

Crime and violence in parable of the sower

[Literature](#), [Novel](#)



Introduction

Octavia Butler's novel *Parable Of The Sower* paints a horrific picture of how the future potentially could turn out. We see America's dark future, climate change, inequality, crime and violence have destroyed society. The basic human necessities are now expensive commodities. With this amount of chaos spreading through the world, savage human nature has begun to come out and societal progress is regressing. Butler sheds light on the true nature of humans through repetitive portrayals of crime and violence throughout the story against communities and bystanders who are living in the chaotic world. Our view of humans have always been shaped by the "lens" at which we view it from, when that "lens" shifts so does our perception of humans. Is true human nature to be selfish and competitive to survive. The lens in which we view humans in *Parable of the Sower* is plagued by violence and crime due to the depletion of natural resources which creates conflict and competition bringing back the true human nature of selfishness and competition. While everyone isn't affected this way, *Parable of the Sower* warns us about the potential societal reverse by depicting a world afflicted by brutality. A world subject to stealing, rape, murder, drugs, and cannibalism. Butler shows that the inherent evil and selfishness of humans when under pressure through motifs such as guns, drugs, and stealing.

Guns

Butler portrays a world in which weapons play a huge role in the lives of survivors through the motifs of guns. There are a few couple perspectives

you can view guns in the novel. Guns are used for protection, they have the ability to create opportunity whether good or bad, and they could be used for safety and intimidation. Guns can be harmful even though it is necessary at times, but will benefit some. Similarly to that of how Butler view violence. Regardless of their feelings on guns it is an absolute necessity for survival in Parable of the Sower. In the novel there are several examples there are several examples of guns being used for evil, catering to the selfishness of humans. As early on as chapter four an innocent life is taken, three year old Amy Dunn is shot and killed by a stray bullet behind her own community gates. It states “ Amy Dunn is dead.... Someone shot Amy right through the metal gate it had to be an accidental hit because you can’t see through our gate from the outside”. As stated before, guns are mainly used for evil purposes within the novel, in this case someone shot at the gate to show their frustration and possible create an opportunity to get inside. As a result a three year old was murdered. Not only are guns literal powerful weapons but they are also empowering to the user.

Take Keith for example he wanted to be trained to use a gun but was too young so when he stole one and went out into the community he came back thinking he is far superior than others and that inevitably led to his downfall. Keith is just yet another example of a person using a gun for malice acts. In chapter ten Keith, Laurens younger brother leaves the community and begins a life of crime, murdering and stealing from people. He states “ What you think I was just going to do? I didn’t have no money. Just had that gun, Mama’s . 38” (p. 108). Here is a prime example of the selfishness of humans when in times of catastrophe. Keith just only 14 years old having no money

nor food uses his gun as an opportunity to murder and steal from someone in the same situation. After killing this man Keith states " I felt nothing after that" he lost all remorse for people and their struggles as long as he benefited from it. In the world Butler was portraying it's clear that the idea of natural selection would soon take place clouding the minds humans making their competitive and selfish nature arise. Not everyone person in this novel uses guns for evil an example of that is the protagonist Lauren who only uses guns when necessary as a means of protection. In chapter fourteen Lauren was tackled by a drug addict who pulled her down.

Naturally Lauren shot the drug addict to protect herself (pg. 154) This is why Lauren is different and represents the protective aspect which guns offer. She does not kill for her own selfish gain rather she only uses the gun in extreme situations to protect herself and her followers. There are several reasons people use guns and that goes for both Butler's chaotic world and our real world, one thing is for sure in Lauren's world a gun is an absolute necessity for survival.

Drugs

Not only do guns play an important role in Butler's work but also Butler shows how vastly society can be influenced through the motif of drugs. In the novel there are two main drugs discussed, these drugs were developed for different uses but were abused by society these drugs warp the view people have of the world to help ease what they are going through but making them extremely dangerous. Due to the world's situation many

people look to drugs to solve their problems similarly to the world we live in people use drugs to get away from reality.

The main drug I will be discussing is Pyro or ro, this drug makes it extremely pleasurable to watch fire burn. The people that take these drugs are referred to as paints they shave all their hair off and paint their skin either red, yellow, blue, or green. With resources being scarce and the world going to shit, many people lose all hope and begin to use drugs to ease their pain. The huge problem within Lauren's world is how dangerous these users become. In chapter fourteen Lauren states " Last night when I escaped my neighborhood, it was burning. The houses, the trees, the people: Burning" (pg. 154). In this instance Pyros destroyed the gate shielding Lauren's community. They raided everything murdering everyone and lighting everything they could on fire purely for pleasure. They have become psychotic the little resources her community had we destroyed and no one could benefit from them now all due to a drug addict act to lose themselves from reality and feel pleasure from others pain. In this kind of world people give up all hope and that exactly what these pyros stand for.... Lost hope. The world that they live in was not desirable so they took drugs to make themselves feel better at other peoples expense another way in which humans are selfish in times of terror. The drug addicts in the novel are the clearest antagonist we see in the world butler portrays. The world is already suffering from lack of resources and the climate changing drastically but that isn't the worst thing Lauren and her community have to watch out for, it is humanity driving more and more into madness.

Stealing

In the novel crime is at an all time high due to the selfish nature humans regressed back to due to the current state of the world. Butler portrays this through the motif of stealing. With resources and hope at an all time low many people turn to stealing to survive whether it is for a means of survival or out of pure malice it strikes laurens community of robledo several times. In chapter 6 two thieves attempted to still rabbits and fruit from one of Lauren's neighbors they were caught quickly and could not make away with any of the goods. Humans will compete with other humans dealing with the same struggle they are to be better off. To deprive someone else of their own food when it is so scarce is horrible it only gets worse as the story progresses, the thieves become more violent and will kill for such small resources. In chapter eleven butler gives us an instance at which the thieves were unnecessarily violent it says " After the thieves used the crowbar on the door, they walked into the kitchen and used it on Doratea Cruz's seventy-five-year-old grandmother. The old lady was a light sleeper and had gotten in the habit of getting up at night and brewing herself a cup of lemon grass tea". These thieves broke into their house and killed an innocent old lady. This shows just how dark and sick humans can be when they are pursuing something they want. Whatever they were looking for they were they did not get because they were shot and killed regardless of them killing cruz's grandmother they surely would have been shot. The world they live in anything resource you can get your hands on is worth killing for and that is horrific to think about.

Conclusion

Butler's Parable of the Sower highlights the nature of humans when society begins to crumble and natural resources become limited threatening their survival. The repetitive acts of crime and violence against the community of Robledo portray the potential dark side within humans. Butler's warns us through the acts of characters within the story that everyone is violent and will do whatever it takes to survive and in a sense that is the key to survival doing whatever it takes. Butler uses a theme of violence throughout the entire novel and effective way she portrays violence are different perspectives one can view it similarly to the use of guns previously described. Violence is harmful, at times it is necessary, and it is beneficial to some, and it is a necessity to survival. Butler's portrayal of violence and crime in this sci-fi novel urges the reader to examine the true nature of humans. Humans are inherently evil, not everyone in the novel acts upon their darkness within, they are all born with such capabilities of destruction, with the world crumbling, society soon fell with it.

Works Cited

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