poor life quality. On account of their lack of food, shelter, and financial status, the maggots or have-nots are defenseless against the elements, slavery, theft, and murder. While on her way to Reverend Robinson's church for baptism, Olamina and the other children come across "people stretched out, sleeping on the sidewalks, and a few just waking up... at least three people who weren't going to wake up again, ever. One of them... headless." (*Parable of the Sower* 10). Furthermore, Olamina laments the destruction of Alabama, Kentucky, Tennessee and other states by tornadoes, which takes three hundred people's lives. On top of that, there is a blizzard in New York and New Jersey, as well as a measles epidemic killing even more people. (*Parable of the Sower* 41). It is suggested that all the victim, of poverty, natural disasters and infections are the street poor, most of them civilians. Until the Earthseedist revolution which transforms America, the civilians are stuck in a vicious cycle of social anomies and conflicts which keep them at the mercy of predatory leadership and organisations.

Notably, America's leadership in the texts is Machiavellian. They exploit the desperation of the masses to attain their ulterior economic and political motives. Illustratively, when Olivar, a small coastal city, has problems with "the encroaching sea, the crumbling earth, the crumbling economy, or the desperate refugees." (*Parable of the Sower* 87), they consign the administration of their town to *Kagimoto, Stamm, Frampton, and Company* (KSF). Then, the company advertises for professionals to work for it. However, the salaries it offers are too low for Olamina's family to live on. Looking at Olamina's reservations, the situation is compounded by the debt which families like Olamina's would likely owe the company: "That's an old company-town trick—get people into debt, hang on to them, and work them harder. Debt slavery." (*Parable of the Sower* 88 emphasis mine). This demonstrates that America's leadership in the selected text oppresses its people by exposing them to poverty, slavery, insecurity, natural disasters, and diseases. In this wise, it is submitted that African civilians are symbolised by the street poor and other common people in the selected texts. Akin to the street poor and commoners, most African civilians are disadvantaged. Poverty in Africa which may be material or psychic, enables African leaderships to exploit civilians by misinforming them, harming them, threatening them, and recruiting them (as political thugs for example) for nefarious purposes.

Still, on civilians, Chabal explains that: "What has made conflict in Africa so damaging... is that it most often targets civilians deliberately. Even when armies fight each other openly, they resort to force against civilians as an overt instrument of war, thus magnifying suffering immeasurably." (159). Although,

Chabal appears to be concerned basically with armed conflicts, his position can be extended generally to serious conflicts in any form in Africa. In addition, he suggests that certain “puppet masters” manipulate civilians as “instruments of war” or of conflict. The general ramification of this manipulation is that: “Conflict... is not an episodic calamity but an endemic condition, which affects a large proportion of the continent’s population.” (Chabal 159).

Comparable to Chabal’s viewpoint is the symbolic character Andre Steele Jarret, who becomes the new president of America. His campaign is built on the vision of a new Christian America. His vision is enforced by the sect known as *Jarret’s Crusaders*. Inspired by the overzealous creed of intolerance he encourages, Jarret’s Crusaders attack people, enslave them, and indoctrinate them in the name of God. For one, Olamina’s community (Acorn community) is subjugated by the crusaders. In the process, many inhabitants lose their lives, while the rest are enslaved. Furthermore, their children are stolen away, then dispersed to families the captors consider ideal for a Christian child’s growth. Also, even though the Jarret’s crusaders claim that they intend to Christianise their slaves, forcing them to accept Jesus Christ, to memorise bible verses etc., they contradict their self-proclaimed holiness by raping, torturing, and over working their slaves. *Jarret’s Crusaders* can be linked to armies in Africa. In the same vein, communities like Acorn can be linked to civilians in Africa. The correspondence of textual evidence with instances of violence against civilians in Africa demonstrates that social harmony in Africa remains untenable due to the prevalence of violence against civilians, who are the majority in the continent.

In the parable series, before the entrenchment of the earthseed doctrine, America is considerably weakened by atrocious leadership. Olamina observes: “Most people have given up on politicians. After all, politicians have been promising to return us to the glory, wealth, and order of the twentieth century ever since I can remember... we’re barely a nation at all anymore.” (*Parable of the Sower* 18) This attests to the ineffectiveness of the leaders, resulting in the creation of a gulf between leadership and the people they should represent, so that Butler’s America is at the brink of absolute anarchy.

The above is not too far from the reality of post-independence African states. Africa’s development crises is caused by poor leadership in the continent since the achievement of independence by African states. As it stands, former nationalists who inherited leadership from the former colonial masters retained some of the devious aspects of colonial administrations, which have facilitated civic and civil conflict in Africa, precluding the continent’s potential for good leadership and advancement (Jallow 2). This shows that neo-colonialism is the new tool of oppression utilised, this time, by African leaders against African peoples. Much like the leaders in selected texts who are either incompetent or authoritarian, many African leaders since independence have exhibited gross incompetence or extreme cruelty in power. One major consequence of this has been social discord. Hence, it can be asserted that the primary source of underdevelopment and social conflicts in Africa is terrible leadership (Mbah 2013, through Poncian and Magaya 106). In an effort to maintain hierarchies of

power that favour them, many of these African leaders have fomented confusion and antagonism within their constituencies.

Terrorism has fast become a serious challenge in contemporary Africa. The continent is regarded as one requiring special counterterrorism attention because since the late 1980s, countries like Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia, and Sudan have been plagued by terrorism, the result being the loss of almost one million lives and the destruction of infrastructure. (Elu and Prince 1-2). More often than not, terrorism is engendered by religious fanaticism. This perspective is supported by the emergence of the *Jarret Crusaders* in P2. The extremists flourish in a society with weak social, political and economic institutions. The absence of these reveals a power void which Andre Steele Jarret and the crusaders occupy. Having acquired and consolidated political and economic power, the extremists begin their operations in America, striving to forcefully Christianise common people. Hence, the society suffers.

In view of the sadism of Jarret's Crusaders in the *Parable Series*, religious fanaticism in Africa is possibly as a result of various economic, historical, social, political and ideological factors. Perhaps, religious fanaticism and terrorism are fomented by manipulative figures (Jarret-kind) who deploy extremism and fundamentalism as weaponry for achieving their own goals. Jarret, for example, deploys fundamentalism as an instrument for achieving his goal of obtaining and maintaining political power. Furthermore, the breakdown of leadership, social institutions, educational institutions and the economic system in many African countries contribute to this menace. Some of the major forces behind religious fanaticism in Nigeria may include the economic (poverty and unemployment), social (insecurity, eroding cultural values) and political (divisive political strategies).

Religious fanaticism and terrorism are calamitous for the African continent. The loss of lives and destruction of infrastructure proven by empirical evidence illustrates how terrorism, motivated by religious fanaticism, obstructs development and social stability in African societies. Terrorism is a global threat which continues to puzzle national and international policy makers. This is even more apparent in Africa, because terrorism affects the continent more than any other.

Africa is beset by poor economic growth in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, which appears to have only worsened decades after independence in many African countries. Azam et al. mentions that "Africa was promised to grow steadily along an avenue of prosperity, while Asia was doomed to remain stagnant. The subsequent 30 years taught economists to be wary of predicting growth performance for anything but the very close future." (178). Thus, the auspicious future of African, which was founded on the euphoria of independence and hope for a future of prosperity, has been delayed by socio-political problems that were concealed until the post-colonial period. The consequence of African leaders' lack of foresight is suggested by Siyum who contents that Africa "consisting of 54 countries, is the least developed continent of the Third World despite its possessing immense wealth of mineral and natural resources." (1).



Alternatively speaking, Africa is in an ironical condition that renders it comparable to a “prodigal child” that misuses its gifts.

America’s situation in the selected texts is analogous to Africa’s. In the texts, the masses are beset by poverty, displacement, natural disasters, violence, addiction, terrorism, psychological anomalies and disease. Again, even communities that struggle to retain a level of social order and economic stability are consumed by the economic depression of their environment. A good example is Robledo, where Olamina spends most of her childhood. In confirmation of her premonition about “the day a big gang of those hungry, desperate, crazy people outside decide to come in.” (*Parable of the Sower* 41), Robledo is raided by pyromaniacs (people addicted to gazing at fire), that brutally kill, rape, and rob its inhabitants. After the raid, the street poor plunder the community.

In view of the above, Africa has been inept at evolving economically, and this in no small measure has imposed on it the defamatory title of “the third world”, a title which relegates Africa to the obscurest margins, in spite of its abundant resources (human and mineral). As a result, the material condition of the majority of African states characterises the continent as a continent of “economic crises.” Some factors inducing economic crises in African states are a lack of political commitment, cross border conflict and terrorism, poorly designed institutions among others. Kabuya (2015) enumerates other factors such as low per capital income, low productivity, and accelerated population growth. Furthermore, he warns that “The sub-Saharan Africa region is going to remain the poorest region with the highest percentage of population below US\$1.25 for the 2020 and 2030 projections.” (Kabuya 80). The fact that present statistical data indicates this possibility demonstrates that Africa is in a dark economic age.

#### **Afropolitanism: Africa’s Earthseedism**

As solution to the dystopic situation of Africa and its diaspora, Octavia Butler projects a possible Afro-renaissance hinged on ideological revolution and pragmatism (application of progressive ideologies), both backed by Afropolitanism. When these are explored and properly utilised, Octavia demonstrates in her fictions the positive impacts they can have on Africa and its diaspora.

The parable series demonstrates the centrality of the correct principles to a stable society or an unstable society that would recover. Afropolitanism has some similarities with *Earthseedism* as propounded by Butler. It is maintained that Afropolitanism has pragmatic relevance to African states much like *Earthseedism*, which has pragmatic relevance to Olamina’s society. If Africa is to undergo an all-encompassing renaissance, its people must be ready to explore ideological systems devised in their immediate environment like Olamina does. However, this alone is inconsequential without practical applicability. As far as ideologies are concerned, Africa has been productive. Ostensibly, none of these have been implemented appropriately to African realities. Therefore, the

workability of Afropolitanism in Africa will be defended using Butler's Earthseedism to show or suggest how the former can be of restorative pertinence to African societies.

Afropolitanism is a refutation of Afro-pessimism "the belief that the continent and its populace is hopelessly imprisoned in its past, trapped in a vicious cycle of underdevelopment, and held hostage to corrupt institutions." (Wawrzinek and Makokha, 10). This refutation can be likened to Olamina's refutation of the suggested pessimism of a title like *The book of the Dead* (of the Tibetans and Egyptians) with a more promising one: *The Books of the Living*. In this respect, Afropolitanism rejects the "burial" of the African continent by affirming that the continent is in fact "alive" and emendable. Furthermore, Afropolitanism celebrates rather than questions the hybridity of the African identity, "prompted by the desire to think of African identities as both rooted in specific local geographies but also transcendental of them." (Wawrzinek and Makokha 10).

Although, hybridity in Afropolitan terms most times is concerned with diaspora Africans, it may be said that an African need not be a migrant to qualify as an Afropolitan, because the African continent today is hybridised, having been influenced in various aspects by the interaction between external (foreign) and internal (indigenous) cultures. Hence, continental Africans, on the same terms as diaspora Africans, have incorporated an Afropolitan spirit into their ways of life. If this is admissible, then transnational communities with African roots are evolving in the continent. Hence, the embracement of hybridity by Afropolitans may distinguish it as a unifying consciousness that undermines tribalism, xenophobia and other kinds of discrimination within Africa, without dispelling the cultural heterogeneity that characterises the continent. This can motivate the exchange of ideas in the continent that could result in an all-encompassing African renaissance.

The merits of the Afropolitan celebration of hybridity is proven by the validation of cultural diversity in the *earthseedist* system. Earthseedism embraces communal diversity as a fundamental principle for survival and progression. This is clearly stated in EARTHSEED: THE BOOKS OF THE LIVING (The earthseedist Bible): "Embrace diversity. Unite— Or be divided, robbed, ruled, killed By those who see you as prey. Embrace diversity Or be destroyed." (*Parable of the Sower* 142). This admonition evinces that any attempt at impeding human diversity runs contrary to the dictates of nature, and thus, invites calamitous repercussions for human societies. Therefore, by embracing diversity in a society intolerant to such, Olamina and her followers discovers a path to rejuvenation which the environment desperately requires. Thus, earthseedism is to Olamina's society what Afropolitanism can be to African states.

Additionally, the optimism promoted through Afropolitanism can have transformative significance in the ideological domain of the African continent. However, its enthusiasm requires modification, since there are suspicions that its optimism is appropriated by an African elite to promote an uncritical idea of

progress in Africa that ignores dire predicaments in the continent (Ankobrey 334). Towards this end, Howel comments that “Afropolitanism has been excessively commercialised so far that, the difficulties besetting Africa are conveniently erased from their depiction of the continent” (Howel 2). It follows that Afropolitanism might not be representative of the majority of continental Africans.

In acknowledgement of the accusations against Afropolitanism, the concept can be rendered more germane to African experiences if an equilibrium admitting on one side, the shortcomings of the African continent; and on the other, an empowering (rather than false) belief in the recovery of Africa hinged on pragmatism and proactivity, can be incorporated into the Afropolitan perception. Accomplishing such is possible thanks to its inter-cultural, inter-racial, anti-essentialist, trans-nationalist, and anti-pessimist foundation. Its foundation marks it as a framework that is capable of facilitating economic, political, environmental, social, and cultural growth and sustenance in Africa. The narrative of progression Afropolitanism implies must entail a workable plan for a more wholesome future for Africa, not a wishful portrayal of Africa that conceals foundational problems in the continent. *Earthseedism* is instructive in this sense.

In P2, Olamina begins her earthseedist advocacy. The first step she takes is to find progress-oriented people, such as Len who helps her to redirect her thinking, and the Elfordes who accommodate her and introduce her to other people that become instrumental in the realisation of the earthseed mandate. Soon after, *The First Book of the Living* is made available on the internet. As a result, universities invite her to speak more about earthseedism, and this leads to her going on a tour, and then, to earthseed workshops.

All these help in propelling people “to worry about the nasty, downward slide that the country’s been on”. (*Parable of the Talents* 383). To address this “downward slide”, Olamina, with other “believers” “engage(s) in speaking, training, guiding, writing, establishing schools that [board] orphans as well as students who [have] parents and homes. She [finds] sources of money and directed them into areas of study that [brings] the fulfilment of the Earthseed Destiny closer.” (*Parable of the Talents* 395). In the end, the destiny starts to unfold as revealed by Lauren Olamina in her last entry:

shuttles have been loaded with cargoes of people, already deeply asleep in DiaPause—the suspended-animation process that seems to be the best of the bunch. Traveling with the people are frozen human and animal embryos, plant seeds, tools, equipment, memories, dreams, and hopes. As big and as spaceworthy as they are, the shuttles should sag to the Earth under such a load. The memories alone should overload them. The libraries of the Earth go with them. All this is to be off-loaded on the Earth’s first starship, the Christopher Columbus. (*Parable of the Talents* 396)

Finally, earthseed is about to take root among the stars. Octavia Butler affirms the potential of humans to effectively transform their world if only they are aware of the unique needs of their environment and can react pragmatically to them. It is only because of conscious efforts, the willingness to evolve, and to find support from other people that Olamina is able to achieve all she does. She does not allow fear, prejudice, greed, or ego to halt the actuation of destiny, even when she has the chance to. Hence, she succeeds; America succeeds.

In view of Olamina's dedication, proponents of Afropolitanism, beyond theorisation, must pursue the deployment of their philosophy to Africa's peculiar predicaments. In accordance with Olamina's actions, they can seek support from patriotic and powerful stakeholders from around the world to augment the political and social potency of Afropolitanism. In addition, Afropolitans should promote Afropolitanism in diverse circles such as universities, broadcasting, radio, television, social media, and pop culture, with the aim of instilling Afro-optimism, patriotism, and a solution-driven attitude in the collective consciousness of African societies. Equally important is the need for Afropolitans to contribute significantly to resolving salient challenges in Africa which are not too different from those faced by Olamina's society: poor education, poverty, moral decadence, starvation, child slavery, and a host of others. If Afropolitanism is deployed this way, it could inspire a contemporary African renaissance, symbolised in the P2 by spread of humanity's influence on Christopher Columbus, Earth's first starship.

All things considered, Octavia Butler's fictional critique and antidote in the *Parable Series* prove that Africa is in a dystopian situation, but is not doomed to a hopeless future. It was demonstrated that the inability of African states to sustain social harmony is the root cause of their challenges. Again, three factors that mitigate against harmony in Africa which were mentioned are the manipulation of civilians, bad governance and terrorism. Subsequently, the workability of Afropolitanism in Africa was defended using Butler's Earthseedism to suggest how the former can be of restorative pertinence to African societies. It was proposed that Afropolitanism engenders a unifying consciousness that could motivate the exchange of ideas in the continent, which could result in an all-encompassing African renaissance. In addition, it was argued that the narrative of progression Afropolitanism advocates must entail a workable plan for a more wholesome future for Africa, not a wishful portrayal of Africa that conceals foundational problems in the continent. Finally, it was noted that proponents of Afropolitanism, beyond theorisation, must pursue the deployment of their philosophy to Africa's peculiar predicaments. Therefore, one is motivated to conclude that Afropolitanism is an ideology that could be adopted by governments, activists, academics, business moguls, and other agents in making Africa more competitive economically, politically, technologically, agriculturally, educationally, etc. on a global scale.

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