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Musings on Radical Witchcraft

(knock here thrice) hello?

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Right now (and now passed, but we'll get there; more on time later) I am sitting in my room with the task of writing about magic as resistance or radical witchcraft. On those last words, it has just begun to rain. I've been stuck for a while and I've finally begun. Leading up to this moment, I have prepared my-self; first by clearing my mind and body with sound -- moving a tuning fork over the landscapes of my body, listening with my attention, my cochleae, my skin, my bones. I place the fork back on my altar and in the next moment my eyes pause on my wrapped container of the water with which I have been working over many moons. I think, it's been a while, but this is fitting. Whether I called upon the water or it called upon me is a mystery. What is sure is that *water is life* and *water is sacred*. I hold it in my hands. I pull the stopper from the bottle.

A communion.

I light a candle at my desk for the writing. Drinking water on my right, dream journal on my left, where I have collected fragments for this work from this morning's hypnagogic twilight.

The tiniest little fly, which had been bugging me since I got out of bed, keeps flying near my face. I had been shooing it away, annoyed. I sat down at my desk finally with the intention of writing and the fly zipped back into my line of sight, zig-zagging near my nose, and again into my periphery. I suddenly remembered the point of my work at hand. I apologized to the fairy. They landed on the window directly in front of me, at arm's length. They were still while I offered them my respect and gratitude. I've seen them around a few times while writing this, although I'm not sure where they are right now.

= 321 words. 3 - 2 - 1 are layers of consciousness which structure some of my work. 3 -- The interconnected cosmic web of everything; 2 -- the mirror, twin, duality, reflection between the seen and the unseen, the familiar side of the veil and the beyond, the waking and the dreaming, the inside and the outside; and 1 -- the world inside me, akin to what is outside of me, and akin to the cosmic web of everything. Also: the self (1), the interpersonal (2), and our environment (3). Radical witchcraft must work on each of these levels. It is a holistic practice. 1 cannot exist without 2 and 3 because 3 and 2 are also 1. The self is inextricably connected to others and the universe.

attunement (n.)

"a bringing into harmony," 1820, from attune + -ment.

attune (v.)

"put in tune, adjust to harmony of sound," also figurative, 1590s, from tune (v), "probably suggested by ATONE" [OED]. Related: *Attuned*; *attuning*.

tune (v.)

"bring into a state of proper pitch," c. 1500, from tune (n.). Non-musical meaning "to adjust an organ or receiver, put into a state proper for some purpose" is recorded from 1887. Verbal phrase *tune in* in reference to radio (later also TV) is recorded from 1913; figurative sense of "become aware" is recorded from 1926.

atone (v.)

1590s, "be in harmony, agree, be in accordance," from adverbial phrase *atonen* (c. 1300) "in accord," literally "at one," a contraction of **at** and **one**. It retains the older pronunciation of *one*. Meaning "make up (for errors or deficiencies)" is from 1660s; that of "make reparations" is from 1680s.

Atone. To bring *at one*, to reconcile, and thence to suffer the pains of whatever sacrifice is necessary to bring about a reconciliation. [Wedgwood]

The phrase perhaps is modeled on Latin *adunare* "unite," from *ad* "to, at" (see ad-) + *unum* "one." Related: *Atoned*; *atoning*.

atonement (n.)

1510s, "condition of being at one (with others)," a sense now obsolete, from atone + -ment. Theological meaning "reconciliation" (of man with God through the life, passion, and death of Christ) is from 1520s; that of "satisfaction or reparation for wrong or injury, propitiation of an offended party" is from 1610s.¹

I have always understood magickal practice and magickal power as the being and doing from a place of utmost harmony with our environment, with each other, and with ourselves. It is a space we co-create with our collaborators, be it other witches or practitioners, animals, plants, minerals, spirits, astral bodies, the Earth's elements, magickal tools, medicines, sounds or other vibrations.

There is magic all around us. Witchcraft knows how to tune in to it.

A political witch would like to go a step further.

Radical witchcraft is founded on reciprocity, mutual responsibility, accountability, and profound respect. It is situating our craft within the context of a deep fracture in our collective ability to attune (on the personal, interpersonal and environmental levels) -- read: the conditions imposed by the dominant political hegemony, marked by its pervasive, interlocking structures of oppression (ie; white heteropatriarchal supremacy, ableism, capitalism, border imperialism and settler colonialism), all of which would like us to be disconnected, disempowered, and complying (or worse; disappeared or dead).

The etymological siblings of 'attune' and 'attunement', the words 'atone' and 'atonement' (in the 'at one', 'in harmony', and 'reconciling' sense), have a particular resonance for a settler witch, and even more so for a white settler witch. Retributive sensibility cast aside, radical witchcraft sees itself aligned with settler responsibilities and decolonization in its ethics and praxis. At a foundational level, radical witchcraft operates in a mode of decentralization. In practicing radical witchcraft, we do not see ourselves as the master of magic. We recognize, see and feel other beings and bodies (human and other-than-human) as having their own autonomy, will, agency, rights, power and freedoms (or lack thereof), their own wisdom, knowledge, experience, stories, histories, trauma,

¹ All etymological references are taken from <https://www.etymonline.com/>

lives, worlds, desires, and dreams (yes, even trees and rocks and rivers). Further, we understand ourselves to be interdependent co-actors in relation with these other beings and bodies and with all of creation.

Radical witchcraft asks:

3) Who is t(he)re?

2) Who is beyond / out of sight?

1) Who am I (becoming)?

3) Who is t(he)re?

Magic, and the attunement to it, is an orientation. It is saying hello to other beings and bodies with whom we share the world -- especially when systemic oppression and resource extraction industry tell us that some beings and bodies ought to be privileged over others, that some lives matter while others matter less or not at all. Radical witchcraft is a listening, a noticing, a witnessing. It is relational by nature.

It is understanding that we affect others and that others affect us. All is connected and all is affected/affecting and ever-changing/transforming.

Radical witchcraft is fundamentally collaborative.

Beings and bodies are distinct from each other while being connected. There is love and awe in the mystery of not ever being able to fully know one another. Yet we are also related. Bodies are porous. Portals to magickal worlds are everywhere. We just need to slow down and pay attention.

2) Who is beyond / out of sight?

Radical witchcraft, of course, considers the Unseen, as in what magickal forces and vibrations are at play in the world and in our practice. This includes spirits, ancestors and transcestors, with whom we may try to establish a line of communication with.

For witches, having historically been persecuted and silenced, radical witchcraft also grapples with the Unheard -- voices of beings and bodies that we cannot grasp or which have been systematically erased, removed or silenced. Those we cannot necessarily collaborate with due to various barriers and borders. This accounts for the dispossessed, the margin-dwellers, the incarcerated, the missing and murdered, those struggling with chronic illnesses, those trying to survive crushing poverty, and so on.

1) Who am I (becoming)?

We do not exist in a vacuum. Magickal practices do not operate in isolation. Radical witchcraft's relationship framework understands the individual as it relates to others in a web of interconnectedness. Our identities and histories are intertwined (yet distinct).

Part of the work is also looking within and assessing one's positionality.

Radical witchcraft asks, who am I from? It is finding one's cultural roots through family history and ancestry. So much of a witch's power can be drawn from reclaiming our relations with our ancestors and ancestral places, along with the traditional knowledge they hold. This also informs us of historical relations between our ancestors and the ancestors of others, which is critical to radical witchcraft.

Radical witchcraft asks us to trust our inner worlds and to know that they echo all of the universe and its knowledge. It is a reckoning for our intuition, for the knowing of the body. Radical witchcraft also understands knowledge production in the very act of magicking.

Finally, radical witchcraft asks, who do I (we) choose to be(come)? This is where we are intentional with our magickal practice, effecting it as a method, a strategic toolkit, to influence our reality in motion. Magickal practices makes room for creativity in what we do and what we do together to shape the ways in which we and the world constantly transform. It is a dreaming, a visioning. Through magickal rituals and performances, we not only grow and strengthen our movements, while cultivating care, healing and wellness for our collaborators and ourselves, but we also engage in and expand our capacity for radical imagining.

A note on time

Radical witchcraft understands time as non-linear. Radical witchcraft centers the pace of experience and iterative learning -- the slow but steady cadence of the spiral. Moreover, radical witchcraft makes space in practice for a constant, collaborative writing and re-writing of time, in past, present and futures, by way of being intentional about how we relate to our co-creators.

Author :

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