

Junkies, sluts and feminists: where are we in the witch legacy?

I recently watched a lecture from Kristen J Sollee's on her book *Witches, Sluts and Feminists*. I first thought she was preaching to me, the converted. Already a feminist academic who appreciates scholarly research into the demonisation of women and our sexuality.

What was this 'witch feminism?' Why does that sound so appealing? I come from a long line of strong women, one of who is rather mysterious with mystical ties. Due to my great grandmother's magical practices pre-dating the Christian conversion of her entire family are well hidden. Is why I found myself hanging off every word of this lecture? The intrigue? It didn't matter that I was already in the church of the witch brand of feminism. Sollee had me covered! Or did she?

Hang on a minute? Where's the junkies? a word I personally use and reclaim. Where are the junkie sluts? Where's the women who use drugs? Why are we not included with these other once 'offensive' female identities? I feel like 'Junkies' would fit right in with the sluts, feminists, and the occult? We are counter-cultural thanks to the criminalisation of what we choose to put into our bodies. In fact, I believe we are natural alchemists, practicing chemical science as only junkies can.

Women who use drugs possess a hidden knowledge, much like the witches of Salem or the cunning folk of Britain and other parts of medieval Europe. The craft and crime of a medieval women was magic. The craft and crime of the modern woman: the knowledge and use of drugs, which can also be magical.

What of the 'sexy witch' stereotype? A barely clothed women expressing female sexuality, riding on a broomstick and exploring sexual pleasure. As women who uses drugs, I am not afraid of seeking pleasure. Like the witch, I should not be demonised for wanting satisfaction and gratification.

Sollee's *Witches, Sluts and Feminists* guided me through the history of misogyny and demonstrated how witch feminism feeds into contemporary conversations about reproductive rights, sexual pleasure, queer identity, pornography, and sex work. Themes addressing for a want of bodily autonomy. I would also like governance over my own body. I would like to be allowed to use illicit drugs, legally and as safely as possible, making informed choices like I could make if I wanted to use a drug deemed 'licit', a drug like alcohol is fine, but not heroin, not even pot.

As much as I could relate to *Witches, Sluts and Feminists*, I also noticed as a junkie I wasn't there. I didn't see myself. Prior to discovering *Witches, Sluts and Feminists*, I had just discovered Narco feminism this year! To quote Judy Chang's article: **NARCO FEMINISM - A CAMPAIGN FOR THE FEMINIST WHO USES DRUGS:**

'I am a feminist. I am a woman who uses drugs. Up until recently, these identities have been mutually exclusive, having rarely been held together in the same conceptual space.'

This blew my mind and resonated with me so much. I had felt like my drug use excluded me from feminist spaces, even though empowering and supporting women who use drugs is a feminist action and we should be included in women's spaces and services more and more.

I was eager to share the discovery with 2 of my closest friends and colleagues: both women who use drugs, who work in harm reduction, advocacy, and activism. The 3 of us are self-confessed narco feminists now. I have even been referring to our group emails, chats and catch-up visits as the 'coven.'

Like all feminist spaces we belong too. Special thanks to all the junkie, slutty, feminist witches out there! You're all my heroes, thanks for your good work.

