

Alexandra Kokoli: PERFORMANCE WORKS

A COUNTDOWN TO EARTHSEED

Durational performance through daily posts on

<https://www.facebook.com/amkokoli>

2 February 2022-20 July 2024

First post, 2 February 2022:

<https://www.facebook.com/amkokoli/posts/pfbid0NpZRAcs1LkzDeRQzMYqLThtoMKasaSvcwxq4CdxqUg11WiNB8UpP1DyPopgWFbgPI>



Alexandra M Kokoli



2 February 2022 · 🌐

A COUNTDOWN TO EARTHSEED

899 days until 20 July 2024, when our calendar and Lauren Olamina's first journal entry converge.

A daily Facebook update in tribute to Octavia Butler's Parable of the Sower (1993).



16

3 comments 1 share



Like



Comment



Share

Last post, 20 July 2024, including a reflection posted as comments:

<https://www.facebook.com/amkokoli/posts/pfbid02LN9Z5t9dURqNowBMKeKzd1469ULpQn2qrBTRGw9Z4aFAEd8fU1V2AnjDqvaYKUprI>

POST

All that you touch

You Change.

All that you Change

Changes you.

The only lasting truth

Is Change.

God is Change.

COMMENT

The aphorism above is followed by Lauren Oya Olamina's first diary entry, dated Saturday 20, 2024. Today hers and our calendars align.

COMMENT

Thus begins Octavia Butler's Parable of the Sower, first published in 1993 by Four Walls Eight Windows. I like to end with a beginning.

COMMENT

Octavia Butler's Parable of the Sower celebrates black feminist energy, adaptability, and survival. Butler outlines a speculative vision of the US in 2024 where political and economic structures have collapsed and the hyper-securitisation of houses and walled-in city-states no longer protects their inhabitants. In The Parable of the Sower, protagonist Lauren Olamina draws strength from her gift as a special kind of empath who both feels the emotions and experiences the sensations of the people she encounters. Her hyperempathy proves not only wearisome but dangerous in her violent surroundings. She eventually tames it and harnesses its insights into a political and spiritual awakening.

COMMENT

Olamina survives the foretold collapse of infrastructures and civil society, chooses her fellow travellers carefully, and forms with them a spiritual community who accepts Change as the most persistent form of the divine. The Book of the Living, the holy scripture for this community, is authored by Olamina on the hoof, while her group search for safe and fertile ground.

COMMENT

The Parable of the Sower presents an alternative to the apocalypse. It reveals the end-of-the-world as only an end of some things and some lives. None of these losses of lives and things (however painful) nor their accumulation mark a complete and final end: only Change. The Parable of the Sower breaks what Catherine Keller called the 'apocalypse habit', reminding us that most stories about the end-of-the-world are actually about the end of man, and more specifically the end of white supremacy and heteropatriarchy.

COMMENT

My countdown to Earthseed masks a resistance to the apocalypse habit under a semblance of millenarianism. Just as Butler frames the end-of-the-world as the cessation of a particular worlding, my countdown's finitude hides a commitment to flow. I see the divinity of Butler's authentic and radical Change as an apotropaic affirmation against neoliberal deployments of 'change'.

COMMENT

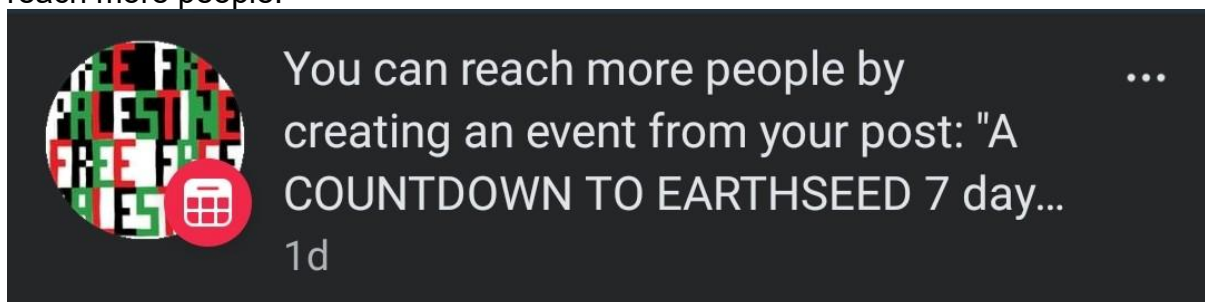
'Change' is no euphemism for divestment. This has been a protest against 'change management' as academic vandalism.

COMMENT

This project has been presented at two events: 1. The lost-and-found Symposium: Revising art stories in search of potential changes, Universidade NOVA de Lisboa, Lisbon, 6-7 December 2023. 2. Sowing and Trekking Through Time, UCL, 24 June 2024, co-organised by Rachel Hill and Giles Bunch and co-hosted by the London Science Fiction Research Community (LSFRC) and the Centre for Outer Space Studies (COSS). I am grateful to Basia Sliwinska (tag) and Giles Bunch (tag) for the invitations.

COMMENT

On days 891 and 898 of the Countdown, Facebook suggested I created an event to reach more people.



COMMENT

A COUNTDOWN TO EARTHSEED: Daily Facebook updates in tribute to Octavia Butler's *Parable of the Sower*, <https://www.facebook.com/amkokoli/>, 2 February 2022-20 July 2024.