

OCTAVIA BUTLER

OCTAVIA BUTLER: *Parable of the Sower* grew out of a number of things. It grew out of a fact that I'm addicted to the news, which is incredibly depressing. I listen to National Public Radio; I subscribe to a lot of magazines. So I'm stuffing myself with current events and most of them are terrible and I have to have something to do with them and pouring them into novels is one of the things that I do with them.

What I did when I was working on the book was look around for the things that really bothered me. Things like the effect of drugs on whole populations, on the children of drug addicts, for instance. The fact that we are trashing our environment and global warming is something that I was thinking about way back in the early 80s. My characters in *Parable of the Sower* are living with the ecological results of our behavior so it's really about problems that we have now, that grow up into the disasters of the future. It's probably the most realistic novel I've ever written. I've written novels about aliens solving our problems, I've written novels about people with powers but I wanted to see what I could do with what we have and the tool that I chose to use was religion because it seems to me, there—I couldn't think of a culture that didn't have a religion of some kind.

Lauren creates a religion as an answer to the problems of her time and she makes a god out of the idea of change and not a god that you would pray to, not a god that you would look to for any sort of mercy. But simply a god that must be taken into account. One of the ways in which I got verses for the *Parable of the Sower* was to read things I disagreed with and that forced me to come to some kind of understanding of what I did believe. I think I was really kind of horrified with the idea that we're ignoring problems and letting them become disasters. One of the things I really would hope that teachers would tell their students is that *Parable of the Sower* and *Parable of the Talents* are not prophesy, but that they are warnings. And that they are warnings of things we can do something about.