Fritz Muntean Collection

ms150/24/01-18

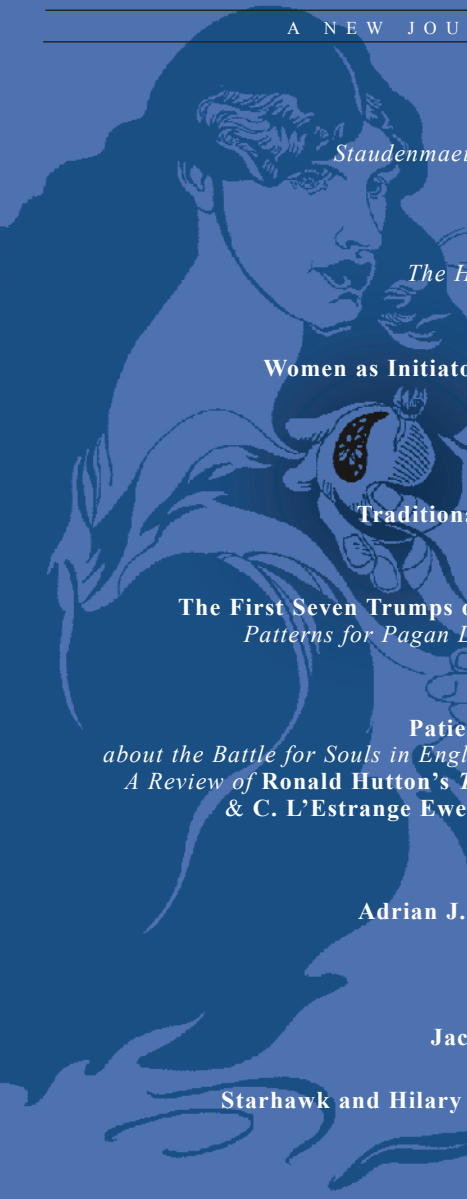
February 2002

The Pomegranate

No. 18

The Pomegranate

A NEW JOURNAL OF NEOPAGAN THOUGHT



ISSUE NUMBER 18 FEBRUARY 2002

The Pomegranate

ISSN 1528-0268 refers to this Journal.

Subscriptions:
4 issues: US$20 — 8 issues: US$37.50
by surface mail anywhere.
Send US Cash, Money Orders in US funds, or Checks drawn on US banks to
The Pomegranate
501 NE Thompson Mill Rd,
Corbett, OR 97019
Subs email: **thepom@cascadeaccess.com**

Submissions:
Our readers are both scholars and nonscholars. We seek submissions written in language that is engaging, clear, and jargon-free.

Deadline for submissions:
the Solstice or Equinox preceding each issue.

The Cover:
Drawing by Tina Monod
from *PROSERPINE* by
Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 1874

The Pomegranate: The Journal of Pagan Studies is published for the interdisciplinary study of contemporary and classical Pagan religions, including Wicca, Witchcraft, Druidism, Ásatrú, Odinism, as well as other forms of revived and diaspora Paganism. We welcome articles and essays from historians of religion, environmental historians, social scientists, and independent writers and scholars whose work engages or is informed by current academic research.

The Pomegranate Readers' Forum

Please contribute to our Readers' Forum so that we may continue to present this valuable venue for the exchange of ideas. Letters may be edited to conserve space or to avoid repetition. Writers of published letters will have their subscriptions extended.

DANIEL SCHULKE WRITES:

I am writing concerning the Solanaceae, Flying Ointments, and modern experimentation. As an ethnobotanist, plant folklorist and herbalist within Traditional British Witchcraft, and a 15-year pupil of the Solanaceae as well, there are a number of points I would add to Chas Clifton's article "If Witches Didn't Fly" (*Pomegranate* #16).

The first concerns the stae of academic investigation of the so-called 'Flying Ointments', which is inconclusive. While numerous references to flying ointments may be found in Inquisition literature (and, less frequently, in medieval and early modern magical literature), there is no consensus among scholars concerning the extent of these unguents' historical use in European folk magic. Some positions, consumed with the neo-pagan romance that Flying Ointment has accreted in recent years, assume the ointment's widespread ritual use in medieval and early modern Europe in connection with an equally romantic view of folk magic. Others dismiss the phenomenon entirely as part of the sabbatic inquisition-construct. Some investigators exclusively focus on the pharmacological aspects, while others consider the powers of the Unguent to have been merely sympathetic magic attached to fats and oils in general. Modern 'entheogenic' approaches seem almost exclusively preoccupied with 'unraveling the secret' of the Flying Ointment, either attempting a deterministic explanation, or trying to create an easy, fast, and convenient method of ingestion for modern practitioners. Few researchers seem ready to include in their investigations the predominating folk-cosmologies of those who would have been using these sacraments, their magico-religious practices, or to examine the existence of other sacred unguents used in European folk magic but not in connection with 'flying'.

Second, in examining modern usage of the Solanaceous plants and the Sabbatic Unguent, we might scrutinize the predominating approach to inebriating drugs and psychotropic plant sacraments in modern industrialized countries, which has probably been influenced as much by western allopathic medicine as by the 'Psychedelic Sixties". Specifically, the notion that if the correct chemical compounds are isolated from a plant and made available in a convenient, easy-to-ingest form, a desirable, easily-measured outcome will result. While there are some similarities between this methodology and that of folk magic in late-medieval and early modern Europe, there were no doubt other factors that were considered which have now been largely abandoned: the ritual context of the ointment use, the magical praxis with which the sacrament was integrated; the influence of the spirits for beneficence or harm; observation of omens; and the knowledge and magic of preparation, adminsitration, and antidotes.

Sensitivity to tropane alkaloids (atropine, hyoscyamine, scopolamine and cuscohygrine, etc.) can vary widely from person to person, and their concentration in plant tissue varies from plant to plant. Therefore, to assert that x amount of Thorn-Apple is safe to ingest is not only irresponsible, but also misses the point. The Hexing Herbs, by their nature, refuse to be taken conveniently on human terms.

A wise approach to plant medication is beginning with the Nature of the plant itself. Thisis especially important with the plants of the Solanaceae. Unfortunately, few modern practitioners seeking to integrate phytognostic sacraments within their work realize that medicinal protocols are not identical for all plants: one cannot use the same approach to Angel's Trumpet (*Brugmansia* spp.) as one would use for Cannabis. This is more than a matter of personal safety, it is also basic common courtesy to the plant in question. A basic education in toxicology, as well as work with such plant preparations as flower essences, greatly aids a practitioner in this. Committed, sincere magical praxis attuning the subtle body (such as ecstatic trance or oneiromancy) potentiates and contextualizes the use of such plants.

Finally, many modern practitioners who work with these plants observe a taboo of silence concerning the specifics of their use, for to divulge such secrets not only invites irresponsible use and possible litigation, but in some cases is passed on purely in an initiatory context.

Daniel A. Schulke
California Institute of Integral Studies

ANGELINE KANTOLA REPLIES TO DAVE GREEN:

My letter (*Pom* #16) regarding Dave Green's article on Chaos Magick (*Pom* #15) was an alarmed response to seeing so many popular but misguided notions about scientific thought and practice perpetuated in *The Pomegranate,* and perhaps legitimized by the appearance in these pages. Mr Green's personal beliefs were not intended to be the focus of my previous letter.

As a sociologist with one foot in scientific philosophy, Mr Green should know well that beliefs about scientific understanding—that is, the unadorned machinations of the material world, even apart from technological applications or the people who have described those machinations—have as much of a real-world impact as do beliefs about human history and culture. In *The Pomegranate,* historians and anthropologists have sought to set the record straight about factually inaccurate beliefs widely held and dearly beloved in the Pagan community. The fanciful wishful thinking that has grown up around ridiculous interpretations of quantum mechanics is ripe for the same treatment—or at least a potshot or two. The overblown rhetoric of the Chaos Magickians was an irresistable target.

I'd like to remind Mr Green that *every* action works in the world with a double edge. Assigning the blame for greed and callous disregard for human life solely to science or 'scientism' is at best naive. In his original article, Mr. Green asserts that "Science needs its *other*". Apparently Chaos Magick needs one too.

Angie Kantola
University of Washington

PETER STAUDENMAIER WRITES:

I am very gratified that my article on "Fascist Ecology" (*Pom* #15) has sparked a thoughtful discussion in the pages of *The Pomegranate* about the politics of right-wing environmentalism. The article's condensed format provoked several misunderstandings, and I appreciate the opportunity to clarify my argument by responding to several of Gus diZerega's criticisms (*Pom* #16). My work is by no means an "attack on deep ecology and Nature religion", as diZerega would have it, but a warning about the potential pitfalls that adherents of deep ecology and nature religions face. The article is, on the other hand, undoubtedly "hostile to certain spiritual values", namely fascist ones. The ongoing mutual attraction between far-right politics and ecological spirituality is a prominent feature of neopaganism in German-speaking Europe today, and this alarming connection merits careful scrutiny by anglophone scholars and practitioners of nature religions.

THE ONGOING MUTUAL ATTRACTION BETWEEN FAR-RIGHT POLITICS AND ECOLOGICAL SPIRITUALITY IS A PROMINENT FEATURE OF NEOPAGANISM IN GERMAN-SPEAKING EUROPE TODAY, AND THIS ALARMING CONNECTION MERITS CAREFUL SCRUTINY BY ANGLOPHONE SCHOLARS AND PRACTITIONERS OF NATURE RELIGIONS.

DiZerega's initial objection to my historical overview of fascist ecology stems from his conviction that German National Socialism was not a variant of fascism, which he takes to be a largely Italian phenomenon. This is a historiographically reputable position, but not one that I or most contemporary analysts of Nazism share. Such differences regarding ideological classification are hardly a matter of "error" on my part or on diZerega's. Yet his categorical insistence that "no such thing as ecofascism ever existed" depends entirely on this terminological disagreement. Moreover, the case of Julius Evola demonstrates that a prominent strain within Italian fascism also partook of the ecofascist worldview traced in my article.

DiZerega's second objection concerns the fact that many Nazis were forthrightly anti-environmentalist, an aspect that my article takes into account. The Nazi "green wing" that I describe was of course a minority tendency within the party as a whole. This fact does not, however, support diZerega's conclusion that "the worst crimes of the Nazi regime had nothing to do with environmentalism". To establish this, he would need to argue that no important Nazi criminals were environmentalists and that Nazism's genocidal impulse was unrelated to its biological politics, both of which are clearly untrue.

DiZerega is quite right that my "real target" is several contemporary trends within environmentalism (though not, as he thinks, neopaganism as a whole). The disturbing tendency among many Greens and deep ecologists to recapitulate the arguments and assumptions of the Nazi "green wing" is exactly what prompted me to write the article in the first place. Until deep ecologists and esoteric environmentalists face this legacy squarely, as the more perceptive among them already have, it will be necessary to critique such inadvertent revivals of ecofascist thought.

DiZerega's further complaint that I neglected marxism-leninism in an article on Nazism leaves me puzzled, and I very much doubt that marxist-leninists "would have endorsed" my anarchist analysis, as he conjectures. I quite agree, however, that my article ignores the liberal tradition, a tradition I reject as incompatible with emancipatory ecological politics. DiZerega's claim that "totalitarian horrors do not arise in a liberal culture" has unfortunately been disproven by the historical experience of the twentieth century. That many contemporary environmentalists are wedded to liberal assumptions is not, in my view, a bulwark against the current re-emergence of ecofascism. What will help to stem this resurgence is critical reflection on the historical entwinement of environmentalism and far-right politics. I hope that readers of *The Pomegranate* will have much to contribute to this process of critical reflection.

Peter Staudenmaier

GUS DIZEREGA RESPONDS:

Peter Staudenmaier argues I must demonstrate "no important Nazi criminals were environmentalists" and "that Nazism's genocidal impulse was unrelated to its biological politics." I agree these statements are false, but I also maintain that they are irrelevant.

To say someone was a Nazi and an environmentalist does not establish causal, psychological, or logical links between these views. Nazism's politics was based on a biological concept of race, and the survival of the fittest. Neither is particularly connected to environmental thinking. Non-environmental Nazis also believed in biological conceptions of race and politics. Survival-of-the-fittest doctrines more easily argue against preserving weaker 'races' or species than seeking their preservation. He has mixed different meanings of the word 'nature', creating the illusion of relationship.

Staudenmaier claims he is targeting deep ecologists and Greens who "recapitulate arguments and assumptions" of green Nazis. Which Greens? What arguments and what assumptions? No influential deep ecologist or Green to my knowledge embraces 1) race as a biological category, 2) domination as a necessary condition between races, 3) hostility to democracy, 4) belief in dictatorship or 5.) extreme or 'völkisch' nationalism. Where's the threat?

Staudenmaier reads s a different history than I regarding totalitarianism. It is in the illiberal part of Europe that the violent Right most successfully manipulates Pagan, Christian, or whatever views to gain power—as the violent Left did the grievances of workers and peasants. Both created hellish societies. Marxist-Leninists liked science, cities, 'rational' analysis. If 'mystical ecology' was a cause of totalitarianism they should have been immune.

Gus diZerega

Who Was Aradia? The History and Develpment of a Legend

by Sabina Magliocco
California State University, Northridge

The author wishes to thank Ronald Hutton and Chas S. Clifton for their helpful critiques of an earlier draft of this work.

Aradia is familiar to most contemporary Pagans and Witches as the principal figure in Charles G. Leland's *Aradia, or the Gospel of the Witches,* first published in 1899. Leland presents her as the daughter of Diana, the goddess of the moon, by her brother Lucifer, 'the god of the Sun and of the Moon, the god of Light' (Leland, 1899, 1998:1), who is sent to earth to teach the poor to resist the oppression of the wealthy classes through magic and witchcraft. Through Leland's work, Aradia's name and legend became central to the Witchcraft revival. Between 1950 and 1960, 'Aradia' was probably the secret name of the Goddess in Gardnerian Craft (it has since been changed), and she has also given her name to numerous contemporary Witchcraft traditions (Clifton, 1998:73).

Leland's *Aradia* also inspired a number of 20th century works of Pagan literature. In a privately published electronic document entitled *The Gospel of Diana* [which according to Silvio Baldassare originated as a spoof of the *Gnostic Gospels* (Baldassare, 1997:15)], Aidan Kelly expands on Leland's idea of Aradia as a religious leader and heroine of an Italian peasant resistance. Kelly's Aradia, however, is a notably erotic character; according to her teachings, the sexual act becomes not only an expression of the divine life force, but an act of resistance against all forms of oppression and the primary focus of ritual. Kelly's document has not achieved broad diffusion in contemporary Pagan circles, however. Much more influential in the perpetuation of Aradia's legend is the work of Raven Grimassi. Grimassi, the author of a series of popular books on *Stregheria,* or Italian-American Witchcraft, presents Aradia as a wise woman who lived in Italy during the 14th century, and who brought about a revival of the Old Religion. He claims to practice a tradition founded by Aradia's followers (Grimassi, 1995:xviii). In *Hereditary Witchcraft,* Grimassi expands on Leland's version and the material he presented in *Ways of the Strega* by adding a chapter on Aradia's teachings (Grimassi, 1999:191-201), which include a series of predictions about the future of humankind and the return of the Old Religion (1999:207-208). After Aradia's mysterious disappearance, her twelve disciples spread her gospel, explaining the diffusion of the Old Religion throughout Italy and Europe (1999:203-210).

But who was Aradia? Was she the legendary figure of Leland's *Gospel,* or a 14th century teacher of the Craft, as Grimassi proposes? Or is her story more complicated? In this paper, I explore the roots of the legend of Aradia, and in the process attempt to shed light on the formation of some of the most important motifs in the legend-complex surrounding witchcraft, both traditional and contemporary. While my conclusions differ from those of Leland, Kelly and Grimassi, they may reveal a surprising possibility underlying the legend that has not been considered before.

My approach is grounded in the academic discipline of folklore, which

LEGENDS ARE EXTRAORDINARILY RESPONSIVE TO SOCIAL CHANGE; IN FACT, THEY ARE ONE OF THE MOST SENSITIVE INDICES OF TRANSFORMATIONS IN CULTURAL VALUES AND WORLDVIEW.

regards stories about historical or alleged historical figures as legends. A legend is a story set in the real world about an extraordinary or numinous event. Legends are typically told as true, with many features that root them in a specific time and place and lend them authenticity; but they are not necessarily believed by all who tell them. In fact, according to legend scholars Linda D'gh and Andrew Vazsonyi, it is the tension between belief and disbelief that keeps legends alive and circulating, as each new listener must decide 'Is this true? Could this have happened?' (D'gh and Vazsonyi, 1976). Within any given community, there are legend believers and disbelievers; our community is, of course, no exception when it comes to this particular legend. The truth content of legends—that is, how closely they correspond to actual historical events—can vary widely; although some contain a kernel of reality, many legends are 'true' only in the most metaphorical sense, in that they are an accurate reflection of popular attitudes, values and morality at a given time and place.

Legends can take many forms. Most typically, they occur as narratives, either in the first person ('This actually happened to me') or third person ('This actually happened to a friend of a friend/ long ago, etc.'). Logically, many legends start out as first person accounts and become third person accounts; but just as often, a narrator may retell a third person account as though it had actually happened to him/her, making the story more vivid for the audience. Legends can also exist as simple statements ('The house on the hill is haunted'), and occasionally become dramatic enactments known as 'ostension' (D'gh and Vazsonyi, 1986), which I will describe later at some length. Legends appear in multiple variants; no one variant is any more correct than any other. At times, legends may cluster together to form what folklorists call a legend complex: a group of interrelated legends and beliefs centered around a particular theme. The multiple legend complexes centering around witchcraft are among the most enduring in Western history. Legends are extraordinarily responsive to social change; in fact, they are one of the most sensitive indices of transformations in cultural values and worldview (Dundes, 1971; Magliocco, 1993). For that reason, it is imperative to understand them in the cultural, political and social context in which they appear. In considering the development of the legend of Aradia, I will be applying all of the above principles, but especially the latter. My goal is to show how each successive historical era added and subtracted elements to this tale in keeping with the cultural preoccupations of the time, giving us not only today's concept of Aradia, but also a much broader legend complex surrounding the nature of witchcraft itself.

ORIGINS: HERODIAS AND DIANA

The origin of the name 'Aradia' is veiled in mystery. I have not been able to find it in written form before the publication of Leland's Gospel in 1899. However, Leland himself equates Aradia with the legendary figure Herodias, a central character in the development of the witchcraft legend complex in Europe (Leland, 1899/1998:1). According to the Gospel of St. Matthew, Herodias was the sister-in-law of King Herod, the wife of his brother Philip (Matthew 14:3-12). Apparently she hated John the Baptist, and asked Herod to arrest John when the holy man was found in his dominion. But Herodias wanted John dead, so she concocted a plan in which she urged her daughter Salome to dance for King Herod. In exchange, the girl was to demand the head of John the Baptist on a platter. The plan worked: Salome danced, Herod delivered, and here the gospel stops. But according to an early Christian legend derived from the gospel, when Salome saw the head brought before her, she had a fit of remorse, and began to weep and bemoan her sin. A terrible wind began to blow from the saint's mouth, so strong that it blew the famous dancer into the air, where she is condemned to wander forever (Cattabiani, 1994:208). Since in Roman usage, the wives and daughters of a house were commonly known by the name of the male head of the household, it is easy to see how Salome became confused with her mother Herodias. In medieval Italian, Herodias is rendered as 'Erodiade,' only a short linguistic step away from Aradia.

One of the earliest mentions of Herodias is in the work of Raterius of Liegi, Bishop of Verona (890-974 CE). He laments that many believe that Herodias, wife of Herod, is a queen or a goddess, and say that one third of the earth is under her charge (Bonomo, 1959:19). Herodias gets linked with Diana in the *Canon Episcopi*, a document attributed to the Council of Ancyra in 314 CE, but probably a much later forgery, since the earliest written record of it appears around 872 CE (Caro Baroja, 1961:62). Regino, Abbot of Pr¸m, writing in 899 CE, cites the *Canon*, telling bishops to warn their flocks against the false beliefs of women who think they follow 'Diana the pagan goddess, or Herodias' on their night-time travels. These women believed they rode out on the backs of animals over long distances, following the orders of their mistress who called them to service on certain appointed nights. Three centuries later, Ugo da San Vittore, a 12th century Italian abbot, refers to women who believe they go out at night riding on the backs of animals with 'Erodiade,' whom he conflates with Diana and Minerva (Bonomo, 1959:18-19).

In each of these cases, legends about women who travel in spirit at night following Herodias or Diana are being recorded by clerics whose agenda is to eradicate what they see as false beliefs. It is difficult to gauge whether these reports represent a wide diffusion of the legends in north-central Italy and southern Germany between the 9th and 12th centuries, or whether the authors of early medieval decrees and encyclicals simply quoted each other, reproducing the same material. However, the work of German historian Wolfgang Behringer demonstrates that legends of night-flying societies, including followers of Diana, were in oral circulation in the western Alps (a region that now includes parts of Germany, Switzerland and Italy) in the 16th century, and probably well before it as well (Behringer, 1998:52-59).

Herodias appears in these legends, as in the New Testament, as a symbol of wantonness (so she remained; as late as the 19th century, prostitutes in Paris were euphemistically referred to by Eliphas Levy as *les filles d'Herodiade,* 'the daughters of Herodias')—but also as a tragic figure, condemned to wander through the air forever as punishment for her sins. Regino equates her with Diana, and Ugo adds Minerva; we cannot know, based on the evidence, if this was their own interpretation, formed as a result of their educated knowledge of Roman mythology, or whether tellers themselves were merging Herodias with other Roman goddesses in their narratives. It is telling, in any case, that pagan goddesses are being syncretized with one of the most wicked characters in the New Testament.

Whether the association was of scholarly origin or arose from oral tradition, Herodias and Diana are linked in folk legend from the 9th century CE onward; and it is through Diana that the connection to witchcraft is formed. The goddess Diana is associated with witchcraft from early Classical Roman literature. She was often conflated with Selene (a deity from Asia Minor) and Hecate, all three of whom were associated with the moon. Hecate was also the queen of the spirits of the dead, present at tombs and at the hearth, where pre-Roman peoples buried their ancestors. At night she would appear at crossroads, followed by her train of spirits flying through the air and her terrifying, howling dogs (Caro Baroja, 1961:26). Folklore about Diana's night rides may be a permutation of earlier tales about Hecate and the rade of the unquiet dead, which survived in Europe well into the middle ages and, in northern Europe, fused with the legend of the wild hunt. All three goddesses were known for helping witches: Horace, writing about the witch Canidia, has her invoke 'night and Diana, ye faithful witnesses of all my enterprises' to assist her in thwarting her enemies (Horace, *Epode* 5, vv.49-54; cited in Caro Baroja, 1961:26).

In Roman times, women of all social classes worshipped Diana on the kalends of August at her sanctuary near Lake Nemi. Her rituals were conducted at night; the lake was ringed by torches. Archeologists have found votive offerings of tablets seeking Diana's aid as well as clay statuettes of mother and child (Diana protected women in childbirth) and of uteri, as well as horned stags representing Actaeon, the youth whose desire the goddess punished by transforming him into a stag. Since the rites were women's mysteries, little information remains to us about their nature (Bernstein, 2000:154). However, we do know that men were often suspicious of women's mystery rites, and may have circulated legends about them like those cited by Juvenal about the rites of the Bona Dea, another goddess worshipped in secret exclusively by Roman women. According to this 1st century BCE Roman author, men imagined the rites to be of a sexual nature, with feasting, dancing and wild orgies (Juvenal 6.314, cited in Bernstein, 2000:220). It is important to remember that this is a male fantasy of secret women's rites, rather than a description of their actual content, and that Juvenal was writing about the rites of the Bona Dea and not those of Diana. Nevertheless, it is not impossible that similar kinds of stories circulated about many women's mysteries, including the rites of Diana. The motif of rites of sexual pleasure may thus have become associated with the legend of Diana and her followers. This motif surfaces again centuries later in association with the witches' sabbat.

Christian legends of Herodias, the flying

THE GODDESS DIANA IS ASSOCIATED WITH WITCHCRAFT FROM EARLY CLASSICAL ROMAN LITERATURE. SHE WAS OFTEN CONFLATED WITH SELENE (A DEITY FROM ASIA MINOR) AND HECATE, ALL THREE OF WHOM WERE ASSOCIATED WITH THE MOON.

dancer, may have begun to merge with those of the pagan goddess Diana because of their shared theme of night flight. With the merging of the two traditions, additional motifs become part of the legend complex: a connection with the moon; the practice of witchcraft; the presence of additional spirits, i.e. the spirits of the unquiet dead from Hecate's rade; and gatherings of women that included feasting, dancing, and sexual license. By the 10th century CE, legends of Diana and Herodias were in wide circulation in Europe, and this continued well into the 12th century. At this point, the legends began to incorporate material from yet another legend complex.

THE FAIRIES

During the 12th century, authors begin to report folk legends about spiritual beings, variously called bonae res ('good things'), dominae nocturnae ('night women') or fatae ('fairies'), that would visit homes at night to feast. If food was plentiful and the house was in good order, these visits were thought to bring good luck, since the bonae res would restore everything they consumed before the night was out. The bonae res could also punish householders whose homes were not orderly, or who did not have plenty to eat and drink, by withdrawing their blessing. The spirits were sometimes said to be led by a queen who had different names, depending on the source of the legend: Bensoria, Diana or Herodiana (combining Herodias and Diana) in Italy; Satia and Dame Abonde in France; Holde or Berchta in what is now Germany (Bonomo, 1959:22) These female figures were the protectors of spinners and of orderly homes, distributors of fertility and plenty who rewarded the good and punished the lazy. Diana and Herodias became identified, in parts of Europe, as leaders of these spiritual assemblies (Bonomo, 1959:29).

In 1249, William of Alverina, Bishop of Paris, discussed beliefs in night rides by the followers of 'Domina Abundia,' who brings abundance and good luck to the homes she visits if there is plenty to eat, but whose followers abandon and scorn houses where they receive no hospitality (Bonomo, 1959:22). Vincent of Beauvais (1190-1264) reports an instance of ostension involving this legend: a group of young men forced their way into the home of a rich farmer, helping themselves to whatever was lying around while dancing and singing '*unem premes, cent en rendes*' ('we take one, return a hundredfold'). The thieves ransacked the place while the credulous farmer told his wife to keep quiet, for the visitors were bonae res and would increase their riches a hundredfold (Bonomo, 1959:25-26).

LEGENDS ABOUT FAIRIES WHO REWARD NEATNESS AND PLENTY AND PUNISH WANT AND SLOVENLINESS SEEM TO ADDRESS ISSUES OF CLASS CONFLICT AND SOCIAL INEQUALITY IN PRE-MODERN EUROPE.

A similar story appears in Boccaccio's *Decameron* (1348-54) as the 'Queen's Tale' (#9). Two common laborers, Bruno and Buffalmacco, explain to a learned doctor that despite their poverty, they are able to live happily, because they go *in corso* ('on course,' 'on a journey'). 'From this we draw anything we want or need, without any harm to others, and from this comes our happy lifestyle which you see,' explains Bruno. The doctor wants to know what this is all about, but Bruno tells him it is a great secret, and that he could never reveal it. The doctor swears he won't tell a soul, so at last Bruno confides the details to him. He and Buffalmacco are part of a brigade of 25 men with a captain and two council members elected every six months, guided by two disciples of a great necromancer. Twice a month, the brigade assembles; each person states their wishes and all are provided for. The assembly then feasts on delicious food and fine wine, while sweet music plays and beautiful women are available for erotic fun. The doctor can't wait to go 'in corso' himself, and begins to ply the laborers with gifts and money, hoping they will take him. Finally they agree. They tell him that on an appointed night, a dark, hairy beast will appear and carry him to a secret location, but he must not mention God or the saints. On the designated night, Buffalmacco and Bruno appear dressed in a bear-skin and carry the gullible doctor on their backs, leaping and yelping, until they dump him into a sewage ditch while they escape, laughing at his foolishness.

Legends about fairies who reward neatness and plenty and punish want and slovenliness seem to address issues of class conflict and social inequality in pre-modern Europe. One family's good fortune could be explained as the result of supernatural intervention. At the same time, such legends also gave hope to the lower classes that if they keep a neat enough house, they too might be blessed by the bonae res. In this sense, the stories acted as a form of social control, reinforcing values of orderliness and hospitality while threatening sanction against householders who violated them. The stories also contained compensatory fantasies for the lower classes, a theme that will appear again a few centuries later. For people whose very survival depended on subsistence farming, and who often suffered from hunger and privation, the idea of breaking into the homes of the wealthy and enjoying some of their benefits, even in spirit, must have been a compelling one indeed, especially as the food magically restored itself by morning. It is not surprising that instances of ostension like the one described by Vincent of Beauvais occurred.

These versions also demonstrate that legends about night-time travels in the company of spirits had both believers and skeptics. Moreover, there may have been class differences between the two: lower classes were more likely to know about them and believe in them than the educated classes, for reasons I explained above. In Boccaccio's tale, the learned doctor, who has never heard of the legend, is taken advantage of by shrewd laborers, who themselves are non-believers, although they are familiar with the legend. They successfully fool and humiliate the learned doctor, reversing the usual power relationships between social classes. However, nowhere in Boccaccio's version is there mention of a company of women, or of a female leader of the spiritual assembly; instead the company is led by a great necromancer, and the doctor is told he will be borne to the assembly by a hairy beast, perhaps a reference to the diabolization of these legends that was taking place during Boccaccio's lifetime.

In all accounts discussed so far, the point of view of the *Canon Episcopi* prevails: the night travels are *spiritual journeys*; they do not take place in the flesh. The stupidity of the gullible is exactly that they mistake a spiritual tradition for an actual practice. Moreover, while the clerics decried belief in these legends because they diverted parishioners' attention away from God, they were not taken as evidence of the practice of witchcraft, nor did they have any diabolical content. But as the 12th century advanced, a new view began to emerge and compete with that of the *Canon*. According to this emergent worldview, the women's nightly journeys were not spiritual, but real. At the same time, older legends about the Society of Diana and Herodias, the bonae res and Dame Abonde begin to merge with tales about maleficent witches. These legends took on a menacing tone. Combined with new attitudes about the nature of the night journeys, they became the building blocks of the witches' sabbat in the subversion myth of diabolical witchcraft.

FAIRIES, HEALING AND SECRET SOCIETIES

Until the 11th century, legends of the society of Diana or Herodias existed side by side with legends about a very different kind of character: women who entered homes at night in sprit form to harm the inhabitants by sucking blood, eating bodies and cooking them before restoring to them the appearance of life. Their victims eventually became ill and died. These are related to the Classical Roman legends of striae, women who could transform into birds of prey to fly out at night and eat their victims, often infants, in their beds (Bonomo, 1959:33). Their victims often appeared perfectly healthy, but over a period of time sickened and died: their souls were thought to have been eaten and, in some cases, cooked by the maleficent beings.

In some parts of Sicily, Sardinia, and Friuli, these two strains still existed separately as recently as the 19th century. In Sardinian folklore, *cogas* (lit. 'cooks;' vampire-like witches) and *janas* (fairies; from *dianas*, 'followers of Diana;' cf. Neapolitan *ianare*) are very different types of creatures: while cogas are uniformly malevolent, janas live in caves or Neolithic shaft tombs in the mountains, are expert weavers and singers, and can interact with and even marry humans (Liori, 1992:107-111). The 19th century country doctor and folklore collector Giuseppe PitrË reported that Sicilian peasants distinguished between the vampiric, maleficent witch (*stria, nserra*) and the *donna di fuori*. Sicilian *donne di fuori* ('women from the outside') or *belle signore* ('beautiful ladies') documented by PitrË are creatures somewhere between

fairies and witches. They appear as beautiful women who can enter homes at night through the keyhole. If all is in order, they reward the householders, but they punish dirt and disorder. They love babies, but too much attention from the donne di fuori can also harm children (PitrË, 1889: iv:153).

Gustav Henningsen, in his careful review of Spanish Inquisition documents from Sicily, reveals that during the 16th century, the term 'donne di fuori' referred to both fairies and people of both genders who were believed to ride out with them at night (Henningsen 1993:195). These individuals were usually folk healers who could cure illnesses caused by the fairies, often as a result of some unwitting offense against them (Henningsen, 1993:195). The usual cure involved a ritual supper offered to the fairies by the victim. The fairies, accompanied by the healers in spirit form, would come to the victim's home on an appointed night where they would dance, celebrate and spiritually consume the food, thus curing the afflicted person (Henningsen, 1993:200-01).

These medieval Sicilian beliefs have interesting parallels throughout the modern Mediterranean. In rural Greece, as recently as the 1960's, certain folk healers specialized in curing ills brought about by the fairies, known as *exotica* ('those from outside;' cf. donne di fuori) (Henningsen, 1993:210). Anthropologist Vincent Crapanzano, working in Morocco in the 1960's, documented a belief system centered around the *jinn* (fairies) and their human followers, folk healers belonging to religious brotherhoods who could cure illness by performing a trance-dance to special music. The queen of the jinn, known as ëA'isha Qandisha, could appear either as a beautiful woman or a hideous hag, but always had a non-human feature, such as camel toes. Healers consulted ëA'isha Qandisha in their dreams, where she explained the cause of the illness and its cure (Crapanzano, 1975:147). In the 1970's, folklorist Gail Kligman documented Romanian brotherhoods of trance dancers who specialized in curing ailments thought to be caused by *iele* (fairies), whose patron saint was Diana or Irodeasa [cf. Erodiade] (Kligman, 1981). And in Sardinia in the 1980's, folklorist Clara Gallini studied *argismo*, a belief system based on the idea that the (often metaphorical) bite of certain insects could be cured only through ecstatic dancing, done to music played by groups of specialized musician-healers (Gallini, 1988). There may also be parallels to *tarantismo*, the folk belief system documented in southern Italy, especially Calabria, by folklorist Ernesto De Martino (1961); but this is a topic beyond the scope of this paper.

The broad diffusion of similar motifs in the circum-Mediterranean suggests that we are dealing with a belief-system of significant antiquity which may once have existed in many parts of Europe. It involved beliefs about illnesses caused by fairies or spirits, folk healers who specialized in communicating with these spirits through dreams and trances, and the enactment of ritual cures, which may have included special meals, music and trance-dancing. In many cases, healers themselves belonged to a society which may have met either in spirit or in actual ritual enactments of the cures.

THE DIABOLIZATION OF A LEGEND COMPLEX

But in most of Europe, belief systems involving night-time spiritual journeys, folk healers and fairies began to change during the 12th century, merging with motifs about maleficent witches and with the growing diabolical interpretation of witchcraft generated by the Church. John of Salisbury (1110 - 1180) combines the two by attributing to Herodias the leadership of night-time cannibalistic banquets, where babies were offered to the lamiae, female-headed serpents of Classical provenance. By the 14th century in Italy, Jacopo Passavanti first mentions the tregenda (sabbat) in conjunction with his merging of the two legendary strains. In his description, demons take the place of humans at these gatherings, leaving humans asleep in their beds. The intent of the demons is diabolical: to lead people astray. He mentions that certain women believe they travel with this company, and that its leaders are Herodias and Diana (Bonomo, 1959:64).

... [IN THE 12TH CENTURY] OLDER LEGENDS ABOUT THE SOCIETY OF DIANA AND HERODIAS, THE *BONAE RES* AND DAME ABONDE BEGIN TO MERGE WITH TALES ABOUT MALEFICENT WITCHES. THESE LEGENDS TOOK ON A MENACING TONE.

An examination of some Italian trial records shows the gradual transformation of legends about the society of Herodias/ Diana into diabolical sabbats, where feasting, drinking and dancing are accompanied by sex acts and cannibalism. Two early trials which have captured a great deal of scholarly attention are those of Sibillia and Pierina of Milan (Bonomo, 1959; Caro Baroja, 1961; Muraro Vaiani, 1976; Ginzburg, 1989). Both trials took place in the late 14th century; both women were probably first identified and persecuted because they practiced divination or folk healing (Muraro Vaiani, 1976:153). Sibillia's first trial took place in 1384. Accused of heresy, Sibillia confessed to having believed in and told legends about the games of *Signora Oriente* ('milady of the East'), not thinking it was a sin. Signora Oriente or *La Signora del Giuoco* ('the lady of the game') presided over these gatherings, where there was feasting on all manner of delicacies, music and dancing; she could predict the future, reveal secrets and resurrect the animals that had been eaten by the assembly, so that in the morning, all appeared exactly as before.

In 1390, Pierina de Bugatis, also of Milan, confessed under questioning to participating in the 'game of Erodiade.' The gatherings would slaughter and feast on livestock, whose bones Signora Oriente would put back into their skins before resurrecting them with her magic wand. The party would visit the homes of the wealthy, where they would eat and drink; they would bless homes that were neat and clean. Signora Oriente instructed her followers about the properties of various herbs and answered their questions about illness and thefts. But the followers were sworn to secrecy. To attend the assembly, Pierina would call upon a spirit named 'Lucifelus,' who appeared in the form of a man to take her there.

The tales told by Sibillia and Pierina illustrate the merging of a number of motifs from different traditions into a single legend

IF THE GAMES OF DIANA/HERODIAS WERE IN FACT EXPERIENCES OF THE IMAGINATION, WHETHER DREAMS OR OTHER ALTERNATE STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS, WHY DID MANY WOMEN CONFESS TO HAVING ATTENDED THEM?

complex: the night journeys, the company of women led by a female leader, who seems to control both abundance and rebirth, as well as revealing the future and dispensing advice on healing; the magical feasting in which appetites are satisfied; the resurrection of dead animals after the banquet; the fairy visits to the homes of the rich, where hospitality is rewarded and all returns as before at the evening's conclusion. In Pierina's version, we have the first appearance of 'Lucifelus,' a variant of *Lucifero*, or Lucifer, as the agent of transport to the games—a minor figure, at this point, who is diabolical in name only.

Italian historian Luisa Muraro Vaiani believes the judges hearing these depositions had a hard time understanding their nature. The women at times spoke as though they were reporting folklore, while at other times they spoke as though they themselves had experienced these night journeys—a characteristic of legend performance I have already remarked upon, and one which makes sense if we accept the hypothesis that both women were folk healers who continued an ancient tradition of consulting with spiritual beings for healing advice. Their tales were dream-like, mixing familiar elements with supernatural ones. To us, they may even suggest events that took place in an altered state of consciousness, and like many such experiences, they alternate in perspective between the self and a kind of detachment from the self. But the judges, working with a binary system of opposites in which illusion and reality were mutually exclusive concepts, didn't know what to make of these dream-like visions that seemed so real to the accused. They ended up assuming they *were* real. Sibillia was sentenced to prison at her first trial for having *believed in* and *told people* about the society of Diana, acts that were considered apostasy, not witchcraft. But at her second trial in 1390, she was sentenced to death for recidivism and for having *actually participated* in the games. Thus, the transition between attitudes of the *Canon* and later ones hinged on the understanding of legendary material as fact (Muraro Vaiani, 1976:137-142)—a critical transition which had ominous consequences in the development of the witchcraft persecutions.

One of the best-known of the Italian witch trials took place two centuries after Sibillia and Pierina were tried and executed. In 1540, Bellezza Orsini of Colle Vecchio (Perugia), a widely respected folk healer who cured using herb-infused oils, was accused of poisoning. At first she swore her innocence, but under torture, she confessed to being part of a secret society of witches. The secret society she described was a hierarchical one in which the initiate-to-be apprenticed with a master *strega*. Initiation involved a formal renunciation of Church teachings, a renegation of baptism, and the invocation of the devil, who was called *Mauometto* ('Mohammed'), and appeared as a handsome man dressed in black. At the time of Bellezza's trial, the Islamic Ottoman empire was expanding its reach towards Europe. The use of the name 'Mohammed' for the devil reflects widespread popular fear and prejudice towards Muslims in16th century Europe. Sexual intercourse with the devil was part of the initiation. Afterwards, the assembled company would fly off, with the help of flying ointment, to the magic walnut tree of Benevento where they would dance with other devils. Initiates chose new, non-Christian names so they could be used when members got together again. Orsini described witches as organized into teams according to their place of origin. Each team was led by a captain with 20-30 students under her. A 'witch queen,' called Befania, ruled over all the teams. Each November 1, there was a 'reconciliation,' or gathering of witches, during which a new witch queen would be elected. According to Orsini, the members of the witch society were sworn to help one another, and to help less fortunate teams by sharing baby-meatballs and other ingredients. By then, witch gatherings included cannibalistic feasting, and the dead were no longer brought back to life.

It is evident that drastic changes had taken place in the Diana/Herodias legend complex between 1390 and 1540. Gone are the earlier legends of all-female societies of revelers whose presence brought good luck to the homes they visited, and where all that was consumed was magically restored—a kind of compensatory fantasy for the poor not unlike other contemporary portrayals of utopias of plenty, such as *Cuccagna* and *Bengodi* (Del Giudice, 2001). By 1540, Herodias and Diana are no longer players in the dangerous 'game.' Instead, it has acquired menacing, diabolical elements introduced by ecclesiastical revisions which interpreted all deviations from Christian doctrine as evidence of a world-wide diabolical conspiracy whose agents were witches. The witch gathering is now presided over by the devil, whose name is identical to that of the Islamic prophet Mohammed—evidence of the demonization of Islam in the popular imagination by the 16th century. Besides the devils' followers, the women present include the witch-queen Befania, a corruption of the word *epifania* ('epiphany'), and witches who initiate their charges into the diabolical society. According to Cattabiani, there may well be a connection between Befana, the Italian Christmas witch, and earlier legends of Herodias. This link is preserved in the names for the Befana in the region of the Italian Alps near Belluno, where to this day she is known as 'Redodesa,' 'Redosa,' or 'Redosola'—possible corruptions of 'Erodiade' (cf. Romanian 'Irodeasa') (Cattabiani, 1994:13). The witches gather at Benevento and fly around the magical walnut tree with the help of flying ointment; cannibalism and sexual intercourse with the devil are integral features of their assemblies. The witch society is a secret society; initiates are brought in by a teacher, and secret names are used to conceal everyday identity. November 1 is now a recognized time for witches' gatherings. Bellezza Orsini's confession reveals the growing diabolization of the legend of the night journeys, as well as the crystallization of certain folk motifs which continue to be central in contemporary revival Witchcraft: secrecy, the use of ritual names, initiation through a teacher, and the importance of October 31/ November 1 in the year cycle.

The transition in the content of the legends was accompanied by a change in the attitudes of the clerics and the elite: material previously understood as legendary was now being understood as *fact*. The tension between belief and disbelief that had kept the legends circulating was beginning to solidify into an acceptance of the witches' sabbat as an actual event. By 1525, the *Canon Episcopi* was being called into question: Paolo Grillando writes in *De sortilegiis eorumque poenas* that the Canon was mistaken about the illusory nature of the witches' sabbats, and that they were in fact real (Bonomo, 1959:110).

BETWEEN DREAM AND REALITY

But what if the judges were right? If the games of Diana/ Herodias were in fact experiences of the imagination, whether dreams or other alternate states of consciousness, why did many women confess to having attended them? Is it possible that the Society of Diana/ Herodias was a real secret society of women, and that Sibillia, Pierina and Bellezza were members? Could Herodias/ Erodiade/ Aradia have been the secret name of an actual leader of such a society, who then became legendary? If this were true, it would give us an intriguing source for Leland's legend of Aradia, as well as revolutionizing our understanding of the history of the witch trials and our sense of gender relations in Europe during the middle ages. Let us carefully examine the evidence both for and against this hypothesis.

First, it is important to remember that not all women confessed to the reality of their experiences; many maintained their dream-like nature to the bitter end. Other confessions, like Bellezza's, were produced under torture, and are thus unreliable as historical evidence. Victims would often confess to outrageous acts under torture because the narration of fantastic episodes brought respite from agony and bought the accused time. A strange compact often developed between judges and their victims which may have led some women to manufacture diabolical details they thought would satisfy their accusers, leading to the creation of fantastic trivia such as the baby meatballs in Bellezza's confession. Other details might have been drawn from the victim's knowledge of everyday reality; for example, the complex organization of the witch society described by Bellezza parallels the organization of other medieval social institutions such as trade guilds and religious fraternities and sororities, which were led by elected officials chosen at yearly assemblies. These guilds and fraternities functioned as mutual aid societies, much as Bellezza describes for the secret society of witches. Thus we need to be selective in interpreting the nature of these narratives.

Some details suggest that certain aspects of the Society of Diana/ Herodias may have been real. The women who reported on it constituted only a small minority of all those accused of witchcraft. Moreover, the narrators had an important element in common: they were folk healers and diviners. A key function of the night-time journeys was the obtaining of answers to divinatory questions and information on cures. This structure parallels that of similar belief-complexes about spirits, healers and night journeys from the circum-Mediterranean. In several of these examples, we know that folk healers indeed were members of a society that convened in the flesh to play music, dance ecstatically and conduct healing rites. In other cases, the societies reported by healers existed only in spirit, and included spiritual members, whether fairies, jinn, exotica or iele. These details, shared with other circum-Mediterranean healing traditions, suggest that the accused may indeed have been part of a secret society of folk healers—either actual, spiritual, or both.

... THE COMPLEX ORGANIZATION OF THE WITCH SOCIETY DESCRIBED BY BELLEZZA PARALLELS THE ORGANIZATION OF OTHER MEDIEVAL SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS SUCH AS TRADE GUILDS AND RELIGIOUS FRATERNITIES AND SORORITIES

At the same time, other legend elements have content that is clearly dream-like and fantastic: all wishes are granted; food magically regenerates; humans fly. These motifs point to the spiritual nature of at least some of the experiences. Additional elements suggest the creation of a legendary peasant utopia: there is food and drink aplenty for all assembled; humans and nature exist in harmony; death is followed by resurrection or rebirth; relationships, though hierarchical, are based on mutual trust and dignity; knowledge is available to all members; gratification is ubiquitous, and the Christian notion of earthly pleasures as sinful is completely absent. These descriptions suggest a kind of utopia, an 'imagined state' whose conditions inversely reflect those of its source (Del Giudice and Porter, 2001:4-5). Muraro Vaiani suggests that Diana/ Herodias was to her followers as Christ was to his, albeit in a parallel universe: the Lady did not judge or deny the Christian universe, but offered an alternative (Muraro Vaiani, 1976:153). Legends of the secret society may have constituted a kind of compensatory fantasy for women—one in which women had power and the ultimate authority rested with a benevolent supernatural female leader. Through legends and perhaps even dreams, they may have offered solace and compensation to women whose real-life experiences reflected the hardships of gender and class oppression in medieval Europe, much as narratives of earthly paradises such as Cuccagna and Bengodi, where rivers flowed with wine and mountains were made of cheese, were created by Italian peasants whose everyday lives were filled with hunger and privation (Del Giudice, 2001:12).

How can we better understand the nature of these narratives, which even after six centuries seem to take place in a world between dream and reality? I would suggest that it is not unreasonable to assume the existence in medieval Italy of legend complexes similar to those in other parts of the circum-Mediterranean, concerning fairies, spiritual journeys and healing. As we have already seen, aspects of these belief systems existed in parts of Europe and North Africa until the end of the 20th century. Henningsen's work confirms the existence of similar beliefs in Sicily during the 16th century, and Behringer documents their presence in the western Alps. If Sibillia, Pierina and Bellezza were indeed members of such a society, their stories begin to make a certain amount of sense.

This is especially true if we consider two additional tentative assumptions: the idea of

... LEGENDS OF CONTAMINATED HALLOWEEN CANDY PREDATED THE FINDING OF ACTUAL CONTAMINANTS IN TREATS BY AT LEAST TEN YEARS. INDIVIDUALS WHO PLACED NEEDLES, RAZOR BLADES AND OTHER DANGEROUS OBJECTS IN TREATS AS PRANKS ENGAGED IN A FORM OF OSTENSION.

ostension and that of the autonomous imagination. Ostension is D'gh and Vazonyi's term for the enactment of legends. For example, a Halloween haunted house may portray legends about ghosts, vampires and werewolves, or a Pagan ritual may dramatize the legend of Robin Hood. Ostension always derives from a pre-existing legend: the legend precedes the existence of its enactment. Thus, for instance, legends of contaminated Halloween candy predated the finding of actual contaminants in treats by at least ten years (D'gh and Vazsonyi, 1986/1995). Individuals who placed needles, razor blades and other dangerous objects in treats as pranks engaged in a form of ostension.

The theory of ostension explains how easily certain elements can pass from legend to ritualized action. Hypothetically, legends about spiritual journeys to dance with the fairies and receive healing can easily be transformed by creative individuals into healing rituals with food offerings to the fairies and ecstatic dancing to special music. What if some women, inspired by utopian legends of the Society of Diana/ Herodias, decided to try to replicate such a society in medieval Europe? Though we have no proof such a society ever existed, it is not inconceivable that a few inspired individuals might have decided to dramatize, once or repeatedly, the gatherings described in legends. The use of the term *giuoco* ('game') by Sibillia and Pierina suggests the playful, prankish character of ostension. A 'game' based on legends of Diana/ Herodias and the fairies would probably have been secret and limited to the friends and associates of the creative instigators, who might well have been folk healers. One or more women might even have played the role of Diana or Herodias, presiding over the gathering and giving advice. Feasting, drinking and dancing might have taken place, and the women may have exchanged advice on matters of healing and divination. The 'game' might even have had a healing intent, as was the case for many comparable circum-Mediterranean rituals, and may have involved trance-dancing. This is one possible explanation for the remarkably consistent reports of Sibillia and Pierina, tried within a few years of each other. The existence of ostension in connection to these legends could also mean that Grimassi's claim that Aradia was a real person may, in fact, not be entirely out of the question; a healer who was part of the society might have chosen to play the part of, or even take on the name of, Erodiade.

However, it is important to remember that even if a group decided to enact aspects of the legend of Diana/ Herodias, it would not have been a revival of pre-Christian paganism, but an attempt to act out certain ritual aspects described in the legends. Moreover, the more magical aspects from the trial reports—night flights on the backs of animals, ever-replenishing banquets, resurrection of dead livestock—could not have been achieved through ostension. We need to consider these as fantastical legend motifs, reports of experiences from trances or dreams, or both.

One way to explain these motifs is to consider the role of the autonomous imagination in blending cultural and personal material. This term, coined by anthropologist Michele Stephen, refers to a part of the human imagination that operates without our conscious control (Stephen, 1989:55-61). It emerges in dreams and in alternate states of consciousness such as vision trances and religious ecstasy. The visions it produces are vivid and detailed, appearing 'more real than reality' to experiencers. They seem to arise independently of any conscious volition on the part of the subject. The autonomous imagination is more creative and synthetic than ordinary thought processes, easily combining elements from the subject's personal life with cultural and religious material. Thus dreams and visions seem to speak directly to our most intimate concerns, but also bring religious and cultural symbols to bear upon them. Furthermore, the autonomous imagination processes time and memory differently from ordinary conscious thought. Past, present and future events may blend together; personal memories may combine with cultural material in unusual ways.

It is possible that some of the experiences of the Society of Diana/ Herodias described by the accused are attributable to the autonomous imagination of the experiencers. Please note that I am not claiming that the accusers invented the experiences; in fact, I am saying quite the opposite. To women such as Pierina and Sibillia, the experience of flying out to the games of Herodias may have seemed more real than ordinary, everyday reality if it took place in trance visions. While it is possible that vision trances may have played a part in a hypothetical, ostensive Society of Diana/ Herodias, it is also conceivable that women who were active narrators of these legends as well as folk healers might have experienced altered states of consciousness, either through the use of herbs or by using meditative techniques. This is consistent with the discoveries of Behringer, who studied the trial transcripts of Conrad Stoeckhlin, a 16th century horse herder from Oberstdorf, in the western Alps, who was executed for practicing witchcraft. Stoeckhlin, a folk healer, reported that an angel led him on a series of trance journeys and gave him advice on healing and divination (Behringer, 1998:17-21; 138). We also know that some contemporary Italian folk healers used such techniques well into the 20th century, and that they reported contacting spirits who helped them with their healing (Henningsen, 1993; De Martino, 1961, 1966; Selis, 1978; DiNola, 1993:41).

Of course, spiritual experiences (and their interpretations) vary widely according to culture and historical period. It is not unlikely that contemporary legend material about Diana, Herodias and the fairies may have made its way into the trance visions of medieval Italian folk healers through the mechanism of the autonomous imagination, giving rise to their reports of actually participating in the game of Herodias. The healers

were telling the truth; their experiences were real. Both Behringer, in his research on the visionary horse herder Stoeckhlin, and Stuart Clark, in his monumental study of early European demonology, propose early modern European folk culture did not always distinguish sharply between experiences that took place in dreams, ecstatic visions or trances and reality (Behringer, 1998:158-59; Clark, 1997:193-96). The dualistic conception in which 'dreamtime' was opposed to 'reality' was a product of medieval Church reforms that culminated in the formation of the myth of diabolical witchcraft. Here we must return to Muraro Vaiani's hypothesis that it was the judges who did not know how to understand the ecstatic experiences of the accused because they fell outside of their dualistic conception of the nature of reality. Therefore, they interpreted them as sorcery—the only mechanism they understood through which illusion could be made to seem real.

CONCLUSIONS

What can we conclude from this evidence about the legend of Aradia? The evidence I have examined and presented here suggests that the legend of Aradia has roots in archaic, pre-Christian materials concerning societies of healers who trafficked with spirits in order to cure. Healing may have involved trance-journeys as well as ecstatic dancing. These ancient materials combined with Classical legends of Diana and Hecate,

and during the middle ages became attached to the New Testament story of Herodias, the eternal dancer. By the 11th century, these elements had become part of a widespread legend complex in Europe that may have involved episodes of ostension, or the enactment of certain legend motifs, probably for the purposes of healing. As clerical and popular attitudes towards the nature of nighttime spiritual journeys changed, these legends merged with parallel folk materials about maleficent witches, and became the building blocks of the subversion myth of the diabolical sabbat, responsible for the death of tens of thousands of innocent women and men between 1300 and 1750.

What Leland collected from Maddalena may represent a 19th century version of this legend that incorporated later materials influenced by medieval diabolism: the presence of 'Lucifero,' the Christian devil; the practice of sorcery; the naked dances under the full moon. While there may have been instances of ostension regarding this legend, the evidence does not support the idea that Aradia was an early teacher of the Craft, although some women may have called themselves Erodiade during ostensive episodes. There is no evidence of a widespread revival of pre-Christian religion as a result of the proliferation of this legend. In fact, it is ironic that a compensatory legend that envisioned a society led by women, featuring relationships based on equality, access to knowledge for all, and the fulfillment of all earthly desires became twisted into the subversion myth of the diabolical sabbat, which was responsible for the murder of so many innocent women during the witch craze.

Legends and beliefs about healing, fairies and nighttime spiritual journeys may have continued to exist in pockets throughout Italy until the late 20th century. Because legends always change to reflect their social environment, they became Christianized, and incorporated references to saints. In some cases, saints may have replaced the earlier fairies. Some version of this legend complex may be at the core of both Leland's discovery of a 'witch cult' in Tuscany in the late 1800's, and Grimassi's claims that his

... EVEN IF A GROUP DECIDED TO ENACT ASPECTS OF THE LEGEND OF DIANA/HERODIAS, IT WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN A REVIVAL OF PRE-CHRISTIAN PAGANISM, BUT AN ATTEMPT TO ACT OUT CERTAIN RITUAL ASPECTS DESCRIBED IN THE LEGENDS.

family practiced a form of folk healing that involved spirits, dancing, and the goddess Diana (Grimassi, pers. communication 8/25/00). These were not, as Leland suggested, survivals of Etruscan religion, but elements of great antiquity reworked into systems that made sense for Italian peasants of the late 1800's and early 1900's. Some parts of these belief systems may even have survived the journey to America, forming the basis of *Stregheria*, or Italian American revival Witchcraft.

Folklore, of course, seldom dies; it transforms itself according to new paradigms and cultural discourses. So it is not surprising to read new versions of this legend emerging today. Grimassi's expansion of Leland's materials must be understood in exactly such a context—as the continuation of the legend begun so long ago. It is intriguing to note that while both Leland's and Grimassi's versions may appear to be strictly Neo-Pagan in content, both also contain very strong Christian influences. In the *Gospel of the Witches*, Diana sends her only daughter Aradia to earth to teach people to resist their oppressors just as in the New Testament, God sends his son Jesus to earth for much the same purpose. In *Hereditary Witchcraft*, Grimassi describes Aradia as having twelve disciples—six male-female couples—who help spread her teachings after her mysterious disappearance. Do these elements invalidate the legends? Quite the contrary, I would argue. They simply demonstrate how easily legend material absorbs motifs from the surrounding culture. These elaborated new versions show that the legend of Aradia is a living tradition that continues to evolve today, changing to adapt to the individual needs of the narrator as well as the larger changes in society.

REFERENCES CITED

Baldassare, Silvio. 1997. Review of R. Grimassi, *Ways of the Strega.* In *Songs of the Dayshift Foreman: Journal of a Rainforest Witch* 69: 12-16.

Behringer, Wolfgang. 1998. *Shaman of Oberstdorf.* Translated by H.C. Erik Midelfort. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press.

Bernstein, Frances. 2000. *Classical Living.* San Francisco: Harper.

Bonomo, Giuseppe. 1959. *Caccia alle streghe.* Palermo: Palumbo.

Caro Baroja, Julio. 1961. *The World of the Witches.* Translated by O.N.V. Glendinning.Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Cattabiani, Alfredo. 1994. *Lunario.* Milano: Arnoldo Mondadori.

Clark, Stuart. 1997. *Thinking with Demons: the Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe.* Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Clifton, Chas. 1998. 'The Significance of

Aradia.' In *Aradia, of the Gospel of the Witches,* by Charles G. Leland, translated by Mario Pazzaglini and Dina Pazzaglini, 59-80. Blaine, WA: Phoenix Publishing.

Crapanzano, Vincent. 1975. 'Saints, Jnun, and Dreams: an Essay in Moroccan Ethnopsychology.' *Psychiatry* 38:145-159.

D'gh, Linda and Andrew Vazsonyi. 1976. 'Legend and Belief.' In *Folklore Genres,* ed. by Dan Ben Amos, 93-124. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.

_____. 1995 [1986]. "Does the Word 'Dog' Bite? Ostensive Action: a Means of Legend Telling." In *Narratives in Society: a Performer-Centered Study of Narration,* 236-262. Helsinki: Finnish Academy of Sciences. (Reprinted from *Journal of Folklore Research,* Fall 1983)

Del Giudice, Luisa. 2001. 'Mountains of Cheese, Rivers of Wine: Paesi di Cuccagna and Other Gastronomic Utopias.' *In Imagined States: Nationalism, Utopia and Longing in Oral Cultures,* ed. Luisa Del Giudice and Gerald Porter, 11-63. Logan, UT: Utah State University Press.

_____ and Gerald Porter. 2001. 'Introduction.' In *Imagined States: Nationalism, Utopia and Longing in Oral Cultures,* ed. Luisa Del Giudice and Gerald Porter, 1-10. Logan, UT: Utah State University Press.

De Martino, Ernesto. 1987 [1966] *Sud e magia.* Milano: Feltrinelli.

_____. 1961. La terra del rimorso. Milano: Feltrinelli.

Di Nola, Alfonso. 1993. *Lo specchio e l'olio: le superstizioni italiane.* Bari: Laterza.

Dundes, Alan. 1971. 'On the Psychology of Legend.' In *American Folk Legend: a Symposium,* ed. by Wayland Hand, 21-36. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Gallini, Clara. 1988. *La ballerina variopinta.* Naples: Liguori.

Ginzburg, Carlo. 1989. *Storia notturna: una decifrazione del sabba.* Tornio: Einaudi.

_____. 1993.. 'Deciphering the Sabbath.' In: *European Witchcraft: Centers and Peripheries.* ed. by Gustav Hennigsen and Bengt Ankarloo, 121-137. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Grimassi, Raven. 1999. *Hereditary Witchcraft.* St. Paul, MN: Llewellyn Press.

_____. 1995. *Ways of the Strega.* St. Paul, MN: Llewellyn Press.

Henningsen, Gustav. 1993. ''The Ladies from Outside': An Archaic Pattern of the Witches' Sabbath.' *In European Witchcraft: Centers and Peripheries.* ed. by Gustav Henningsen and Bengt Ankarloo,191-215. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Kelly, Aidan. 1992. *The Gospel of Diana.* Privately published manuscript on disk.

Kilgman, Gail. 1981. *Calus: Symbolic Transformation in Romanian Ritual.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Leland, Charles G. 1899, 1990. *Aradia, or the Gospel of the Witches.* Blaine, WA: Phoenix Publishing [reprint of original edition].

Liori, Antonangelo. 1992. *Demoni, miti e riti magici della Sardegna.* Rome: Newton Compton.

Magliocco, Sabina. 1993. 'Eels, Bananas and Cucumbers: a Sexual Legend and Changing Women's Values in Rural Sardinia.' *Fabula* 34-1/2, 66-77.

Muraro Vaiani, Luisa. 1976. *La signora del gioco: episodi della caccia alle streghe.* Milano: Feltrinelli.

PitrË, Giuseppe. 1889. *Usi, costumi, credenze e pregiudizi del popolo siciliano.* Palermo: GiuffË.

Selis, Luisa. 1978. 'Prime ricerche sulla presenza delle streghe in Sardegna oggi.' In *L'erba delle donne: maghe, streghe, guaritrici.* Roma: Roberto Napoleone Editore, 137-147.

Stephen, Michele. 1989. 'Self, the Sacred Other and Autonomous Imagination.' *In The Religious Imagination in New Guinea.* ed. Michele Stephen and Gilbert Herdt, 41-64. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

Sabina Magliocco is Associate Professor of Anthropology at California State University - Northridge. She has done fieldwork in Sardinia (Italy) as well as among contemporary Pagans in the San Francisco Bay area, and is the author of a forthcoming book Neopagan Sacred Art and Altars: Making Things Whole *(University Press of Mississippi) and a number of articles. She is a Gardnerian initiate.*

Women as Initiators and Crafters of Human Growth in the 'Reclaiming' Witchcraft Tradition

by Jone Salomonsen

On May 1, 1999, I participated in a ritual workshop on women's spirituality at a Catholic retreat center in Connecticut. The nuns opened the gathering by inviting us into a circle. Then we honored the four directions by singing, "Air I am, Fire I am, Water, Earth and Spirit I am," and called the feminine face of God/ess with, "She changes everything She touches and everything She touches changes." Towards the end we danced a spiral dance and closed the circle while greeting each other with, "Merry meet, merry part, and merry meet again." When the ritual was over, the other women participants wondered where all these beautiful sayings and ritual acts came from, and the nuns answered, "Oh, they have been around forever, they are old Catholic traditions."

I am afraid they are not; they have been borrowed from a feminist version of neopagan Witchcraft. Besides displaying how Catholics still appropriate the world and how inter-religious cross-fertilizing takes place, this act of ritual 'borrowing and forgetting' is an example of how Witchcraft adds to the gendered field of religion (a term used by feminist religionists to refer to religion as a descriptive social field, consisting of elements such as history, philosophy, concepts of nature, of cosmos, of sexual difference, etc, all of which are individually and collectively profoundly gendered) and to feminist ritualizing.

The particular version of Witchcraft that I will be speaking of in this paper was established in San Francisco in 1979 by Starhawk and friends, and came to be known as the 'Reclaiming' tradition. But as with the nuns, Reclaiming was not created out of the blue. It is part and parcel of contemporary Wicca/Witchcraft—a new religious movement crafted in postwar Britain in the 1940s and 50s. The creation of Witchcraft was, at that time, motivated by a desire to return to spiritual and aesthetic practices that could conjure up the 'good old days' of humankind (Hutton 2000: 360). This nostalgic return was amply nourished by romantic notions of the feminine divine and the wisdom of ancient paganism, as well as by the occult philosophy and ritual magic of the European brotherhoods, such as the Freemasons and Rosicrucians. As is the case in all occult traditions, the quest for knowledge and wisdom was made synonymous with extensive ritualization and, ultimately, with participation in secret, stratified initiations.

When this spirituality was finally introduced to the public in 1954, the father of modern Witchcraft, Gerald Gardner, offered the adept three degrees of initiation. After having obtained the third one, the quester was ordained a High Priestess or High Priest of the Witches' Craft and entitled to start a new Witches' coven. A Witches' coven is an autonomous religious assembly, ideally consisting of twelve or thirteen members under the leadership of a high priestess and her consort, the high priest. All serious seekers of Witchcraft may obtain a first degree initiation and become a priestess or priest. Therefore,

Neopagan Witchcraft prides itself on having abolished the schism between priesthood and the laity; all participants are considered clergy, with different skills and duties.

Although Gardner and his friends claimed direct historical lineage to a presumably peaceful and pre-Christian 'Old Religion' and presented Witchcraft as an esoteric, initiatory religion with a magical system kindred to the Mysteries of Eleusis and Isis, it is obvious that neopagan Witchcraft is a contemporary construction, inspired, among other things, by the rise of comparative religion and cultural anthropology in the 19th century. Extensive reading and misreading of scholars belonging to the 'myth and ritual' school, in particular Robertson Smith and James George Frazer, gave ideas to the outline of Witches' rituals in general and to the initiation rituals in particular. The famous notion that a universal 'dying and rising god' theme was underlying all rituals worldwide was, for example, taken to heart and made manifest in the ritual system of Witchcraft.

In the early 1960, Gardnerian Wicca immigrated to the US and was soon to take a radical new turn. It was adopted by feminist women who were seeking a female expression of spirituality that could represent an alternative to Christianity and Judaism, although neopagan Witchcraft also needed reform to fit with radical feminist perspectives, invented as it was in the androcentric lineage of European secret societies. This process of transformation and reinterpretation started with Z. Budapest and Dianic Witchcraft in the early 1970s and accelerated with the birth of the Reclaiming Witchcraft tradition in 1979.

Many Reclaiming people will say they are Witches in order to counterbalance what they see as a deep denial of the immanentist nature of reality in western culture, that is, that the universe is alive and interconnected at all levels; that the elemental power giving birth and life is female and sacred; that humans are a mode of the divine and that infants are 'twice born'—of divinity first, of humanity second. Physical birth is not the point of no return in which Divinity/Goddess is revealed to be either present or absent in regard to human nature. Neither are initiations nor baptism seen as authoritative, mediating acts in which 'the missing part' is finally invoked into place. By virtue of being ritual acts, they both symbolize—for example, commitment, faith, growth, conversion and covenanting—and make such experiences happen. But they do not represent miraculous events altering human nature, infusing human beings with a divine grace that was previously absent. They merely enlarge, sanctify and rechannel what already is. Yet the initiation ritual is an option for spiritual rebirth and becoming once again, and also for finally becoming an adult, that is, responsible and at home in the universe.

In Reclaiming's reinterpretation of Gardnerian Witchcraft we may see two parallel moves: one toward politicizing ritual action and a joint, spiritual horizon, another towards a quest for empowerment of unique subjects. On one hand, feminist and anarchist politics are incorporated into the social visions and magical practices of Witchcraft. They offer classes and public rituals to large audiences, and a stated goal when ritualizing is to empower and sanctify people and to revitalize their engagement in and for the world. On the other hand, the priestesshood of Reclaiming is continuously reworking notions of personal and spiritual grown. And, in regard to ritually healing and revitalizing the subject's spiritual growth, the initiation-to-Witch ritual has been attributed with the greatest of options.

A SUBSTANTIAL PIECE OF RECLAIMING'S INITIATION RITE IS ... INHERITED FROM THE MORE CEREMONIAL WITCHCRAFT TRADITIONS AND FROM PRIVILEGED MEN'S SECRET SOCIETIES AT THE TURN OF THE 20TH CENTURY. THESE TRADITIONS HAVE ALL MADE THE 'DYING-AND-RISING-GOD' THEME CENTRAL TO THE RITE ...

A substantial piece of Reclaiming's initiation rite is, however, inherited from the more ceremonial Witchcraft traditions and from privileged men's secret societies at the turn of the 20th century. These traditions have all made the 'dying-and-rising-god' theme central to the rite and ordained ritual passages through which the apprentice moves, passages that are believed to be similar to those of the imagined god. First, the apprentice dies a symbolic death. Then she enters the kingdom of death or, better, a magical circle where the ordinary notions of day and night, life and death no longer pertain. Upon entrance to this extraordinary liminal place, she is bound and blindfolded like an unborn fetus, and escorted by her chosen sponsors. When finally accepted into the circle of the Wise Ones, she also enters a new kinship structure. It is not based on biological bloodlines, but on spiritual affinity. It extends beyond life and death, including the elemental forces, the apprentice, her initiators and the Mighty Dead within the same family group. Inside the magical circle and beyond the boundaries of ordinary time and space, the apprentice not only gains immortality. She is also taught the greatest of mysteries, formulated thus in the Charge of the Goddess:

> And you who seek to know me, know that your seeking and yearning will avail you not unless you know the mystery: for if that which you seek you find not within yourself, you will never find it without. For behold, I have been with you from the beginning of time, and I am that which is attained at the end of desire.

This ritualized scenario, which not only resembles themes taken from the Greek mysteries but also those of the baptismal rites of the 1st and 2nd century Christians, has to a certain extent been reformed by Reclaiming women. The inner secret part of the ritual, in which the apprentice is taken to the thresholds and offered rebirth, is pretty much the same in all Craft traditions. But the Reclaiming women have invented an extensive separation rite that emphasizes liminality even more. It is comprised of time-consuming personal challenges, a meeting with the four

IN RECLAIMING'S REINTERPRETATION OF GARDNERIAN WITCHCRAFT WE MAY SEE TWO PARALLEL MOVES: ONE TOWARD POLITICIZING RITUAL ACTION AND A JOINT, SPIRITUAL HORIZON, ANOTHER TOWARDS A QUEST FOR EMPOWERMENT OF UNIQUE SUBJECTS.

elements and a symbolic burial ceremony—all intended to accelerate a psychological process taken to be intrinsic to the initiation rite as such and which, to a certain extent, may be described by two key psychoanalytic notions: displacement and transference.

So, whereas a more traditional Gardnerian initiation rite will probably last for three or four hours and begin with meditation and a ritual bath just before entering the magical, secret circle, the initiation ritual in Reclaiming is more likely to last for 12-15 hours and will begin, not with meditation, but with a year-long process in which therapeutic challenges are expected to be met. Furthermore, a person initiated to Gardnerian Witchcraft is bestowed with certain social and ritual privileges, such as being ordained a priestess or a priest and thus entitled to start a new coven. In Reclaiming, however, initiation does not lead to any sort of entitlement or new formal positions. For any Reclaiming Witch can start a new coven whenever she wants to, and anybody can call herself a priestess and Witch—initiated or not. Therefore, while Gardnerian initiation seems to conform more to a sociological approach, emphasizing the passage from one social group to another, the Reclaiming rite is more focused on the person undergoing ritual initiation, so that she may actually experience a real transformation through the process. Consequently, Reclaiming initiation rites are accommodated to the individual seekers. They are more akin to psychotherapy and the yearning for personal growth through bonding, transference and displacement than to the building of social circles within circles and the maintenance of power and knowledge by a chosen few (cf. Bell 1997: 56ff, quoting Crapanzano).

These changes and additions, which are exclusive to the Reclaiming traditions (or perhaps were exclusive, as I don't know if this is any longer so), have resulted in a somewhat different focus and, therefore, also in a somewhat different meaning to the entire initiation process. The values of secrecy, esoteric knowledge and exclusive membership, often associated with men's secret societies, are moderated, whereas initiation as a path to personal growth is emphasized. A stated goal is to develop power-from-within and to become more competent, both as a priestess and as a person inerrconnected with all of the world coping with everyday life. The essence of initiation in any Craft tradition is, in fact, explained as an intentional act to give up one's will in order to surrender to Goddess and experience 'perfect love and perfect trust'.

As may be assumed, such statements are, at first glance, annoying to feminist women. For how may submissive acts, such as giving up one's will, create perfect love and spiritual growth instead of a hierarchical set-up between adepts and initiators? By having to ask for initiation and for personal challenges, an adept obviously puts somebody in the temporary position of authority, as Mother or Father. As a result she may regress back into childish behavior. To invite challenges is to invite another to see and name her 'shadow' sides. From this 'seeing' the initiator extracts a challenge that, on one side, is intended to promote self-illumination by stating something essential about the apprentice today and, on the other hand, give her a direction for change. To refuse the challenge is to pretend that she did not ask for it of her own free will in the first place, although this pretension is most likely to manifest. If so, the ritual proceedings will be significantly prolonged.

Also, systematic efforts to 'craft' the interior person by psycho-spiritual tools may easily resemble religious conversion associated with sect membership. It reenacts an idealized imitation of the parent-child relation, a relation in which the apprentice ultimately seeks to merge with the perfect love object: the Goddess, or her representatives.

But the Reclaiming initiation is also radically different from conversion to a sect, first of all in terms of pedagogy. In initiations, the authority structure is a conscious and time-limited one, set up for the purpose of personal refinement to help the individual develop inner authority, love and trust. In sectarian conversion, this may or may not be the case, but an often-heard version is that the convert is set in a continuous relationship with an omnipotent, male authority figure (Ullman 1989). The goal of Witches' initiation is not to stay within a human parent-child relation, but exactly the opposite: to grow out of it forever by being 'reborn' as a new and wiser being, as a child of the Goddess.

Reclaiming Witches are also careful not to push anybody into the process of initiation too early. A main theological platform seems to be that people need acceptance, affirmation and sanctification of 'what is' before they dare encounter their own shadows, at the very least in order to open up for the crafting work of the spirit and change into 'what is not yet'. This thesis structures the whole entering process into Reclaiming feminist Witchcraft, including the outline and progress of ritualization. When a person approaches the Craft for the first time, she is invited to affirm and celebrate a strong sense of self. In particular, women are mirrored over and over again in all the powerful traits projected onto the Goddess. Not until strong enough in their ego sense of self are they considered ready to submit to the path of initiation.

If we bracket the growth process instigated in an initiation process, Witches seem to have untwisted the burdensome Protestant succession of 'justification' and 'sanctification' in their own ritual cycles: the self undone by justification is not thereafter remade and sanctified according to the law of love, but the other way around. What is at stake theologically in the Witches' ritual system can thus be compared to Serene Jones' recent observations. She argues that if people who have experienced nothing but fragmentation and disintegration, which is often women's felt situation, are met with a request for repentance and a call to change, their undone self will just continue to fall apart. Instead

of recapitulating the abuses and losses of lived life, the history should be turned around: first a centering of the subject, then a call to grow and change; for only in sanctification, not in justification, is agency implied in growth, regeneration, change and new becoming (Jones 2000).

Ritualizing is the Witches' primary social strategy for this centering and new becoming, and thus is considered the main avenue to new insight and renewed agency. This is also the reason why the rite of initiation is believed to denote more than a formal passage from one social group to another. It is seen as instrumental in itself, in a magical sense, for the development of inner authority and integrity, primarily through its capacity to process and realities of human separation, isolation and hurt, and for transforming emotional separation into temporary unity. Growth is believed to take place exactly within these sublimating, dialectical movements.

In order to be initiated, the person must herself take an active step and ask for it. One is typically not offered initiation or given the suggestion by anybody that she is worthy of it. The wish to be initiated may be put forth to people already initiated after the apprentice has completed three basic introductory classes (which equals one week of Witchcamp, a summer intensive program in Reclaiming), and after having been in the Craft for 'one year and a day'. Since the whole concept of initiation is alien to most modern western people, they usually need time just to become adjusted to the idea. Having asked, she might get a yes; she might get a no. The uncertainty of the answer is explained with reference to karma. For to be an initiator is to build a 'karmic bond' with the one being initiated, a bond of mutual influence and destiny in this life and the lives to come.

The challenges given are mostly aimed at people's addictions. A man who was drinking beer daily, but was not considered an alcoholic, was challenged to quit drinking completely for a year and a day. An overweight woman was challenged to exercise three times a week for an hour. A woman with little knowledge of, and a strong prejudice against, non-pagan religions was challenged to study another religious tradition seriously. A challenge should not be moralistic, but is meant to come from the Goddess via the initiator. If the initiator does not receive a challenge to pass on, she can tell the apprentice that the Goddess will challenge her directly, and that she will know when that happens. A challenge is intended to be met; 'trying my best' is not sufficient. The beer drinker did not accept his challenge but was angry and wanted to negotiate it. This is rarely possible, and he was not initiated. Usually it takes a year before the initiators agree that the challenges are completed. Only then can the initiation process be set with the esoteric initiation ritual.

If the goals of initiation are so idealistic, why is the phenomenon such a delicate theme in Reclaiming? Dedication, obedience and the supposed swearing of oaths are regarded as attitudes in conflict with anarchist politics. Feminism is a modernist ideology, basically rejecting any kind of hierarchical truth-holding and the making of esoteric, secret knowledge. Modernist arguments against initiation hold that all knowledge is exoteric and that everybody already has access to power, to a power-from-within. Furthermore, all available knowledge is potentially inside every person, and an exterior human teacher is really not necessary for an apprentice to learn. All women are already priestesses and initiates to the Goddess by virtue of being women.

RECLAIMING INITIATION RITES ARE ... MORE AKIN TO PSYCHOTHERAPY AND THE YEARNING FOR PERSONAL GROWTH ... THAN TO THE BUILDING OF SOCIAL CIRCLES WITHIN CIRCLES AND THE MAINTENANCE OF POWER AND KNOWLEDGE BY A CHOSEN FEW.

Arguments explicitly favoring initiation state that there is hidden wisdom in what is old, in what people have done before, and they maintain the value of esoteric knowledge, which is only accessible to initiates. This kind of knowledge is, by the non-initiates, often believed to be instrumental (like mathematical formulas), for example, knowledge about advanced forms of magic to attain power, knowledge about the mystical invocations to call spiritual beings, and knowledge about the true naming of deities. Whatever this knowledge in fact might turn out to be, it is believed to be handed down secretly from 'the ancients' through the esoteric traditions.

Yet, most Reclaiming Witches will soon find that initiation really is the next 'class' they need to take. They will also be confirmed in this viewpoint by those who have already been initiated, and told that if they really want to develop spiritually and personally, they should ask for initiation. None of the initiated Witches I interviewed had ever regretted their choice; nor were they disappointed with the long initiation process or the final ritual. On the contrary, they emphasized that initiation was the most powerful, special event of their life.

But what exactly did the initiation offer? Did people perform an act of piety, dedicating themselves to the Goddess (like the God, who had to embrace the Goddess in order to be reborn), or did they enter a sister-brotherhood of magicians, obtaining secret, but instrumental, magical formulas?

Since initiation is steeped in secrecy, people do not know exactly what they apply to join. This situation creates a phantasmic object – an 'it' that is expected to mysteriously bring forth spiritual and personal fulfillment. In order to gain 'it' the apprentice may be said to desire a helper who holds the authority to incorporate her into an estimated space or continuum, which in itself is believed to hold truth, power and love. The initiation ritual may thus be said to process a basic human existential structured as an emotional and psychological triad in which person X desires the precious object (a), but believes that the person Y somehow holds the key to it. X therefore desires Y to get (a). However, in order to connect with (a), X creates a displacement in which Y becomes the object of desire instead, so that Y becomes (a) for X. Thus, Y changes position from a person holding the key to a desired object to becoming a final desirable object herself. In the context of initiation, the objects of desire (a) can be plural, but still interrelated in terms of their spatiality.

... ARGUMENTS AGAINST INITIATION HOLD THAT ALL KNOWLEDGE IS EXOTERIC AND THAT EVERYBODY ALREADY HAS ACCESS TO POWER, TO A POWER-FROM-WITHIN. ... ALL WOMEN ARE ALREADY PRIESTESSES AND INITIATES TO THE GODDESS BY VIRTUE OF BEING WOMEN.

Thus the primary desire is to be part of an unknown circle, a spatial continuum attributed with high expectations regarding its content, which eventually will be disclosed.

In this context, initiation can be understood as entering a 'room' that cannot be known otherwise. This implies that the room is of such a character, or is made into such a character, that it is not intelligible in language alone. The quester must embody it and be embodied by it. Until then, it will continue to represent the unknown but highly desirable 'it'. Furthermore, the door to this room can only be opened by someone (Y) who has already 'been' there, who is believed to already have 'it' (a). If these observations about displacement and transference are valid to all human object desire (cf. Lacan 1982) and thus also for what may be called 'initiatory desire'. we may expect the helper (Y) to slowly be projected as identical with the desirable object (a), believed to embody the expectations of the unknown circle in her persona, so that Y becomes (a) for X.

Yet, in initiation rites, transference is temporary: when the ritual is complete, the candidate is expected to have learned that Y has nothing that she didn't already have herself. Y is not (a); Goddess is. And Goddess is already inside X, as well as in Y. The ritual verifies for X that (a) is in fact desirable, but not as a property of Y, and with a different content than expected. Thus the initiation process resembles a setting for personal growth in which the basic human object desire is challenged to evolve and be transformed to a more mature level. A mature X can let go of objectifications and instead relate to Y as an equal subject, a unique creation/manifestation of Goddess and nothing else. Thus, the initiation process really brings to light that the emotional structure X-Y-(a) is in fact immature; it belongs to and describes the eternal child, the non-initiated (cf. Salomonsen 2001 for a fuller description and analysis).

The pedagogy underlying initiation favors embodied, emotional knowledge and the category of experience as primary in the learning process. This scheme is also found in classical ideas for child rearing. Children understand acts before they understand words. They express themselves through body language before they speak. They have a bodily experience of the world before they learn to name and interpret it. A pedagogical tradition derived from this observation must necessarily assume that the most transformative tool to change a human being is the breaking down of words and external, adult identities until she is like an innocent, trusting, speechless and naked newborn, who thereafter is 'forced' to learn a new interpretation of life the way small children do: through bodily experiences, symbolic language, emotional turmoil, mimetic games, intuitive communication and performative arts—rather than through intellectual analysis or the appropriation of dogmatic beliefs.

By reclaiming and reforming a traditional rite of initiation and incorporating it into an otherwise elaborate expression of a newly invented female/feminist symbolic order, Reclaiming Witches have contributed a new notion of women as initiators and crafters of human growth. Resistance against secretive ritual acts and dislikes of hierarchical structures separating the learned from the ignorant are normally (and for good reasons) very strong among feminist theologians and religionists. But blind resistance also risks throwing out the gold with the garbage—the gold in this case being a certain form of pedagogy, namely the mystery rite. The mark of a mystery rite is to convey knowledge and insight through bodily feeling, thinking and acting that otherwise cannot be known, and to actively stage a process of psychological displacement and transference in order to induce personal and spiritual growth in the candidate.

This esoteric method has been as controversial in the field of religion as Freudian analysis has been in the field of psychotherapy. However, just as feminists have appropriated psychoanalysis and reformed its theory and practice to suit their own liberation schedule, time is perhaps ripe for twisting methodological knowledge about the mystery rite from the hands of western exoteric societies and other androcentric brother/sisterhoods, and using it in the service of feminist theological reflection, women's spiritual growth and maturity, and deepened experiences of autonomy and interconnectedness (cf. Conn 1993: 254). Reclaiming's merit is to have managed to develop a form to the mystery rite that is both traditional and accommodated to individual needs, and one that unanimously has been experienced as deeply meaningful by those who have decided to enter this time-consuming and challenging quest.

WORKS CITED:

Bell, Catherine (1997) *Ritual. Perspectives and Dimensions.* New York: Oxford University Press

Conn, Joann Wolski (1993) "Toward Spiritual Maturity". In *Freeing Theology. The Essentials of Theology in Feminist Perspective* (ed.) Catherine Mowry LaCugna. San Francisco: Harper

Hutton, Ronald (2000) *The Triumph of the Moon. A History of Modern Pagan Witchcraft.* Oxford University Press

Jones, Serene (2000) *Feminist Theory and Christian Theology: Cartographics of Grace.* Minneapolis: Fortress Press

Lacan, Jacques (1982) "God and Jouissance". In *Feminine Sexuality: Jacques Lacan and the Freudienne* (eds.) J. Mitchell and J. Rose. London: Macmillan

Salomonsen, Jone (2001) *Enchanted Feminism. Ritual, Gender and Divinity among the Reclaiming Witches of San Francisco.* London and New York: Routledge

Ullman, Chana (1989) *The Transformed Self: The Psychology of Religious Conversion.* New York: Plenum Press

BOOK REVIEWS

Claiming Sacred Ground:
Pilgrims and Politics
at Glastonbury and Sedona
by Adrian J. Ivakhiv
Bloomington: Indian University Press, 200.
0 23 3389 9.
xx1 + 326.

Reviewed by Graham Harvey
King Alfred's College, Winchester, UK.

Over a decade ago Yi Fu Tuan argued for the vital importance of considering what he called 'topophilia' in relation to many pressing issues. Not only geographers and scholars of religion, but policy makers, politicians, economists and many others should be interested in the various ways in which identities are entangled with places. Adrian Ivakhiv has not only written a fascinating book about Glastonbury and Sedona, but contributes (cogently, powerfully and importantly) to debates about pilgrimage, politics, modernity, post-modernity, globalisation, consumerism, materialism, spirituality, diversity, particularism, sectarianism, and much more. Although the book's dust-jacket says that this is a 'captivating study of people and politics at two New Age spiritual sites' it is only if you read this expansively that the phrase does justice to the book. It is precisely the fact that Glastonbury and Sedona are not only New Age spiritual sites, but also places where people professing or stigmatised with other labels live, that generates this work. And if 'people and politics' means anything, it is an almost all-embracing phrase. What is left? Well, admittedly I looked up 'catering' in the index and found nothing—but it is there among the patterns of sociality and the modes of employment relevant to Ivakhiv's debates.

Claiming Sacred Ground arises from detailed and admirable research in both the USA and the UK applying and advancing significant scholarly approaches. In other words, the author is himself entangled in the various contests and conversations that make these places and this era so exciting. This is not to say that he obviously takes sides, indeed the book is remarkably free of polemics for or against anyone. But this seems to arise out of genuine interest and respect for people and their diverse engagements rather than from the old style 'aloof and distant' pretence at objectivity. In other words, this is a book I shall be recommending to researcher students when considering methodologies. I too hope that conversation will become more central, indeed normative, within academia—but also celebrate the contestations that seem necessary as phases in these conversations towards mutual understanding. Clearly in understanding each other we may come to realise that our initial dislike had not taken into account matters that really divide us even more deeply. That is a risk we take.

If this book is excellent as a provocation of thought about scholarly approaches, it will also be of great interest to those fascinated by contemporary religions (spirituality if you will) and especially by New Age's ideology and lived-reality in Glastonbury and Sedona. For those primarily interested in (neo-)paganism there is also much to ponder here. Although the index cites 'neo-paganism' as occurring on only three pages, it also lists Druids, Dion Fortune, and many more. I and others have asserted (sometimes even argued!) that Paganism and New Age are not the same creature. But much that appears definitive of New Age is also true of Paganisms. This book requires further thinking and clarification of the terms both among insiders and as critical terms. Similarly, there are points where Ivakhiv's discussion of New Age requires consideration of the boundaries (or their absence) drawn around Christian identities. Reference to 'angels' is obvious, but social dynamics and discourses are far more interesting commonalities. The various ways in which New Agers, Pagans, Christians and others (shop keepers, tourist office, etc.) appropriate from indigeneity also suggests fluid boundaries between what might otherwise be polemicised as opposing or alternative identities. An excellent discussion here should generate further engagement.

THE VARIOUS WAYS IN WHICH NEW AGERS, PAGANS, CHRISTIANS AND OTHERS APPROPRIATE FROM INDIGENEITY ALSO SUGGESTS FLUID BOUNDARIES BETWEEN WHAT MIGHT OTHERWISE BE POLEMICISED AS OPPOSING OR ALTERNATIVE IDENTITIES.

To be honest, I had intended to write a brief review that simply read 'this is a very interesting and valuable book about lots of things to do with the world in which we live'. I didn't intend to delay your reading and consideration of the book itself. Instead I have, I hope, justified my enthusiasm for the book within several arenas.

Graham Harvey

Wiccan Warrior:
Walking a Spiritual Path
in a Sometimes Hostile World
by Kerr Cuhulain
Llewellyn, 2000
1 56718 252 6

Reviewed by Phoenix Pangaryk

With *Wiccan Warrior: Walking a Spiritual Path in a Sometimes Hostile World,* Kerr Cuhulain masterfully presents his vision of the Wiccan who dances to her own unique euphony, transcending the limitations emulated and imposed by some of the more 'fundamentalist' Wiccan traditions. A full-time law enforcement officer, father and active Wiccan Elder, Cuhulain challenges the Wiccan reader to revisit his or her initial attraction to Wicca, and to reexamine the ways in which that initial attraction still applies, or has stagnated. Cuhulain encourages his readers to assess the motives and effectiveness of their teachers, and to determine if they are

RABINOWITZ SHOWS HOW THE LATER GREEKS, SUCH AS PLATO, CAME TO DREAD THE MATERIAL WORLD, AND HOW HEKATE'S INFERNALIZATION WAS AN ATTEMPT BY THE ROMANS TO EJECT HER FROM THE OLYMPIAN RANKS BECAUSE OF HER ASSOCIATIONS WITH BIRTH, DEATH, DIRT, AND IMPURITY.

indeed following a path that is true to themselves. He then demystifies much of the myth that has resulted in the 'power-over' relationship of adept over postulant, and exposes the ever-present responsibility of the individual Wiccan to create his or her own destiny.

Cuhulain will no doubt be challenged by traditional and fundamentalist Wiccans for his candid views concerning dogma and the constant need of the Wiccan to pursue growth, and consequently, change. He warns of a potentially impending theological collision within the Wiccan community comparable to the rivalries exhibited in places like Ireland. In order to avoid this level of strife, Cuhulain expresses the need for the individual to strip away the rigid structures of Wiccan dogma found in various traditions today, and to embrace her own Wiccan path.

An effective example of this vision is Cuhulain's comparison of the rigidly structured, by-the-book type of ritual found within many Wiccan traditions to an initiation rite created by Cuhulain and his wife, Phoenix McFarland, specifically based on the values, experience and desires of a particular initiate. It is a ritual of genuine magick and discovery suited to the needs of the individual, rather than in accordance with a set standard of text, chants, and guarded restrictions that are fixed in many traditions. Cuhulain and McFarland made the effort as teachers to learn as much as possible about the initiate during his studies with them, and as a result, they were able to provide a unique and powerful gift in return.

Cuhulain's message that intent is more important than form speaks to any Wiccan interested or schooled in the martial arts. As a Wiccan martial artist for the past ten years currently exploring my own Warrior path, I could not agree with Cuhulain more in his approach to Wicca today. A pioneer on the subject, he is one of the first Wiccan writers to effectively integrate Eastern martial art philosophies with basic pagan principles. In their book *Moving with the Wind: Magick and Healing with the Martial Arts*, Brian and Esther Crowley make passing reference to the bridge between Eastern martial arts and philosophy with that of Wicca. Cuhulain actively embraces this bridge, making the connection relevant for any Wiccan prepared to explore her own take on the Craft in the process of becoming a Wiccan Warrior. Mastery of the martial arts, not unlike Wicca, requires the eventual letting go of the structures and forms provided as a solid base for growth during initial training. Cuhulain transcends the realm of basic structure in his quest for self-discovery, and creates his own magickal 'style within the style' suited to his independent needs, while making it clear that these same concepts can be adopted by any Wiccan.

Cuhulain's reminder that each of us has arrived into this world with all the tools we will ever need for magick encapsulates the very essence of *Wiccan Warrior*. The introduction of the Witch's Pyramid to this vision offers a tantalizing glimpse of things to come. Cuhulain's next book, *Full Contact Magick* is due out next spring, and will no doubt shed more light on themes introduced in this text. You can also bet that he will continue to challenge us with the will of a true Wiccan Warrior, because as he says, "the Wiccan Warrior uses the principle of planning and preparation to help focus intent and facilitate action … the Wiccan Warrior then actively directs energy with his will to cause change." And cause change is exactly what this Wiccan Warrior's work will do.

Phoenix Pangaryk

The Rotting Goddess: The Origin of the Witch in Classical Antiquity
by Jacob Rabinowitz
Automedia: New York

Reviewed by Doug Ezzy
University of Tasmania

THE ROTTING GODDESS is Rabinowitz's term for Hekate, a deity of classical antiquity. The book is divided into three sections. The first section traces Hekate's evolution from her first appearance as a sweet fertility goddess in Asian minor, through her decomposition into a demonic goddess among the late Greeks as "Queen of Heaven, Queen of Hell" and on into her ambivalent place in the Roman pantheon into the 1st century AD. The second section of the book examines images of the Witch in antiquity, tracing a similar degeneration from "inspirer of passion to victim of sexual appetite, from goddess to crone". The third section of the book is two appendices, one on the Witch of Endor, and the other examining Shamanism in the Roman Witch literature.

There are two main themes running through Rabinowitz's book, which is based on a graduate school thesis, apparently a doctoral thesis at Brown University. First, he makes an academic argument about the evolution of Hekate and the Witch in antiquity. The book presumes an extensive knowledge of the mythology of antiquity, and it is hard going if you are not already familiar with the intellectual terrain. The academic argument is most easily summarised with a quote from page 115 where he concludes: "The actual practice of witchcraft—that is, private magical activity centred on Hekate as a source of power and not just any casual practice of magic, herbalising or midwifery—is perhaps the result and not the basis of the Witch who is at first a mythological figure." There are further complexities in his argument about the evolution of Hekate, her conflation with Juno, and the significance of this for images of Hekate that I will not detail here.

Ken Butler, in his review of the same book, comments that Rabinowitz has collected virtually every reference to a

"witch" that occurs in the Roman literature. Rabinowitz has clearly done his research, and the book, from this point of view, is a valuable source. For example, he quotes extensively from *Papyri Graecae Magicae,* a collection of magical spells and formulas, hymns and rituals from Greco-Roman Egypt, often with his own translations. Butler was not entirely convinced by Rabinowitz's argument about the evolution of Hekate and the Witch, and neither was I, although I am not a classicist, and not really equipped to evaluate his argument.

However, for me there was a second theme in Rabinowitz's book that lies under, or beyond, the academic argument. This is perhaps best illustrated by the final paragraph of the book (p. 122): "The development of the dark goddess is not merely a degeneration and demonization of an originally benign being, but the (albeit somewhat onesided) unfolding of the implications and depth of one of her basic aspects. Those who would learn the Craft of the Wise must embrace not only the nymphlike generation-spirit of Asia Minor, but exult in the corruption of the Rotting Goddess of Rome, and pass the initiatory night at her side, sharing her shroud."

The lessons of death, decay, and the earthy world of dirt and sex are ones that our culture still recoils from. Rabinowitz shows how the later Greeks, such as Plato, came to dread the material world, and how Hekate's infernalization was an attempt by the Romans to eject her from the Olympian ranks because of her associations with birth, death, dirt, and impurity. Rabinowitz reminds us again that the body, sex, and death, are not prisons of a rotting soul, but rather, elemental to life.

The Rotting Goddess came to me at a time I was grappling with images, experiences, and emotions associated with death, decay, and dying. Its message rang true for me, and I'm glad I read it. It is not an easy book. This is both because it presumes a considerable understanding of classical mythology, and because it challenges us to confront a side of ourselves that we tend, still, to avoid. It is also a frustratingly short book, with many of its themes only barely developed and hardly explained. Nonetheless, I found it worthwhile and would recommend it to others, with the proviso that it is a demanding and frustrating text, both academically, and emotionally.

Doug Ezzy

The Twelve Wild Swans: Rituals, Exercises & Magical Training in the Reclaiming Tradition
by Starhawk and Hilary Valentine
HarperSanFrancisco, 2000
326 pages, $24 cloth

Reviewed by Chas S. Clifton
University of Southern Colorado

Twenty years after the success of *The Spiral Dance,* the Wiccan teacher Starhawk, with the collaboration of Hilary Valentine, has returned to the self-help genre with *The Twelve Wild Swans,* which brings together in book form what the authors and others have taught in numerous training sessions, or 'Witch Camps'. As Robert Bly did with Iron John, this book is organized around a folktale, one in which a princess endures many hardships in order to free her twelve brothers from an enchantment which has turned them into swans. Rather than seeing the story as encoding patriarchal domination, in which the princess, Rose, serves her brothers, the authors reinterpret its symbolism to gain both a feminist message and a template for magical self-realization.

[STARHAWK'S] FOUNDATION MYTH IS CHEERFULLY AHISTORICAL, STILL RETAILING MARGARET MURRAY'S CLAIM THAT VICTIMS OF THE EARLY MODERN WITCH TRIALS WERE PERSECUTED PAGANS AND GODDESS WORSHIPPERS

Thus, "Leaving the Castle" introduces discussion and exercises about moving from mundane in sacred space: self-purification through visualization exercises, invoking the four element powers, and casting a circle. "Wandering in the Wilderness" includes self-blessing and self-initiation, and developing what anthropologist Tanya Luhrmann called the "interpretive drift" toward the magical world-view and into viewing one's life as a spiritual quest. Likewise, the chapter entitled "The Wicked Vow" involves overcoming "shadow beliefs" about gender roles, self-importance, and the like—in Jungian terms, confronting the Shadow.

"Carried Away," based on the tale's telling of how the swan-brothers carried their sister over the sea in a basket, is interpreted shamanically and deals with trance work and creating ritual. Next comes "The Challenge," which reinterprets the princess's weaving of twelve shirts from nettles in total silence, and further chapters dealing with her marriage, a false accusation of infanticide, and her eventual rescue of her brothers.

Compared to *The Spiral Dance,* this work is denser, more nuanced, contains far more experiential material, and has more of a sense of humor. It also departs from the traditional Witchcraft teachings on the neutrality of magic as spiritual technology, summarized in the saying, "A Witch who cannot curse, cannot bless." Starhawk and Valentine optimistically assume that their course of study will inevitably produce not just a more centered, self-realized person, but one who shares their political views on oppression by race, class, or gender; on nuclear power, or on the World Trade Organization. In addition, its foundation myth is cheerfully ahistorical, still retailing Margaret Murray's claim that victims of the Early Modern witch trials were persecuted Pagans and Goddess worshippers, and Marija Gimbutas' claims about a universal, peaceful Goddess-worshipping culture in the distance past. (However, the claim that "The red, the white and the black are the colors of the Goddess," should be attributed to Robert Graves rather than Gimbutas.)

Chas S. Clifton

The following articles and book reviews are reprinted from "Issue #0", our Premier Edition. They appeared on the *The Virtual Pomegranate* website in the Autumn of 1995, a year in advance of our first print edition.

Traditionalism, Eclecticism, and Ecumenism

by Margarian Bridger

Modern Wicca is composed of many different traditions, each with its own distinctive way of doing things, and it's good that this is so. With so many different variants of Craft available, almost any Witch should be able to find, somewhere, one suited to her or his own outlook. It would be a sad thing if the practice of the Craft were so uniform that one must conform, or else be solitary. The trouble is, the different traditions tend to be not just different ways of doing our religion, but the basis of political factions and tribal rivalries. In the larger scene, Wicca is a religious ghetto, and historically bickering and bloodletting is never so intense as in the intimate pressure-cooker of a ghetto.

When there is only a handful of Witches in a given city or area, we usually have to shrug aside differences and work together, but as soon as a community gets big enough, it tends to spring apart into bickering factions. More often than not, the factions begin with personal enmities, but soon it turns into 'us' versus 'them', the original reasons for fighting are forgotten, and the battle lines harden. Orthodox wisdom says that the best way to unite bickering internal factions is to present them with a common danger; but I question whether this is a good idea, since it might expose us to other, very real, dangers. Let us not wish upon ourselves any more anti-Witch pogroms, just to help us sort out our internal politics. Besides, this doesn't always work; there are cases on record of groups of Witches going to court against each other, inviting in the media and the Religious Right to trample both parties in the process.

In almost every religion there is a trend towards fundamentalism. Those who proudly label themselves 'fundamentalists' insist that their approach has nothing to do with intolerance; it's simply about getting back to the truly important things of the faith, the things that have been almost forgotten. And yet, to most Witches as well as to the freethinkers in other religions, 'fundamentalist' is among the nastiest of epithets. That's because, whatever its commendable-sounding motives might be, fundamentalism in practice turns out to be a doctrine of intolerance. Holding to the 'important things' means that we know what's important and others don't; our way of doing things is the only right way, and our beliefs are the only correct ones. Fundamentalism in Wicca takes two forms. The first is a matter of beliefs: thus-and-such is what true Witches believe; this part is metaphor and myth, but this other part is literal fact, and don't you dare think otherwise if you want to call yourself a Witch. Wicca is not a belief-centred religion, but most of us grew up surrounded by religious orthodoxies, and it's tempting to try to press every religion into the familiar belief-centred mould. The other kind of fundamentalism has to do with the form of our rituals, and therefore with the attitudes implicit in these forms. This is how it is in our tradition's BoS, this is the only acceptable way to do it, and don't you dare change a word of it.

Even a few years ago, it was understandable that some members of the older traditions, especially Gardnerians, might feel this way. Gardner had, after all, merely put into coherent written form a tradition that had been handed down unchanged, often at great personal cost, through many generations. After it's been so carefully preserved for so long, one must not tinker with it simply to suit personal whim. This argument collapsed a few years ago, with the publication in *Crafting the Art of Magic,* by Aidan Kelly (Llewellyn, 1991), of as-yet-unrefuted proof that Gardnerian Wicca is a product of this century. Conservative Gardnerianism, as anything other than the expression of a personal preference, is no longer a tenable position. That some people still cling to the Gardnerian origin myth as literal truth, in the face of contrary facts, is a demonstration either of political elitism ('we've got the high ground and we're not gonna share it without a fight!') or of the irrepressible human capacity to continue to believe what we can't afford, for sanity's sake, to stop believing. Not everyone is flexible enough to let go of a cherished, but no longer tenable, assumption and rebuild an entire personal belief structure from scratch. Honesty demands it, but fear makes it most difficult. The fundamentalist solution is to crush the external voices of dissent, hoping thereby to silence one's own inner doubts. There's a little of the conservative impulse in each of us. Unless we travel so widely and share ritual in so many different forms that variety is our personal norm, we all slip into certain habits and expectations about our rituals. We always cast the circle thus, and call the quarters in this order. The repetition is familiar, comforting, reassuring. If someone else comes along and does it differently, the difference feels jarring and wrong. Within one's first few months in the Craft, habit patterns begin to establish themselves. The longer one goes on, exposed to only one ritual style, the more deeply the habit patterns are set, and the harder it is to break them later.

I'm going to advance a controversial idea here: having a traditionalist and conservative component is good for the Craft. Throughout history, it has been the militant, intolerant, and recruitment-oriented religions that have survived, the peaceful and tolerant ones that have been overrun and dissolved. Wicca is a tolerant, non-recruiting religion and I'm glad that this is so, but it does make us vulnerable. If also we are also so open-ended, and our boundaries are so fuzzy that we aren't even clear on what is worth preserving, we have no hope of surviving and thriving in the face of outside pressures. For the time being, we define our boundaries largely on the basis of the attacks we receive from the conservatives of other religions; but as understanding and acceptance of what we are grows in the world around us (and may the Goddess grant that it does grow!) another danger emerges: the very real danger of dissolving, around our edges, into the larger movement of environmentally aware, goddess-worshipping new agers and liberal Christians. The conservative core, the more rigidly defined traditions within the Craft, help to anchor us. By changing slowly, if at all, they stabilize the rest of the Craft, making us that much less likely to be blown away by each brief shift of the philosophical wind. All the same, the extreme conservative position, in whatever Wiccan tradition, is neither a healthy nor a comfortable place for most of us to occupy.

I'm glad that a number of different fixed anchor points—traditions—exist within the

Craft. They help to define, within the complex multidimensional map of Wicca, some concepts that the rest of us may weigh against one another in the search for a workable personal position. I wouldn't want to be either an orthodox Gardnerian or a Dianic separatist; it's the dynamic balance of the middle ground between them that interests me.

I believe that Eclecticism is the future of the Craft. Wicca, like all other religions, is syncretic in its origins. Gardner himself was an eclectic; he gathered bits from many sources, tinkered with them until he created something that worked for him, then tinkered some more until it worked better. Others have continued this process ever since. Orthodox Gardnerians are working, as it were, from an early-draft, rough-edged script; the rest of us have moved on. If the Craft had remained as Gardner first envisioned it, it would never have survived and grown to become the viable religious movement it is today. If it does not continue to grow and change, it will not remain viable.

Eclecticism means different things to different people. To me, the ideal Eclectic Witch is someone who is well-versed in many aspects of the Craft, has had in-depth exposure to more than one tradition, and out of this varied experience is able to transcend the flaws of each of those source traditions to create a personal approach that is more relevant to her or him than any one of the sources. Unfortunately, many people in the Craft see eclecticism differently. 'Eclectic' is the name applied to someone who hasn't had any real training, whose understanding of the Craft is shallow and haphazard, and who can't validly claim to be part of any 'real' Tradition. Taken as such, 'Eclectic' becomes an insult, and labelling something with an insult is no way to appreciate its value.

The discipline of formal training is valuable. Without it, each practitioner must (as many self-taught solitaries do) struggle to re-invent the wheel. With training, a Witch starts by receiving as much as can be transmitted of the skills and experience of one's teacher, and one's teacher's teachers. There can be such a thing as 'Eclectic with lineage'. To study with one or several teachers, whose experience comes from several different traditions but transcends all of them—or to study those traditions for oneself, one at a time—is not the easiest way to be a Witch. It's not as easy as skipping the hard work of formal training, but neither is it as safe and comfortable as subscribing to a single name-brand tradition. But if we'd wanted 'safe and comfortable', we wouldn't have become Witches in the first place.

There's a lot to be said for the comforts of tribalism, of having a home and family to identify with, within the broad sprawling structure of the Craft. Eclectic Traditions can provide that: a sense of family identity, a few shared quirks that mark our common background, but still an attitude of openness and flexibility that makes it possible to adapt, and grow, and work alongside fellow Witches of various other traditions without discomfort. To maintain such a Tradition is a constant and difficult balancing act: too rigid, and you become just another fixed tradition within the Wiccan establishment, staking out your own tiny niche; too flexible, and the sense of family dissolves. In addition to an appreciation of the values of Eclecticism, the development of open lines of communication between Wiccan 'denominations' is also necessary if we're to survive the inter-Traditional bickering that's so much a hallmark of Wiccan politics. Christians, particularly those in the 'High-Church' denominations, have been actively engaged in Ecumenical discourse for nearly a century now, with remarkable results. We are a vulnerable new religion, we do have outside enemies, and we can't afford to waste our energies tearing at one another. If we really are a religion, we should be putting our efforts into serving the gods, and not into the sort of bickering that makes the House of Commons look mature and unified by contrast. The most difficult element of establishing an

... THE VERY REAL DANGER OF DISSOLVING, AROUND OUR EDGES, INTO THE LARGER MOVEMENT OF ENVIRONMENTALLY AWARE, GODDESS-WORSHIPPING NEW AGERS AND LIBERAL CHRISTIANS.

Ecumenical dialogue between the various Traditions of Wicca is figuring out how to start the process. I leave these questions with our readers: In what ways can we go about this? What is anyone actually doing now? What would you like to see happen?

Ecumenical dialogue inside the Craft is important, but so is the kind of interfaith activity that opens lines of communication between the practitioners of different religions. We've passed our fiftieth birthday; it's time to begin to take our proper place among the other well-known and recognized religions. As long as our mere existence is subject matter for Oprah and Geraldo, as long as the average citizen still thinks we boil babies for breakfast, as long as the majority of our spokespeople are media-hungry adolescent vampires of all ages, Witches who are discovered will continue to suffer unnecessarily for being what they are. The secrecy and the solidarity against persecution, the black-hatted image of a cackling crone on a broomstick—whether or not we want to admit it, most of us still hold a little nostalgia for these things. They help us feel different, special, exciting, but it just might be past time to begin letting go of them.

Not all of us can afford to participate in interfaith activities. We must live in the present, not in some ideal tolerant future, and many of us find it necessary to stay in the broom closet. But for those of us who can, I think it's valuable to work with the interfaith community. If Christians, Buddhists, Hindus, and Baha'is can get together with one another for potluck suppers, surely we can join them. We're no more different from any of these religions than they are from each other. The most visible interfaith activities are large-scale events predicated on the sort of large administrative structures that Wiccans prefer to avoid, but there are many smaller, local things that can be done. Drop in on a Unitarian service. Take a Lutheran minister to coffee. Swap clerical shop talk with a Zoroastrian who's lamenting the difficulties of having a tiny local community. Trade vegetarian recipes with a Buddhist. It doesn't have to be something large and spectacular; real acceptance comes from the grassroots, one friend at a time.

There are many entire religions that would have no problem with what we are and what we do, if only they knew what that was. Many liberal Christians are struggling to reinvent things we've been doing for decades. Even among conservative Christian denominations, there are open-minded individuals. But if all they see are black-clad youngsters waving Tarot decks and hinting at strange secret rites, guilt-mongering attacks over the 'Burning Times', and the lyrics to the Christian-bashing stanzas of Old Time Religion, what should we expect them to think of us?

Wicca is still a young and small religion. It has many possible futures. The choices we make now may help decide whether there are still Witches dancing with the gods a century hence—or whether we'll become nothing more than a curious historical footnote.

The First Seven Trumps of the Major Arcana (and the Fool) as Patterns for Pagan Leadership: Past, Present and Future

by Fritz Muntean

In the very earliest days of my involvement with the Craft, in the San Francisco Bay Area of the middle 1960s, one of the major influences on our search for a model of coven organization (and the consummate path to magical enlightenment, as well) was our study of Tarot. We had already noticed that the beginning of the journey through the Major Arcana, the first seven cards, was populated by Priests and Priestesses, Emperors, Popes, and Kings setting forth in Chariots—all representatives of temporal powers and authorities—and that only by passing through these, as if through an early but necessary stage of development, could one proceed on to the second flight of seven, the Realm of Earthly Reality and Equilibrium, and to the final row, the Realm of Heavenly Illumination and Self-Realization.

I have structured this essay around those first seven cards of the Major Arcana (eight, including the Fool) as prototypes or patterns for Pagan Leadership, keeping in mind as we look at them, that like all temporal organizations of an enlightened nature, they represent conditions that must be transcended, but at the same time cannot be bypassed on the road to Wisdom. More important still is the understanding that the male and female figures here in the Tarot represent not men and women, but the masculine and feminine aspects of the divine existing in all of us regardless of our reproductive plumbing or sexual preferences.

Let's think of the Fool, the Magician, and the High Priestess as models of Pagan leadership Past—as stages we've passed through on our way to where we are today. The Empress and the Emperor will then be seen as the models for the ideal leadership of the present, and the final three Trumps, the Pope, the Lover, and the Chariot will become the patterns and paths for our Pagan future.

THE FOOL

We've all met this fellow. He's in such close contact with his instinctual side that he doesn't need to look where he's going—in a very literal sense. He can let his Inner Childe (that's the little dog) guide his steps. He's Parsifal, and his disregard for conventional good manners and the advice of his elders leads him—almost accidentally it seems—to ask the one simple question needed to heal the King and redeem the Waste Land. He believes, along with William Blake, that "If a man would persist in his folly, he would become wise," and that "The Road of Excess leads to the Palace of Wisdom." The Fool is the enemy of rules and regulations, of hierarchies and principates, and even (as we can see) of safe paths through the mountains. He believes, and rightly so, that he can achieve magical results with no adherence to doctrine or discipline, but his near-complete neglect of magical standards only produces magical results that defy evaluation.

The Fool has also been known to write books—which Llewellyn has been known to publish duitifully. These books are easy to read and often entertaining, and many find the ideas in them to improve self-confidence, and to be 'empowering' to the reader. But their low standards of scholarship only seem to blur the distinctions between fiction and fact, between polemic and research, and between hypothesis and conclusion.

COVERT LEADERS OFTEN INSIST ON SOME VERSION OF THE CONSENSUS METHOD OF DECISION-MAKING, KNOWING (OFTEN ONLY INTUITIVELY) THAT ... CONSENSUS FUNCTIONS AS A MORE-OR-LESS SUBTLE METHOD OF INTIMIDATION

Like the Navajo trickster God, Coyote, the Fool is accorded a special role in the social order. But it's important to remember that Coyote can lie in wait for the unwary. He sometimes plays a trick so outrageous and violent, that it destroys the well-being, the sanity, and even the life of its victim. And all that remains is an edifying story of human folly to be told 'round the campfire. The Fool nowadays often finds his human counterpart in those who have used drugs unwisely but too well in order to blast their way out of a too-rigid cultural prison only to find themselves stranded helplessly on the other side.

As far as his potential for leadership goes, it's probably best for us to visualize the Fool with a bumper sticker across his butt that reads: "Don't Follow Me—I'm Lost!"

THE MAGICIAN

Here we have the Fool come to rest, at least temporarily. As the Magician in the Marseilles deck, the magic wand he holds aloft connects him to his ancestor, Hermes, god of revelations, the great communicator, the maker of boundaries and the mercurial crosser of borders. He creates both the illusion and the self-awareness that dispels it. He knows The Secret: that All is One, all manifestations are one, all elements, all energies, all Power, all are whole and all are Holy.

In the Rider deck, the Magician's table has been tided up. Articles such as dice, balls, and other items of dubious purpose have been swept under the table. The Magician's hand holds aloft a wand indicating that his powers are under conscious control and are dedicated to the heavenly spirit above. With his left hand he points earthward, (as above, so below). Both the poles of his wand are white. The masculine spirit is doubly emphasized, whereas the dark feminine yin is excluded.

The Magician is not fixed firmly to the spot, when his performance is finished, he will move on to other fields. He's about to perform some tricks. He calls them tricks, and that is exactly what they are. He welcomes our attendance at his magic show, sometimes even inviting us on stage as his accomplices. ("Just imagine what could happen is every living human being 'imaged' peace and directed his energies toward its realization! 'We' magicians could indeed work miracles.")

The Pagan Leader represented by the

THE MAIN PURPOSE OF MAGIC MAY BE TO PROVIDE SOLIDLY-CRAFTED CONTAINMENT FOR THE CONSCIOUS AND INTENTIONAL ENACTMENT OF FORBIDDEN WITCH BEHAVIOR: THE EROTIC AND ECSTATIC AS WELL AS THE VIOLENT AND DESTRUCTIVE ...

Magician is usually someone who has become overly impressed with the 'magical' coincidences of everyday life. He's developed an inflated notion about his own magical abilities and has begun to feel rather precious and special. If you find yourself dealing with a Magician, a light touch and a playful attitude will come in very handy.

THE HIGH PRIESTESS

The High Priestess of the Marseilles deck is the Female Pope, the feminine aspect of the Divine. The Magician's magic, like his sex, is out in front. The Priestess' magic is veiled and hidden. She's the family matriarch, the Pope's wife, she's had her children, but they're grown and gone. She's the Virgin Mary, she's Isis. She says "No man has unveiled me!"

The scroll she hold is the book of the Law—she has the rules and she'll teach them to you. But these are the real rules—the rules of nature—and you have to obey them intuitively and flawlessly—even as you learn them. Birth, death and rebirth are hers as well, but like the Law, they are not under her conscious control. The nature of her magic is hidden even from herself.

Compared to the Popess' comfortable body and wise old eyes, Waite's HPs in the Rider deck seems young and pure and somehow untouched. In spite of the complex symbology of her setting, she seems a passionless figurehead, remote from her surroundings and disconnected from her body. Her gown flows to the earth and becomes water. This is a stream that will follow the line of least resistance, adapting itself comfortably to the contours of the earth, spiraling slowly but steadily ever downward.

Since 1980 or thereabouts, the Female Pope has been a standard feature in the world of Pagan Leadership. Charismatic and visionary, she emphasizes the immanent nature of the Goddess and encourages us to seek inspiration from the divinity within ourselves. She enters our presence trailing clouds of glory from the farthest corners of the universe and from our most remote human origins. She also trails the odd wisp of anti-authoritarianism and untidy scholarship from her long affair with the Fool, and an unshakable confidence in her own magical abilities resulting from her apprenticeship with the Magician.

The possibility that these inner voices she hears, these divine 'revelations', may simply be mistaken—a lesson from history that should come through loud and clear—is denied by the very pious and ascetic nature of the High Priestess' demeanor. Under her leadership, a lack of self-criticism is combined with an anti-authoritarian belief system that rejects hierarchies in favour of egalitarian social structure. Now it's certainly true that very small or very short-lived groups can function, often quite adequately, without leadership hierarchies. But in longer-lasting organizations, such as covens, circles, and groves, or in larger associations or collectives, the only real leadership choice is between overt and covert authority.

Covert leaders often insist on some version of the consensus method of decision-making, knowing (often only intuitively) that in all those societies which practice consensus as against majority rule, such as the Plains Indians, the Quakers, and certain Japanese corporate bodies, consensus functions as a more-or-less subtle method of intimidation; bringing everyone present into at least nominal agreement with the will of those in charge. This can have a beneficial effect if the people wielding authority are mature, compassionate, attentive to the opinions of others and responsive to the long-term needs of the organization. Unfortunately, people who believe that all their own ideas are divine (since they come from within, and that's where the Goddess dwells, right?) and who have the High Priestess' unshakable confidence in their own magical abilities to make everything right, can easily do great harm to organizations which practice consensus without firm and responsible (as well as overt) leadership.

The goals of organizations like this are usually stated as vague idealistic prescriptions for society as a whole. Such claims are often made in the context of a belief system that negates the relevance of objective accountability, while positing a vision of the Goddess that excludes all darkness and evil as something outside the divine, and therefore outside the group. When an organization projects its shadow needs and agendas away from itself and onto an enemy, especially when the enemy is portrayed as an opponent of society in general, a perilous context has been created, since demagogues have always found the link between politics and religion to be a fertile field.

Of course we should ideally build our political principles on spiritual foundations, but when we try to derive our spirituality from a system of belief that is essentially political in nature we court serious difficulties. For one thing, being attuned to one's inner voice or higher self may well lead to spontaneous acts that defy the logic of ideological consistency, and as a result, political ideologies will always place a ceiling on the height to which one's consciousness may be raised. In addition, when there's too tight a fit between politics and religion, it takes a saint to not give in to utter self-righteousness; and judging from the amount of self-righteousness in the realm of the Female Pope, saints are clearly in short supply.

THE EMPRESS

The Empress represents the transition from Maiden to Mother. She's luck, abundance, a sheaf of wheat. She's May Day! She's fresh, excited, she's pregnant, and most important, she's really really busy!

In contrast to the Female Pope, the Empress cares more for the power of love than the love of power. She's Venus, Goddess of Love. And love is the unifying and regenerative force that connects yang and yin, spirit and flesh, heaven and earth. Reintegrating opposites in creative embrace, the Empress brings liberation and transformation. She bridges the gap between the Mother World of creative inspiration and the Father World of logic and ideas.

The Empress is feeling and emotion, wisdom and love, and the subtle intelligence of dreams. The instinctual drives which ensure the necessities and fulfillments of life are the Empress' domains. Her power is dark, vis-

ceral, primitive, and vastly powerful. When the High Priestess is unified with the Empress, as passion—and compassion—warm the pontifical figurehead of the High Priestess, ideologies collapse in the heat of an embrace which recognizes the 'Other' as the 'Self', and the High Priestess is transformed. That which does not serve the Empress' primal mission of Love evaporates into meaningless, and what emerges from this union is the dark, mysterious, and thoroughly frightening figure of the Witch.

The Witch, like all the other Goddesses and Gods really, is not concerned with our conventions, nor our need for safety or security. She allows us access to unconscious mental processes that exist very close, but not quite inside the normal limits—not only of acceptability—but of any hope for complete control. The successful wielding of Witch energy therefore requires training, restraint, humility, and—above all—compassion. Whitewashing the Witch, even in the laudable name of 'pagan public relations,' serves only to trivialize the powers involved, and the denial of this darkness and the destructive energies inherent in the Witch can only allow undirected Witch energy—which will not be denied—to take on a magical life of their own, and invade entire communities. The well-known tendencies for even minor conflicts in the Wiccan community to get immediately out of control might give responsible persons in position of leadership pause to reexamine some of their more reflexive behaviour patterns.

By somehow rendering conscious and acceptable these subterranean aspects of the Empress—the suppressed underground powers of the Witch—we can legitimate her demonic and destructive powers as having rights of their own on the strength of their therapeutic potential. But we must clearly understand that we do so at our own peril. Edward Whitmont suggests that from a psychological point of view the main purpose of magic may be to provide solidly-crafted containment for the conscious and intentional enactment of forbidden Witch behavior: the erotic and ecstatic as well as the violent and destructive—all of which is instinctual material which we repress at our peril, but cannot release in polite society with any degree of safety. The greatest danger is our tendency to consider some aspects of the divine as good, benevolent, or intentionally helpful, and other aspects as distinctly different—as malevolent or evil. A more cautious way of regarding the Empress is to think of her as loaded with power for regeneration—we can profitably suppose that that is her purpose. But the same power that can give us rebirth can also drive us mad. The powers of the Empress are potentially volatile, and certainly difficult to manage, without the inner resources conferred by serious long term training, great restraint, deep humility and enormous compassion.

THE EMPEROR

As we can see by the decorations on his throne, the Emperor is ruled by Aries. From the armor he wears beneath his robes, we can tell that he is recently returned from war. One of my earliest Tarot instructors told me that the Emperor wears armor because everyone knows who he is and where he lives. He's not a wandering star. He's not trying to lead the Community from inside his broom closet.

The Emperor and the Empress are a wedded pair. Neither can function creatively without the other. The Empress' feminine, feeling side is refined and shaped by the critical masculine Emperor to create the finished product. Together they are the creators of something new: civilization.

BECAUSE OF THIS SHADOW EMPEROR'S OTHER-WORLDLY NAÏVETÉ AND HIS UNSTABLE POINTS OF REFERENCE BETWEEN THE TRANSCENDENT AND THE MUNDANE, THESE MOVEMENTS ARE OFTEN TOO EASILY INFILTRATED BY THOSE SEEKING POLITICAL OR ECONOMIC GAIN.

The Emperor wields power. Real, temporal, physical power. Power is something we're all a bit tentative about having, or using, especially in the interconnected and personal world of the Pagan community. Power, in the world of the Primitive Masculine (I like that term so much better than "the patriarchy") was the right and privilege of kings and bishops, soldiers and police. Power—used to rule, conquer, repress and punish—was forbidden to the ordinary person. The deliberate use of psychic power was condemned as magic, sorcery, and heresy. Small wonder than, in view of this heritage, that the idea of power has for us become suspect, even reprehensible. We automatically associate power with its misuse.

Honest folk like ourselves are very wary of deliberately trying to live with and manage such power in our personal lives. Even seasoned magical practitioners scurry to ground the energy every time they make a move of any consequence in Circle. But leadership requires the conscious awareness of power. Otherwise, there's no possibility of choice or decision, and so, no question of responsibility. And as a result, power is left to be used by those who claim it for their personal satisfaction, and who are largely unconscious of their selfish motivations. By making honest and positive use of power, we can build a humane and sustainable Pagan community. And the Emperor provides us with the pattern. The Emperor represents the Wise Old Man, the Shaman, the Spirit Guide, and the Psychopomp that stands behind the Wiccan High Priest and Priestess. He's the link with the numinous energies of the God-forms, and the technology of contacting the divine without identifying with it. The seductive power of the divine is enormous, and it can totally overwhelm our critical powers more than most of us modern types can usually understand. Coven members needs someone who can lead them into the presence of the Old ones safely—and safely lead them back out again. They need a Priest or Priestess who are not themselves overwhelmed by their contact with the divine. And that's a tall order. There's so much pressure on Wiccan Priests and Priestesses to think of their own self aggrandizement, rather than the welfare of the Circle, because it's impossible to be coming from the grandiosity of divine inflation and have any ethical sense at all. If you look at that honestly, then it's amazing how much good work actually does happen!

On the other hand, the covener 'kind of has to' project this Emperor/Empress energy onto the Priest & Priestess in order for the

THE ORGANIZATIONAL POWER THAT THE POPE OF THE TAROT REPRESENTS WILL BE FOUND AMONG THE GUIDES AND THE TEACHERS, THE THERAPISTS AND THE COUNSELORS, THE SAGES AND THE ELDERS OF THE PAGAN COMMUNITY. OUR JOB IS TO IDENTIFY THESE PEOPLE AND TO EMPOWER *THEM*.

magic to really work. If you're in a magical relationship and there's nothing happening, if there's no real feeling of this kind of numinous energy opening up for you, then the magical transference is not happening. Now this could be because of your own wounds, and your capacity to trust. If somebody as really failed you early in life, say, it'd be harder for you to project this energy onto your Priest and Priestess and successfully hold it there. The successful leader needs to be aware of this as an issue and be willing to patiently work on issues of trust. It helps, if you're the leader, to keep in mind that this magical transference really has nothing to do with you personally. It's necessary, but only for the time and duration of sacred space. Patience and humility and an almost Zen-like detachment is required of the leader, but within reasonable bounds. We know that you can go on for a long time without the Emperor/Empress energy, where nothing deep is really happening, but eventually boredom sets in, and destructive energies are sometimes released.

One of the forms this reaction to the tedium of superficial spirituality takes is the rise of the charismatic or prophetic leader, as a self-styled agent of change, or radical social transformation. Because of this shadow Emperor's other-worldly naïveté and his unstable points of reference between the transcendent and the mundane, these movements are often too easily infiltrated by those seeking political or economic gain. The darker elements of the psyche, such as the Rebel, the Victim, and the Martyr, may manifest enormous authority in the mundane world, but one of the defining aspects of shadow power is that it cannot be shared—it cannot be used to build a community or a religious movement—but can only accrue to the individual wielding the shadow energy.

Nearly all religions have as one of their goals the improvement of society. This often takes the form of social action in the broader community ('good works,' advocacy, etc.), or the modeling of an ideal society by the religion itself (monasteries, communes, etc.), both of which certainly have political overtones. Under ideal circumstances, however, the call to political action is generated by compassion. This compassion ideally derives from discriminating wisdom, which in turn is the result of the kind of enlightenment which is most usually arrived at through contemplation of the divine. Wisdom without enlightenment is trapped in narrow confines and cannot perceive whole systems. Discrimination without wisdom is divisive, territorial, and separatist. Compassion without discrimination is doomed to failure. And political action without compassion is self-serving at best, and at worst it can destroy entire societies. Discriminating wisdom is at the center of this equation, and this is not a characteristic of the Prophet, but of the Emperor.

THE POPE

This Trump is the first one in which we see other figures—of human size. While the Emperor looks out over distant horizons, his eye encompassing the totality of his empire, the Pope looks directly at the individuals before him. He communicates with them. The Pope is the outer organization that contains all inner workings, the arbiter of moral questions, the one who must determine the ultimate authenticity of all mystical experience. Religion, like sex, aims to unite the opposites. As a symbol of this unification the Pope is androgynous, uniting in his person both the masculine and the feminine. He represents the magical nature of organization, of property, of the Land. Venus brings forth fecundity, but the Pope underlies it and fertilizes it.

As Pagans we have a lot of resistance to the idea of any kind of organized container for our religious activities. We believe in inner workings, in the esoteric, but we're highly suspicious of what many of us feel to be the unnecessary and limiting outer framework, the exoteric components that put the organization in Organized Religion. Technically speaking, however, mystical experience and esoteric insight need to be grounded in core values, and these values are part of the exoteric structure of a religion. Since the mid-60s, we've been increasingly surrounded by the wreckage of esoteric religious systems that have become disconnected from the structure of their exoteric value systems and have quickly devolved into venues for self-empowerment, self-forgiveness, and self-deification. As Pagans, we're just beginning to develop the first traces of these problems ourselves, as the occasional self-initiated and self-appointed person begins trying to speak for all of us.

Lacking any sort of authorizing exoteric structure, Paganism has become host to an ideological sub-cult in which critical judgment and leadership accountability are discouraged and where a kind of funky fundamentalism—complete with a paranoid world-view and an opportunistic political agenda—have, in some areas, nearly overwhelmed our original spiritual content.

Let's assume then, that we need some kind—and obviously not just any old kind—of religious structure in order to contain, protect, and preserve our esoteric workings. The Pope provides—or in the case of Neopaganism let's say that the Pope of the Tarot may hopefully someday provide—an adequate container for our religious passions and a structure that will allow our mystical experiences and esoteric insights to outlast our own lifetimes. The Pope will someday die, but he will always have a successor. How many of us can say the same thing. The big question of everyone's minds is this: OK, but who's going to be the Pope? Any volunteers?

Our Pagan deities are considered to be transcendent in so much as they are universal, eternal, and can be found everywhere. We mainly think of our Goddesses and Gods as being immanent, and this concept impacts heavily on the issue of leadership. If the divine is everywhere, and is accessible to everyone, then anyone can reveal truth. This belief system, compounded by a wide-spread rejection of the authoritarian religious systems of the past in which the few—the called and the chosen—controlled the many, has caused most practi-

tioners of Wicca to be inherently suspicious of leadership in any form. In the most extreme cases, this has led to a kind of fundamental egalitarianism that often ends up militating against any form of authentic human worth. Abraham Maslow is often quoted for support of this anti-authoritarian position, but between the 1964 publication of Religions, Values, and Peak-Experiences, and its second edition in 1970, his views underwent some interesting modifications:

"The rejection of a priestly caste who claimed to be exclusive custodians of a private hot line to the sacred was, in my opinion, a great step forward in the emancipation of mankind, and we have the mystics—among others—to thank for this achievement. But this valid insight can also be used badly when dichotomized and exaggerated by foolish people. They can distort it into a rejection of the guide, the teacher, the sage, the therapist, the counselor, the elder, the helper along the path of self-actualization and the realm of Being. This is often a great danger and always an unnecessary handicap."

So there is my answer: The organizational power that the Pope of the Tarot represents will be found among the guides and the teachers, the therapists and the counselors, the sages and the elders of the Pagan community. Our job is to identify these people and to empower *them.*

THE LOVER

This is the Trump of the path not taken. The old Marseilles Tarot version is particularly instructive. In the Rider deck, called (interestingly enough) The Lovers, the path to unity has already been chosen and heavenly celestial being blesses the pair. On closer examination, we may notice that although the man's attention is directed toward the woman, she only has eyes for the angel. The Edwardian esotericists were surely a peculiar lot.

By way of contrast, the Lover in the Marseilles Tarot is seen standing between two figures, an older and a younger woman. And instead of a glorious angel overhead we have Cupid, the imp with the poisoned arrow. Is the Lover a young man who is having to choose between a young Wife and his old Mother? Or is he a man in mid-life trying to decide if he should stay with his Old Wife or run off with a New Cookie? Of course he can simply choose not to choose. He can continue to live with his mother (or with his Old Wife) and see the young woman with whom he is so obviously enamored on the side. But that stops the process right here and the rest of the Trumps must, of necessity, go unexplored. He must choose in order to proceed, and in a very real way it doesn't matter what choice he makes as long as he does choose, because in the realm of the Lover the path not taken is as important as the path taken. Any attempt to eliminate the stresses and tensions of this triangle will cause the Lover to lose an initiatory rite of great importance in the development of human consciousness. Only by becoming aware of our conflicts, by making clear and firm decisions and then by facing the results of those decisions and suffering through all their consequences, both for ourselves and for the others involved, can genuine growth and progress can be achieved.

All thoughts of choice and rational processes aside, it's also important to notice that a colorful deus ex machina is already making the Lover's decision for him behind his back.

... WE HAVE UNCRITICALLY INCLUDED UNDER THE EVER-BROADENING RUBRIC OF NEOPAGANISM EVERYONE WHO WOULD STAND FOR IT, AND QUITE A LARGE NUMBER OF THOSE WHO WOULD NOT IF THEY HAD ANY IDEA THAT WE WERE DOING IT.

So what are these important landmark decisions that we as Pagan leaders must make in order to get on with the real work of spiritual development? We have, for the last thirty-odd years (and some of them very odd indeed) been wrapped up in a process—one that's very common to emerging New Religious Movements—called radical inclucivism. In order to generate the kind of enormous numbers we seem to feel that we need in order to justify our existence to ourselves and to others, we have uncritically included under the ever-broadening rubric of Neopaganism everyone who would stand for it, and quite a large number of those who would not if they had any idea that we were doing it. The definitions used by organizations like CoG are necessarily vague in the extreme, since everyone involved is painfully aware that any distinction at all between what is or isn't a Pagan would instantly cause half the membership to disappear, and any further distinction would cut the remaining membership by half again. It's true, of course, that Afro-Caribbean religions, The SCA, emerging First Nations' Spirit movements, the celebration of the Eleusinian Mysteries, Women's separatist organizations, Trekkies, Unitarians, Wiccans, Wotanists and Tantric Buddhists all have some things in common with one other, but their points of commonality are fairly superficial, and in any case are not their most subtle, their most powerfull, or even their most interesting features.

I have a very strong feeling that, at the time in the—I hope—not too distant future when we do decide just what path Paganism is really on and live with our decision—including coming to terms with all the paths not chosen that we have left behind—not only will our numbers demonstrate some genuine growth, but our festivals will start being a lot more focused than they have been in the last five or ten years.

THE CHARIOT

Here we have a powerful figure. He's a King, a Warrior, a guiding force, but he's drawn to human proportions. All the powers and patterns of the external figures that have gone before have been brought together and internalized as guiding principles within this one character. He's setting forth to seek his fortune and establish his identity in the larger world, freeing himself from containment within the family of leadership prototypes we've been looking at. He has within him the seed for future growth and the potential for complete self-awareness, and he's getting ready to take his show on the road.

Of course, nobody's perfect. He still bears the wound from Cupid's dart, and he still needs his armor and his vehicle and his horses and all, and if he was totally enlightened and completely together all he'd really need would be a small satchel and maybe a little dog. That's right, if he was really enlightened he'd look just like the Fool, and who knows, maybe the Fool really is as totally enlightened and autonomous as he thinks he is. But in a less than perfectly-pulled-together universe, a good horse and a good cart, not to mention a good map, will do wonders for those just setting out on the journey through the rest of the Tarot that's represented by the Chariot. A journey through the next seven Trumps, the Realm of Earthly Reality and Equilibrium, and on to the final set of seven, the Realm of Heavenly Illumination and Self-Realization.

Here endeth the lesson. We've seen our own recent history and we tip our pointy black hats at the leaders of the past who have played out for our benefit the characters of the Fool, the Magus, and the Female Pope. We've caught a glimpse of the future and will be alert to such epiphanies of the Pope, the Lover, and the Chariot as will come. But most important, we now know a little bit more than we did before about the characteristics of the Empress and the Emperor and we stand a better chance of nurturing those attributes in ourselves and in others as we travel gaily forward toward our Pagan goal of humane and sustainable models of spiritual leadership.

SUGGESTED READING:

Colegrave, Sukie. *Uniting Heaven and Earth.* Los Angeles: Jeremy Tarcher, 1989.

Deikman, Arthur J. *The Wrong Way Home.* Boston: Beacon Press, l991.

Douglas, Mary. *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo.* Middlesex: Penguin, 1966.

Ellwood, Robert S., and Partin, Harry B. *Religious and Spiritual Groups in Modern America.* 2nd ed. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1988.

Hoeller, Stephan A. "The Divine Feminine in Recent World Events." *Gnosis* No. 24 (1992): pp. 10-11.

Maslow, Abraham H. *Religions, Values, and Peak-Experiences.* New York: Viking, 1964.

Nichols, Sallie. *Jung and Tarot: An Analytical Jouney.* New York: Samuel Weiser, 1986.

Robbins, Thomas. *Cults, Converts and Charisma: The Sociology of New Religious Movements.* London: Sage, 1988.

Smart, Ninian. *Worldviews: Crosscultural Explorations of Human Beliefs.* New York: Charles Scribner's, 1983.

Stark, Rodney, and Bainbridge, William S. *The Future of Religion: Secularization, Revival and Cult Formation.* Berkeley, California UP, 1985.

Whitmont, Edward C. *Return of the Goddess.* New York: Crossroad, 1984.

Wilson, Bryan R. *Magic and the Millennium: A Sociological Stludy of Religious Movements of Protest among Tribal and Third-World Peoples.* London: Heinemann, 1973.mann, 1973.

This article has been adapted from the Keynote Address to the Cascadia Pagan Leadership Conference in Seattle, October 20, 1995.

Patient Counting:

What Old Records Tell about the Battle for Souls in England and the English Witch Hangings

by Kate Slater

A REVIEW OF BOOKS:

The Rise and Fall of Merry England: The Ritual Year 1400-1700.
by Ronald Hutton.
Oxford University Press, 1994

Witch Hunting and Witch Trials.
by C. L'Estrange Ewen.
London: Kegan Paul, 1929.

How important is it for us to know the history of the beliefs and customs we weave into Neopaganism? You may be a lore maven or an experience maven or maybe both if you can find the time and energy. For lore mavens here are a couple of plums.

In 1980, British historian Ronald Hutton laid out a research project that he expected would document how England's rich seasonal festival culture, sprung from pagan roots, encountered first an attack upon religious grounds, subsequently by the English Reformation, and finally upon secular grounds, resulting from the social changes of the 18th and 19th centuries. This expectation rested on the views prevalent in the 1970s among social historians and folklorists. The data did not fit. By 1985, Hutton had become increasingly less certain that many customs could be traced to ancient origins, and other current researchers share this doubt. Evidence showed that many celebratory customs were adopted locally during the late Middle Ages. Nor could his extensive search through parish account books support a mainly economic model based on wage values, inflation and wars.

The thread of history that he named *The Rise and Fall of Merry England* was spun from church, guild and town backing of the people's enthusiasm for seasonal celebrations such as midsummer watches, morris dances, and the devotion that blessed church candles. The thread was torn by many opposing factors: religiously based civil war; political will to suppress the power of the guilds; social stratification that created a morally self-conscious middle class; rising population; and random factors such as the spread of the bible, which is accurately pinpointed by Hutton's troll through old parish accounts. Hutton shifted his attention to work on histories of Charles II and the Restoration because research competition in that field threatened to outpace his publication. He then split his study of the riual year into three sections. In 1990, he finished *The Pagan Religions of the Ancient British Isles,* a survey of what is known and how little certainty there is now held about them. He then produced this history and, finally, may write the book he had originally planned, *The Stations of the Sun.*

Between 1350 and 1520, the festival year became increasingly important and elaborate. It involved both church and secular society and although there was occasional conflict—in 1407 a churchman complained about football violence—celebration was thought beneficial. No one seemed to think they were following Pagan leadings.

Pears Encyclopedia places the beginning of the Reformation with Martin Luther

nailing up his 95 theses in 1517. Hutton divides his history with the significant changes that show up in England by 1530 when Henry VIII took control of England's Church. Until this time England had one religion, Catholic. Henceforth English churchmen could be forced to obey the Monarch's religious preference or face execution for heresy. From then until 1700, England's faith was rocked by almost every new Monarch and some portion of the people were always oppressed or rebellious. The conflict that is Ulster now was that of England for over a hundred years, with civil war, deposition and restoration of kings and revolutions of faith and social order. Protestantism chopped pieces from the Church calendar until for a brief period during the Puritan Commonwealth even Christmas, Easter and Whitsun were not celebrated except as incidental to Sunday services. Public celebrations were eliminated because of their cost, fashion and their potential for triggering public disorder. The social revolution of 'manners' finished Merry England's public seasonal feasts. Religious celebration was driven to become private celebration by people who could afford this, and although there were occasional resurgences of secular celebration, gradually the public events were regarded as cruder, unacceptable sports, despite occasional spurts of romantic poetry about May Queens.

Hutton's *Pagan Religions of the Ancient British Isles* seems to be a book that should be in a private Pagan library. *Merry England* might not rate this unless you are a dedicated British Traditional, enjoying lore about midsummer watches, Robin Hood plays and church ales. For example, Hutton notes that many towns had permantently ercted maypoles or stories of going out to cut one. But other than one picture showing men and women "cavorting" around a pole, we lack evidence of how they danced. He says that use of ribbons are is new, a custom that arrived from the Mediterranean in the past 100 years. If you enjoy lore, trivia and history you'll likethis book. A novice to British History will benefit from having a historic events list handy while reading either Hutton's *Merry England* or C. L'Estrange Ewen's *Witch Hunting and Witch Trials.* I tried to compare both carefully documented works to see if they would mesh and in some respects they do, rather like puzzle pieces of the same colour that do not actually interlock and must depend on the framework to prove their fit. A historical outline provides some of that framework. Occasional intriguing time coincidences emerge but these do not prove cause and effect.

C. L'Estrange Ewen was the first British scholar to go back to original records in a systematic attempt to discover what actually occurred in England between 1558, when Elizabeth I passed the first thoroughly enforced witchcraft Act, and 1736, when the last Act dating from James I was finally repealed. He concentrated on the Home Circuit, yearly assizes that were held in the counties of Essex, Hertford, Kent, Surrey and Sussex, covering the southwest corner of England, geographically and probably legally including London. He spent four months searching 1373 Assize records, which he calculated make up 77% of all ever existing, and also searched with Gaol Delivery Rolls and a few records from other Assize Circuits. Essex, home of Witchfinder Matthew Hopkins in the years before the Commonwealth, had the best preserved records and by far the highest number of trials and percent of executions. Norfolk County also had a noted Witchfinder, Stearne, and Ewen wrote about this area in

... HUTTON HAD BECOME INCREASINGLY LESS CERTAIN THAT MANY CUSTOMS COULD BE TRACED TO ANCIENT ORIGINS ... EVIDENCE SHOWED THAT MANY CELEBRATORY CUSTOMS WERE ADOPTED LOCALLY DURING THE LATE MIDDLE AGES.

1939.

Ewen analyzed his data in 10 year periods from 1558, compiling numbers of persons indicted, numbers of indictments, numbers of persons hung and conviction percentages. These are presented in charts, graphs and lists of names, with a 135 page essay containing the history of all witchcraft legislation and Ewen's data analyses, and 190 pages of abstracts from the Assizes and other trial accounts. The abstracts give enough personal data that analyses by gender or accusation could be done. His findings from other areas of England indicate fewer prosecutions: either population was less or the hysteria was milder. In the Home Circuit, Ewen identified two peaks of prosecution. The first filled the duration of Elizabeth I's age and possibly the first bit of James I's reign, a 50 year period accounting for 288 persons indicted and 73 hung (26%). Secondly, the years of pre-Commonwealth conflict (Ewen's 1638-1647 period) when Charles was defeated but not yet beheaded, which account for 52 persons indicted and 22 hung (42%). Overall, Ewen found 513 persons indicted and 112 hung, for an execution rate of 20% (299/82/28% in Essex). (By contrast, the conviction rate in France sometimes reached 95%.). In England there were also some witchcraft prosecutions in ecclesiastical courts, but Ewen says that these seem to have been both rare and lightly punished. (Again by contrast, during her 5 year reign 1553-1558, just before the witch hangings began under Elizabeth I, Mary I burned an estimated 300 Protestants, including the Bishop of London and the Archbishop of Canterbury. When the pendulum swung the other way 264 Catholics were executed.)

Ewen projects these figures to estimate the total executions for England thusly: if 77% of the Home Circuit records give 112 executions, then 100% could be 150. For all six circuits this would become 900 and adding on all other courts might double this number to 1800. However this would allow for 12 times the Essex activities of Hopkins and is unlikely. Ewen guessed the total of executions in England between 1542-1736 as less than 1000. His work is summarized and critiqued by Keith Thomas in *Religion and the Decline of Magic,* 1971 (reprinted 1991, Penguin Books). Thomas quoted newer figures from Essex by Dr. Alan Macfarlane, showing 74 executions, not 82, and 36 other persons who died in gaol. But despite finding another 130 trials and 22 executions to add to Ewen's collection, Thomas states that he cannot improve on his overall total estimate.

EWEN'S WORK WAS THE FIRST DOCUMENTATION I HAD SEEN THAT IS DETAILED ENOUGH TO CONVINCE ME THAT THE CURRENT LOW ESTIMATES OF TOTAL EXECUTIONS FOR WITCHCRAFT ARE SOLIDLY BASED.

Dr. Macfarlane's book, *Witchcraft in Tudor England, a Regional and Comparative Study,* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970), is also interesting. It is a modified version of his Oxford PhD thesis on Essex 1560-1680, supervised by Keith Thomas. He also consulted original records.

Ewen's work was the first documentation I had seen that is detailed enough to convince me that the current low estimates of total executions for witchcraft are solidly based. I've never been a nine-millioner, but I have preferred the older estimates by writers of Church publications (e.g. 300,000 in all Europe by Kurtz in *Church History* (footnote to Thomas' book) and an old Catholic Church estimate of 250,000 for which I cannot find the citation) because I thought that the Church would have a fairly good handle on the data. Unfortunately, the 'Myth of Nine Million' burnt has proliferated like the old McDonald's hamburger slogan , almost beyond recall as 'common knowledge'. While researching this article I reread Hutton's own total estimate of 40,000, along with his quotes of 30,000 estimated by Robert Muchembled and 50,000 by Robin Briggs. These quotes were unsourced and may be private communications or unpublished work. Robin Briggs appears to have dealt primarily with France, and personally studied the the high-exectution area of Lorraine. Worth reading are the essays in her book, *Communities of Belief, Cultural and Social Tension in Early Modern France,* (Clarendon Press, 1989).

Hutton quoted these numbers in a review of *Witchcraze: a New History of the European Witch Hunts,* by Anne Llewellyn Barstow. Barstow had estimated 100,000 total deaths and Hutton was providing counter estimates. My library search turned up several reviews of *Witchcraze* on CD-ROM, so I looked them over. In *Booklist,* v90, Feb. 1 1994, p980, someone who possibly didn't read the book writes: "Though the persecution, torture, and execution of more than seven million women suspected of being witches during this period has been documented in other historical sources, Barstow is the first scholar to offer a convincing gender analysis of the Reformation-era witch craze."

Witches? Seven million? Surely you jest?

Kate Slater used to do weird and wonderful things with data in the Calgary oil patch and has a somewhat pathological respect for facts. She is presently writing fiction set in ancient Greece and odd bits like fire safety manuals for witches.