



SEHNSUCHT AS A POLITICS OF MAGICK; OR, NAVIGATING FEAR IN

UNSETTLING LANDSCAPES

As settlers, we are challenged in our assumptions about what constitutes intimacy and where and how it is to be found. This is not a challenge presented to our thinking— we all are well-acquainted with the intellectual critiques of the heteronormative valuation of intimacy, idealisation of romantic exclusivity, and violence of patriarchal reproduction after all! No, no...The challenge we are presented strikes deeper—into our bodies, directed at assumptions that are emotionally rooted, rocking and unsettling the very constitution of our physical beings. And we have been struck by the primary emotion that has surfaced from all this: Fear.

We can sense it. Through these emotional challenges that strike at a more primal part of us, we are going through Change...one way or the other, as we live through these transforming timeplaces. So we have been given bouts of excitement and fear in the recent time. It has been an interesting time, like a rollercoaster ride. Thrilling panic. So to ground ourselves, we decided to stop trying to solve it and just observe how it courses through our bodies.

First off, fear is difficult to distinguish from excitement. Adrenaline. Both make us want to throw up a bit. Fear/excitement feels like a wave, a rush that started in the lower reaches of our bodies, perhaps at our feet rendering them tingly, unstable, racing up the spine, making it difficult to breathe, but stopping somewhere at the base of our necks, rendering it either difficult to speak or words become an unstoppable deluge. Fear makes things go faster, a lot. Speed. It makes us want to rush, even when it freezes us. Rushing of thoughts, ideas. Airy, fiery. There is something to be said here about the experience of fear and the need for speed under capitalism/empires of production. Fear feels obsessively fecund, a multiplication of thought chains each calling out loudly to be chased (Capitalism's reproductive proliferation running through our bodies?) Simultaneously fear also feels like an existential threat. As empires of production a.k.a. civilisations (within and beyond capitalism) are wont to do.

So, fear as an instrument/practice of power. More importantly, fear as also the experience of finding-founding new terrain. Fear is imminent in times of Change. Placetimes in the process of transformation. The Earth is going through changes. As part of these lands, we too are. Cannot escape it, won't try to. We actually like you. Wanna live this relation, experience together, in intimacy with these lands. Wanna be with you, dear Earth, even when you are scared, scarred, when we both are pulsating with fear. Wanna invest in this connection, nurture some reciprocity in how we take from you, what we offer—instead of running away, trying to rise above transcend separate matter from spirit our matters from spirit, us from you. Do not want to abandon you, land who called us here, loved us, cared for us! Do not want to abandon the selves who called us, brought us here, loved us, and cared for us.

What is this feeling?

What is this connection we share?

An unfamiliar terrain of intimacy emerges as desire....Responsibility, response-ability....is the natural result of earthy desire, not the opposite of freedom. Intimacy is about orientation: Who do we call close? What do we approach and let approach? When do we turn away? When do we run not in order to protect but in an attempt to escape fear?

Fear is imminent in times of Change. If we are not facing fear, we are resistant to change. *Facing* fear. Something here too about orientation. Who are we directed towards? What are we directed away from? The disorienting power of fear is potent, for who *wants* to face fear! Sara Ahmed writes, "*The concept of 'orientations' allows us to expose how life gets directed in some ways rather than others, through the very requirement that we follow what is already given to us...*" (When we don't, we experience fear.) "*...For a life to count as a good life, then it must return the debt of its life by taking on the direction promised as a social good, which means imagining one's futurity in terms of reaching certain points along a life course. A queer life might be one that fails to make such gestures of return.*"

And in facing fear instead of looking away, strange queer life of these lands—of you and me—becomes disoriented. In this disorientation, we stumble upon new terrain. Of course it is uncomfortable, dizzying! Exciting. Physically, emotionally. Terrifying!

Yet we face fear instead of turning away. What makes us undertake this courageous act, do this illogical foolhardy insane thing? Haha! Ha ha ha... *cue insane laughter* ...We are back here into the Fool's journey! The pull of fear, the desire for familiarunfamiliar landscapes within and without which sparks that fear! Responsibility is the natural result of earthy desire, not the opposite of freedom. A real turning towards responsibility is a turning towards our desire, the land's desire. Will be disorienting, unsettling.

Magick too is about the politics of orientation. Witchcrafts about subversion skills...Subverting expectations about the orientations we occupy in life-death. About sabotaging the directions given to us as defined paths in our relations, in our intimacies. Facing fear instead of turning away. So too our unsettling witchcrafts be very physical.

Let it seep.

#WITCHCRAFTISPOLITICAL

