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# The Pomegranate

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# The Pomegranate

A NEW JOURNAL OF NEOPAGAN THOUGHT



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# The Pomegranate

## Editorial Staff

Maggie Carew, Stephen McManus, Fritz Muntean, Diana Tracy

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*The Pomegranate* is the combined effort of a group of senior Pagans in the United States and Canada. Its purpose is to provide a scholarly venue for the forthright and critical examination of Neopagan beliefs and practices. We intend this Journal to be a forum for the exchange and discussion of the philosophy, ethics, and spiritual potential inherent within the Craft. The consideration of new ideas, as well as the exploration of the roots of our current practices such as classical Paganism, western esoteric traditions and influences from other disciplines, will be included. In the interests of promoting lively discussion, we encourage both our writers and our readers to keep an open mind, and to be ready to explore a wide variety of outlooks.

## Notes from the Underground

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This fourth issue of *The Pomegranate* is both a landmark and a watershed. We are proud to have made it through a full year of publication, even though it took us a year-and-a-half to do it, but we're more than aware that nearly everyone who supported our fledgling publication by subscribing did so for the first four issues, and now virtually all of those original subscriptions must be renewed. We do trust that you will all take advantage of the (stamped!) self-addressed resubscription form attached herein and cheerfully sign up for at least one more year.

We needed to publish four issues in order to determine actual printing and mailing costs, and we hope that our more realistic subscription price of \$16US for four issues will not frighten away any of our devoted readers. Since we accept no advertising, *The Pom* depends entirely on reader support. So please resubscribe if you value our uncompromising commitment to quality and relevance, and wish us to continue to serve you in the future. We look forward to being granted not-for-profit status soon in both the US and Canada, and at that point we will begin soliciting donations as well.

With this issue we introduce a new, and hopefully regular, feature entitled 'Workings'. We hope you will enjoy our first offering, and that you will feel moved to submit other careful, dispassionate, ethnographic even, descriptions of actual rituals. Our intention is to fill the need for decent 'reportage' in Neopagan writing. Submissions should emphasize 'what was done' rather than 'what to do', and could include the entire trajectory of the ritual, even to the extent of incorporating, say, subsequent dreams and other results.

Alas, as you will surely notice, there is no 'Readers' Forum' in this issue. We would love to read (and print) your letters, so please do write ...

*Persephone's Hard-working Minions*

## THE SACRED MARRIAGE: Hierogamy in Grand Opera

by John Yohalem

The world must be peopled” — says Benedick, in *Much Ado About Nothing*. Benedick, the eternal bachelor, the constant railer against the fair sex — especially against Beatrice, cobra-tongued niece of the Governor of Messina — abruptly finds himself in love, resolved to be married — to Beatrice, of course. He tries, not too successfully, to persuade himself that this is a logical turn of events. His last reason is, to our over-populous times, the least convincing of all, but for Shakespeare’s audience, it was the heart of the matter.

Perhaps the original drama is the drama of mating. Tension arises from the question of whether nature, against all odds, is going to permit reproduction to occur, life to go on. Will flower One bloom long enough for its pollen to reach flower Two, and will Flower Two be ready for it when it comes? Will boy bird succeed in impressing girl bird? Will the sperm survive the endless uphill trek to the egg? Considering the preposterous odds, the fecundity of life may be the strangest thing about this planet — yet it is also the most ordinary.

Accordingly, it is not odd that so many folk tales, myths, pagan rituals, operas and limericks are concerned with this matter, to the exclusion of all others: will X marry (or at least impregnate) Y, despite the obstacles and, therefore, will life continue? Marriage, in the fables and the movies, is the happy ending — it took the bourgeois novelist to realize that, for people who think, whose lives have more complexity than flowers and birds, the institution of marriage is just the beginning of the interesting part. And you know the old curse: May you live in an interesting institution.

Thus, the hierogamy, or sacred marriage, represented in Wicca by

the Great Rite, does not merely symbolize Father Sun fertilizing Mother Earth, or the Sovereignty Goddess granting seizin, acceptance, to the tribe of her annual lover — it is a metaphor for survival itself.

I was meditating on this at a recent performance of Puccini’s *Turandot* at the Met. In this work, left unfinished at the composer’s death in 1924 and therefore the very last Italian opera in the more than 300 years that make up the standard repertory, *Turandot*, a Chinese princess, hating men due to the legend of the rape of one of her ancestors a thousand years ago, refuses her hand to any prince who will not attempt three impossible riddles — and she beheads those who cannot answer them. An unknown prince, captivated by her beauty, dares the riddles and, to her horror, answers them. But the prince wants her love, her partnership, not merely her conquest, so he offers her a deal: if she can guess his name by dawn, she can behead him. In the garden later that night, she admits that his look made her tremble, that she knew he would guess the riddles, that she did not know what she feared more — his success or his failure. She begs him to leave her in peace; he refuses, and kisses her; she bursts into tears — her first tears. Triumphant, he tells her his name: Calaf, prince of Tartary. She exults: “I know your name!” The final scene takes place before the Emperor and the full court. “August father, I have learned the name of the intruder! It is — love!”

It has to be love. *Turandot* “the pure” is a symbol of virginity — not frigid but frozen. (“You who are made of ice, you too shall yield to love,” prophesies Liù, the meek slave girl who kills herself rather than reveal the prince’s name under torture.) Icy *Turandot* must melt, must forget her obsession with independence in order to cohabit — to engender life. “This is the end of the glory of *Turandot*,” she moans, when the prince boldly kisses her. “No,” he replies, “it is the beginning of your glory!” The Maiden thus becomes the Mother, and a princess needs a prince to achieve that.

Calaf is pure, too — pure, mindless testosterone. From the moment he sees *Turandot*, he has no doubts and only one objective. He is single-minded, as lust is. When the ghosts of the 26 princes she has murdered try to warn him off, he tells them they didn’t love her enough. He disregards the warnings of the mandarins and the Emperor, the pleas of Liù and of his old, blind father. He tosses off the riddles with little hesitation, and gives *Turandot* another chance — he wants her on his terms, not hers. Yet he can be tender: he trusts her with his name, because he knows he has not conquered — she has surrendered. Having wept, having melted, she

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would be powerless if he chose to rape her – but rape is not his desire. He wants her to admit she loves him, to enter into a partnership, to create a family. Thus the ending is happy: Turandot is not conquered, she is transformed, able to accept love.

Singers of the role take different tacks. Birgit Nilsson, who owned the role for decades, was ice, turned to fire by her prince. Joan Sutherland and Montserrat Caballé were less sure of themselves – from the first aware that this was the man who might change them, therefore implying that the ice was always a piece of self-deception, a façade. At this recent Met performance, Jane Eaglen sang the tortuous role so serenely, effortlessly, that her confidence seemed unshakable, even before Luciano Pavarotti's legato. Even her size – Eaglen is larger than Pavarotti – seemed to make her impervious, a dreadnought princess. Perhaps it was the singing – and the suicide – of Hei-Kyung Hong's exquisite Liù that changed her mind.

This moral may trouble some feminists, and plenty of trouble can certainly come of taking such a myth, such a metaphor, too literally. There was little thought, in the days of primal myth, for the feelings of individuals – it was recognized that these archetypes were no more real than the archetypal farmer's daughter and the traveling salesman. But as they became figures in drama and poetry, artists began to speculate on the hardships of woman's place in society. In classical Athens, Aeschylus might condemn, in his plays on the Danaids (*Suppliants*), the woman who responds to rape (or forced marriage) with murder, but Euripides, in *Ion*, explored the fate of the woman pregnant out of wedlock in a patriarchal society, and condemned the god who raped her – radical stuff, as his contemporaries were swift to recognize.

In operatic terms, this version of the fertility myth evolved into such works as Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Verdi's *Attila* and

Puccini's *Tosca*, where the assaulted heroine turns the tables – and the phallic blade – upon the male. The shock of the famous Mad Scene in *Lucia*, Freudian critic Brigid Brophy pointed out, is that the blood with which the bride is dripping as she emerges from the nuptial chamber is not her own, and evidence of her maidenhead, but the bridegroom's. Her madness is the only acceptable explanation for her behaving in so 'unwomanly' a way – and it certainly isn't characteristic of the yielding, bullied persona she has presented to us for the previous two acts. In *Attila*, Odabella is avenging her entire civilization, the Roman Empire, on its violator – but it is difficult to feel much sympathy for this iron-clad battleaxe of a matron. If Attila finds this strenuous fire-eater bride material, he obviously deserves what he gets on the wedding night. *Tosca* is the old chestnut about the corrupt judge who will spare the boyfriend if the girl makes it worth his while, but of course he intends to betray her. It is more personally shocking because Puccini underlines every step of his heroine's path, the narrowing of a woman's choice to the point where she feels obliged to kill her sexual tormentor – and then he gives us the murder itself, on-stage and far more graphically than opera had been used to, a foretaste of the slasher flicks later in the twentieth century.

In all these works, lust (in *Lucia* and *Attila*'s case, even lust with marriage) is no longer its own justification. Civilization implies that unthinking biological necessity is no longer the sole motivation accepted as good. And yet it is our very expectation of single-minded male lust and the narrow range of traditionally permitted female response that makes poignant, indeed terrible, an opera like Verdi's *Rigoletto*, where Gilda, seduced and betrayed by the Duke and fully aware of his libertine character, nonetheless sacrifices her own life to save his – though he will never even know of her sacrifice.

In myth, and in opera, the riddles that represent the effort the male must make to achieve the fulfillment of lust are not always posed by the female. Often, it is her father or guardian who makes things difficult – walls her up in a tower or conceals her in some exotic disguise, which the correct party never fails to penetrate. In Greek myth, suitors for Hippodamia, heiress of Oeneus, king of Elis, were obliged to race chariots against the old king, who slew the losers. Pelops bribed Oeneus' charioteer to throw the race, promising him the first night with the bride – then slew the charioteer when he arrived to collect. (This is only one of the reasons Pelops's descendants, Agamemnon, Menelaus and Orestes, were accursed.)

In medieval legend, Tristan's father falls in love with Blanchefleur during a tournament in which he is wounded. Convinced he is too weak to require a chaperone, Blanchefleur's duenna lets the girl into the sick room, and Tristan is conceived with his father's all-but-dying breath. His mother then dies giving birth to him, and his life of love and death intertwined is thus set before he has begun to live it. His later stratagems, and Isolde's, to elude the jealous vigilance of King Mark, are only more of the symbolic hurdles that, by raising the stakes and the lustful energy of the male, ensure the excitement proper to his undertaking the sexual act — pointlessly in this story, since Isolde never becomes pregnant. In Wagner's opera, they never quite manage to have sex — the drama and, even more, the violently chromatic music, are about yearning for a fulfillment, an ease, that is never attained. Death rather than life is the consummation of such a passion.

But in the Celtic legends that were the source for the medieval epics that Wagner quarried for his libretto, the duel between the right (usually young) man and the old one, the formal (legal) possessor, father in authority if not blood, is the purport of the tales of Deirdre and Naisi, Grainne and Diarmuid. The fact that none of these tales of de facto adultery, of the female slipping from the grasp of the official husband to that of a more appropriate lover, ever leads to pregnancy was intended by the poet to add an extra touch of poignancy, a sense of biological waste, to the concluding tragedy. *Ernani*, Verdi's opera from Hugo's revolutionary play, is a version of this tale: Elvira loves Ernani, not her guardian, her elderly uncle, Silva; thanks to the interference of the witty Emperor Charles V (who also desires her), she is given to her true lover — but Silva, eaten up with the unassuageable jealousy of age for youth, uses the notion of family honor to oblige Ernani to kill himself before the wedding can be consummated. Biologically, what a waste — but, dramatically, how poignant!

Classical opera (and the drama contemporary with it) is full of maidens who can only be won when a father's prohibitions are met. If it's a husband, rather than a father, who must be outwitted, the result tends to be a farce rather than a serious work — Donizetti's *Don Pasquale*, Ravel's *L'Heure Espagnol*, Offenbach's *La Belle Hélène*. The implication is that the lover of a daughter is pursuing his society-mandated role, which is a serious matter, but the lover of a wife is doing the job the husband is incapable of. This is funny — deception, disguise, is always, in some sense, comical — but, biologically, it is equally necessary. As long as another generation is provided for, the ending is happy in some sense. All

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mythic cycles — think of the sexual tales and prohibitions in the Torah — approve of any sex, no matter how vile, if it leads to reproduction. (The Torah quotes tales of incest, rape, prostitution and fornication more or less approvingly — but prescribes death for masturbation and homosex.)

The Count in Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro* would be merely threatening, wicked, if he were just the man in authority threatening young love — but since he has a lovely wife, who may not be immune to the flirtations of other men, he becomes comical as well, which turns the poison of possible tragedy into classic comedy.

In Weber's *Der Freischütz*, Prince Ottakar's chief huntsman has offered his daughter, Agathe, to the man who can win a shooting contest. Max, her lover, is so desperate to win that he all but sells his soul to the demon Samael for six magic bullets. When, at the conclusion, the truth is revealed, the marriage is postponed for seven years — an unmythical ending, typical perhaps of the imposition of Christian moral standards on mythic turf. In Wagner's *Die Meistersinger*, Pogner, the wealthy goldsmith, offers his daughter, Eva, to the man who can win a singing contest. In love with Walther (who has failed to make the run-offs), Eva attempts to elope with him, but the opera's true hero, Hans Sachs, prevents this — obliging Walther (with Sachs's aid) to enter the contest and win Eva fair and square, according to the demands of society. In the same composer's *Siegfried*, the hero must kill a dragon and cut the world-ruling spear of Wotan, king of the Gods, before he can penetrate the magic fire with which Wotan has surrounded his favorite daughter, Brunnhilde, Siegfried's destined bride.

In the operas of Verdi, to whom (for reasons that scholars still debate), the parent-child bond is always significant, often more intense

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than the bond between lovers. The attempts of fathers or father-figures to prevent access to their daughters except by approved suitors (in Verdi's *Ernani*, *Jerusalem*, *Luisa Miller*, *Rigoletto*, *Simon Boccanegra*, *La Forza del Destino*, *Otello*, *Falstaff*) are seldom successful and often disastrous. Disobedient daughters who choose for themselves often come to grief (Elvira in *Ernani*, power-hungry Abigail in *Nabucco*, the saintly warrior Giovanna d'Arco, the adulterous Lina in *Stiffelio*, Luisa Miller who falls for a disguised Count, Gilda seduced by a disguised Duke, Leonora in *Forza* who falls for an Inca Prince despised by her racist father, Desdemona in *Otello*), but daughters who accept the family choice hardly do better. Lida in *La Battaglia di Legnano* and Elisabeth de Valois in *Don Carlos* marry men they don't love for selfless reasons, and reap nothing but bitterness and thanklessness for their pains – from the men they marry, from the men they really love and, by implication, from their whole societies.

For Verdi, it is the parental bond that is most significant in their lives – and the survival, by hook or by crook, of future generations is seldom an issue. This may be the triumph of personal myth over primal myth – and certainly Verdi is an unusual Italian composer in that his creations have enough psychological complexity to give their dilemmas depth and resonance. We feel we know them, through their music, because the music exhibits undercurrents, doubts, secondary meanings. They can be acted in more than one way. But the resonance, the way these dramas reach us, is more through troubling personal echoes than through the position of the figure in society. We seldom feel at the end of a Verdi opera, the sense that our society has triumphed in a satisfying conclusion – we are more inclined to feel a resentment, which is perhaps the emotion

Verdi is sharing with us, a bitterness retained from his youth throughout a career of artistic success and financial triumph.

In the operas Mozart wrote to librettos by the roué Lorenzo da Ponte, the quest is not so much for the male to secure the consent of the proper female, but for society to keep the sexual male within his proper bounds. In *The Marriage of Figaro*, Figaro and Susanna love each other, and the Countess loves the Count – but the Count and his adolescent page, Cherubino, the wild card in what would otherwise be a simple farce, ardently pursue every available female. That the Count, who sees himself as the reigning stud in this herd, constantly finds the ardent boy in his way, quicker with every available female, is the sly change playwright Beaumarchais and librettist da Ponte ring on the old theme.

But men are not the only transgressors of proper, pre-ordained mating patterns – for the Countess is not above some tender flirtation with Cherubino, and the elderly Marcellina has a yen to marry Figaro, and is only dissuaded by the discovery that he is her long-lost son. The plot encompasses an elaborate series of stratagems to shame the Count into being faithful to his wife and, incidentally, to get Marcellina married off to Figaro's father, his old enemy Dr. Bartolo, and Cherubino to Barberina, the gardener's daughter. Can we believe that any of these matches – except that of Figaro and Susanna – will remain constant? Fortunately, that is not a question we are obliged to answer – the opera is a comedy. That is, the survival of social mores, not of life itself, is the matter symbolically at stake.

In *Don Giovanni*, an even more anarchic rake turns society on its head. The hero not only seduces (or attempts) every woman he encounters, he employs a valet to list them! (2,065 in five countries, if you are interested. And this was before the sexual revolution or, indeed, any other revolution.) Don Giovanni claims that he adores women, but from what we see of his MO, one may doubt that he even likes them, or knows them – once they have said yes, he loses all interest. Indeed, they don't even have to say yes – he attempts rape on three occasions in Act I alone. I had great fun once showing a film of *Don Giovanni* to two liberated women and a sensitive New Age guy (or SNAG). The libretto, which I have known since I was 10, no longer makes much of an impression on me, but watching my friends' first exposure and appalled reactions to its unapologetic and, shall we say, archaic attitudes was utterly refreshing – I was able to share their astonishment and shock.

Clearly Don Giovanni, who nearly wrecks two marriages and is seen dining alone and friendless in the penultimate scene before the vengeful statue drags him down to hell and restores the social and moral order, is not a good representative of the principle of the survival of the human race. Yet his amoral energy has much of the amorality that is perhaps a necessary, concomitant of human nature in lust mode – such that he was seen by 19th-century revolutionaries as symbolizing freedom from the shackles of stultifying authority. If his failure to treat women as anything but lust objects, his failure to regard men as anything but dupes (if they are his social equals) or servants (if they are not), has alienated the modern audience, we can still see his remorseless, untiring need for sexual contact as a mythicized natural function, albeit one perverted out of its proper place in life.

That the Don's music is so much more elegant, more virile, than the music of his sexual rivals, the wimpy aristocrat Don Ottavio and the lumpish peasant Masetto, inclines the hearer to more sympathy with Don Giovanni's amoral erotic intentions than with their highly moral ones. We can only infer that Mozart intended this imbalance – that the opera is a celebration of the male sexual impulse – or that Mozart's own libido ran away with him in idealizing that rather than the prissier alternatives. He had proved, with Belmonte in *The Abduction from the Seraglio* and with Figaro, that he was quite capable of making an aristocratic tenor and a bumptious lower-class bass sound sexy; that he did not do so in *Don Giovanni* must be, on some level, intentional. (In the moralistic *Seraglio*, two men – the aristocratic Pasha and his comic servant, Osmin – command two women, the English Konstanze and Blondchen, to fall in love with them. They have the ladies in their power, but they are not impressed – because they are in love with two younger men, the Spaniards Belmonte and Pedrillo. Freedom of amorous choice triumphs – but, according to the plot, only because the Pasha is a benevolent, philosophic type. He does not, however, sing a note – and the music makes it clear that the triumph is of true tenor-soprano love over any external interference.)

The sexual characters of the third Mozart-da Ponte opera, *Così fan Tutte*, are easily duped by their sexual fantasies into believing whatever they, or the masterful cynic Don Alfonso, wishes them to believe. No one is more surprised than the four lovers are when genuine feeling slips into this complicated tale of fiancée-swapping – but it is this genuine heart, supplied by Mozart's music, that makes them lovable dupes. In the end, Don Alfonso advises the young men to marry their girlfriends despite their infidelities, because “così fan tutte” – all women

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do it. One might add that it doesn't matter, in the long run, if they do – so long as there is a new generation, does it matter who fathered it? But this is not a moral that society was going to permit on the stage in 1790, or for a century or so afterwards, when the opera was considered too immoral to perform without rewriting.

Richard Strauss, who consciously imitated Wagner and, especially, Mozart in many of his operas, is unusual in taking up the question from the opposite side: what makes a woman worthy of becoming a mother to future generations? He genuinely seems to have found women much more interesting than men – indeed, not a few of his heroes are played by women in drag, because he loved the female voice. Men in Strauss's operas, especially tenors, are often ciphers or stooges, but the women usually fascinate. True, they are presented from a man's point of view, and feminists may well find Strauss condescending, but the music is always beautiful and often expresses an emotional and intellectual depth of which the males in his operas are seldom capable.

In his second opera, *Feuersnot* (The Need for Fire), Strauss presents an alter ego, a young magician despised by his neighbors but true to the magical teachings of “Meister Reichert” (that is, Richard Wagner – a motif from the Ring makes this clear). The girl he loves invites him to her upstairs room in a basket, then stops the basket halfway up and exposes him, a laughingstock, to the entire town. Incensed, the hero chants a spell that puts out every hearth fire in town – until the cruel girl gives in and takes him into her bedroom after all. Whatever goes on up there, the hearth fires all light up down below. If the score is mediocre and the drama simplistic, the mythic element is certainly here: the hearth is life, and for life to go on, sex must have its way.

Whatever anthropology books Strauss had been reading, he put them away for his next several operas. Symbolism returns with *Ariadne auf Naxos* in 1916 – a post-modern fable, in which sung exegesis accompanies the action. A wealthy boor (who never appears) has



*This ... is the meaning of Wagner's drama,  
rather than the power plays of a bunch of  
morally shoddy supernaturals: that humans,  
living in the shadow of death and time,  
are 'better' than gods,  
who are impervious to such things.*

commissioned two entertainments: a light and sexy commedia dell'arte (whose subject was always the seduction of the woman from her husband or guardian by a worthier, or at least sexier, male) and a grand and ponderous opera seria on the subject of Ariadne, deserted on Naxos by Theseus on the way home from Crete. The Prologue includes bitter debates among the cast members over which piece shall be played first, ending when the patron commands that they be performed simultaneously (to save time). The Opera, which follows, does just that: Ariadne, abandoned by her seducer, longs for Death, and the commedia characters try to cheer her up with examples from their own amoral adventures. (Ariadne pays no attention.) At last a godlike figure appears, and she welcomes Death. But it is not Death; it is Bacchus, god of wine and ecstasy, come to bring her to transcendence and apotheosis, a place among the stars earned by her sufferings – or so he says. But Zerbinetta, from the commedia, comments that a broken-hearted woman can always be consoled by a new man. Strauss's score slyly plays it both ways – we have an eloquent, transcendental duet, and also a witty send-up.

In 1920, Strauss threw cynicism to the winds. His librettist, von Hofmannsthal, created a new mythology and a legend worthy of comparison (they felt) with Mozart's Masonic *The Magic Flute: Die Frau ohne Schatten*, The Woman without a Shadow. Here we deal so entirely with archetypes that only two of the opera's characters – the unseen and unheard king of the spirit realm, Keikobad, and the 'everyman' figure, Barak the Dyer – have names at all. The three women among whom the real drama takes place are the Empress, the Nurse and the Dyer's Wife.

Keikobad (the name was taken from a medieval Turkish king) has a daughter who has taken a fancy to humans – a taste "inherited from her mother", we are told, though we learn nothing else about that mysterious lady. In the form of a deer, the girl is pursued by the Emperor of the

Southwest Islands. At the moment of capture, she assumes her real form. Of course he falls in love with her, knowing nothing of her true nature. (All women are 'natural' and mysterious, according to the patriarchal mythos.) But the marriage is not a 'true' marriage – it is merely mutual lust, constantly indulged. For true marriage, the Empress must be capable of becoming pregnant. By her father's decree, as long as she casts no shadow, she remains inhuman, without a soul, literally 'impregnable' – unconquered, like Puccini's Turandot – and if she still casts no shadow at the end of a year, her husband will be turned into stone. Secretly, this is just what her Nurse, a powerful witch, hopes will happen. As the opera begins, only three days remain, and the Empress has no shadow. Learning only now of her father's law, she commands her Nurse to take her to Earth to get one.

They encounter Barak the Dyer and his bored, unhappy wife. The Nurse soon persuades the Dyer's Wife (with many a magical bribe) to agree to sell her shadow – she has no wish for children anyway, and only contempt for her devoted husband, who yearns for a house full of little ones he can slave for. Only when a terrible storm sweeps away their house at the moment she is renouncing her shadow does she begin to see the long-suffering Barak as he is. But it is too late – her shadow is lost and unclaimed.

In her father's realm, having turned away the wicked Nurse, the Empress is confronted with a statue – her husband, the Emperor. Only his eyes are still alive, pleading with her. A fountain rises at her feet – and a voice explains that if she drinks from it, she will receive the shadow of the Dyer's Wife. But in the distance she can hear Barak and his wife singing of their remorse and misery. She cannot bring herself to commit this theft – and by her sympathy and pity for ordinary humans, she finds she has become human as well, with a shadow of her own. The Dyer's Wife gets her shadow back, too, and as the opera ends, both couples are reunited and a chorus of their unborn children sing that the door to the world is open at last.

The Empress has elements within her of both the selfless Pamina in Mozart's *Magic Flute* and Wagner's Brunnhilde – who becomes human after observing the human love of Siegmund and Sieglinde, and feeling, in contradiction to her divine nature, sympathy for them. This, as Shaw pointed out in *The Perfect Wagnerite*, is the meaning of Wagner's drama, rather than the power plays of a bunch of morally shoddy supernaturals: that humans, living in the shadow of death and time, are

'better' than gods, who are impervious to such things. Brunnhilde was born a demi-goddess, a force of nature, unafflicted with personality or libido, uninfluenced by the messy concerns of those doomed to die – and not a player in the reproductive game. Wotan, in his attempt to combat the malevolence of Alberich and Fafnir, has tried to produce a child capable of free will, of knowing good from evil – in many mythologies the turning point between a creator deity and the human creature. Too late Wotan realizes that all his plans for the Walsungs are hopeless – they remain puppets. Later still, he realizes that Brunnhilde, his favorite child, is what he wanted all along – a creation capable of making moral judgments for herself, and of ignoring his when hers are superior. It is Siegmund's love for Sieglinde – and Sieglinde's even more self-sacrificing willingness to go on living, after Siegmund's death, in order to bear their child, that has taught Brunnhilde the moral meaning of life: sacrifice of oneself for a greater good. But in making her human, capable of understanding human feelings, this comprehension has also cost her her godhead. (This may have some resonance for believers in the Christian sacrificial myth as well – the dying Wagner was considering writing an opera on that subject.) Wotan, at his supreme tragic moment (and Wagner's score makes the most of it), understands that Brunnhilde is the child he had always wanted – and that he must lose her forever. She will now 'belong' to the man who can surmount the supernatural obstacles (magic fire) to awaken and possess her.

Brunnhilde rejoices in her fate – until she realizes that humans must face other things as well, such as moral ambiguity and even death. The only deaths in the Ring before the concluding calamity that are not the result of being slain (Fasolt by Fafnir, Siegmund by Hunding, Fafnir and Mime by Siegfried, Siegfried and Gunther by Hagen) are those of Hunding – who drops dead at a contemptuous word from Wotan – and Sieglinde's death in childbed. This event was highly ordinary before the twentieth century, and part of the thrill and terror when a woman yielded to the sexual needs of the male. We must believe that Sieglinde knows what Siegfried's birth will cost her when she agrees to submit to it – indeed, ecstatically rejoices in her submission. The news that she carries her dead brother's child sets off a musical explosion, the first appearance in the Ring of the rather Bellini-like theme Wagner dubbed "the glory of woman". The theme does not reappear until the very end of the fourth and last opera in the cycle – when it is identified with Brunnhilde's willful (altruistic we are to suppose) destruction of the entire civilization based on the corrupt quest for power set off by the theft of the Ring, gods

*The new world ...will be based on love and understanding ...[Brunnhilde] will bring it into being, giving her life (and the lives of a lot of other people) to do so – as Sieglinde (and so many other women before modern times) gave her life simply to bear a child. ... here it is the Daughter of God who brings it about, and she doesn't let God get off lightly either.*

included.

The new world, and you can trust a male chauvinist romantic like Wagner to say it, will be based on love and understanding, 'feminine' virtues, if you will. A woman, not a man, will bring it into being, giving her life (and the lives of a lot of other people) to do so – as Sieglinde (and so many other women before modern times) gave her life simply to bear a child. In a sense, this is the story of Jesus redeeming the world from age-old sin – except that here it is the Daughter of God who brings it about, and she doesn't let God get off lightly either.

Wagner, who never met a man whose wife he didn't like, had many deep thoughts about the rival claims of legal marriage and passion. He sought what many men seek – a woman who would put up with anything from him, even other women. The giving up of self that is required for true marriage was decidedly foreign to so egoistic a nature, but that didn't stop him from hymning the glories of matrimony, any more than lifelong bachelorhood stopped Beethoven.

There are six marriages in Wagner's epic Ring, and in each we have a chance to see what the individual has given up, and what the reward has been for society. In *Das Rheingold*, the prologue to the work, which deals only with gods and other supernatural beings, marriage is symbolized by the bitter union of Wotan and Fricka – who quarrel bitterly (and, we will learn, eternally) over the rules of their contract. Affection has been sacrificed in return for social status – but Fricka is not the one who tries to worm out of the bargain.

In *Die Walküre*, Sieglinde, Wotan's mortal daughter, partakes of two 'marriages' – her legal bond to Hunding, to whom she has been given by the men who killed her mother and carried her off as a child

*Sacred sex consecrates the drama that produces a new human ... To make that marriage, an individual takes on responsibilities towards the community, and gives up the potential self ... this sacrifice, which the hierogamy, the union of god and goddess, most sublimely implies, becomes in Goetterdaemerung the holy marriage of Brunnhilde and Siegfried. Their sacred sacrifice will give birth to a new world.*

(a marriage, significantly, protected by Fricka, guardian of the law), and her passionate but highly illegal union with her brother, Siegmund (a union denounced and destroyed by Fricka). Fricka thus stands revealed as an opponent of the future of life in the name of legalism – which is precisely the reverse of the Queen Goddess’s role in myth – for Sieglinde and Hunding are childless, but Sieglinde becomes pregnant by Siegmund from their one and only night of love. Her sacrifice – of home and place in the community, not to mention divine approval – is apparently insufficient to her transgression: Wagner exacts her death, as well, in giving us the divine child, Siegfried, fated to lead the world to its salvation.

Siegfried, too, makes two marriages: the bond of love to Brunnhilde, and the legal bond to Gutrune, whose brother Gunther forces Brunnhilde to marry him. Both the legal unions with the Gibichung pair are ‘magical’ in the sense of deceptive, unreal: Brunnhilde has married Gunther because Siegfried, in Gunther disguise, forced her to do so. He has married Gutrune because he drank a potion that made him forget Brunnhilde. Many stagings rightly stress that the bumptious, naïve Siegfried comes from a different world to that of the charming but corrupt woman he has married; in the final scene of the opera, even Gutrune admits she was never anything but Siegfried’s concubine, while Brunnhilde was his true wife. By then it is too late – both bridegrooms are dead, and Brunnhilde has resolved to destroy the whole world for letting the disaster of her betrayal occur in it.

Siegfried, at the first sight of Brunnhilde, has given up the

fearlessness that was his emblematic quality and also his shield against the world. He was “the boy who didn’t know what fear was”, and this enabled him to forge his sword, slay his dragon, take the Ring that symbolizes rule of the world. The sight of Brunnhilde makes him tremble for the first time in his life – and later he proves vulnerable to magic, to skullduggery and to weapons. Brunnhilde, for her part, has given up her godhood, her immortality, in order to become a woman, perhaps a fount of new life, like Strauss’s Empress. This in turn makes her vulnerable to human forces she has always despised – she has never had to care for. Marriage – the ability to love, the willingness to give up one’s individual self – is, in Wagner, a stripping away of the defenses of the individual ego. That this produces good in the continuation of life is shown by the result of Brunnhilde’s sacrifice: She destroys the corrupt civilization and its compromised gods to give birth to a new world order, based on love and sacrifice rather than power and law. It is for this reason that the melody filling the opera house at the conclusion of the Ring, the motive Wagner dubbed “The glory of women”, is the one heard only once before in the entire cycle – at the moment Sieglinde learned she was pregnant, and resolved, despite her despair, to live to give birth to her son.

Sacred sex consecrates the drama that produces a new human, and a baby is one of the most vital symbols for everything that is potential, for the promise of the future. To make that marriage, an individual takes on responsibilities towards the community, and gives up the potential self that exists in individuality. This commitment, this sacrifice, which the hierogamy, the union of god and goddess, most sublimely implies, becomes in *Goetterdaemerung* the holy marriage of Brunnhilde and Siegfried. Their sacred sacrifice will give birth to a new world.

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## The Magician of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*

by Maggie Carew

The older and more experienced I become, the more I admire William Shakespeare. I have seen countless productions of his plays, and read them over and over. I think about him and his characters often, quote him in daily speech, and continually find new insights in his work.

*"Age cannot wither [him], nor custom stale  
[His] infinite variety."* (Anthony and Cleopatra, II:ii)

The 37 plays, 154 sonnets, 2 narrative poems and a few shorter verses he has bequeathed to us excel as drama, as psychology, and as poetry, no matter what criteria are applied. They may be interpreted in countless ways — and have been, according to the temperament of the interpreters and the fashions of thought prevalent at the time. In our century alone, Hamlet, for example, has been seen to suffer from an Oedipus complex (Ernest Jones), to be an Angry Young Man (Kenneth Tynan), and (in a recent British stage production) to be a victim of multiple personality syndrome. At Stratford, Ontario, about 20 years ago, a production of *The Tempest* emphasized the magical elements. Prospero, played by Len Cariou, used the spirits to cast a circle for the masque. *Macbeth* has been presented as a modern American mobster (*Joe Macbeth*), and in Orson Welles' 1948 movie version, the First Witch carries a stang. Verdi based three of his finest operas on *Macbeth*, *Othello*, and *Falstaff*, adhering fairly closely to the text. *King Lear* has been produced in the style of the Japanese Noh drama and Kurosawa is one of the many distinguished directors to have made movies of the plays. Shakespeare's work went into eclipse in the century or so following his death, but he was rehabilitated by the great actors Garrick and Keane in the 18th century and is at the present time one of the hottest properties in Hollywood.

What can possibly be added to all of this? In my opinion the well is not nearly dry. Every new era, every paradigm shift in the history of ideas, suggests new approaches. In this essay I wish to present my reasons for believing that Shakespeare was familiar (at least!) with the elements of

Ceremonial Magic. I admit that I cannot prove my contention beyond a reasonable doubt, but that is equally true of most of the theories of the past. At the best, I hope to provide a little nutritious food for thought, and you, gentle reader, are at liberty to take it or leave it. It is just one more personal interpretation. We all bring ourselves into our appreciation of any literature, and the author puts himself into the writing of it. We are mirrors for each other, and Shakespeare held, "as 'twere, the mirror up to nature" (*Hamlet*, III: ii). He left no diaries, and no personal letters have been found. The

*... in Shakespeare's day female practitioners of magic are 'foul witches' while male magicians are virtuous and learned. Wizards, from Prospero to Oz, are 'very good but very mysterious'*

Elizabethan Age was not noted for introspection (although we know that Shakespeare read and admired Montaigne), and autobiographies until modern times were rare. To assume that *The Tempest*, or any other work of his, is autobiographical is just that: an assumption.

When I was at school (about a million years ago), the most influential Shakespearean critic was still the venerable Andrew Bradley. There was a prevailing myth of Shakespeare, in which he was portrayed as a high school drop-out (true), who got a girl into trouble and had to marry her (also true), who was suspected of poaching (not proven) and took it on the lam from his home town to lose himself in the big city; that he never (or rarely — the twins have to be accounted for) returned until he was old; that he was a third-rate actor, and an insomniac ("Sleep no more. Macbeth doth murder sleep" *Macbeth*, II: ii), and a womanizer, who may or may not have written the plays for which he was paid a fortune (not true: Shakespeare's money came principally from his partnership in the company that owned the theatres and from shrewd real estate ventures). Since then, many devoted students have spent hours in dusty archives excavating wills, deeds, and parish registers which, taken together, contribute to a very different appraisal of his character. Computer technology has facilitated techniques of language analysis that are now being applied to all kinds of texts. Very few modern scholars still believe that Shakespeare did not write the works attributed to him.

*"An upstart crow,"* wrote Robert Greene in 1592, *"beautified with our feathers ... as well able to bombast out a blank verse as the best of you ... the only Shake-scene in a country."*

Greene was dying when he wrote those bitter words. In February, 1592, a play of his had bombed badly, while in March, Shakespeare had enjoyed a huge success with *Henry V*.

*... the material world is governed by two opposite principles: the Boreal, or northern, principle of condensation; and the Austral (southern) principle of rarefaction. These principles seem to be personified by Caliban and Ariel.*

There seems to have been some resentment on the part of the university men towards this upstart from a provincial town, educated at a provincial grammar school, and writing better plays than theirs. The notion that someone else must have written the plays grew largely out of this town versus gown rivalry. Interestingly, one of the staunchest advocates of the theory that Francis Bacon wrote the plays was Manly P. Hall.

*"It is quite evident,"* he writes, *"that William Shakespeare could not, unaided, have produced the immortal writings bearing his name. He did not possess the necessary literary culture ... his parents were illiterate ..."*

This is simply not true. John Shakespeare was a respected burgess of the flourishing town of Stratford, and a member of the school board. Another distinguished alumnus of Stratford Grammar School was one John Harvard. In some parts of the United States, a 'grammar' school; is an elementary school, but in England a grammar school was (and still is) an exclusively academic high school, where Latin and Greek grammar were taught, together with rhetoric. For his homework, Shakespeare would have been required to write Latin verses on classical models. I think if he had gone on to university, he would have been trained to write like Marlowe and Jonson and all the other talented people of his age. As it was, his language was totally original. He elevated the common speech to the level of poetry. It has been estimated that he coined more than 2000 new words, together with many new phrases that we use daily and have come to think of as clichés. From *The Tempest* alone, example include: 'brave new world', 'in a pickle', 'foul play', and (my

favourite) 'thin air'. A Cambridge man might have said 'incorporeal element', and people can always be found who will prefer such stilted language and think it is somehow superior because ordinary people have trouble with it.

In *Shakespeare and the Drama* (1906), Tolstoy remarked:

*"All his characters speak, not their own, but always one and the same Shakespearean pretentious and unnatural language, in which not only they could not speak, but in which no living man ever has spoken or does speak ... a writer like Shakespeare — who had not developed in his mind the religious convictions proper to his time ... corresponded to the irreligious and immoral frame of mind of the upper classes of his time and ours."*

Shakespeare was not a member of the upper classes, but Tolstoy was! One wonders which plays Tolstoy had read, and whose translation. Throughout his plays, Shakespeare expresses sympathy and understanding for the common man, and for the "houseless heads and unfed sides" of the dispossessed.

On the eve of battle, Henry V talks to a group of common soldiers in prose, their own language. He tells them "Every subject's duty is the king's, but every subject's soul's his own" (*Henry V*, IV: i). In the Elizabethan era that was a courageous thing to say in public. Censorship was a fact of life, and so was jail for writing 'lewd and seditious' plays: it happened to Ben Jonson. As for 'the religious convictions proper to his time', one of the seminal issues of Shakespeare's era was the no-hold-barred conflict between Catholic and Protestant ideologies. Prudent men were very guarded on the subject of religion.

Coleridge, on the other hand, praises Shakespeare for exactly the same qualities:

*His language is entirely his own, and the younger dramatists imitated him. The construction of Shakespeare's sentences, whether in verse of prose, is the necessary and homogeneous vehicle of his peculiar manner of thinking ... he is of no age — nor, I may add, of any religion, or party, or profession. The body and substance of his works came out of the unfathomable depths of his own oceanic mind* (Table Talk, 1836).

When we look at the great masters retrospectively, our perception is filtered through all the changes that have happened between their time and ours, and we tend to forget that all great artists are modern and innovative. We need to try to see them through the eyes of their own era, to assess them in relation to the work of their contemporaries and predecessors, and to recognize — as far as it is possible — the cultural prejudices ingrained in our own culture.

Shakespeare became successful, respected and rich through a combination of natural talent and exceedingly hard work. He was frequently at court, both in Elizabeth's reign and that of her successor, James I. Every

recorded description we have by people who actually knew him (except Robert Greene) comments on his 'sweetness', his 'gentleness' (by which was meant something like refinement), and his wit. He kept his friends throughout his life, and allowed his daughters to marry husbands of their own choice, even though he disapproved — with good reason — of his younger daughter's choice. Shakespeare was a dutiful husband, a shrewd businessman, and a hard worker. In short, a 'master of the ordinary'. This was no semi-literate hick.

All drama began in religious ritual, English drama had its roots in the medieval mystery plays performed in churches to instruct the largely illiterate congregations. As these early plays gradually became more theatrical and less religious, they were moved out of the churches into the market square or the inn yard, where they were performed on a 'pageant' — a wheeled cart with curtains around it and a space underneath to store properties. Large inns of the period were usually built around three sides of a square, with an open space in the middle and balconies running around the sides. This model was easily adapted to the shape of the first Elizabethan permanent theatres, such as the Globe. Actors became professionals, passing the hat at performances. It didn't take the theatre owners long to figure out that collecting the money at the door was a more reliable method. At the Globe, people paid one penny for general admission, and additional penny for admission to the covered seats, and a third penny to get into the best seats. Almost everyone could afford it, and going to the play became a popular and frequent entertainment — just like bear-baiting.

During the turbulent reign of Queen Elizabeth I, England became very prosperous. The population of London grew from 50,000 to 200,000 in about 60 years. The city was crowded, jerry-built, dirty, noisy, plague-ridden — and dynamic. Actors enjoyed the status of modern stars. Shakespeare was an actor, and became a shareholder in the stock company that owned the Globe. His plays belonged to the company, and for the most part were not published during his lifetime because the rudimentary copyright laws of the time protected publishers, not authors. The company jealously guarded its properties and tried (not always successfully) to prevent rival companies from mounting pirated versions. During the warm summer weather there was usually plague in London and the theatres were temporarily closed. At such times, the players would take the show on the road — back to pageants and inn yards. These tours would provide Shakespeare with ample opportunities to visit his family in Stratford, and records exist of theatrical performances there.

In 1609 the company opened the Blackfriars theatre in north London.

This was one of a new type of theatre which had features in common with both the Globe and the palace rooms where command performances were given. It was an enclosed theatre, which held a smaller audience but charged a much higher price for admission. It was consequently more exclusive, and not at the mercy of the weather. Evening performances could be given. There was an elevated stage at one end, with a musician's gallery overhanging it, and doors at the back. There was room for machinery and special effects. Seating

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was arranged in rows facing the stage, and also in balconies around the walls. It was for this theatre that the last plays were written, and Shakespeare, ever the innovator, must have reveled in the possibilities of the new technology.

But something had happened to Shakespeare. The death of Queen Elizabeth in 1603 seemed to many to mark the end of a Golden Age. She had reigned for as long as many people could remember. Shakespeare's plays took on a pessimistic tone. It was at this period that he wrote the 'dark' comedies and the 'problem' plays. He had no money problems. His wife died in 1609, and perhaps he loved her more than has been supposed. Perhaps his health broke down. Perhaps he was simply exhausted. The records indicate that he spent more and more time in Stratford, buying real estate and apparently planning for his retirement. In London, he trained young John Fletcher to take over the position of principal playwright for the company, collaborating with him on *Henry VIII* and on a play called *The Two Noble Kinsmen* which is so much Fletcher and so little Shakespeare that it is not included in the canon of the complete works.

The last play Shakespeare wrote which was entirely his own work was *The Tempest*, written for the Blackfriars theatre and premiered there in 1612. Try to imagine what it would have been like to attend a performance: the large room ablaze with candles which would reflect from the jewels and rich fabrics worn by the audience, and ceiling and the extremities of the room would melt into shadow and the air would be filled with music.

“... the isle is full of noises.

Sounds, and sweet airs, that give delight, and hurt not” (*Tempest*, III: ii).

We do not know who wrote the music for this first production, but whoever he was he was a contemporary of John Dowland and William Byrd. There was probably a consort of lutes and viols in the musicians’ gallery, and many of the cast members were called upon to sing ‘ayres’, a popular new vogue.

It was customary to open a play with a brief conversation not essential to the action. In the absence of lights and curtain this was a useful device to give the audience time to find their seats *The Tempest*, however,

*Shakespeare hired professional child actors for the role of Ariel and the chorus of spirits. They would be light in weight, asexual in appearance, and they would sing high treble. It is certainly true that the convention of diminutive fairy folk so deplored by Tolkien had its origins in this period.*

begins with a shipwreck — thunder-sheets, flashing explosions, a ship drawn across the back of the stage by a windlass, people yelling above the din. I think the special effects would look contrived, and that the style of acting would be quite mannered, but that would not be a difficulty for people who were used to life at court.

Now that he has everyone’s attention, Shakespeare moves the scene to Prospero’s ‘cell’, or cave on the island. He tells his daughter, Miranda, the story of their past and how they came to the island when she was too young to remember. This exposition, punctuated by her questions, establishes her character as sweet and gentle creature and his as a powerful magician. Prospero, it turns out is the rightful Duke of Milan. His interest in the occult sciences developed into an obsession. Devoting most of his time to magic and science, he allowed his brother to take over the administration. Eventually, the brother saw his way, with the connivance of the King of Naples, to usurp the duchy. Prospero was set adrift in an open boat with his motherless infant daughter. A noble Neapolitan smuggled aboard necessary supplies and “from mine own library ... volumes that I prize above my dukedom” (*Tempest*, I: ii).

Here they have lived for twelve years, but at last a ship is passing near the island which carries the brother, the noble Neapolitan, the King of

Naples and his son. Prospero seizes his opportunity for revenge. We meet first the king’s son, Ferdinand, who has been separated from the others and believes he is the sole survivor of the wreck. Prospero makes it clear to the audience that part of his plan is to marry his daughter to Ferdinand, so we know right away that this will be less of a good old-fashioned revenge tragedy and more of a redressing of the balance. “There’s no harm done,” he assures Miranda. “No harm. I have done nothing but in care of thee” (*Tempest*, I: ii).

The island is populated by spirits, led by Ariel, who is an important character in the play. Prospero uses his magic arts to command these spirits to his service. There is also Caliban, a monster who once tried to molest Miranda, and is kept in total abjection by Prospero (he is the aboriginal inhabitant, and much has been written about the contemporary American colonies both from the point of view of the prejudices of the colonists and from that on the exploited native population). Caliban’s mother was Sycorax, a ‘foul witch’ and ‘blue-eyed hag’ (I think probably this should be ‘blear-eyed’), who was exiled to the island for her crimes. and who locked up Ariel in a tree for refusing to obey her evil orders. It is interesting to note in passing that in Shakespeare’s day female practitioners of magic are ‘foul witches’ while male magicians are virtuous and learned. Wizards, from Prospero to Oz, are ‘very good but very mysterious’.

**I**t interests me that Prospero insists he has done no harm. He has taken upon himself the very gratifying task of manipulating the situation by magical means to achieve the outcome he desires. He might argue that he has acted ‘for the good of all’, but certainly not ‘according to the free will of all’. He implies that the end justifies the means. On the other hand, many occult Orders are hierarchical in nature and constitution.

One of the delights of Shakespeare’s work is that it is possible to read almost anything into it. *The Tempest* may be seen entirely in Jungian terms, with Prospero as The Self (or the Wise Old Man), Ferdinand and Miranda as animus and anima, Ariel as The Child and Caliban as The Shadow. The tempest itself, in this interpretation, would be a mental or spiritual crisis (which may have been connected to Shakespeare’s period of ‘dark’ and ‘problem’ plays and his decision to retire at the comparatively early age of 48).

Manly P. Hall claims that the whole play is an encryptment of esoteric — specifically Rosicrucian — knowledge, and that the First Folio contains much more; and that this would suggest that Shakespeare could not have written it.

*The philosophic ideals promulgated throughout the Shakespearean plays distinctly demonstrate their author to have been thoroughly familiar with*

*certain doctrines and tenets peculiar to Rosicrucianism,” writes Hall; and again: “Who but a Platonist, a Qabbalist, or a Pythagorean could have written The Tempest?*

Quite so. But Hall has failed to prove by these arguments that Bacon wrote the plays and that Shakespeare did not. If documentary evidence exists, or ever did exist, it will probably not be made available. I am not a Rosicrucian and I am quite prepared to accept Hall’s judgment on this. He is a recognized authority on arcane systems, but not on everyday life in England in the reigns of Elizabeth and James. He has proved nothing but his own prejudice. I cannot prove my thesis either, but if Hall’s contention is true that Rosicrucian symbolism is encrypted throughout the plays, then it was Shakespeare who put it there. He assumes that Shakespeare could not have been a Rosicrucian or a Freemason, but I can think of no reason why he should not be. In the England of his day it was safer to be an occultist than a Catholic!

According to Catholic canon law, Elizabeth Tudor, who was the daughter of Ann Boleyn, was illegitimate and therefore had no right to the throne. The next heir was her cousin Mary Stewart, Queen of Scots, who was a Catholic. Pope Pius V excommunicated Elizabeth, which meant that her Catholic subjects were no longer bound to obey her (all of this at a time when England’s greatest political rival was Catholic Spain). Elizabeth’s sister, Queen Mary I — ‘Bloody Mary’ — had burned Protestants as heretics. Elizabeth’s spin doctors charged Catholic priests not with heresy, but with treason. They were publicly put to death in a most barbarous manner, and persons who tried to protect them were also imprisoned and sometimes executed. The principle of separation of church and state was a very new idea when it was incorporated into the Constitution of the United States.

Occultists, on the other hand, were not perceived to be a threat to the monarch. During the Renaissance, which reached England at this time, there was a revival of interest in the ideas of the neo-Platonists, Pythagoreans and hermeticists. No distinction was made between astrology and astronomy; Tycho Brahe and Johannes Kepler, contemporaries of Shakespeare, practiced both. In the writings of the period, including Shakespeare’s, there are frequent references to beliefs which were widely held then, but now have currency only among occultists.

For example, analogical thinking was an accepted norm, and so was belief in the dictum of Hermes Trismegistus popularly paraphrased as ‘As above, so below’. It was believed that the natural order of creation was hierarchical, that matter was constructed of the four elements, and that the circle was the ideal form. There was little distinction made between science and what we would call occultism. Medicine, especially, was based firmly on

*[John Dee] was an alchemist, a student of the Talmud and of Rosicrucianism, and a medium. It seems strange to us that the Church of England was not nearly as hostile to these practices as it was to Roman Catholicism ...*

the theories of Paracelsus.

The most renowned occultist of the period was John Dee. After taking his degree at Cambridge at the age of 17, Dee traveled widely in Europe, where he studied mathematics and astrology. Under a cloud during Mary Tudor’s reign, he came into his own in Elizabeth’s, who paid him the honour of visiting him at his home in order to consult him. He was an alchemist, a student of the Talmud and of Rosicrucianism, and a medium. It seems strange to us that the Church of England was not nearly as hostile to these practices as it was to Roman Catholicism; but as long as metaphysics was studied privately by men of substance, the clergy were content to tolerate it.

In *Psychic Self-Defense*, Dion Fortune writes:

The finest minds in occultism are totally unknown outside their own Orders ... Those who know what to look for, however, can pick them out readily. Perhaps at this length of time I may be forgiven if I break the Oath of the Mysteries that binds to secrecy concerning the names of initiates and suggest that the key to the Bacon-Shakespeare controversy may lie in the fact that Bacon and Shakespeare were members of the same Order.

It must be added that Fortune simply makes the assertion; no supporting evidence is offered in the book for this remarkable statement. It is important to remember that anyone may read almost anything into someone else’s work when it is approached with preconceived expectations. Perhaps that is what I am doing in this essay! With this caveat in mind, I want to point out some details of *The Tempest* which suggest strongly to me that Shakespeare was indeed an occultist.

There seem to have been Masonic lodges in England in the middle ages. The Regius MS. (discovered in the 19th century) is dated 1390. It claims that the Masonic movement came to England in the time of Athelstan, grandson of Alfred the Great. There are other mss. which contain similar information. That these did not surface until the early 19th century —



the periods of Francis Barrett — suggests to me that they may be akin to the Book of the Law suddenly discovered in the reign of King Josiah (*II Chronicles*, 34: 15-21). Nevertheless, there is no doubt that there were Masons in London in Shakespeare's day, and that the Rosicrucian Order was introduced into England by Robert Fludd (1574-1637). After extensive travels in Europe, Fludd settled in London in 1605 or shortly afterwards, six years before *The Tempest* was written.

One of Fludd's beliefs was that the material world is governed by two opposite principles: the Boreal, or northern, principle of condensation; and the Austral (southern) principle of rarefaction. These principles seem to be personified by Caliban and Ariel. Given that the north is traditionally ascribed to the earth element in Western tradition, the brutish and scarcely human Caliban seems to fit neatly. Uriel is the archangel of earth, but by replacing the last vowel of the alphabet with the first one, we get Ariel. If Caliban is (almost) an anagram of Cannibal, then Ariel could be a pun on *aerial*, an apt name for the principle of rarefaction.

At the Blackfriars theatre, Ariel and his attendant sprites would have been suspended with ropes and pulleys to fly about the stage. Popular rivals to the legitimate theatre of this period were the companies of child actors, most of whom had been trained in the great cathedral choir schools. Shakespeare takes a crack at them in *Hamlet*, when he has Rosencrantz describe them as:

... an aery of children,  
little eyases, that cry out on the top of the question  
and are most tyrannically clapt for it (*Hamlet*, II: ii).

I think 'eyas' may be a corruption of the Greek Aias (Ajax). There are two heroes named Aias in the *Iliad* — Big Aias and Little Aias.

On the principal that if you can't beat them you may as well employ them, Shakespeare hired professional child actors for the role of Ariel and the chorus of spirits. They would be light in weight, asexual in appearance, and they would sing high treble. It is certainly true that the convention of diminutive fairy folk so deplored by Tolkien had its origins in this period.

One of the central events in the plot of *The Tempest* is Prospero's calculatedly cruel treatment of Ferdinand, designed to prove his courage and to arouse Miranda's compassion. He makes it clear that he has every intention of matching these two:

... It goes on, I see,  
As my soul prompts it ...  
At the first sight  
They have changed eyes. Delicate Ariel,  
I'll set thee free for this! (*Tempest*, I: ii).

The episode reads very like the traditional ordeal preparatory to initiation, and in this respect resembles the treatment of Tamino in *The Magic Flute*. To celebrate Ferdinand's success in the ordeal, Prospero conjures up not only spirits, but Olympian Goddesses, no less — Juno, Ceres and Iris: goddesses of marriage and prosperity, and their divine messenger. This scene is in fact a masque within the play, and was probably entirely sung, or acted to music. Meanwhile Caliban and the drunken servants are hounded — literally — by spirits in the shapes of dogs, and the ship's crew is in a spell-induced sleep.

Critics have usually identified Prospero closely with his creator, suggesting that in this last play Shakespeare is taking a formal farewell of his public.

*I'll break my staff  
Bury it certain fathoms in the earth  
And deeper than did every plummet sound  
I'll drown my book* (*Tempest*, V: i).

Please note that he says 'book', *not* 'books' as he is made to do in the recent Peter Greenaway film *Prospero's Books*. It has been suggested that 'breaking-staff' is a play on 'shake-spear', and that the drowned book is a play script; but it is at least equally possible that Shakespeare meant a magician's wand or staff, and his grimoire.

One of the great losses of European art is the opera that Dylan Thomas was collaborating on with Stravinsky at the time of his death. I had managed to come to terms with that, but in the course of researching this essay I came across another loss which I had not known of, and which is so calamitous that I shall be grieving over it for a long time. When he died, Mozart was planning an opera based on *The Tempest*. It would have been a collaboration of the two artists I love the most in all the world.

It is common knowledge that Mozart was a Mason, and so was his friend, Emanuel Schikaneder, who wrote the libretto for *The Magic Flute*. Like *The Tempest*, this last opera was a huge popular success. It was the culmination of Mozart's mature work, written not for the court but for the public theatre, full of melody and high spirits. It also contains much Masonic symbolism, especially in the very instances in which it resembles *The Tempest* — which may well have been what attracted Mozart to the play. Schikaneder was a successful actor-producer whose repertoire included the roles of Macbeth and King Lear. It was certainly Schikaneder who changed the original story line, in which the daughter of the good fairy was abducted by the evil magician, Sarastro. (I have always had difficulties with the abrogation of Pamina's free will and the dangers to which she is exposed during her

captivity.) He it was also who introduced the characters of the Three Boys, who are connected with Masonic symbolism. In Viennese productions to this day, they are always played by members of the Vienna Boys' Choir — the little eyes of the 20th century. I suspect this is the reason why Ariel was triplicated in the movie *Prospero's Books* (it's a pity the music wasn't more inspired).

I can hardly bear to think what the composer of the High Priest's invocation of Isis and Osiris might have made of "Our revels now are ended". Try to imagine Mozart's setting of "Full fathom five" for a treble voice with chorus, and a trio by the three goddesses along the lines of the female duet in *Così fan tutte*. Think of the love duets, the dance of the masque, the storm music of the overture.

Whether or not any merit can be found in an arguments for Shakespeare's being a ceremonial Magician, I think we may agree that he was a magician in a more general sense. His plays, now four centuries old, never cease to inspire pity and terror — and laughter — in new generations of audiences. His characters are so real that they make themselves quite at home in every era. Almost single-handedly he transformed a living language and provided later poets with an unmatched medium for their genius. He was a master of the Art of Naming, and truly as his lifelong friend, Ben Jonson said of him:

*"He is not for an age, but for all time."*

*Maggie Carew was born and educated in England.  
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For many years she published All My Relations,  
a Pagan magazine of considerable quality and renown.  
Back issues are still available. Contact The Pom for further details.*

## A YELLOW DRESS AT CHILLY BRAURON: The Taming of Wild Girls

by Kate Slater

Arkteia — the rite of maidens playing the bear. To play the bear is to consecrate.  
Hesychius, *Lexicon*

A certain maiden dedicated (kept) in the sanctuary of Artemis was tame. Once a certain maiden teased it, and her face was clawed by the she-bear. Grieving, her brother killed the bear. Artemis, angered, ordered every maiden to imitate the bear before marriage and to tend the sanctuary wearing the saffron-colored robe.

Scholia on Leyden Mss of Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*, line

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Decking out his daughter, he hid her in the inner recess, and adorning a goat in clothing, sacrificed it as if it were his daughter.

Pausanias *Lexicon in Sale, Temple-legends*

The overall continuity of a sanctuary should not, therefore, be allowed to mask ... profound changes in the nature and significance of a cult.

Francois de Polignac

Two years ago, I set out to write a historical novel about the Eleusinian Mysteries. On the way to Eleusis I turned in the opposite direction, following another ancient pilgrimage, to the marshy shore of Brauron, and the childhood of women, where the story begins. After onsite exploration in Greece my pile of research notes is deeper than the story line so I am glad to offer *The Pomegranate* a report.

My view of the Arkteia is that of a priestess of a modern mystery religion and a designer of ritual. Long ago, I was a Grey Owl leading a pack of excited and homesick little girls with drinking cups and mystic uniforms into woods filled with mostly theoretical bears. The Greeks would have made up a story for that. We, who examine fragments of their stories searching for what they really meant, must remember that their stories varied endlessly with the teller and the time. Stories were open ended, it is we who demand last words.

As a base to ground the speculative freedom of fiction, I needed answers to several questions: What did Classical Greeks hope to get from their investment in maintaining the Arkteia cult and how did this expectation relate to the real or perceived nature and role of women? What was the nature of

Artemis? What does the evidence say about the nature of the ritual? What was its historic background? When did the Arkteia take place? Among competing

... pictorial evidence for the Little Bears thus far amounts to pieces of three well-drawn red-figure pots and fourteen more crudely painted black-figure pots.

mythic and literary evidence, which synthesis will accept the broadest set? What ritual process can be conjectured that accepts most of these things? All the myths linking Artemis with bears, childbirth, the taming of wild girls, and girls who are saved from sacrifice by substitution and become her priestesses are relevant to understanding the Arkteia cult and the thinking of the society that supported it.

Greek religious cults were generally of two kinds: personal mysteries which relate to the otherworld and are voluntary individual experiences; and regional-cultural-community rituals which relate to this world and which must be performed for the well-being of the populace, but not necessarily by each individual. Playing the bear for Artemis was a this-world pre-puberty ritual designed to protect girls during the dangerous period from menarche until they married and bore their first child, as well as to socially enforce their role as legitimate wives and mothers. Probably only a few of the daughters of citizens served as resident handmaidens at the sanctuary, although if the Arkteia ritual occurred annually at one or both of the dedicated temples, and if the late-date stoa which could accommodate 99 girls really indicates the scope of the Arkteia, then a substantial percentage of Athenian girls could have played the bear during a ritual of short duration. Performance of the rite by representative members of tribes, demes or families would have adequately protected all in their age cohort and certainly their sisters and cousins.

Scholars disagree concerning details of the scant descriptive materials and how they should be interpreted. Since practice of the ritual may have extended for a century though periods of intense political and cultural change, some apparently opposing alternatives could have existed, over time if not simultaneously.

The Arkteia, ritually playing or dancing the bear, took place at two sites. Greek Attica is an inverted triangle whose point juts down into the Mediterranean. Athens lies on the western shore and the sanctuary of Brauron on the eastern, about 24 miles away. The second sanctuary, Mounychia, existed

on a hill four miles south of Athens, separating the port of Piraeus from the open bay of Phaleron. This hill is now covered by a suburb and I haven't seen information that the temple site has been found. Artemis, yet another armed goddess, watched over the ports.

The main site at Brauron was drained and excavated between 1948 and 1963. The excavation director, John Papademetriou, died suddenly before publishing more than progress reports and presumably a great deal of information is unpublished. A small and lovely museum built to hold finds from the sanctuary and the area's Mycenaean graves was opened in 1969. Behind it lies the rocky acropolis hill, an arrowhead of broken syncline pointing to the sea.

On the stepped slope of the acropolis, adjoining the marshland, is the ancient sanctuary. The area was wooded and the stream was tended to keep it within its banks. The sea, now a quarter mile away, came nearly to this point. Marsh-loving Artemis would not be unhappy with her site today. The excavation covers about 230 by 300 feet, possibly all of the temenos.

The site has been lightly used since Neolithic time but cult activity did not begin until 800 BC. Buildings, including a temple and structures in a cave said to be the tomb of Iphigenia are covered by grander buildings from mid-fifth century, built on the ruins left by the Persian Invasion in 480 BC. At its height in the fourth century, the sanctuary held a medium-sized temple and a great U-shaped stoa that fascinates scholars. Because of war or economic reasons one side was never finished. The rest held nine rooms containing eleven couches each. Hostel? Dining room? Ritual or festival shelter? Orphanage? The Perseus website offers a plan of the sanctuary and photos of the ruins.

The sanctuary drowned when its river mouth silted up in about the end of the third century BC and the settlement must have moved into drowsy pastoral and olive orchard life.

#### When did the Arkeia take place?

Artemis was a springtime Goddess, shown carrying a fawn, "with buds in her hair". The Attic month of *Elaphebolion*, the moon cycle of our March, was named for the festival of Artemis Elaphebolia, "Deer Slayer". This festival seems to have disappeared, eclipsed by the City Dionysia established by Peisistratus in 534. Early summer arrives near the beginning of that month with the rising of the star Arcturus in the constellation of Bootes, the Bear Herder who keeps Callisto (Ursa Major) and her son Arcas (questionably Ursa Minor) from sinking into purifying water, according to Hera's spiteful curse.

Our April is *Mounychion*, named for the Mounychia full moon festival which included an Arkteia rite. Although a full moon would assist a rural

festival, it seems unlikely that the Brauronian Arkteia would have taken place simultaneously, since cross-visitation and sharing of resources might have been desirable. If a chorus of Little Bears lived in residence for an extended time, learning dance and song, they might have served at both temples. I think that opening participation to large numbers of girls would have been a useful social strategy and that all possible combinations of one or both temples holding Arkteia probably happened over time. While Brauron was in ruins after the Persian invasion, Mounychia might have fulfilled its role.

It's unclear as to whether the Brauron Arkteia occurred annually or as part of a larger pentateric festival (counted as every fifth year but equaling four years apart). In his comedy, *Peace*, staged in 421 BC, Aristophanes has a character say: "She's Theoria, whom we once, being rather tipsy, banged en route to Brauron." The play satirizes Athenian yearning for an expected truce after a long war and Theoria, played as an attractive tart, means 'delegation' or 'embassy'. This line has been interpreted to mean that there was a lusty heterosexual festival at Brauron, or conversely, that it was sarcasm toward the Athenian government or the long-gone Peisistratids.

Following a multi-year plague in Athens, the island of Delos was re-purified and the penteteric expedition to the island expanded. Minority opinion thinks it may have sailed from Brauron. The Brauron Museum guide says that epigraphic evidence for stables, gymnasium and palaistra indicated a large festival with chariot racing, sports and musical competitions. The Guide says there was also an annual, perhaps local, festival. I think this could have been the small, private to women, Arkteia.

A 1957 travel guide says: "In the precincts of the shrine [on the Athens acropolis], feasts were held every four years during which young girls, aged five to ten, came from Brauronia to bring offerings. They were called 'bears' and in earlier times used to wear bearskins." The idea that a delegation may have come from Brauron to Athens seems reasonable, though current theorists say the girls went the other way. Both journeys may have occurred.

Literary evidence is fuzzy — imagine trying to reconstruct our own beliefs and practices from the works of Tennessee Williams, Andrew Lloyd Webber, and fragmentary records from the taxation office.

#### **What did the Arkteia support:**

What was the situation of women belonging to citizen men? While daughters were idealized as intensely loving their fathers, they existed by their fathers' tolerance. Since all legitimate children inherited equal shares of property, limiting the total number of children was important. Shortly after birth, the father decided whether to keep the newborn and, if so, he ritually accepted it. A

rejected child might be exposed, left at a temple or more precarious place where someone might pick it up and adopt it or take it as property. Fragmentary evidence indicates that daughters were more often exposed, though there may have been a law forbidding exposure of a family's first daughter, or perhaps this meant first-born child. Strong laws governing marriage of citizens may reflect

### **My view of the Arkteia is that of a priestess of a modern mystery religion and a designer of ritual ...**

fluctuations in the gender balance, with surpluses of men over women existing even after wars.

Adult women were thought of as helpless and lustful. Medically there is no record that Greek physicians had ever discovered the hymen and virginity therefore seems to have been assumed in the absence of pregnancy or direct evidence of sexual congress. Simultaneous orgasm was thought

necessary to draw the sperm into the womb. This encouraged men to pay attention to their wives' pleasure but implied that any pregnant woman must have enjoyed the conception. If an unmarried woman became sexually active her guardian had the right to sell her into slavery. Demographics have been deduced from records and from exhumed skeletons. Men married at about thirty, girls at about fourteen, shortly after a later menarche than girls have now. First births, still overseen by Artemis, were more dangerous both because they were first and because they occurred so young. Average life expectancy was about 36 for women and 46 for men, so women lived as widows for about five years.

All citizens were expected to marry, with husbands chosen by girls' fathers. Girls were described as wild domestic animals, fillies or calves, waiting to be tamed or yoked by their husbands. Marriage ceremonies were elaborate transfers of the bride to her husband's house, where she may have been unable to maintain much contact her own family.

#### **Artemis**

Leto came from the East. Pregnant by Zeus, she bore Apollo and Artemis, who in the Homeric Iliad, ca 800 BC, is clearly named both Olympian Artemis and Potnia Theron, Mistress of the Animals. Apollo was integrated as a god of civilization and oracles; Artemis remains wild, guarding borders and passages between the unknown and the familiar. Both were intensely jealous of the honours due them and their mother. While her counterpart in wildness, Dionysus, can be humorous and her brother Apollo was a mischievous child,

Artemis has no humor. Both twins shoot arrows of sudden, unexpected death: Apollo to warriors, Artemis to women in childbirth. To these she may offer easy birth or her gentle arrows of release, invited by women whose labor has been too long and difficult. She has variously been called the “Soother” or “Pacifier.”

**Literary evidence is fuzzy — imagine trying to reconstruct our own beliefs and practices from the works of Tennessee Williams, Andrew Lloyd Webber, and fragmentary records from the taxation office.**

Eileithyia, the midwife, is too complex to describe here. She (or sometimes the maidens Eileithyiae) is variously called daughter of Hera, a Hyperborean maiden, a nymph linked to Pan, or another manifestation of Artemis. The title Artemis Kalliste (Beautiful) does not in my opinion establish Callisto as an alternate form of Artemis since the two identities are clearly separated in all versions of that myth.

A catalog of gifts received at Brauron describes robes displayed

around (on) or before two or three Goddess statues combining these attributes: the upright one (as opposed to sitting?), the one at the back, the one of stone, the old one and, simply the one (hedos, meaning holy, venerable statue). Some scholars think the “old one” may have been the wooden image which was said to have fallen from the sky to Tauris and brought by Iphigenia to Brauron. Pausanias says this was later taken away by either the Persians or the Spartans. Dates in the catalog occur as late as 342 BC, 120 years after the Persian war, so the “old one” is not likely Iphigenia’s *xoanon*.

Artemis Locheia: Reeder says this title had roots in Minoan religion. Artemis remained the guardian of young women until each had delivered her first child and the *lochos* (afterbirth). In modern medical terminology, *lochia* refers to the discharge that continues until the birth canal is completely healed and unlikely to become infected, about 40 days after delivery. This is the period which Greeks both ancient and recent have believed was the time required for a woman’s state of vulnerability or “pollution” to last. If the ancient Greeks defined lochia similarly this would be an interesting herbal signature, since saffron was used for menstrual problems and lochia can be a distinctive saffron color.

In *Iphigenia at Tauris*, Euripides wrote that Athena sent Iphigenia to

the Brauron temple and her brother Orestes to the temple at Halai Araphnides (modern Loutsá) on the bay four miles north. Iphigenia was to receive the robes of women who died in childbirth. In memory of the human sacrifice at Tauris the priest at Halai was to prick the throat of a man so that altar received a drop of blood at each festival. Halai Araphnides and Brauron must have been paired, with girls and possibly mothers celebrating the Arkteia at Brauron and boys or men the rites of Artemis Tauropolos at Halai Araphnides.

Male and female rites were unlikely to have been held simultaneously, because there would have been concern for the safety of the girls if many men were nearby. Part of the mystique of the Artemis cult was the mythic danger that girls could be stolen from her temples, as “when, sailing to Brauron, [the Lemnians] seized young girls, basket bearers... [by] no lucky chance [they] carried off the daughters and wives”; and the abduction of young Helen by Theseus while she was dancing in the Spartan temple of Artemis Orthia. Theseus left her with his mother until she grew up enough to marry, while he went on another adventure. Her brothers rescued her by invading Attica. Helen was later stolen and carried to Troy. She was portrayed either as Iphigenia’s aunt or, in a later story, as her mother.

#### **The myths and legends**

(Slashes denote units of information that can be used for comparison between the myths.)

#### *Childbirth, midwifery, and death myths:*

Eastern Goddess, Leto/ is raped by Zeus and pregnant with twins/ flees Hera’s wrath/ wanders in the wild/ delivers baby Artemis/ while holding onto an olive (or palm) tree/ Hera blocks labor for nine days by detaining midwife Eileithyia/ other Goddesses send for Eileithyia/ who comes and/ helped by Artemis who has grown up fast/ delivers baby Apollo/ while Leto clutches a palm tree/ on Delos island.

Eileithyia/ an aspect of Artemis/ or a nymph/ grants safe quick birth. Artemis/ controls survival in childbirth [also the child’s?]/ helps Eileithyia/ or grants merciful death/ to women in childbirth/ is special guardian of the first birth/ may protect or punish illegitimate pregnancy/ receives robes and votives for successful births/ of boys or girls.

Iphigenia/ chthonic heroine/ once priestess/ receives clothes of women who die in childbirth/ may care for children of these women.

(Note that Goddess midwives are all celibate, never likely to become polluted or be giving birth themselves when needed by another.)

*Heroic myths of bears and wild girls:*

Wild young girl Callisto/ daughter of king father/ hunts with Artemis/ is raped by Zeus and pregnant/ is turned into a bear/ by Hera/ or by Zeus/ or by Artemis/ (or in late Roman version remains with Artemis/ nine months later is seen to be pregnant while bathing/ pollutes sacred spring/ and is killed by Artemis)/ has son Arcas/ who is founding hero of Arcadia/ the bears Callisto and Arcas are thrown into sky/ become Ursa Major and Minor/ and is prohibited by Hera from reaching purifying water.

Wild young girl Atalanta/ exposed by king father/ suckled by a bear/ hunts with Artemis/ hunts Calydonian Boar/ returns to father/ is ordered to marry/ races suitors (losers die)/ Aphrodite helps suitor win race/ Atalanta marries (despite oracle against)/ husband does not repay Aphrodite/ who causes them to make love in a temple/ of Zeus or Cybele/ who turns them into lions/ becoming wild/ and celibate because lions mate only with leopards.

Disobedient daughters/ of king Proetus/ are unwilling to marry and leave their home/ which angers Hera/ who makes them wander in the wilds/ celibate, mad and dangerous/ are tamed by Artemis or by a priest in her temple/ return home/ and marry.

*Myths validating Arkteia temples:*

Brauron: Obedient daughter Iphigenia/ of King Agamemnon/ leaves her home/ prepared and willing to become bride/ is sacrificed by father/ to Artemis/ for favorable winds to hungry Greek army on ships bound for Troy/ Iphigenia is saved by Artemis/ who substitutes a goat, bear or deer/ she is lost to her family/ becomes Artemis' priestess/ is dangerous/ is saved by brother Orestes/ serves Artemis at Brauron.

Brauron: A girl/ from Athens/ leaves her home/ plays with tame female bear [or flirts with tame male bear]/ at sanctuary of Artemis/ has her face scratched/ her brothers (or Athenians) kill the bear/ Artemis sends plague or famine/ Athenians consult oracle/ promise that girls of Athens will play as bears/ or serve Artemis in her sanctuary/ before they marry.

Mounychia: A bear appears/ at sanctuary of Artemis/ harms people/ is killed by Athenians/ plague or famine results/ Apollo's oracle decrees/ that a girl must be sacrificed/ by her father/ to Artemis/ wily father Embarus/ offers obedient daughter/ in exchange for perpetual priesthood at Mounychia/ dresses daughter in a goatskin/ conceals her in back of temple/ sacrifices a goat/ which he calls his daughter/ she serves Artemis at Mounychia/ and girls thereafter play as bears there/ before they marry.

William Sale made a careful textual analysis of several versions of the Brauron and Mounychia temple legends, attempting to determine the sequence

Medically there is no record that Greek physicians had ever discovered the hymen and virginity therefore seems to have been assumed in the absence of pregnancy or direct evidence of sexual congress. Simultaneous orgasm was thought necessary to draw the sperm into the womb. This encouraged men to pay attention to their wives' pleasure but implied that any pregnant woman must have enjoyed the conception.

of their evolution. It seems to me that these are not sequential in time, but inner and outer mysteries that would have existed simultaneously. One, requiring that maidens perform the Arkteia ritual before marriage, may have involved many girls, either as Arktoi or in an activity such as joining with the selected representatives at the Acropolis and processing part of the way toward Brauron.

A second, and to my imagination deeply secret, inner mystery may have been the occasional sacrifice of a daughter to the goddess, so that she might enter permanent service as Artemis' priestess.

*What the ancients asserted happened in the Arkteia:*

Obedient daughters/ of Athenian citizens/ leave their homes/ become bears at the temple of Artemis/ are tamed by Artemis/ return, marry and deliver their first children under her protection.

**What was the ritual?**

Published pictorial evidence for the Little Bears thus far amounts to pieces of three well-drawn red-figure pots and fourteen more crudely painted black-figure pots. The black-figure pottery dates between late sixth century and early fifth (pre-Persian invasion), with one piece showing dancing to an *aulos* possibly dating to 560 BC. The red-figure pots date to about 430-420 BC. All items are broken and incomplete. The pot style has been called *krateriskos*, a small version of the *krater* used to mix water and wine. One black-figure fragment

strongly links the *krateroskoi* to the Arktea's races. It shows a *krateriskos*, painted with nude running girls, tipped as if pouring a libation before a laurel

All this would occur on  
the greatest adventure  
the girls had  
experienced, the journey  
into a world wild with  
birds and pines and hills  
and sea, with a cave and  
sacred spring and their  
own small temple.

sapling. Drawn beside it is a nude running girl.

Many black-figure *krateriskoi* have been found at Brauron and Mounychia. A few appear in the Athens and at Eleusis. These are not thought to indicate Arkteia rituals at the other sites. If every Bear had her own drinking cup, either there should be many more, with some taken home, or there were very few Little Bears. Yet there seem to be more

cups than one per year. Perhaps one for each race or ritual event?

The *krateriskoi* are shaped like goblets on cylindrical stems of varying height, with handles which often mimic the shape of a palm tree top. The red-figure items are in a private collection and it is not known where they were found. Color photos of them appear in Reeder's exhibition volume, *Pandora*.

A red-figure *krateriskos* shows young Artemis preparing to shoot an arrow, accompanied by Leto and Apollo. Other fragments show a laurel tree, two fleeing deer, and two humans wearing masks of bears. One theory is that these are Callisto, frozen in a gesture of fear as she begins to turn into a bear, and her son Arcas, who survived to become ancestor of the people of Arcadia. Its shape relates it to the Arkteia. Decorations on ritual pottery are often not specific to the rites. Callisto has no literary link to the Arkteia; still she is wild and in bear-form is presented as a good mother.

A second theory is that the man and woman are a priest and priestess wearing bear masks in a ritual drama that was part of the Arkteia. There may also have been another ritual drama called the sacred hunting of Artemis. This may be represented in the lower band of painting of this *krateriskos* showing Artemis hunting and, in the lower panel, hounds chasing a deer.

The girls' ages cause argument. In Aristophanes' comedy *Lysistrata*, written in 411 BC, the heroine describes her qualifications as a citizen in terms of her various civic duties for the Gods. Translators of this passage say that she was a bear either in her tenth year or later and as to whether she "shed" or "wore" the yellow *krokotos*. The Scholia on Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* II.B.10,

and *Suda* II.B.13 say bears were between 5 and 10 years old.

The first analyst of the *krateriskoi*, Lily Kahil, estimated the depicted ages as seven to thirteen. Looking closely, I would agree. The younger girls wear short dresses which are sometimes tied up like rompers and the older girls may be clothed or often nude. Souvrinou-Inwood puts considerable effort into her case that the girls are between the five to ten and that the older looking drawings of the ten-year olds are stylized representations of pre-puberty.

The girls on the red *krateriskoi* do not appear frightened or gesticulate to show shock. Little girls on one look intent and happily ceremonial as they run. On another, older nude girls, carrying wreaths, run upright and therefore slowly, away from or possibly toward a bear. In the older, black figure *krateriskoi*, the running girls appear to be going flat out, their naked limbs reaching like little Gorgons or Harpies, racing toward or past a fiery altar with tightly held torches or wreaths. In men's torch races at other festivals the winner lit a fire, probably on an altar. If the wreaths are laurel the girls may have offered them to Apollo. If they are myrtle they could have been blessed and taken home in anticipation of their weddings. From the pictures, I cannot guess which plant appears.

Rituals are partly shaped by their facilities. Whenever a major change in the site or setting occurs, the ritual will change, adapting to new limits or exploiting new possibilities. Theatrical developments from the Dionysia would influence the drama. Imagine a row of little girls sitting on a retaining wall, looking down at a play enacted by torchlight before the stoa columns.

Hollinshead says that Kontis thought that there had been a creche at Brauron. This idea appeals to me. There are four possible sources of children: girls acting as temporary handmaidens to Artemis; children of women who died in childbirth; children of priestesses in allied temples; and girls who have been "sacrificed" to the temple for a life as priestesses. Small boys may have also spent time at the temple, perhaps one token boy, like the token child at Eleusis.

#### Guesses about the Arkteia:

Rituals are built of components suitable to the age and understanding of the participants. What stories would you tell very young girls? Which ones to girls about to marry? They might include star-gazing stories of Callisto, dramas of Artemis hunting, or perhaps even playing at being Leto holding the palm tree and birthing Apollo while the other Goddesses helped. Singing, dancing, racing, sea-bathing and processions are probable. Possibly the girls participated in the sacrifice of a goat, perhaps in memory of Iphigenia. I like to think that Brauron still had a tame bear.

All this would occur on the greatest adventure the girls had

experienced, the journey into a world wild with birds and pines and hills and sea, with a cave and sacred spring and their own small temple. Then, in a loose yellow dress, draped and girdled so that it allowed them room to grow, they went home to looms and houses and marriage, knowing they were under the protection of the Goddess, no longer wild.

The handmaidens of Artemis who may have lived for a year or so at the sanctuary were of varied ages, for aesthetic and practical reasons. A few older girls may have stayed longer and undergone testing to become a future priestess or one of her assistants. Perhaps the girl who could face the bear and not run away became one of these. And perhaps her father, after she had gone home to say goodbye, brought her back to the sanctuary gate, leading also a goat. The girl went inside and the goat was sacrificed and the man received something of value for all that he had given to Artemis. Perhaps ...

In the ritualist's terms, at the end of the ritual, you have done what you believed needed doing. Whether you were successful is still unknown: that depends on the Gods.

#### How did it end?

Success may have killed Brauron. One of the puzzles of Eleusis is how a large staff managed to accommodate periodic week-long hordes of pilgrims — simply providing toilet facilities for two thousand people must have taken ingenuity. Though Brauron served hundreds, not thousands, the area is much more ecologically sensitive. Increased erosion and failure to maintain the river channel would be enough to doom the unfinished stoa. Was there pestilence? There are debates as to when malaria occurred in ancient Greece and how prevalent it may have been.

In the fourth century, Aesclepius became a divine source of medical care. Did he assume responsibility for childbirth? As Attic power declined, did some of the religious beliefs die, especially those involving women? Did the philosophers outlive the State cults? Did the need to civilize wild girls end? When the *xoanon* disappeared, did Brauron begin to die?

The spring still flows beneath the Brauron hill.

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## MASKS IN MAGICAL MEETINGS

by M. Macha NightMare

In Starhawk's recent novel, *The Fifth Sacred Thing*, masked representatives of the voices of the four Elements are channeled in trance during council meetings. When I read this idea, I was intrigued by it, so I asked Starhawk if the technique had ever been tried. She said it hadn't, it was just an idea she had.

### Opportunity

The Covenant of the Goddess (CoG), a national organization of Witches and covens, holds MerryMeet, its annual Grand Council and festival, in late August each year. Preceding MerryMeet, the Leadership Institute is a day-long workshop or series of workshops for members to continue their magical education and to share their knowledge and expertise. The Northern California Local Council of CoG (NCLC-CoG) and Reclaiming Collective sponsored MerryMeet and its concomitant Leadership Institute in 1996.

As a member of NCLC, I chose as my work on MerryMeet to produce the Leadership Institute. As a Reclaiming Witch, I like to try new methods to use magical techniques in practical ways. It behooves us as Witches to remember that when we come together to do the work of the Covenant, our work is sacred. Employing basic magical practices, such as building a small altar in the meeting room, helps us reinforce and maintain this awareness.

Using mask-wearers to ensure that the proceedings are harmonious with Air, Fire, Water and Earth struck me as a magical undertaking that could enhance our work. Mask-wearers are not direct participants in the meetings. They do not address matters of policy or implementation of projects. They participate in their sacred capacity as voices of Wind, Fire, Water or Earth. Sometimes they may speak or gesture, and sometimes they merely remain alert. When Wind has something to say, the meeting ceases while Wind speaks. Then the meeting resumes, taking into account the spoken words of Wind.

### Manifestation

Eleanor Myers is a wonderful magical sculptor who has been associated with Reclaiming Collective since before we actually formed ourselves into a collective. She created the Element headdresses for the first Spiral Dance ritual in 1979. Her main medium is clay, and her work graces many a Witch's altar in the San Francisco Bay Area. Much of Eleanor's work is shamanic in

appearance; she has created masks for hanging, primal guardian figures, small, often horned, shamanic figures wrapped in skins.

At the time these masks were needed, Eleanor lived in Northern California where she maintained her connections with our community. Although her work sells in galleries, Eleanor's most inspired work is done for magical reasons instead of for a commercial market. Since CoG did not have a budget for commissioning works of art, if we were to have masks for these meetings, they would have to be created as priestessly work, not for money. I approached Eleanor with the idea of creating masks for people to wear to channel the voices of the Elements. She agreed, using the rather vague requirements that she and I could ascertain from the technique suggested in *The Fifth Sacred Thing*.

Eleanor began with the notion of creating something along the lines of a Zuni Shálako. To that end, she started with large cylinders three or more feet high. Since we had no money for materials, she checked in regularly with her local recycling center to collect usable cardboard. She worked this cardboard into 15 layers of lacquered paper to create the cylinders that formed the basic structure of all four masks.

To find other materials which would work to create the masks, Eleanor did magic and asked for the materials to come to her. She walked along the banks of the Sonoma River and found interesting materials which had been washed downstream by the winter rains. She found rusty metals, a hub cap, a silicon disc about the size of a ship's porthole, mosses, branches. The shiny chrome hub cap and silicon disc became the sun rising on the East mask. For the South mask she wanted to use copper; she discovered that discarded plastic-sheathed wires at the recycling center contained copper, so she stripped off the plastic and used these many small wires to create the flames of Fire. The West mask bears seaweed and water-smoothed driftwood. The North mask is crowned with mosses, twigs and the antlers of a young deer.

The masks are brownish and the textures are similar to fine bark. They are designed to sit on the shoulders of the channeler. They have eye openings, but are otherwise solid. Their overall appearance is chthonic. One has only to touch them or to carry them or to place them over one's head to immediately feel their primal power. There is nothing flashy about them. They are solid and unmistakable in their power.

### Experience

The two morning Leadership Institute sessions were structured in a circle, with four featured participants, people who were working or had experience in the fields which were to be discussed interspersed throughout the group. A large

white candle had been consecrated by the NCLC-CoG staff at the Full Moon two nights before. This candle burned in the center of the room during all sessions of the Leadership Institute and the following Grand Council meetings.

Four volunteers agreed to wear or sit behind the masks during the sessions. The room was uncomfortably hot, inhibiting the actual wearing of the masks for most volunteers. As facilitator, I spoke to the sitters one by one, beginning in the East, suggesting that they let go of their human personae and

*... this was just how the ancient oracles operated — the oracle spoke; the interpretation was up to the listeners.*

open up to let the Element fill them. I asked the mask wearers to signal if and when — and only if and when — they were moved to speak in the voice of the Element. The first session dealt with prison ministries. During that session, the voices remained silent.

The topic of the second session was counseling the dying, their loved ones and the bereaved. Since I was a featured participant in that workshop, another Witch volunteered to facilitate. This is such an emotional topic that most of what people needed to do was talk about their experiences with dying loved ones. This took up much of the session, and we had little time for more helpful “hands-on” discussion. No channeled voice spoke, but I offer this experience from Rowan Fairgrove, who sat under the Earth mask:

I attended Death and Dying — but I can’t say I was there ... They [the masks] were cylindrical and were made to entirely cover the head and rest on the shoulders. A small slit in the front provided the only ventilation and window on the world. I had volunteered to channel Earth and despite the heat, decided I wanted to wear the mask rather than hold it in my lap, at least for a while. So for about the first 40 minutes or so of the workshop I was deeply in touch with Earth energy. I felt the land we were on, I felt land far away that had things to say to someone who would listen. The sweat pouring from my body became the rivers pouring across the earth. I felt the itch and irritation of pavement and the unthinking works of humans. A part of me heard the folks talking about dying, but mostly the doings of humans were too fast for the pace that I was channeling. It was one of the most thorough trances I have done in a long time.

On the first day of the Grand Council, the masks rested silently, unattended, in the four quarters of the room while the meetings took place. On the second day, I asked our First Officer, Amber K, who was facilitating the meetings, if four volunteers could use the masks in council. She readily agreed.

Cary the Fairy wore the Air mask, as he had in one of the Leadership Institute workshops. He relates:

I was East on two occasions and only felt the need to speak during the second round ... the issue was about burnout, the specific moment was during the questioning of Thorn, when she was asked to address the issue of burnout. As East I did not hear the answer and wanted to speak; however, the group was not focussed enough for me to speak and be heard without some sort of hand waving. At that point I had enough of interruptions, appropriate or not, and point of process was not something I wanted to channel.

I wore the Fire mask. The heat was wicked, as everyone who wore a mask, or not, was all too aware. The site of the gathering being clothing-optional and our being Witches, I removed my clothes and wore only the heavy mask. I was restless. Sound was muffled under there. I moved around a lot and readjusted the mask frequently, but I did keep my focus on being Fire. Sweat ran down my body. At one point in the proceedings, I felt the need to speak, so I stood up, spread out my arms, and spoke the word “burnout.” Discussion stopped and folks looked around in some confusion and asked questions of each other. “What did she mean?” “Did she mean she’s burn out?” “Does she mean it’s too hot in here?” “Does she want to know if so-and-so is burned out, or likely to get burned out?” I had no more to say.

Christopher, who was an active participant in the discussion at hand, remarked later that this was just how the ancient oracles operated — the oracle spoke; the interpretation was up to the listeners.

Mev wore the Water mask. She says: “[Wearing the West mask] was transformative and a much-needed way for me to work my way out of being a CoG member and back into being a private Witch ...” During that session, the Earth, as is its nature, remained silent.

### Lessons

Design: The masks are very heavy. They definitely encourage stillness and attention to what one is about. The sculptor provided foam strips to place on the shoulders for protection and to provide individual adjustment to the wearer’s body. They’re definitely made for sitting or standing, not for walking. I don’t recommend any one person wearing one for more than 30-45 minutes in such heat as we experienced that weekend. I wore the Fire mask for an hour and 15 minutes, which nearly exceeded my limits.

As mentioned by everyone, they’re also hot! Eleanor said this is easy to remedy with an Xacto knife; cut slits in the sides so they have more ventilation but their appearance is not changed. Beourn, who wore Fire for a session, said that “[I] was not able to completely ‘disconnect’ and go to a deep trance. I often

‘came up for air’ to change position. Having someone spray me from the spray bottle that came around made a great deal of difference.” He recommended that each mask-wearer have a tender to look after such physical needs. Mev agreed about the need for a helper, particularly during return from trance.

Mev, other wearers, and observers, noted that the placement of the eye slots facilitated going into trance: “The eye slits, being cut as high as they were, pulled my line of sight upward, forming a visual and kinetic focus for trance. I

*... [we] felt mask-wearing, participating in this alternative way, to be a way for more high-profile Witches to shift their focus and to participate in both business and magical workings in a completely different manner.*

think that having the eyes so high is very, very effective at inducing trance.” The mask does muffle sound quite effectively, both incoming and outgoing.

Assistance: We found that each channeler needs a tender. This tender’s duties are (1) to assist the wearer into the mask; (2) to adjust its fit to some modicum of comfort; (3) to gently talk the wearer into letting go of her human persona in order to allow the voice a vehicle to speak; (4) to fan, spray or otherwise keep the wearer cool if it’s hot, or to cover the wearer’s body if it’s chilly, especially if he is still for a long period of time and his metabolism slows; (5) to recognize when the voice needs to speak, and then stop the proceedings to allow that to happen; and (6) to help the mask-wearer out of the mask, out of a trance state and back to normal reality. This includes helping the person to stand, giving her water and food for re-grounding — and not leaving her until assured that this reintegration is complete.

Function: The idea of using the masks is to maintain a spiritual focus to our undertakings; to assure that our decisions are in keeping with our professed Earth-based, Nature-worshipping values; to keep our proper magical perspective so that our conclusions, and the way we choose to proceed to implement our decisions, remain in balance with the Elements. To this end, the facilitator and all other participants need to be aware of the mask-wearers, and to be alert to when they are moved to speak. The very presence of these living symbols of the Elements of Life can aid us in maintaining this important perspective.

We found that the masks and their wearers were largely ignored. As Cary mentioned, he was moved to speak, but his inspiration went unrecognized, so his voice remained unheard. I, on the other hand, just stood and raised my arms. People stopped the proceedings and listened to my single utterance, “Burnout.” (My presence and desire to speak was no doubt reinforced by the fact that I was skyclad.) So in future we all, especially the facilitator, need to be ever alert to the inspiration of the voices.

Uses: Experimental wearers, as well as observers, had some ideas about additional uses of these masks other than the uses mentioned above. Cary thinks that they could be a good way for beginning practitioners of magic to learn to focus their energy and to learn and experience the Elements.

As Mev mentioned above, she found mask-wearing to be an excellent method for those of us who tend to be very active in discussion to, as she said, “work my way ... back into being a private Witch.” I agree that they are a way shift focus, to re-air (inspire/respire), re-energize, re-emotionalize and re-ground. This is why I suggested that she and I try them on for size.

Starhawk, Rowan, Rhiannon and I all felt mask-wearing, participating in this alternative way, to be a way for more high-profile Witches to shift their focus and to participate in both business and magical workings in a completely different manner. Conversely, I believe this could be a good way, somewhat in line with what Cary observed, for shyer Witches to play a vital role in meetings and ritual from a rather low-profile or low-key place.

In addition, the masks, worn or standing alone, make fine Quarter altars and touchpoints for warding a circle. There may also be many other advantages to employing this technique; I invite more people to use masks in their workings and then relate their experiences, and the lessons they learn.

*M. Macha NightMare, a long-time member of Reclaiming, recently co-wrote and co-edited The Pagan Book of Living and Dying (HarperSanFrancisco, 1997) with Starhawk. Currently, she serves as National First Officer of the Covenant of the Goddess (CoG), the oldest and largest ecumenical organization of Witches in the U.S.*

## BOOK REVIEW: Margot Adler's *Heretic's Heart*

Review by Chas S. Clifton  
University of Southern Colorado

Most *Pomegranate* readers know Margot Adler as the author of the definitive journalistic study of the American Pagan movement, *Drawing Down the Moon*, published in 1979 with a revised edition released later. Some hear her voice now and then as a National Public Radio network reporter. But the story Adler tells in *Heretic's Heart* (a title she acknowledges came from Catherine Madsen's song of the same name) is of her life before she found the Craft, when she was a girl growing up in an "atheist, semi-Marxist, non-Jewish, Jewish home" — a "red-diaper baby," to use the old Cold War term. A psychoanalyst like her famous grandfather, Alfred Adler (whom she never met), might make something of Margot Adler's feeling of growing up 'separate'. But her long pilgrimage to the Craft was not a simple case of taking a minority religious path because she felt she was 'different'. Her place in the Craft came only after years of attempting to reconcile her desire to fight social exploitation with a long, less-expressed desire for ecstasy and mystery.

Margot Adler's story is set in the middle of that over-summarized decade, the 1960s. One advantage to reading it is to get past the image of antiwar protests, burning inner-city neighborhoods, and LSD and to hear two people's stories: hers and that of the American soldier who became her pen pal, confidant, and briefly lover.

"Today," she writes, "we tend to lump many aspects of the sixties together — rock music, politics, clothing styles, sex and drugs — but a continuing battle between the 'hippies', on the one side, and the 'politicos' on the other, defined much of the era." For Margot Adler, the "sixties" took off when she entered the University of California at Berkeley in 1964, a pivotal year in that institution's history. "Living in New York City, I looked upon Berkeley as so many Americans have looked throughout history upon the West — as an escape from everything that defined my past. For me, Berkeley was not only an excellent school, and a place with a rich history of student activism; going to Berkeley meant fleeing New York, my parents, the memories of four depressing high school years during which I had few real friends. Most of all, I was fleeing from myself and from the large one-hundred-and-eighty pound body that encased me. ... I was determined to

enter this mythical realm [California] and to claim it as my own ..."

A shy first-year student but a definite 'politico', Adler enlisted as a foot soldier in one of America's first big student protest movements, the Free Speech Movement of 1964. The FSM began as defiance of a university ban on on-campus political activity by civil-rights organizers and others and grew into a nationally televised confrontation between University of California 'knowledge factory' administrators and students in what felt like "a battle to wrest the control of our lives away from the clerks, the files, and the forms that seemed to be increasingly dominating our lives as students — in other words, from the seemingly invulnerable giants of technology and bureaucracy." After her FSM experience, Adler felt drawn to the civil-rights work being done in the South, registering black citizens to vote and so forth. Not only did it seem to be what the 'real activists' did, but she herself had been born in Little Rock, and one of her New York neighbors was Andy Goodman, one of three civil-rights workers murdered in Mississippi during the previous summer.

She continued to be tempted by the tiny American Communist Party but knew herself ultimately to be too much of an anarchist and a heretic to fit in. Yet her left-wing training left her with an intellectual legacy. Adler observes that "the core legacy shared by those of us who went through a serious encounter with Marxism has little to do with economic theory or even communism. It is this: when we look at the world, even today, we take nothing at face value. We are always looking for the unseen relationships."

Describing her former self as "a left-wing nun in the Summer of Love," Adler revisits her correspondence with an American GI serving in Vietnam, Marc Anderson, who had written a bitter letter to her university newspaper about the luxury of those who could smoke marijuana and talk about Maoism while soldiers like him are "dying for lighting a cigarette at night, or 'cause the NCO in charge was drunk." No flag-waver, Specialist 4 Anderson responded to her reply and shared his own disillusionment with the Vietnam War: "I know exactly how you feel, as I fight 'their' war and one with myself." Their correspondence, about war, American society, and the trivia of daily life, forms the book's center. While both naturally present themselves on their best behavior, theirs is the conversation of two 'foot soldiers', one an actual infantryman and one a soldier in 'the revolution' that was always just around the corner in the late 1960s. Reading both sides of the correspondence cuts through the clichés that we still hear about doped-up 'baby killers' on side and 'long-haired free love antiwar demonstrators' on the other.

But the 'Psychedelic Sixties' are also underway and they make Adler



nervous at first; she goes to graduate school in journalism and spends another 'revolutionary' summer harvesting sugar cane in Cuba as part of the Venceremos ("We will win") Brigade, a group of American pacifists and leftists. But as she ages, the old Marxist ideas lose their appeal: "my belief that I should be some kind of socialist revolutionary had not changed. But what I was actually doing was reading about nature and feeling a fear for the plight of the earth." On a second trip to Cuba, this time as a journalist, she begins to realize her need to be a spiritual revolutionary.

When Neopagan Witches get together, stories about 'how I found the Craft' are a conversational staple. Adler saves her core 'conversion story' for chapter 12, but without the previous eleven chapters, it would lack its context. She struggles: "The old Marxist inside me warns that all this religion stuff is an opiate, an oppressor. ... these occult philosophies do let the anxious middle class feel secure with their privilege." Ultimately, as the readers of *Drawing Down the Moon* know, Adler rejects the old Marxist Left as "too afraid of the irrational and its pull," too condescending towards the eternal human need for ecstasy and mystery. "It did not realize that one can enter the flow of the mysterious, the non-ordinary reality known to all artists, poets, and indigenous people without losing one's intellectual integrity ... that one can work to end poverty and exploitation but still embrace song and dance and dream."

*Heretic's Heart: A Journey through Spirit and Revolution*

Margot Adler

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