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Octavia Butler's Generic Mobility: Working Against Categorization and Single Visions in The Parables

Introduction

Octavia Butler's parables series have been discussed in the light of utopian as well as dystopian discourse. These generic studies have a tendency of aligning her works with categories. Curtis has come up with the term of 'realist utopia' (Curtis: 2005), Phillips characterizes her work in both utopian and dystopian terms (Phillips: 2002) and Chang studied her work as a 'critical dystopia' (Chang: 2011). The diverging responses to her parables emphasize the impossibility of reaching a satisfying generic answer. Even if it does not seem justified to undercut the interpretations of these critics, one of the central pitfalls is that a fit label to Butler's work does not exist. In that regard, it appears most urgent to approach her fiction with a sense of mobility that prevents a totalitarian generic classification. Our paper aims to examine the generic hybridity of utopian and dystopian devices in Butler's *Parable of the Sower* (1993) and *Parable of the Talents* (1998) to show how her work plays around with mobility. Johns's 'Feminism and Utopianism' will be used as a basis to identify where Butler's work contests the feminist utopian tradition. Through a Black feminist framework, this first part aims to discuss the place of motherhood in the parables and how the mother-daughter relationship destabilizes traditional generic categories. Focusing on the role of mobility, the nature of the hyperempathy syndrome, and the plurality of narrative voices in the novels aims to further examine the alternating dystopian and utopian layers that shape Butler's work into an unclassifiable piece of speculative writing. A mobility in genre eschews the pitfall of a closed narrative system and thereby prevents the ambivalent use of labels and categories.

Butler and the feminist utopian tradition

In "Feminism and Utopianism", Johns gives an outline of the feminist utopian tradition that aims to work against the largely male dominated blue-print utopia. Even though one of Johns's

motives is to work against a one-sided tradition, she nonetheless creates categories for utopias that are framed by feminist theory. Although Johns acknowledges the possibility for differences in utopian works, she does not elaborate on where these differences arise. Butler's parables on the other hand, emphasize that a generic mobility prevails, which thus prevents a totalizing means of classifying individual works. As a thematic device, the unstable institution of motherhood in Butler's parables pronounces that genre should be perceived as open to changes and not as a fixed scheme. The central characteristic of feminist utopias is a 'process-oriented' approach (Johns, 174). Indeed, process plays a significant role in Butler's parables and is manifested by recurrent themes such as the centrality of education. However, to further the fluid nature of genre, it remains necessary to re-work where the generic ambiguity in Butler's parables arises. It is aimed to focus on the specific characteristics that ground in instability and to examine to what extent her work can be read as a feminist utopia.

Johns outlines five different points that shape feminist utopias into process-oriented narratives. One of these points concerns what Johns characterizes as the 'malleable' nature of humans (Johns, 182); that is to say, characters in feminist utopias are inclined to undergo psychological changes and avoid a sense of determinism. According to Johns, 'feminist utopias reveal a faith in behaviour modification, looking to stories, conversation, education and play to teach new habit, goals and values' (Johns, 183). In that sense, Johns argues that utopian characters do not foster a determined mind-set to enable a process-oriented environment. However, I would argue that this utopian openness for psychological change is not entirely manifested in Butler's parables. In particular, her protagonist Lauren Olamina undercuts psychological modification. In many instances, Olamina refutes to change her mindset that is fixed on her self-developed religion, called Earthseed. Even though she is raised by a Christian reverend, Olamina does not support her family's religion. Since the age of twelve she lives a life in ambivalence; one on the surface in accordance with her Christian family and the

community of Robledo, and one that she expresses in her written verses: 'I try to hide in all the work there is to do here for the household, for my father's church, and for the school Cory keeps teaching the neighbourhood kids. The truth is, I don't care about any of those things, but they keep me busy' (Butler: 1993, 24). The Earthseed paradigm is fostered throughout the entire book. On her later journey North, Olamina's welcome of other migrators always incorporates an introduction to her religion. In *Parable of the Talents,* Olamina allows her brother to teach Christian verses at Acorn and thus leads him into a direct trap of communal rejection. Ironically, the 'God is Change' (Butler: 1993, 245) idiom is not embodied by Olamina herself. The communal diversity applies to race and class but ceases when it comes to religious inclusiveness.

Accordingly, Johns deems that the utopian tendency of a character's adaptability 'emerges from a model of childrearing' (Johns, 183). In traditional feminist utopias children stand at the foreground of the communal belief system and often transcend blood-ties. In *Herland* (1915), Charlotte Perkins Gilman puts an emphasis on the significance of childrearing and maternal community. Her work is a straight-forward feminist utopia that exclusively entails women. Through parthenogenesis, these women build a world many female readers would define as utopian. In accordance with Johns, the nurturing trait dominates in the narrative and correspondingly, the women of *Herland* embody malleable and adaptable personalities. As the male intruders invade their land, the women firstly make sure to educate the men in their language and customs. However, the women are not reluctant to open their minds to the outside, heterogenic world. They even imply the foreign culture in their teaching in order to change the men's perspective on their own land: 'When I asked her about it, she tried at first to tell me, and then, seeing me flounder, asked for more information about ours. (…) A clear methodical luminous mind had my Ellador, not only reasonable, but swiftly perceptive.' (Gilman, 145). Their adaptability reaches its peak as the women alter the foundation of their all-female

population by embracing a heterogenic fertilization between one of their women and Terry O. Nicholson. The worship of motherhood thus parallels with the malleable trait of Gilman's characters.

In Butler's parables, this feminist utopian parallel cannot be traced back so clearly. The deeply troubled mother-daughter relationship in Butler's parables undermines a feminist, utopian model of childrearing and thus, prevents the concomitant openness towards psychological adaptability. In fact, Olamina suppresses her openness for change even before the baby is born. Her Earthseed mindset outweighs the childrearing pragmatics and she determinedly is annoyed by her husband's demand to move to a safer town for the up-bringing of their unborn child: 'I've got to think of the baby, he says. I've got to be realistic, for god's sake, and stop dreaming, he says. I'm not conveying the full flavour of this. It's the same old stuff' (Butler: 1998, 133)**.** Olamina lacks the rearing trait that is so fundamental in Gilman's feminist utopia. Gilman frames motherhood in existential terms, as the parthenogenesis happens 'when a woman chose to be a mother', because then 'she allowed the child-longing to grow within her till it worked its natural miracle' (Gilman, 94). In that regard, it does not come natural to Olamina to temporarily sacrifice her religion in order to find her daughter that has been stolen by Christian Americans. Even though her brother Marc tells Olamina that she could have access to information about her daughter if she were 'part of a good Christian organization', Olamina assertively rejects her brother's hint (Butler: 1998, 323). Whereas as a teenager she leads this religious life in ambivalence, her mothering trait is not powerful enough to force her back into this binary way of living. By accentuating her protagonist's determinism, Butler undermines one of the central characteristics of female utopias. Since Olamina does not adapt as a mother, she evidently afflicts her psychological malleability and ultimately, destabilizes a crucial step towards a process-oriented world. In that regard, if process is not guaranteed then the utopian framework in itself is undercut.

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Butler and Black Motherhood

And yet, the parables do not entirely undermine the utopian impulse when read in the context of black motherhood. It is through a specific nature of nurturing that a generic mobility between the dystopian and utopian imagery prevails. Even though Olamina does not foster an all-consuming mother-daughter bond, she nonetheless puts all her efforts in a distinct version of nurturance. It is her biological daughter Larkin, later called Asha Vere, who states that 'all Earthseed was her [Olamina's] family. We never really were, Uncle Marc and I. She never really needed us, so we didn't let ourselves need her' (Butler: 1998; 405). Curtis claims that the troubled mother-daughter relationship underscores the elusive nature of control and security in Butler's parables that stems from an 'intra-family drama' (Curtis: 2010, 176). Thus, Curtis posits the prevailing sense of insecurity and fear that informs Butler's writing as a gateway to progress. Curtis claims that 'radical hope allows fear to be the catalyst for working towards a new future' (Curtis: 2010, 162). In that regard, the dystopian family setting, in which brothers betray their sisters and mothers prefer to follow their religion rather than their daughters, intents to address the future and therefore, to steer towards possible utopian alternatives. Even if Curtis's argument discusses the utopian impulse that informs the dystopian setting, she does not directly connect the instability of motherhood with the mobility of genre. Curtis draws back to Collins's *Black Feminist Thought* (1990) to discuss the notion of choice. However, to further the mobility of the role of the mother, and consequently of the genre, it is beneficial to draw attention to Collins's take on Black motherhood.

In "Black Women and Motherhood**",** Collins starts from a lack of 'a fully articulated Afrocentric feminist standpoint on motherhood' (Collins, 111). Any premise results from Black men's view on it, that portrays and glorifies Black mothers as slaves to their children. In that regard, Black motherhood has been defined by others but themselves. 'The controlling images of the mammy, the matriarch, and the welfare mother and the practices they justify are designed

to oppress' (Collins, 118). Furthermore, Collins states that a dialectical tension within motherhood persists that stems from these images of oppression and at the same time, from a ground for self-expression. Thus, our claim entails that Butler explores motherhood in her fiction in a creative and self-expressive way to counter the dominant oppressive maternal categories, and ultimately, to destabilize the social assumption of Black motherhood through the generic setting. As claimed before, Olamina seems to transcend the traditional matriarch or mammy through her preference of the status as an 'othermother' for Earthseed over being a blood-mother for her daughter Asha Vere (Collins, 119). And yet, at the same time, Olamina's extraordinary strength as a character, and her determinism to survive resonates with a contradiction outlined by Collins. Through her rational rejection of fostering the religion she has worked for her entire existence, Olamina does not chase after her daughter; that is to say, after her emotions as a mother. Even though she claims in her journal entries that she is restless unless she finds her daughter, when the chance comes to hold on to her, she lets her go: '" All right," she said when I headed for the door. "But you can always come to me."' (Butler: 1998, 403).

Collins regards this survivalist strength of Black mothers as a set example for their daughters. Giving up on her daughter means that Olamina does not give up on herself and on her Earthseed vision. Accordingly, with the persistence she writes in her diary and in which she makes proof of her strength, she communicates 'the vision of encouraging [her daughter] to transcend the boundaries confronting them' (Collins, 125). In the dystopian setting Butler presents, the boundaries are maximized by religious suppression and slavery. Olamina is aware of the dystopian surroundings and consequently, her mothering tactics do not obliterate process but are meant to strengthen her daughter from a distance. This distance could also be literally analyzed because Olamina is always on the move while being pregnant; as a means of change and mobility have accompanied her pregnancy from the earliest stage. As an emblem of strength

and independence, Olamina sets an example for her daughter. On the one hand, her sense of determinism leads towards social progress because she is not lead astray by the dystopian setting. Despite the ever-present dangers, she does not give in and clings onto her Earthseed vision. In addition to her fixed mindset, her physical mobility points towards the progress of the future. A determined mind is thus crucial to implement social mobility and progress in the dystopian setting. In that sense, Butler interweaves the utopian notion of process in different layers. Even if Butler undermines an unequivocal feminist, utopian categorization, she shows through an application of Black Feminist Theory that the genre of her work is inflicted with mobility and cannot be constrained by a totalizing means of categorizing.

Mobility of Perspectives

Many critics have pointed out how the narrative of *Parable of the Talents* is a construct of various critical voices, and thereby 'shunning the idea of one utopian answer' (Stillman, 30) but keeping an open mind towards various possibilities. We want to take this point even further, with the aim to show that the way in which the various narrative voices have been employed adds another layer to the story.

In the *Parable of the Sower*, Olamina is the main narrator. Due to her own reflections and doubts we are already invited to doubt and reflect with her. In *Parable of the Talents,* this is further developed, as no longer Olamina but her daughter Asha Vere is the main narrator. We still have access to the story through Olamina's diary but it is Asha Vere who decides what fragments we get to read. Moreover, fragments from the diaries by Bankole and Marcus are included as well, adding further to the plurality of perspective. Asha Vere is highly critical of her mother and makes us aware of the ambiguity of Olamina's decisions we may otherwise have missed. Her greatest point of critique concerns Olamina's decision not to leave Acorn in favour of Earthseed, while she could have saved her daughter and family. 'Should she have left Acorn and gone to live in Hallstead with as my father asked? Of course she should have! And

if she had, would she, my father and I have managed to have normal, comfortable lives through Jarret's upheavals? I believe we would have' (Butler: 1998, 137). Curtis points out the importance of the disagreement between mother and daughter on ideas of the family and argues how the reader is not pushed to empathize more with one of them; both can be right and/ or wrong (Curtis, 159). This important device of the novel thus helps the reader to take up a *perspective of mobility*. The reader can travel next to Olamina and feel inspired by the Earthseed verses she preaches while simultaneously feeling the daughter's pain and anger caused by Olamina's decisions.

Through her introductions to the diary fragments, from which by far the largest part are her mother's, Asha Vere interweaves her own story. This narrative technique enables the reader to further understand the harsh criticism towards her mother for choosing Earthseed over her child. We are continually reminded of the gap between how Asha Vere's life could have been (a safe life in Hallstead) and how it was (living with a Christian American abusive father and an unloving, disinterested mother). However rash and critical, even Asha Vere's critique is multi-layered. Like her mother did in her diaries, she starts every new chapter with an Earthseed verse. She then goes on to introduce or reflect upon what will follow, most of the time pointing out how her mother failed in doing what she was supposed to do and sometimes the verses she picks serve to foreshadow her mother's faults. There are many instances in which she does this but a most striking example can be found in chapter nine that starts with the following verse:

'To make peace with others

Make peace with yourself:

Shape God

With generosity

And Compassion' (Butler: 1998, 153).

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Asha Vere reflects on how she thinks her mother made Marcus fail on purpose and concludes her introduction to the chapter with the following words:

'She [Olamina] learned from everyone, used everyone and everything. I think if I had died at birth, she would have managed to learn something from my death that would be useful to Earthseed' (Butler: 1998, 154).

Accordingly, Asha Vere does not find any of the compassion or generosity in her mother's behaviour that is supposed to be crucial in the Earthseed religion. Asha Vere's introductions and reflections serve as a frame for Olamina's diary fragments and puts them in a highly critical, if not negative light. However, this is turned around again by the way in which the whole narrative is framed by the prologue. In this prologue, Asha Vere gives her reason for 'writing and assembling this book' (Butler: 1998, 1-3). She wants to understand her mother. She closes the prologue with a last essential Earthseed verse and the following words:

'All that you touch

You Change

All that you Change

Changes You.

The only lasting truth

Is Change.

God

Is Change.

The words are harmless, I suppose, and metaphorically true. At least she began with some species of truth. And now she's touched me one last time with her memories, her life, and her damned Earthseed' (Butler: 1998, 3).

On the one hand the prologue makes use of the same kind of narrating method as the rest of the novel and thus serves as an introduction to how the story will be told. Yet at the same time, it is crucially distinct to the rest of Asha Vere's reflections because she wants to understand rather than criticize her mother, and moreover, lets herself be touched by her words. To come back to the framework of Black feminism, the prologue strengthens the notion of implicit mother-daughter love that works in different interwoven layers. Even if the rest of Asha Vere's comments suggest otherwise, her prologue enacts as a framing device that expresses her love and respect for her mother. In that regard, the form strengthens this notion of utopian, feminist process. Thus, Johns's nurturing characteristic is fulfilled through a Black feminist approach. It is thus crucial to consider a theoretic deviation to Black feminism as well as an alternation between dystopian and utopian techniques.

Enforced Mobility and Change

So far we have mainly discussed mobility in a metaphorical sense; we focused on mobility of genre and moving perspectives within the novel. Importantly however, there is also a very literal dimension of mobility in the novel. In *Parable of The Sower,* the Earthseed community is established on the road, while its new members are fleeing from their burning homes. In this paragraph we will focus on this literal aspect.

Change is of essential importance and highly praised in the Earthseed verses. As a young girl Olamina already deeply felt on the one hand the futility of resistance to change and on the other hand the danger of stagnation. At fifteen she attempts to explain the necessity of change to her friend; 'Our adults haven't been wiped out by a plague so they're still anchored

in the past, waiting for the good old days to come back. But things have changed a lot, and they'll change more. Things are always changing. [...] People have changed the climate of the world. Now they are waiting for the old days to come back' (Butler, 57). When she preaches from Luke for the community of Robledo in the place of her father whom by then is no longer expected to return safely, she cannot share in the community's beliefs. After Olamina finishes her speech, Kayla Talcot starts singing 'we shall not, we shall not be moved...' (Butler, 135). Indeed, Olamina could not agree less with the lyrics: '[...] as much as I want all that I said to be true, it isn't. We'll be moved, allright. It's just a matter of when, by whom, and in how many pieces' (136).

Everything changes continually and it would be wise not to resist but adapt as much as we can. Sarah Outterson shows how the verses can be brought to bear upon the destruction of both Olamina's family home and of Acorn 'the violence of eventual destruction of the family's enclave fulfils the philosophy of her verses: unchanging isolation cannot last' (Outterson, 444). Moreover, setting out on the dangerous road (and here we have the literal aspect of mobility,) is of essential importance. 'Only when she finally lets the seed spread, when she finally sends her companions out to travel without a safe and unchanging home, can they survive' (Outterson, 444). Yet, according to Outterson, violence is not only a woeful consequence of stagnation, it is what we need in order to change and not to remain in the same place. Outterson's reading of the parables is so much focused on violence as a unifying and what almost seems to be an all-explaining factor that she loses sight of the ambiguity and irony in the novel, as will also become clear in our next paragraph. In this paper we want to refrain from making huge claims about the role of violence in the novels and to what extent it is necessary or not. For our purposes it is more interesting to zoom in on the importance of *mobility* to change. Outterson argues for what she calls the 'impulse toward stagnating self-protection' in Acorn (444). We believe 'stagnation' to be an important term because it reveals a close alignment with reluctance to

change and consequently a tendency to narrow-mindedness. The literal mobility then opens up a way to leave behind (literally and metaphorically) stagnation and conservatism. Olamina knows that the people of Robledo will be *moved* when listening the community singing the song and already understands by then to be moved is not a bad thing. Similarly, forced to leave Acorn, Olamina sets upon her next journey with a renewed impulse to spread Earthseed and to be touched by change once more.

The Hyperempathy Syndrome and Irony

In this section we will explore the ambiguous role of the hyperempathy syndrome and how it reveals the generic mobility of the parables. Suffering from hyperempathy means that upon seeing someone's bodily pain or pleasure, you will share in it. This also involves that hiding pain from view liberates the sharer from suffering but also that pretended suffering is felt as real pain in the sharer: 'I feel what I see others feeling or what I believe they feel. Hyperempathy is what the doctors call an "organic delusional syndrome". Big shit. It hurts, that's all I know' (Butler: 1993,12).

In the dystopian setting Butler presents us with, hyperempathy is not something anyone would wish for, and indeed the dangerous, dystopian side of this syndrome is shown many times within both novels. At the same time, there appears to be an educational, even utopian vision connected to it. In his analysis of *Parable of the Sower* Jim Miller describes the comparison between Olamina and her brother Keith as 'one of the most instructive elements in the novel' (356). He argues that the hyperempathy syndrome is employed as a tool to defamiliarize our indifferent attitude towards each other in our current society. As we see Olamina developing into 'a prophet of sorts,' Keith is turning into a monster. Miller's interpretation seems to be primarily based on Olamina's words after she has found out about how Keith has been tortured to death. 'If hyperempathy syndrome were a more common complaint people couldn't do such things. […] I've never thought of my problem as something that might do some good before,

but the way things are, I think it would help. I wish I could give it to people. […] a biological consciousness is better than no consciousness at all' (115). Miller argues that central to the Earthseed community is their inclusiveness as a group and what he defines as a radical reciprocity.

Even though Olamina's words have rightfully resonated with Miller in writing his interpretation one should also be aware of simplifications. The syndrome has a more ambiguous role to play in the novel. This is for example seen in Olamina's struggle when to tell Zahra and Harry about it. 'They deserve to know that I'm a sharer. For their own safety they should know. But I've never told anyone. Sharing is a weakness, a shameful secret' (Butler:1993, 178). During their dangerous travel North, the syndrome may not only endanger Olamina but the entire group. Sharers are often forced to avoid as much as possible being confronted with someone else's pain because they may lose consciousness, which in turn makes it incredibly difficult to help their friends and thus invites dystopian scenarios. Moreover, the vulnerability of the sharer may inspire self-centered action. Sharer Grayson Mora angers Olamina when he disappears from the site of violence. 'Where were you, man and fellow sharer, while your woman and your group were in danger' (Butler: 1993, 300). Olamina clearly does not believe that the syndrome could be used as any way of excuse. Mora defends himself but through Olamina's criticism the reader is left to wonder whether his defense is convincing. Sarah Outterson focuses on this dangerous side of the syndrome and argues that 'the strange and painful affliction of the empathic "sharers" in the Parable books [...] seems to mock naive expectations for the utopian value of relational abilities. The empathetic communication they share is not useful or constructive, it is simply dangerous' (17). Indeed, Olamina often describes her sharing ability along these lines, since sharers are indeed much more vulnerable than other members of the Earthseed community, especially when on the road. In *Parable of the Talents*, when Olamina's travel companion Len suggests that some people think hyper-empathy is a

strength she answers, 'You know it isn't' (Butler: 1998, 341). However dangerous, we do not agree with Outterson that empathetic communication is not useful or constructive. We for example also learn how eventually Olamina's recognition of Len as a fellow-sharer brings them closer together. They are both highly vulnerable travelers that nonetheless have been able to survive through incredible loss and pain. Because of this shared vulnerability they really need to be able to trust and rely upon each other. Olamina, having gone through dangerous journeys before, had had to learn this from experience. What is offered to us through the *Parables* is an invite to stretch our minds and think through the many possible meanings there are in the text.

What has been failed to notice is how, in looking for a unifying interpretation, we lose sight of the ambiguity and irony that are so essential in the parables. Similarly, the hyperempathy syndrome both defamiliarizes our indifference towards each other *and* mocks naive utopian ideas considering our relationship with others. A more fruitful path to unpacking the many layers in Butler's writing is to embrace the irony and think through the meaning of the contradictions. As Donna Haraway famously puts it: 'Irony is about contradictions that do not resolve into larger wholes, even dialectically, about the tension of holding incompatible things together because both or all are necessary and true' (117). This ties in with her call for the 'transgression of boundaries' as well as 'potent fusions'. Even though he simplified the meaning of the hyperempathy syndrome, Miller does recognize the importance of contradictions in Butler's work and establishes an important link between Butler's work and 'a Cyborg Manifesto'. He emphasizes Haraway's call against 'resolving differences in a bland oppressive sameness' (338). To fully grasp what seems to be an endless richness and multilayering in Butler's work, we must fully understand the importance of what Haraway characterizes as 'the need for unity of people trying to resist worldwide intensification of domination' (121). The one perspective does not have to be dominating the other and thus we

do not have to choose between two incompatible interpretations. The challenge is to stretch our minds to understand how they could both be valid, and thus refrain from labeling.

Conclusion

To recapitalize, this paper aimed to work out an alternative approach towards Butler's works that does not try to enforce a label on her writing. As our paper demonstrates, preventing to place her work into one dominating genre helps to enrich the interpretative lenses that can be brought to bear on her work. Our study of Johns's feminist utopian outline showed where Butler contests the feminist blue-print. She has developed the mother-daughter relationship in complexity and with a Black feminist approach, shown how the dystopian and utopian inform each other to create something new. The nurturing theme is not developed in a process-oriented way when studied in a feminist, utopian framework. Yet, when expanding the interpretation to the implicit determinacy of Black mothers it opens up a distinct, utopian version. Even so, the multiple voices Butler employs strengthen this generic hybridity in terms of style and form. The reader is made intimately familiar with Olamina's viewpoint in *Parable of the Sower*, and through Olamina's own criticism made to reflect upon her ideas. We saw how this was taken up further in *Parable of the Talents* in which the main narrator and editor is Olamina's daughter Asha Vere. She is highly critical of her mother, especially about her decision to stay in Acorn rather than flee to Halmstad with her family. Yet her criticism is again framed through the prologue in which not her criticism but an understanding and love towards her mother are present.

The literal mobility in the parables emphasizes the intimate relation between change and movement. Remaining in one safe place brings about stagnation and impedes personal development. Mobility enables the characters to undergo the changes they need to survive in the ever-changing dystopian world they inhabit. In a similar fashion the hyperempathy syndrome works against stagnation as well. As a motive it embodies the urgency of

acknowledging more than one perspective with the tendency to embrace contradictions and multiplicity. Haraway's emphasis on irony highly resonates within and with the parables, and only an all-encompassing view can do justice to the richness and multi-layeredness of Butler's work. Hence, we argued that Butler's parables show that 'single vision produces worse illusions than double visions or many-headed monsters' (Haraway, 122). Like the Earthseed book itself, her work does not ground in a purpose, but in potential. In times of emerging populist tendencies, it appears most urgent to acknowledge the importance of mobile perspectives. Similarly, our reading should not be restrained by a generic direction but acknowledge that who can love can equally kill; someone's utopia can be someone else's dystopia.

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