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CLIMATE REFUGEES IN OCTAVIA E. BUTLER'S *PARABLE OF THE SOWER*

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This project will examine the cultural and social importance of the climate refugee in Octavia E. Butler's *Parable of the Sower*. Through an analysis of Butler's intensive work archiving news articles on global warming and natural disasters, as well as close readings of Butler's novel, this presentation will explore how Butler's then-future vision of a 2020s America destroyed by climate change intervenes in the dominant structure of racial capitalism. Building on the work of Shelley Streeby—who devotes an entire chapter to Butler's work in her book *Imagine the Future of Climate Change*—this project will engage with Butler's futurisms to argue for the importance of including the humanities in climate discourse. While scientific data provide crucial information on how close we are to permanently crossing the nine planetary boundaries of ecological collapse, numbers never tell the whole story. Narratives of climate refugees such as Butler's protagonist in *Sower*, Lauren Oya Olamina, offer a qualitative counterpoint to hard science. Thus, through careful attention to narrative and literary form, the humanities provide a more empathetic framework for understanding ecological crises. We need data to understand climate change, but we need stories too, especially Black speculative fiction, to help us reimagine the future in creative, communal, equitable ways. By examining how Lauren's methodology (and Butler's) inform ecological displacements, this project hopes to join an ongoing conversation exploring why and how acts of interdisciplinarity can encourage cultural engagement with the climate crisis.