



Green Egg

The Journal of the Awakening Earth

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Green Egg Magazine

Table of Contents

FEATURES:

Door to the Beyond, Mental Health and Paganism (Moss Bliss)	7
Questions to Christians (Leo Flamehand and Ashley Vinson)	18
Ods Bodkin on Tour Part 2 (Kenny Klein)	27
Timeless Wisdom (Mercedes Sayaques)	46
Tyche (Carlos Parada DD)	48

MUSE REVIEWS:

Avatar (Tom Donohue)	22
Spirit Nation (Oberon Zell)	24
White as Bone, Red as Blood (Ariel Monserrat)	25

COLUMNS:

Editor's Page (Ariel Monserrat)	3
Critter Corner (Ariel Monserrat)	6
The Cantankerous Celt: Pet My Peeves (Michael Gorman)	33
Contributors Showcase	63

NEWS AND INFORMATION:

Witch School Leaving Rossville	5
Giant Naked Goddess to be Carved into Hillside	16
Ravencast: Podcasts for Asatru and Other Heathen links (David Carron)	41
Ancient Egyptian Pregnancy Test (Anne Hart)	42

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Visit the website at: <http://www.greeneggzine.com>

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EDITOR'S PAGE

By Ariel Monserrat

CONNECTING TO NATURE IN THE WINTER

In the warm months of the year, it is easy to become one with Nature. Gardening, for example, can be an all-day, everyday event. We can go outdoors and watch the wildlife, birds, butterflies, all the flora and fauna. It is daylight for much more of the day when it's warm. But in the winter, what does one do to maintain that connection with Nature? The days are short, dark, gray and cold and they don't inspire a person to go outside to be with Nature.

This winter I discovered something that has helped to maintain that connection quite a bit. First of all, Tom and I can't

afford to hibernate inside all winter. We have horses to tend to. Going out early in the morning to feed the horses when it's 12 degrees outside, tramping in the snow

and ice, is a real adventure, especially when you have to hand-carry buckets of water out to them because their water is completely frozen over. It keeps you in touch with Nature, alright, maybe even more than you want to be! There is also a spring to be maintained, a road to be smoothed and a greenhouse to tend. Maintaining all these things forces us to go outside and connect with Nature's harsher aspects, but what about actually *enjoying* that chthonic connection?



**Male Cardinal**

NYS.Gov

While surfing the internet one morning, I ran across a recipe for bird food that is very healthy for them in winter and also attracts large numbers of a variety of birds. I was looking for recipes that didn't involve suet (beef fat), since suet is just about impossible to find any more. I discovered that you can use half Crisco shortening and half peanut butter, then add things like corn meal, popcorn, nuts, dried fruit and berries and wheat flour in any amount that you want. So I followed the recipe, made the bird food block in a few minutes and set it outside. Very soon after that, there were enormous numbers of a variety of birds that had flocked to the feed block. I watched them swoop down and then wait their turn to eat. They were all right outside our living room window and watching their various flight patterns and styles was absorbing. I stared in awe at all the types of birds: cardinals, towhees, titmice, black-capped chickadees, Carolina wrens, mockingbirds, nuthatches, several kinds of sparrows, Eastern phoebes, purple finches, house finches, goldfinches, and three types of woodpecker. There were some species that we didn't recognize so we got out our bird book. Soon we were watching the scene outside our window whenever we got the opportunity. We began to name the birds: Mr. and Mrs. Cardinal, Phoebe, Woody and other names.

**White Breasted Nuthatch** MO.Gov

Soon we were going online to help us identify the various bird songs and calls. Suddenly, we had become big bird enthusiasts and were making all kind of winter treats for them, such as suet blocks, popcorn, cornbread and dried orange slices hanging chandelier-style from a tree branch.

It feels good to be helping the little ones survive the harsh winter here and we have so much fun watching them as they chirp, eat and fly in wonderful aerial feats that are more like ballet than anything else. They are always very polite with each other, waiting their turn for food, getting in line and patiently waiting their turn to eat.

The crows, however, are a different story. Two days ago they came and stole the suet block from the rest of the birds. Later on, after we had replaced the block, we saw several crows again, obviously plotting their next heist. Tom went out and yelled at them and they haven't been back since. Crows, by the way, make bluejays look like diplomatic gentlemen. I've even seen them group together and terrorize a hawk!

It's amazing what you learn about Nature when you pay close attention! What do you like to do to keep in contact with Nature during the winter?

WITCH SCHOOL LEAVING ROSSVILLE, SEEKING A NEW FUTURE IN 'THE WITCH CITY', SALEM, MA



Rossville, IL (October 26th, 2009) -- Witch School Headquarters are closing in the Rossville-Hoopeston area of Illinois. Witch School settled from Chicago to Central Illinois in 2003, and became the center of protest by many of the Christian Churches in the area. A well-documented spiritual battle has been waged for the last six years, with open hostilities and long quiet truces by various Christian factions. Simply put, this has not allowed Witch School the staff and resources needed to keep up with their growth. On Halloween, Witch School Rossville will close permanently, and Witch School will be moving its HQ to 'The Witch City', Salem Mass.

According to Ed Hubbard, Founder and CEO of Witch School, "The Churches are not the cause, they are a symptom of the problems in rural areas, and that is the lack of useful educational resources. While the United States Urban areas have been undergoing a communications and information revolution, the Digital Divide between those areas and places like Rossville IL, which has very few Internet carriers, all very expensive, and very undependable, has continued to grow. Our Internet provider has terrible customer service, and been down as much as a week at a time, on a regular basis, and we use the same one the city government uses. Also attempts to provide computer training and employment saw pressure on participants to quit and boycott the business. The Churches believing that they were 'protecting' the community, have rejected and blocked several attempts by Witch School to improve Internet Service in the area. So it has become necessary to find a place where

we can get the online access and staff we need to continue our growth."

Grown they have. At the beginning of September when they began their 9th year in Education, it was announced that WitchSchool.com became the most trafficked Pagan website in the world according to Independent Ranking site, Alexa.com, an Amazon Company. Since they began Witch School has added many new features, and tons of information to provide to the public, and relevant information for even the most experienced practitioner. The Witch School site has evolved from a simple school to a global educational community with hundreds of thousands of participants in as many as 147 countries worldwide. The number of features are truly too many to list, but includes a .Library, Downloadable Book of Shadows Pages, Booklets, a Nightly Radio Show called 'Pagans Tonight'; over 500 self produced Magick TV videos, as well as many community videos and photos, group listings for everywhere in the world, and extensive blogs, forums, multiple chat rooms, and a community dedicated to providing anyone, anywhere, anytime a magickal education. It becomes easy to forget they have a core education with over 100 online classes, which provide an excellent basic education in Wicca, Magick, and metaphysics.

"It's heartbreaking to leave the area, my home," says Rev. Don Lewis, Co-founder of Witch School, and Chancellor of the Correllian Nativist Tradition, "I really wanted this to work in Vermillion county, where I and the Tradition were born. My family has been here a long time. Unfortunately, I have a commitment to

the whole tradition and to the school to do the best possible job I can in teaching and providing spiritual support. That commitment, a covenant between myself and our members to provide a lifetime of education, leads me to be aware that Central Illinois is not a place where we can continue to build our community, virtually at this time. We have to move in order to continue to survive and grow to fill the needs of our members."

However, this will not be without adding to the anguish of the local Rossville-Hoopston community as five jobs currently, and at one time as many as 11 jobs, are now leaving the area. It is unclear how many, if any of Witch School's employees will relocate to The Witch City. This also forces local Correllian and Pagan groups to scramble for new locations to practice and teach. It will be a more closeted community once Witch School departs, as the churches believe

they have been rewarded for their continued prayers, and will deepen their discrimination against local Pagans. There is little question that the local Central Illinois Pagan Community will be dramatically impacted by this move. Witch School has stated that it will do everything in its power to continue working for a more open community everywhere including Central Illinois.

So as Halloween arrives, also known as Samhain or Witches New Year, Witch School plans to create a new future, leaving Rossville-Hoopston behind, and hoping for a better day in Salem, Mass: 'The Witch City'.

Find out about their plan at
www.WitchSchool.com

For more information about Witch School staff, please call 217-799-1013 for either Salem or Central Illinois.



CRITTER CORNER

By Ariel Monserrat

Here is an unusual service offered for people who have animal companions and are worried that if they're Raptured, their beloved pets will be left behind. Fear not!

There exists on the internet a website that tells you all about how you can have peace of mind for your animals. It is run by certified atheists (guaranteed not to be Raptured up, so they can stay behind and take care of your animal.)

Only \$110.00! It's a fun read!
http://eternal-earthbound-pets.com/Home_Page.html

The Door to the Beyond: Mental Health and Paganism

Introduction

Merry Meet, my name is Moss Bliss. I have been an Initiated Wiccan since 1983, the middle part of my spiritual trek. (The Third Movement, so to speak, is developing as I learn to integrate all spirituality into one through my studies in Kashmir Shaivism, adding a couple thousand years' worth of written works to my pagan beliefs.)

I have also been considered "weird", "sick", "disturbed", etc. since about the age of three (due to a period of sexual abuse by my uncle and brother, which my mother has begun to accept recently). I went from doctor to doctor, my parents trying to find some medical excuse for what was "wrong" with me.

Many of you will recognize this pattern; some of you will identify with it. Most of you won't even bother to ask the question, "What has that got to do with paganism?"

The answer, unasked or not, is that many of us don't feel like we fit in to the "normal" society, especially with all the negative judgments we receive from whatever church our parents caused us to attend. You start looking around. You find other churches, which are almost safe for you, but they don't fit any better, just more strangely. In the 1960s and 70s, there didn't seem to be any other options, so you either stopped going to church or stopped believing (whether you continued to attend or not). My own path to Wicca culminated in 1982.

But that's not the whole story, is it? Even though you find a group of people who accept you as being

"different", even if they're the same **kind** of "different", you are still being judged by the people around you. In my time, I was diagnosed as some form of "mentally ill" long before I found the Goddess (or rather, before She found me), and paraded through legions of social workers, therapists, psychologists and psychiatrists before learning how to ritualize – both to rid myself of the "bad" and to celebrate the "good" (and learn what the heck the rest of it was and how to deal with it). Guilt and shame are not effective tools for healing these issues.

By the time I was 12, I was on Mysoline (primodone), an anti-convulsant. Another doctor put me on Valium. The medications started to add up. One neurologist said I was "borderline epileptic", but if any doctor had bothered to read a medical journal I could easily have been labelled "ADD" and put on Ritalin. These drugs made others think I was "better", but they only made me feel like I was about 2 feet underwater, scratching for the surface.

It wasn't until I was 31 that I was given a psychiatric label – "mild cyclothymic disorder" – and placed on lithium (carbonate). That was the first ANYTHING I had been given that made me actually feel better.

And when I was 48, my kidneys failed from too much lithium. The carbonate form is such that the effective level and the toxic level are so close as to keep the doctors monitoring your kidneys, but unable to tell anything until you're in great danger.

My doctors began what I call the "Medication Guinea Pig Dance", changing me from one drug to another, using drugs that were toxic

only to my liver to give my kidneys a break. I have taken just about every psych drug on the market. None of them felt as good as lithium, all of them had "side" effects that made me hurt again. All the doctors repeatedly told me there were no alternatives, and these drugs would "cure" me.

In mid-2003 I was directed to the ALT-therapies4bipolar Yahooogroup, and learned that there **were** natural alternatives. By early November 2003 I was entirely off all medications and felt better than ever. My doctor told me that they would no longer treat me or meet with me, until such time, as he cheerfully predicted, that I relapsed and needed their drugs again.

As that prediction has not been fulfilled, I thank Goddess for showing me the nutritional deficiencies I had and what I can do to help myself heal.

At the present time, I am functioning as Owner of ALT-therapies4bipolar, and am also a Moderator of Bi-Polar_Pagans Yahooogroup, and am also a co-founder of the Asheville Radical Mental Health Collective. I also have training as a leader in Recovery, Inc., which provides a number of helpful tools in keeping one from making one's symptoms worse (or preventing them in the first place), and have been a group leader in NAMI CARE.

It is my opinion that all cases of "mental illness" are caused by nutritional deficiencies coupled with traumatic experiences. If you take care of the nutritional aspects, you will be much better equipped to deal with putting your brain back together. I do believe in talk therapy, although I know there are probably as many good therapists as bad ones, and there are always

other ways to work things out if you know where to look. I have also learned that at least 90% of the diagnoses themselves are based on politics, to allow doctors to sell you drugs – and that a lot of people are afraid to hear that. My opinion should not be taken as Law, and I support everyone who tries to heal from or control their "disease" regardless of the method they choose to employ.

Just as in religion, there is no One True Right and Only Way to heal from "mental illness". I hope to provide information on some of the easier ones to find and use. Most of my information applies mainly to "bipolar disorder", although I have known it to work equally well in cases of schizophrenia, PTSD, "unipolar" depression, and even multiple personality disorder (or whatever the "in" term to use may be)

A good High Priestess will help, as much as a bad one may hurt. I have known both – those who understand, and those who refuse to even talk to you because they are afraid of you (or your diagnosis).

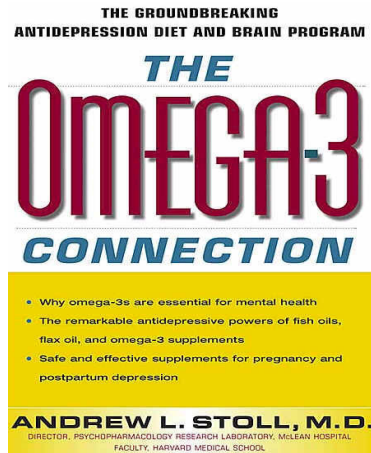
That should be enough for an introduction. If you are curious as to some of the methods I employ, you are welcome to visit my website, Hippo Haven, <http://moss.witchesgathering.com> or join one of the groups mentioned above. Write me at:

zaivalananda@yahoo.com if you would like more information or an invitation.

The magic words for you may be, as for me, "fish oil".

I apologize in advance that this month's article will be almost solely dedicated to this issue; I will discuss other helps in coming articles. It will be hard to bring it back to

paganism much, but I will try, and will refocus in future articles.



Anthropologists tell us that, not that long ago, there were 3 or 4 competing hominid ("man-like") species. One of these groups lived along the lake, and ate a varied diet including spearing fish from the lake; the others did not get the benefit of eating fish. According to these anthropologists, those who ate fish regularly had their brains grow to 3-4 times the size of their competitors, and were thus able to use their new-found brainpower to out-compete the others and become the only surviving species of man. (Source: paraphrased wildly from "The Omega-3 Connection" by Andrew L. Stoll, M.D.)



Catching and Drying Salmon
Diorama, Reading Public Museum

Is this not a gift from Goddess? It would seem so to me. I would

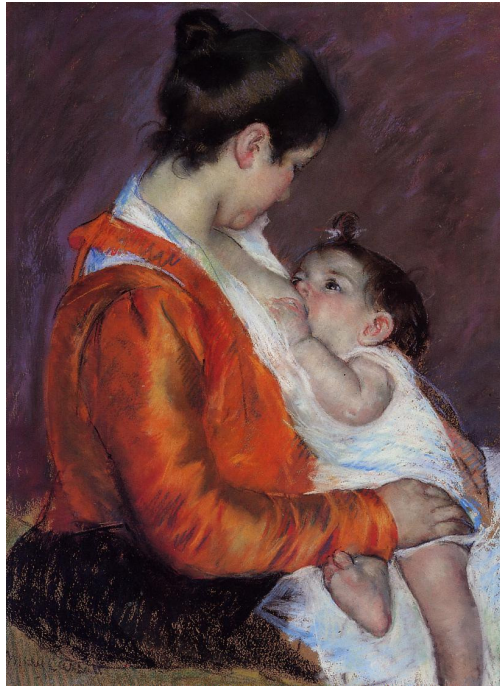
venture to say that these distant ancestors were likely moved to use these brains to think about the world and universe around them, discovering the Grace that the Lady had given them.

How does this affect us today? When we are born, over 60% of our brains are made up of fats, with nearly all of those fats being the Omega-3 fatty acids EPA and DHA. These fats get used up, and are replaced through our diet. If there is EPA and DHA to replace them with, our body uses those. If there isn't, it uses whatever fatty acids are available (commonly AA, Arachidonic Acid – an Omega-6, in the American diet). Our bodies can manufacture EPA and DHA directly from dietary fish, or from grains or vegetables high in a third Omega-3, ALA (Alpha Linoleic Acid); it cannot manufacture an Omega-3 from an Omega-6. The typical American diet is VERY high in Omega-6s, high in Omega-9s, but unless you eat a lot of fish or flax, virtually no Omega-3s. (I can discuss what these terms mean privately if you like... suffice it to say that our brains NEED Omega-3 and not the other types of fats, and do not work properly without sufficient quantities of them.) With the proper fats, our neurons fire off in proper sequence; without them, we're out of synch. (Same source as above) This appears to be a MAJOR (physical) cause in depression, mania, schizophrenia, and other types of mental illness or distress.

Yes, there are environmental factors, behavioral factors, etc., but the Goddess gave us these brains and we need to feed them properly.

It has further been studied (and so far mostly proven) that, as fetuses and babies, we suck our mothers dry of their supplies of these fatty acids – it's how we get them in the first place, either through the

placenta or through mother's milk. In fact, a mother with a diet insufficient in Omega-3s is sucked so empty of them that it appears to be the almost sole cause of "post-partum depression".



Louise Nursing Her Child
Mary Cassatt 1898 ARC

How can we get sufficient quantities of these substances in our diets?

1. Eat cold-water dark-muscle-meat fish (cod, salmon, etc., but not whiting) 3-4 times per week, at least 4 oz per serving.
2. Take fish oil supplements (these can be cheap or quite expensive, but the expensive ones have not been shown to have any value over the cheapest ones).
3. Take a DHA supplement (more expensive, and mostly only available at GNC Stores, but derived wholly from algae and plankton, not fish).
4. Take Flax Seed Oil or Hemp Seed Oil Supplements (high in ALA, which your body CAN convert to EPA and DHA... but different bodies are more or less efficient at the conversion process). (You can also

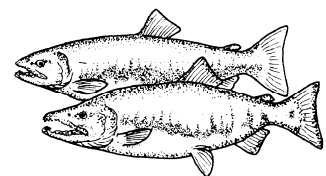
add whole flax seed or hemp seed to your diet in various ways, and other vegetables have lower levels of ALA but might be sufficient.)

That's it. There is no other way.

There are questions about fish being polluted with mercury; a careful study of the subject shows that no major brand of fish oil (or DHA) has any measurable amounts.

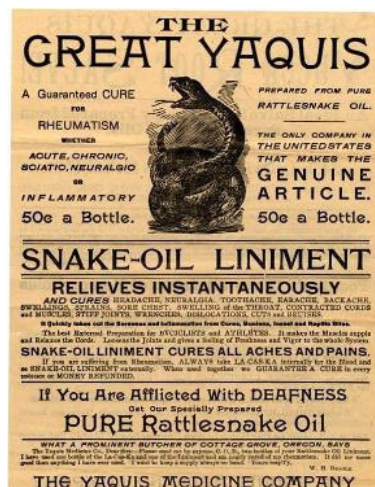
How much does it cost? Well, you know what it costs to buy fish, or can check at any grocery store. Fish oil can be obtained as cheaply as 300 1-gram softgels for under \$7 (Sam's Club, similar price at Costco), 250 for \$10.50 (Walmart), up to 100 for \$19.95 at various health food stores. It has been shown that nearly all (regular-strength) fish oil is processed and produced at only 3 factories in the world, so the expensive stuff at the health food store is exactly the same as the cheap stuff at Sam's Club. (I recommend that you do not buy "Icelandic Health" from infomercials or "OmegaBrite"; these are untested formulations at VERY high prices. Standard fish oil contains 180 mg of EPA and 120 mg of DHA per gram of oil.)

How much should you take? If you suffer from clinical depression, bipolar disorder, or another diagnosed disorder, I would start at 4 grams (softgels) and think about trying 6 if you can afford it; less than that is shown to not be effective, more than that just costs too much and there is no shown benefit to date.



I would like to emphasize several things here. I am a Priest of Wicca, not a Doctor of Medicine. These statements are based on a LOT of anecdotal evidence and a few studies done at Harvard Medical School and affiliated university hospitals. If you are diagnosed as "bipolar" (or "manic-depressive", same thing), feel free to join the ALT-therapies4bipolar Yahooogroup, where currently over 180 other people are talking about what they are doing for themselves, usually without any drug therapy whatever. We also have a group called Bi-polar_pagans, which includes people -- on any therapy -- who happen to be pagan. If you need help contacting these groups, please write me.

Moss Bliss
zaivalananda@yahoo.com
Asheville,NC



Snake Oil Bottle Label 1903

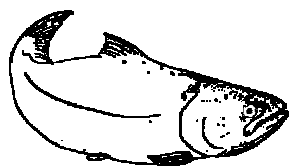
Our next question is, what is the relationship between "madness" and Paganism? Quite simply, the answer appears to be that the special gifts which others view as "madness" and those which others view as "psychic abilities" appear to come from the same place – our Inner Child. Do you hear "voices"? They could be your spirit guides, or bad experiences with your family "environment" repeating themselves as though the person who first said those things was saying it right now.

The following is an extract from website information on "The Icarus Project" (<http://theicarusproject.net> – HIGHLY recommended):

"Dangerous Gifts"

Despite the risks, we recognize the intertwined threads of madness and creativity as potential tools of inspiration and hope in this repressed and damaged society.

What if madness in society is an ecological response to the monocropping of our minds, and it has the potential to push the sensitive, creative, spiritual people at the fringes to become healers and leaders and turn the whole system upside down? At the very least, history bears witness to the fact that "mental illness" is far more common in populations of artists, writers, and musicians than it is in society at large. The Icarus Project is home to a truly talented and unique bunch of creators and visionaries whose sensitivities allow them access to all kinds of worlds; this section is designed to house art and writing that reflect and explore the brilliance we hold inside.



Daedalus and Icarus

Lord Frederick Leighton ARC

Visions & Super-Powers Mystics & Shamans

It's striking how much overlap there is between the tendencies and behaviors our society attributes to the "seriously mentally ill" and the tendencies and behaviors that shamanic and mystical cultures view as prerequisite for someone to take on visionary roles. This section explores the ways that sensitivity and altered states of consciousness can grant us access to radically different understandings of reality, sometimes putting us in touch tremendous powers of healing and connecting us to a sense of the mysteries much greater than ourselves.

Dreams

Dreams are full of clues if we allow ourselves to see them. All masked in layers of metaphor and symbol. They can be a whole other set of maps, maps to the underground unconscious each of us carries around with us. Sometimes dreams can even let us know where we are

and where we might be going... If you'd like to contribute to this section or help get it off the ground, e-mail scatter@theicarusproject.net

X-Ray Visions

It is a common experience among people struggling with "mental disorders" to see things that the people around them don't see. While medical authorities usually write off people's visions as mere delusions and recommend higher levels of medication, quite often the things we see and hear are evidence of a heightened sensitivity and of the thin skin that comes with madness. Our porous nature allows us to have an intimate relationship with parts of the world other people will only ever read about. Like all the classic superheroes, our superpowers are dangerous gifts that intensify the struggle of our lives. But they are superpowers, and we can learn to use them." (end of quote)

Does anything sound familiar here? Icarus Project has taken the lead in demystifying "mental illness", changing the terminology from "sick", "brain disorder", etc., to "Dangerous Gifts".

We all have dangerous gifts. Even the most benign healing powers may do harm, or you may *need* to do harm in order to heal (i.e., killing cancer cells, psychically "cutting tissue", etc.).

It is these same gifts which made us feel "outcasts" in our parents' religion, uncomfortable no matter which church we attended, and caused us to keep searching until either we found Goddess or She found us. It is these same gifts that our religion (with a good teacher or lots of good books) trains us to use, "always harming none." It is these same gifts that are written about in all the Pagan literature, and "The Old Laws" are full of references.

It would be easy to write off all Pagans as "mentally ill". The truth of the matter is that, under current psychiatric definitions, every man, woman and child in the U.S. could fall under some psychiatric diagnosis – or several, or different ones depending on the diagnosing physician. This is not to say that Pagans are "crazy", or any crazier than the rest of the country (or the doctors themselves). Our difference is our strength, the welcome the Lady extends to us, the acceptance (however slowly) of those gifts and the desire to do good with them, the desire to grow those gifts and powers.

It would not do anyone any good to recite the stories of the people who have come to me about going to a "Pagan teacher" and being told that s/he refused to teach them because of their "illness". What will do good is to recognize all our potentials, the safe and the dangerous, and be willing to teach what we know or have experienced.

I hope you remember my earlier belief statement: "God/dess is Love. Love unites; Judgment divides." Turning a potential student away because you are uncomfortable with them, or afraid of them or their "illness", or because of something in their past (especially if they have worked hard to get beyond it) is an admission of your weakness, not that of your potential student. Embrace your Dangerous Gifts as your Lady embraces you.

"Mental illness" is a combination of factors – abuse, poor nutrition, bad experiences, bad drugs, and lazy doctors appear to be the main ones at the time I write this. People with multiple personalities probably developed them to keep their "center" "safe" while their body was being abused by someone. I do not

believe that it makes them unacceptable as a Priest or Priestess. I hope I'm not alone in this belief.

Back to the nutritional angle. There are other deficiencies noted throughout the country, and I'm going to discuss a few of them here.

First, mineral deficiencies: Doctors try to tell us of the dangers of excessive mineral intake, but they rarely tell us the rest of the truth. *All minerals* have an *essential* level, a *therapeutic* level, and a *toxic* level. I don't care if you're discussing radium, oxygen, or calcium, the above is a true statement. For some of those minerals, the *essential* level may be miniscule; for others it is quite large. The typical American diet does not come close to providing essential levels of magnesium, potassium, or other minerals, while it exceeds the levels for sodium, chlorine, and a few others.

Magnesium appears to have a large role in the treatment of "mental illness", particularly stress, anxiety, and panic responses. The amount of magnesium your body needs can range to as high as 3 grams per day or higher; most diets include between 300 and 800 milligrams. The problem with supplementing magnesium is that many forms, in adequate quantities, cause peristalsis (diarrhea, which ends as soon as the excess magnesium is flushed from the system). This is both a plus and a minus, as magnesium sulfate (Epsom salts) has been used for generations as a laxative.

The problem is, what form are you taking? Magnesium can be supplemented as oxide, sulfate, carbonate, or even orotate. The trick is to get the magnesium out of your bowel and into the rest of your

cells. One common supplement that has been found to aid in this process is malic acid.

The other trick is to use as many of the possible sources as possible – magnesium sulfate is most likely to cause peristalsis, oxide and orotate least likely, but if you balance them you can avoid it entirely. (At least one supplement company sells a "Magnesium Complex" supplement.)

Also, supplementation of magnesium at high levels will throw your calcium level out of balance; always take additional calcium when you're taking extra magnesium. For a variety of reasons, I do *not* recommend mixed calcium-magnesium supplements.

A much-overlooked mineral is lithium, except when you have been diagnosed as "bipolar" or "manic-depressive", in which case your doctor prescribes a common – but very toxic – form of lithium, lithium carbonate. In a combined medical-geological survey in the 1950s, it was noted that some areas with lower rates of "mental illness" than other areas had measurable amounts of lithium in their drinking water.

The only organ in your body which appears to *need* lithium is your brain. Lithium carbonate is dangerous in that it does not easily pass the elemental lithium past the "Blood/Brain Barrier" (I know it sounds silly, but look it up, they really do use this term). The solution, in the mind of medical science, is to flood your body with enough lithium carbonate to get *enough* lithium to your brain. The negative of this is that your **other** organs do **not** need lithium, and this causes many "side-effects" including eventual kidney failure.

The natural solution is to take lithium orotate (lithium chelated with orotic acid, a natural amino acid). Lithium orotate contains a very small amount of lithium, and the orotic acid carrier has been shown in many studies to pass essentially all the lithium through the Blood/Brain Barrier. (Years ago I was taking 1800-2100 mg of lithium carbonate daily, giving me from 756 to 882 mg/day of elemental lithium. I currently take 360 mg of lithium orotate, supplying less than 15 mg/day of elemental lithium.) I asked my doctor about taking lithium orotate. She stated plainly,



Midsummer Eve Edward Hughes 1898
ARC

"I know nothing about it. I'm not going to talk about that." What is interesting is that she annotated my patient file with the words, "Advised pt. strongly against it." Unless you have an exceptional psychiatrist or doctor, you will likely get the same result.

Excessive lithium intake also tends to degrade or damage your thyroid gland. Lithium orotate has shown (in a few cases, all anecdotal to date) that it does not cause that harm, indeed, in one case the person's thyroid (having been damaged by intake of lithium carbonate) improved and her doctor cut her Synthroid dosage in half.

For information on this and other natural therapies, especially for bipolar and depression, please visit my website,
<http://ALT-therapies4bipolar.info>

That should be enough to hold you until next issue. Question, read, study, talk to others. In particular, I have gotten a lot of support from the Bi-polar_pagans Yahoogroup people.

Blessed be,
Moss Bliss



The Salmon Eduard Manet

Giant Naked Goddess to be Carved into Hillside



Artist's Conception of Northumberlandia

Blagdonestate.co.uk

A 400-yard naked "Green Goddess" is to be carved into the Northumberland landscape, under a new plan revealed by a mining company.

Dubbed the "Goddess of the North", Northumberlandia will be made from two million tonnes of earth dug out from an open cast mine in Cramlington, and tower 112ft into the northern sky.

The Goddess, designed by artist Charles Jencks, will recline over the Shotton open-cast mine and form the centre piece of a new public park at the site.

The open-cast mine, which began coaling earlier this year, will produce around 3.4 million tonnes of coal, two million tonnes

of shale and 750,000 tonnes of fireclay during its eight-year lifetime.

The entire development is estimated to cost around £2.5 million, and work will begin on the sculpture next year.

Plans for the sculpture, which will be visible from the A1, were originally blocked by Northumberland County Council 2006 after 2,500 people objected to the proposals.

But after a successful appeal to the Government by the Durham based The Banks Group, which runs the mine, the Goddess will now be able to go ahead.

Northumberlandia represents an "attempt

to provide a tangible, early and permanent benefit for south-east Northumberland", said The Banks Group.

Mark Dowdall, environment and community director at the firm, said: "Our dual aims with Northumberlandia were to create an outstanding artistic landmark which stands alongside the region's other main tourist attractions and to provide high quality leisure facilities for the local community, and we believe this final design will succeed on both counts.

"Northumberlandia has already garnered interest and responses from people right around the world, and we're very excited to now be unveiling the project's final form.

"It will take around 20 minutes just to walk all the way around her, and the design has been enhanced with more paths to allow visitors to the park to easily ascend the figure.

"As well as the artwork itself, the surrounding landform park will offer important nature conservation and public health benefits, giving both local people and visitors an ideal place to exercise, picnic and enjoy themselves."

"This artwork could not exist without the

adjacent mining operation, and the sculpture will be part of the long-term local legacy that we always wanted the Shotton scheme to leave."

Bob Downer, chief executive at the Blagdon Estate, which owns the land earmarked for the sculpture said the project was "bold and exciting".

"Northumberlandia is a unique opportunity which will provide an exciting location for many future generations to come," he said.

Northumberland County Council was unable to comment, but county councillor Wayne Daley told the BBC the Goddess was "ridiculous".

"If we wanted something like this why didn't we just ask Jordan to open a theme park," he said.

"It really is ridiculous to think that something like a naked woman, who is only there as a result of all of the slag and the coal from the mine, is a good way of attracting people to Cramlington."

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/5715111/Giant-naked-goddess-to-be-carved-into-hillside.html>



15 QUESTIONS FOR CHRISTIANS

By Ashley Vinson and Leo Flamehand

EDITOR'S NOTE: If you live in modern day America, you most likely have had the experience of having Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons or some other Christian group knock on your door and try to convert you. They often come early on a Sunday morning so they can haul you off to church, should you succumb to their sales pitch.

There are many different ways you can handle this situation. Personally, I don't believe in being rude to people who are well-meaning, even if I do consider them misguided. So I usually just tell them politely that I already have a religion and thank them for caring about my soul. Often I will take whatever literature they want to give me, because they feel like they've accomplished something by spreading "the Word" and it also helps them to leave expeditiously.

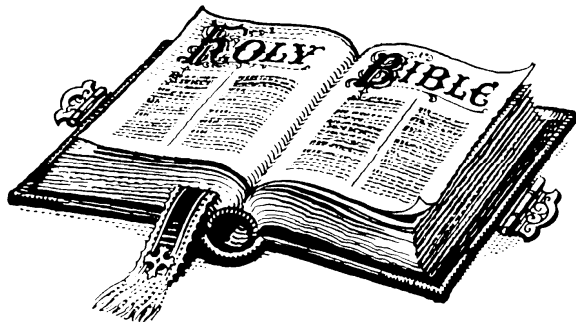
Of course, my favorite way to handle the door-to-door missionaries was written about by Oberon Zell-Ravenheart a number of years ago in an article entitled "*The Other People*". You can read all about it by clicking on the link at the end of this excerpt, and it's well worth the read:

"Ding-dong!" goes the doorbell. Is it Avon calling? Or perhaps Ed McMahon with my three million dollars? No, it's Yahweh's Witlesses again, just wanting to have a nice little chat about the Bible... Boy, did they ever come to the wrong house! So we invite them in: "Enter freely and of your own will..." (Hey, it's Sunday morning, nothing much going on, why not have a little entertainment?) Diane and I amuse

ourselves watching their expressions as they check out the living room: great horned owl on the back of my chair; ceremonial masks and medicine skulls of dragons and unicorns on the wall; crystals, wands, staffs, swords; lots of Goddess figures and several altars; boa constrictors draped in amorous embrace over the elkhorn; white doves sitting in the hanging planters; cats and weasels underfoot; iron dragon snorting steam atop the wood stove; posters and paintings of wizards and dinosaurs and witchy women, some proudly naked; sculptures of mythological beasties and lots more dinosaurs; warp six on the star-filled viewscreen of my computer; a five-foot model of the USS Enterprise and the skeleton of a plesiosaur hanging from the ceiling; very, very many books, most of them dealing with obviously weird subjects... To say nothing of the great horned owl perched on the back of my chair and the Unicorn grazing in the front yard. You know; early Addams Family decor. And then, of course, it being late in the morning, you can expect Morning Glory to come wandering out naked, looking for her wake-up cup of tea. Morning Glory naked is a truly impressive sight, and the Witlesses look as if she'd set titties on stun as they stand immobilized, hands clasped over their genitals. (read the rest here:) http://www.paganlibrary.com/fundies/other_people.php

You can always try Oberon's approach or you can try asking them some questions of your own. Herewith, is a list of suggested questions to help you get started, so you'll be ready for those pesky religious sales calls. – Ariel Monserrat, Editor.

Below you will find 15 questions about Christianity that a friend and I have compiled. It is our request that you answer each question in full, and that answers such as "Because the Bible says so", and "Because it just is", be avoided. We have cited outside sources and the Bible beneath some of our questions, we encourage you to look beyond the Bible as well for your references. We apologize in advance if any of our questions offend you, as it was not our intent. Please respond with your replies to us at devonh0818@yahoo.com



1..Why do you believe God Created Earth, and people in his image? Did he create us simply to worship him? If he is perfection, why would he need a world of people just to worship him?



Adam and Eve

Lucas Cranach the Elder ARC

2. What is your opinion on the historically documented stories of Pagan gods that

pre-date stories of Christ and his disciples? In these Stories, the gods often are killed, and then resurrected 3 days later, and some even have 12 disciples, and are born of a virgin. Horus is most likely the most prominent example. Also, if you wish to argue that these stories are false, why couldn't Christianity be false as well?

(Source Material)

http://www.religioustolerance.org/chr_jcp_a3.htm)

3. Why are there so many Christian beliefs adopted from early Pagan religions? (religions most Christians today believe to be "Devil Worship") Among these adoptions include December 25th as Christ's birthday, the Holy Trinity, Easter, and the adoption of Pagan deities as saints. Would you not agree that these adoptions were made to make it easier for people to convert to the Christian faith?

Please view:

http://www.watchtower.org/e/ti/article_04.htm
http://www.watchtower.org/e/20071215/article_01.htm

and:

http://www.watchtower.org/e/19990315/article_01.htm



The Flood Michelangelo 1508 ARC

3. Is it possible that the writers of the Bible took aspects from every day events, and natural disasters and made them appear like "God's Work"? For example, the deluge or "Great Flood".

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deluge_myth
<http://www.talkorigins.org/faqs/flood-myths.html>

4. Christianity has a bloody history, and we even celebrate some of it! St. Patrick's day is a perfect example, why do you believe it was found acceptable to basically wipe out an entire religious group?. Why do you believe Christians see fit to limit the rights of others, especially those in the GLBT Community? Not only is it hurtful and wrong, it's cruel. To turn a blind eye to the suffering caused by Christian groups lobbying to ban gay marriage, is wrong. To say that all gays are sinful devil-worshippers and bad people is to go against the Bible. "Thou shalt not judge" or can people overlook that saying if the person they are judging doesn't follow God? There are gay people in this world who have done great things for society. Why are they viewed as evil, and/or misguided?

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_gay,_lesbian_or_bisexual_people



Hell Hieronymus Bosch ARC

6. Do you believe that Christians use scare tactics? "Become a Christian or burn in Hell" That doesn't sound like the truth,

it sounds like propaganda that has been pushed on us for far too long.



Mural Peabody Museum

7. Did our ancestors co-exist along-side dinosaurs? In a few places in the Bible it speaks of "great beasts", however wouldn't such large predators and herbivores most likely be mentioned more often, due to not only their immense size, but the threat they would have posed? How do you explain the finding of dinosaur bones here in the States?

8. Countless times I have been told "Don't go questioning the Bible, or you'll begin to doubt God". Basically, those saying that all the information available to us that contradicts the Bible's teachings is calling hundreds of thousands, if not millions of people liars. Why shouldn't we be able to question the Bible like we would question any other book that's just as old?

9. Is it not possible that after countless translations, and revisions, much of the true text of the Bible is lost? I attended a Teen Night at a dance club once and upon

exiting I found the sidewalks blocked with a youth group and my ears filled with a pastor on a bullhorn. He was calling everyone exiting the Club "Sinners and unclean". How could that group know about the lives and doings of each person inside that club? How did he find it acceptable to be so disruptive in a residential neighborhood at 9 o'clock at night?

11. Christians often cite the United States as "God's nation". This is false, our constitution has one reference to a creator, and this creator isn't specified. The Treaty of Tripoli also states we are not a Christian country. This is often used as an arguing point for Christians, but it has been proven to be a misfounded point. One of our founding fathers wrote his own Bible, removing all of Jesus's miracles and simply leaving the good morals. What is your response to the claim that we are a Christian nation?

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Treaty_of_Tripoli

Please see Article 11

<http://www.usconstitution.net/constnot.html>

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jefferson Bible](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jefferson_Bible)

12. People say the Bible is infallible, but it is written by man. Regardless of their inspiration, it is still man's word. Do you believe the Bible is Infallible?

13. Virtually all of the Old Testament speaks of how the Israelites were "God's Chosen People", and thereby justified to kill men, women, and children so that they could have land. Do you believe Christianity to be a "Tribal Religion"?

How can a "Loving God" basically pick one People to live and another to die?

How can a "loving God" promote death like that, yet write "Thou shalt not kill" in the 10 commandments?

"He destroyed with the sword every living thing in it; men and women, young and old, cattle, sheep, and donkeys" (Joshua 6:21). For example, Deuteronomy 20 contains Yahweh's instructions about war. If a city does not accept Israel's offer of peace and open its gates, then "when the Lord our God delivers it into your hand, put to the sword all the men in it" (verse 13). With regard to other cities, the command is (verse 16), "Do not leave anything that breathes."

14. If someone lives through a terrible case of cancer, it was through "their faith in God", but when they die "it was God's will"? I have known devout Christians who took their time reading the Bible and believed they had a good relationship with God, only to pass away. Is this simply because God controls everything?



15. Do you not believe it is a little far-fetched that Jesus/God can hear billions of prayers all at once and make decisions regarding their Life? How can Christians call the beliefs of others silly without examining their own?



Muse Reviews



Avatar

By Tom Donohue

It's official. The Vatican hates James Cameron's *Avatar*. The Vatican newspaper *L'Osservatore Romano* has said that the movie "flirts with the notion that worship of nature can replace religion." (AP) and "... gets bogged down by a spiritualism linked to the worship of nature." While this is not an actual papal announcement, it

does reflect the Pope's views that ecology is turning into "the religion of the millenium."

In his New Year's Day message for World Peace, Pope Benedict XVI criticized the tendency to consider Nature as more important than the human person, and the "egalitarian vision of the "dignity" of all living creatures." "Such notions . . . end up abolishing the distinctiveness and superior role of human beings. They also open the way to a new pantheism tinged with neo-paganism, which

would see the source of man's salvation in nature alone, understood in purely naturalistic terms."

Far out! Former *Hitlerjugend*, Benny the Dick, has noticed that we exist, and he seems a little worried.

The movie has also been criticized by militarists and arch conservatives as being anti-military and anti corporate.

One more good reason to see it.

It is also rapidly becoming the highest grossing movie in film history, even surpassing Cameron's earlier mega-hit, *Titanic*, and is expected to win several Oscars.

The plot is a little thin but the film is, after all, a fable, reminiscent of *Pocahontas*, *The Emerald Forest* and *Star Wars Episode VI Return of the Jedi* with a hint of Edgar Rice Burroughs' John Carter of Mars. It's true genius lies in the special effects which are dazzling. I found it impossible to refrain from oohing and ahing in numerous moments of incomparable beauty. If at all possible, see it on the big screen. Watch the 3D

version if it is available in your area. Expect to be overwhelmed. The film makers have created an imaginary planet that is at once, totally alien yet somehow familiar. The flora and fauna that inhabit this world are biologically plausible in ways that suggest that a lot of serious science was involved in their creation.

Be warned that is about 2½ hours long and is definitely an "action" movie with some warfare but without graphic carnage.

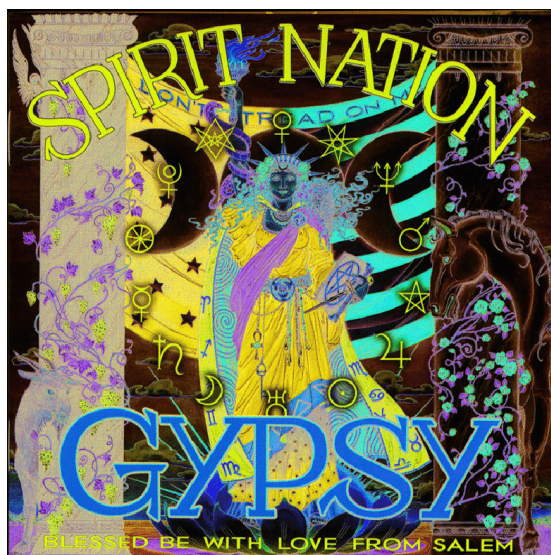
The film is marred by the single line, "It's not just Pagan voodoo; it's real" spoken by Sigourney Weaver's character, exobiologist, Dr. Grace Augustine. The line is a flaw that I can easily forgive since Dr. Augustine represents Science itself. The **physical** reality of Gaia, the sentience of other species and of the interconnectedness of all life forms is of paramount importance to Pantheists and Pagan scientists alike. Our Goddess is 100% natural.

In short, Avatar is one of the most beautiful and most moving films I've ever seen. Don't miss it!



Spirit Nation by Gypsy

Reviewed by Oberon Zell-Ravenheart



Yesterday I opened a package from my old friend Gypsy in Salem. It contained her new CD: *Spirit Nation*. I was personally excited about this latest release, because I'd arranged permission for her to cover Gwydion's famous Pagan anthem, "We Won't Wait Any Longer."

So I put it on our sound system in our Temple, got all comfy, and settled in for a wonderful and inspiring musical journey into the Underworld, and back out to a triumphant reclaiming of our Pagan place in the world!

I was delighted to discover that not only Gypsy and Gwydion wrote lyrics for this album, but also my dear old (in the sense of having known each other for four decades) friends Erinna Northwind and Isaac Bonewits.

The journey begins, appropriately enough, with a powerful Rite of Initiation. This is followed by a tribute to the Starwood festival where so many of us have met and

danced around the bonfire for the past 30 years.

The Elements are invoked and stirred into the cauldron with William Gray's energy- (and hair-) raising "Mill of Magick." This is followed by an exquisite love spell to call one's true Wiccan Soulmate. The note says it's by Gypsy for Richard, her own Priest and lifemate.

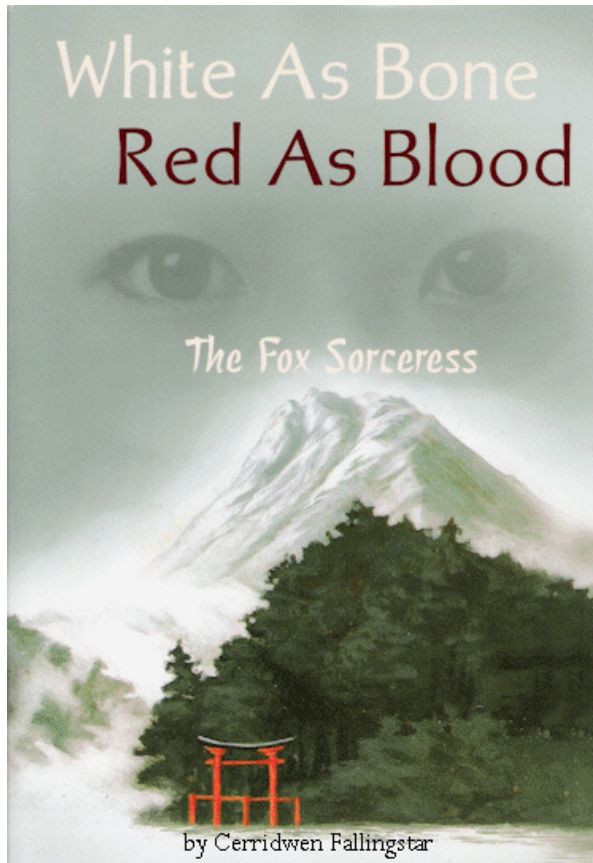
Next comes an "Esbat Meeting Song," evoking many Full Moon Circles I've known. And this takes us to a poignant paean for the "Fallen Angel:" "Believe in yourself and make miracles."

But the true Great Work of this album, and the piece that brought me to my knees in joyous tears of recognition, is "I Am Thy." This is the perfect love song that can come only out of a lifetime shared with one's true Soulmate and Magickal Partner: Priestess to Priest; Witch to Magician. I could not but think of Morning Glory and our 36 years together!

And then (appropriately enough at this Samhain season), we journey into the Underworld in memories of "Jack and All Our Dear Ones" departed beyond the veil, whom "we'll meet and know and love again in Avalon." There we meet The Morrigan, for "without the touch of your white wings, we cannot have rebirth." This song is by Isaac, and it always sends chills up my spine.

And finally, the rousing and triumphant Pagan Anthem by our own beloved Bard, Gwydion Pendderwen: "We Won't Wait Any Longer." You've heard it a thousand times, but never—I guarantee—like this!

So I say, buy this CD, and play it in your Circle!



Cauldron Publications ISBN: 978-0-578-02711-1

Review by Ariel Monserrat

This is without a doubt one of the best books I've read this past decade. Set in 12th century Japan, the book's story unfolds with writing that is poetic, lyrical and almost musical.

Seiko, a priestess of Inari, the Japanese fox deity, is of noble birth but the death of her father leaves her economically dependent on her vicious stepmother, Mikogi. Seiko is forced to endure cruelty

and torture by her husband, Mikogi's son. Eventually, she attempts to escape and lands at the Imperial court of her old

friend, who has now become the Empress. She becomes a well-known poet and

writer, while also teaching the art of lovemaking to other women, some of whom become her lovers.



The book is full of sensual sex, which is described in poetic terms. Along the way, the reader learns about Japanese history, cuisine, spiritual customs/rituals and art.

The entire book presents an almost visual picture of what life in medieval Japan was like. The descriptions of the cherry blossom festival, the moon rites and other rituals are exquisite. She describes Inari, the Japanese fox deity, whose representation even today can be seen in great profusion throughout Japan.

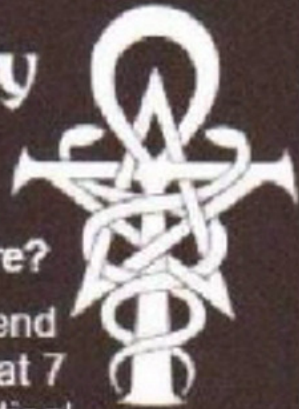
I've never really been drawn to Japanese history or culture, though I do love the simplicity of Japanese art. Even so, I found this book to be so intriguing that I

couldn't put it down. Nor could I get the images of bright silken robes, rich jewelry and palace luxury out of my mind. The entire time I read this book I was hungry for Asian food and on the plus side, I learned how to cook Chinese food pretty well. (I know Japanese and Chinese cuisines are quite different, but my stomach and taste buds don't know the difference! Go figure.)

There will be sequels to this book and I can't wait to read the next one!

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Odd's Bodkin On The Road

Part 2: On to Indiana!!

By Kenny Klein,
(with commentary by Anna Klein)



When last we left Pagan-ren faire-Gypsy-Celtic band Odd's Bodkin in GE #149, the band was playing at Corn Stalk festival in scenic Ohio, at scenic Wisteria. Despite the rain, we had a very good gig there. We never got to play the amazing huge main stage, but we had fun in the pub! And on the last night of the festival I got to sit in on a set with the most excellent Momentary Prophets. Great musicians and songwriters, I really enjoyed having a chance to play with these guys.



Momentary Prophets



(www.myspace.com/momentaryprophets)



We also had a great time meeting and listening to Amanda Rogers.

(www.myspace.com/amandarogers)

Because of the rain, only our old friends the Dragon Ritual Drummers got to play on the big main stage. You guys owe us one... (but Anna says she still loves Utu).



We left Wisteria on a rare (for us) sunny day, and headed to northern Ohio for Great Lakes Medieval Faire.



I do a lot of renaissance faires, and while my job is to make them fun for the patrons (as we call the paying customers), doing something for years can make it perhaps somewhat less then exciting. Oh, I am ever appreciative of being able to play songs about dead gerbils for a living! But if you ask me "are you excited to be playing a renaissance faire next weekend?" I will most likely respond "just another day at the office." (Then again my office is probably much bigger and more tree-lined than your office...)

But I never tire of camping at a faire with my peers, our fellow faire workers. Here in California, where I do most of my faires since moving to Los Angeles ten years ago, there are no faires that offer all-week camping. You show up Friday evening, you play Saturday and Sunday, and you go home Sunday night. But elsewhere in America, every faire has a campground for its employees, and most employees are full time national renaissance festival carnies. I mean workers. You arrive at the start of a faire, and camp for six or seven weeks with your fellow faire-folk. It's great. So that's how it was at Great Lakes, and we loved it.

The faire itself was much more awesome than we expected. Decent stages, and our old friend Broon was there performing on a

stage close by us. I also got to see several other old faire friends and co-workers whom I had not seen since leaving the national circuit for California faires. It was nice to see a lot of them! Scott Hendricks, who plays the character Axel the Sot, runs this faire, and I hadn't seen him in quite a few years. It was a joyous reunion.



But the campground was, for me, the best part. At renaissance faire campgrounds, there are great traditions that occur when the faire closes and the patrons head home. One of these is a Monday morning tradition called Bizarre Bazaar.

Now remember, we faire workers work Saturday and Sunday, so our Friday is like your Sunday, with an early bed time, and Monday morning is the start of our glorious 5-day weekend. Monday morning for us is like any lazy morning for you: Pajamas, cup of coffee, ratty slippers, crossword puzzles. At faire camps, we celebrate our 5-day weekend with a little flea market/breakfast shindig. The breakfast part, cooked by a volunteer and costing just enough so no one loses money on providing coffee, eggs and cheese, is called Bernie's Breakfast after the guy who twenty-odd years ago came up with the idea. Bernie I fear is long gone from the circuit, but his fame lives on.

Alongside the breakfast crowd in their pajamas, we have bizarre bazaar. Anyone with something to sell, from items important to our work like costumes and knives to the

completely non-essential like jewelry, sneakers, used clothing, blankets, hemp hats and g-strings, you name it, can set up a mat or a sheet and sell to her or his fellow workers. At this bazaar folks were selling earrings (I bought a nice 2 gage glass piece), used DVDs and CDs, bodices, handmade purses (nice ones, too!), and some items of gently worn designer clothing. Great thing about bazaar, you never ever know what you'll find.

Another long standing faire-ground tradition is Funky Formal. It's been my experience that ren faire workers, who usually wear whatever is at the top of the dirty clothes pile in the van or tent, look really good on two occasions: in their costume (garb) Saturdays and Sundays at faire, and decked out for

.....*Funky Formal*.....the anything-goes-wear-your-hottest-sexiest-out fit-show-up-naked-if-you-dare-and-believe me-people-really-do, party held at each faire campground once during that faire's run. Sadly, our run at Great Lakes did not coincide with their Funky Formal. Better luck next year.



Ichneumon Wasp

On another note, while at the campground we saw the weirdest Ohio bug on the face of the earth!!! It was a huge wasp, drilling into a tree right beside our campsite. We brought over several 12-year-old bug experts as well as the campground director but could not get an ID on this thing. The Internet revealed it was an Ichneumon wasp, with a 5 inch

ovipositor (or long spiky stinger thing) which it uses to lay its eggs in trees where spiders have lain their eggs. When they all happily hatch side-by-side the young wasps will feed on the newly hatched spiders. Apparently Darwin commented on how evil and insidious this wasp is, and would have nothing to do with the creature.

Wasps. That's how I spent my summer vacation...

We hated leaving the ren faire campground, but other good things awaited us. After what seemed to us a short and rain-free drive, we reached the lovely city of Indianapolis.

Each time we go to Indy in August, a headline flashes through my mind:

*Small Midwestern City Invaded By Geeks!
Details at eleven.*



Sure enough, each year in Indianapolis the world's largest gaming convention, GenCon, takes place at the Indy Convention Center, and each year tens of thousands of geeks descend upon the unsuspecting city. And each year they pay me to play there! It's a great gig for several reasons: they give me (and this year Anna and Stephanie) a beautiful four star hotel room; they pay us in actual U.S. currency (although we did receive some Federation of Planets money this year as well); they tell us to roam the hallways and perform, and we do so and sell lots of CDs; and they give us a table in the dealer room, which in previous years turned out to be right next to Erin Gray (of Buck Rogers in the 25th Century fame) and Richard Langley from the cast of the X Files. Oh Erin...the twelve year old in me still yearns for you (and believe me, you don't have to dig down so deep to find the twelve year old in me).



This year was just as good as any other. Lots of geeks, lots of gaming, lots of music. We spoke to a guy who hadn't cleaned his ears in...well, he'd apparently never cleaned his ears. We saw tons of Klingons (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Klingon>), several Star Wars babes, and of course R2D2. There were also hundreds of cute anime girls, which kept Anna very happy. (Anna fans, be advised; she's wishing for a ball joint doll for Yule. Say no more). I have a feeling that someday my Goth Girl song will find its nearly matching book-end in an anime girl song. It's that or the ode to hot geeks girls I've been meaning to write for several years. Cast your vote.

Anyway, don't let the guy with the ears put you off to GenCon (well, either guy with the ears...Spock was there too). Like any geek event, it's great, and full of surprises. You never know what is going to come wandering down the hallways. There is a game in every nook and corner. The convention center opens into several hotels and the mall. You haven't lived until you've seen Magic the Gathering being played in a Midwestern mall food court. Or LARPs carried on in Victoria's Secret. Anna points out that men ask young women out with the pick up line "wanna LARP?" GenCon, she adds, is one of the few places on earth where that line actually works.

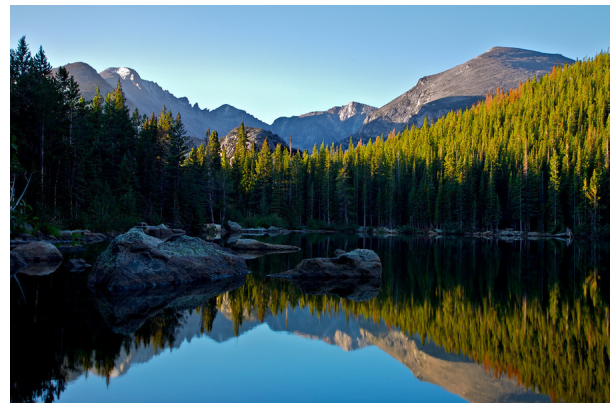
The costumed ball was in the renovated train station, which was wonderful. Yes, Doctor Who was actually there. The real one. And the station was incredible, with old train cars turned into hotel rooms (Stay there if you ever find yourself in Indianapolis), and the waiting room the site of the grand ballroom.

It was hard to pull ourselves away from the anime girls (especially for Anna), but

Colorado called to us. Also when the con ends they kind of kick us out of the hotel.

On the way to Colorado we played at Aquarius/Vulcan's Forge, a huge occult-New Age-Witchy-jewelery store in Kansas City (www.vulcans-forge.com). A family owned business, mom (Barb) runs the occult shop, and son (Russ) makes the very well crafted silver jewelery. A couple of the sisters are in and out too. They also employ pretty much every Pagan in KC. The store also has a pretty nice sized concert room, and acts like the Gypsy Nomads and Wendy Rule have performed there. So we played there too, to a small but appreciative crowd (this is a music business term that means no one showed up but they paid us anyway). We played great though.

On to Colorado!



We didn't have a gig in Colorado. Our next gig was in Utah. But we had reservation at the campground of Rocky Mountain National Park. Anna has been avidly finding and visiting national parks for a few years, collecting the stamp and sticker for each one we visit. She plans on seeing them all at some point. This is an achievable goal, as we tour a lot. So we stayed at Rocky Mountain for a few days, and hiked up to Emerald Lake, 12,000 feet above sea level. While we all had headaches, no one vomited, so it was a really good day. As we lay in our tents at night, a fairly large pack of coyotes came and serenaded us. This was a complimentary service, provided by the wildlife of the National Park at no additional cost.

Anna slept through the concert.

After leaving Colorado, which involved visiting a lot of roadside tourist stands and

trying on a LOT of cowboy hats, we crossed Wyoming (counting the antelopes) and entered Utah.



Mormon Temple Salt Lake City, Utah

Apparently when you tell people you're booked to play a gig in Salt Lake City, the first thing everyone asks is "are you playing for Mormons?" This is very like playing at a renaissance faire and telling people you will sing a song about dead gerbils: everyone has to ask "is Richard Gere in it?" and laugh a little stupidly afterwards. People, Richard Gere never had a gerbil up his butt, so get over it. Salt Lake City is a fairly large Western city with a population of 181,698 as of July 1, 2008, making it America's 125th largest city. Now since the Mormons believe that only 100,000 souls will go to Heaven, that leaves 81,698 people (give or take a soul) who are actually not Mormon! As a matter of fact, in the first few hours of our stay in SLC Anna and I met three very lovely Pagans and an incredibly hot lesbian with a ukulele. How's that for not Mormon? (And nothing like Richard Gere's gerbil). In fact SLC has several Pagan organizations, including Blue Planet Productions which sponsored our show, several occult shops, and a few Pagan and Wiccan meet-ups. It's almost like a real city.

We played at the Unitarian Universalist church to a very good sized audience, and had a great show. As far as I know, no Mormons attended. Lots of Pagans and UU's, though. The next morning we were invited to perform at the UU service, which was great. They loved our song "Maria's Not A Catholic Anymore." We told them next time we'd write a song about Elizabeth not being a

Mormon anymore. Just another song I need to get around to writing after I compose the Anime Girl Suite.

After the service, we were off to Helper, Utah.



Yes, I'm afraid that's true. My old buddy Loke E Coyote had booked us to play in the sleepy town of Helper. This town is named for the helper engines that were put on the trains to get loads of coal over the mountains. Facts about Helper Utah: in 2006 Helper was named "best Western town" by True West Magazine. In 2000, the population of Helper was 2,025. It has a celebrated ethnic diversity due to being a hub for the Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad. Through the turn of the century, the narrow gage railroad employed Chinese, Eastern European, Greek and Irish labor. In 1891 the narrow gage track was converted to standard gage, and Helper was named the DRGW's official hub between Grand Junction Colorado and Ogden Utah. This brought a good deal of building into the town, including hotels, saloons, and the Mutual Mercantile Company (now a Piggly Wiggly). On April 20, 1897, Butch Cassidy and Elzy Lay stayed in Helper on their way to rob the Pleasant Valley Coal Company in nearby Castle Gate the following day. Legend says that Butch Cassidy was a frequent visitor to Helper afterwards.

Despite all of that, there's really nothing there. We arrived in downtown Helper on Sunday afternoon at about three, and the entire downtown was closed. It was like a ghost town. Not a car in sight, not a person on the streets.

We had a show in a stone barn on the outskirts of town. Imagine our surprise when we arrived and saw no one there either. No

one. There was a general groan from all in the truck, and we wondered what Trickster (as Mr. Coyote likes to call himself) had gotten us into. The place was like an abandoned set from a western movie, with a turbulent mountain stream and a half broken picnic table. A solitary mountain jay sang from a branch somewhere above us. Nothing in the air stirred.

We set up our equipment, hoping against hope for the best. Then, like a scene from a surrealist movie, a knot of people suddenly appeared! I can only use the word odd to describe this. There was no one there, then we were performing to this throng of audience. I believe the entire gay community of Helper Utah was present (complete with drama), as well as what might have been the entire alternative community. When we began fiddling, there was suddenly this mini-Woodstock atmosphere. It became, in Stephanie's words, a naked hippie dance fest (which was fine by us)

I have come to believe that certain spirits haunt Helper, and are carried by the rushing waters in and out of the town, appearing briefly as gay love triangles or hemp-clad pregnant hippies. I'm pretty certain that as soon as we left the stone barn that evening, the spirits left as well, and it was transformed once again into an abandoned building eerily lit by moonlight. We'll never know: we ended up at a 24 hour taco stand in Price Utah at two AM.

This was certainly one of our more interesting gigs.

By the way, Loke E Coyote has been a presence as a musician in the Pagan community for a decade or so, and has a few very good CDs out:

www.myspace.com/lokeecoyote. And if you become his friend, he may book you to play in Helper Utah.

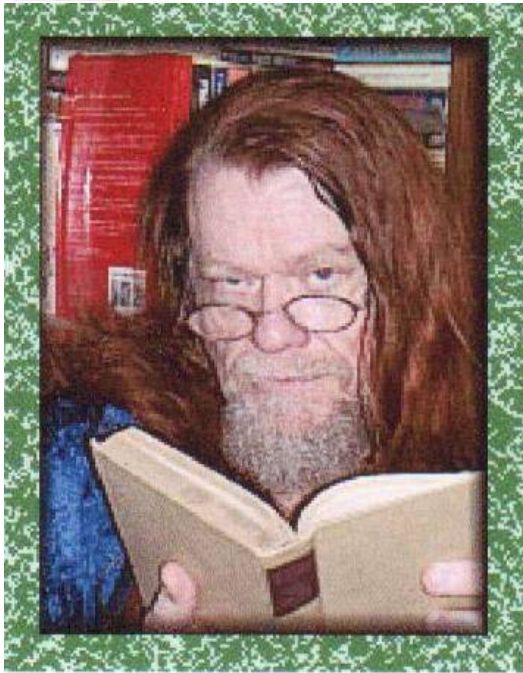


The next day we worked toward making Anna's dreams come true by visiting Zion National Park, which is beautiful and we hiked up about 3000 feet in altitude, again without vomiting. The Virgin River is very picturesque from way up there. At the mesa above the river we decided not to take the tiny trail which signs warned us was taken at our own risk, and which had caused the deaths of countless visitors to the park. Instead we visited the souvenir shop and headed to Mesquite Nevada, where you can get a hotel room for like twenty bucks a night.

And that's really it. We drove home the next day, happy to be back in Los Angeles (if such a thing can be said), in our own home and our own bed. Anna laid down with the dog and the cat and her fuzzy blankets and didn't get up for a couple of days. It was that good to be back. But really we go through this every year, so I know to expect the three days of dog, cat and fuzz.

To see our upcoming tour dates, peruse CDs and to contact me or us, visit:

www.kennyklein.net,
www.myspace.com/kennykleinmusic,
www.myspace.com/oddsbodkinband .



PET MY PEEVES

By Michael Gorman

Okay, there are a few things I just have to write about because, quite frankly, I have lost all patience with them.

Issue One - As a Druid, I try my best to be tolerant of a diversity of views. Diversity is good. It's the way

of things. Narrow gene pools, even intellectual ones, are death to a species. What I have trouble tolerating, nevertheless, is arrogant ignorance born of social privilege that is sustained in the face of rational thought simply because it is the majority view. And I'm not even talking about the latest intellectual abomination from the extreme religious right. This one comes from the religious left that considers itself tolerant of other "faith communities." Here is, specifically, what gets my polytheistic, gay, Pagan goat:

In the English language, the word "God" is not an inclusive term. It's just not. God is a masculine term. It refers to a masculine deity. One masculine deity: that's its definition. There is a feminine equivalent of the word God: the noun, Goddess. Yes, I know my liberal religious friends of the monotheistic persuasion will claim that "God" includes both the masculine and the feminine in deity. If that is true, my inclusive friend, then you would have no problem using this word interchangeably with the word "Goddess." But you do have a problem with that. Your church has a problem with that. Your doctrine and covenants has a problem with that. In fact, using the word Goddess is, in Christian

theology, equivalent to worshipping idols. And not the American Idol kind. The word Goddess is an affront to your version of "inclusiveness." So just stop pretending that you mean anything feminine when you say "God." You don't. You mean "the Father" and "The Son." You do not mean "The Mother" and "The Daughter." And we all know it. The current fad of "Mother-Father God" is a linguistic absurdity. That's like saying "Walking-Swimming Trout" or "Mother-Father Dad." At best you might be acknowledging that your God is in touch with his "feminine side," but he is still a he. Every hymn you sing is a him hymn. Just be honest and admit it and stop pretending that your word God is androgynous.

Also, the word "God" is a singular word. No ambiguity there. In English, if you mean more than one of something, you add an "s" to the word. So not only does the word "God" exclude the divine feminine, the female half of the human population for whom you see no true reflection in deity, and those who honor feminine divinity, it also excludes the majority of the human population that is polytheistic. Admitting to multiple deities, let alone pantheons inclusive of Goddesses, is in fact heresy in Christianity. You know it. We heretics know it. So don't add injury to insult by saying it ain't so.

Then there is the never spoken linguistic quirk used universally by you who are monotheistic. You capitalize the word "God" but only when it is referring to *your* God. When you write about the "gods" of the rest of us, you use a small g. Only your God gets a capital G. Our gods and goddesses get little g's in your book because in your Book, they are mythological creatures who don't exist, and your spelling is a constant reminder to the rest of us that our "myths" are not in the same category as your "God."

Now, I have no problem with people being monotheists, but I do have a problem with monotheists who lie and say that they are inclusive. Every time a monotheist speaks to me of God, I just want to smile politely and ask, "Could you be more specific, please?" But in most cases they wouldn't even know what I was talking about, so ingrained is their expectation of exclusivity where deity is concerned. When I am asked if I believe in "God," I want to ask in return, "Which one?" When I have done so, monotheists laugh. Obviously polytheism is not to be taken seriously.



Cernunnos

Oberon Zell

See, I have a God named Lugh. I have another God named Cernunnos. I have a patroness Goddess named Brigit. I have worked with the Goddess Morganna as well, and my mother Goddess Danu, and the Father God Dagdha, and Manannán Mac Lir, and Fand, and Epona, and Oengus Og.



Brigid Oberon Zell

When I say "the Gods and Goddesses," in certain contexts I include your God. I have the language to include the Hindu Gods and Goddesses, and the African deities. And I do not have that separate "your mythological deities" category for other people's divine patrons and patronesses. See, I believe in Gods and Goddesses who may not be deities I worship or know personally or wish to work with. I acknowledge and respect deities who are not of the Tuatha, the Tribe of Danu, the deities of my ancestors, and I often talk to friends about those divine ones. Heck, I've even talked to those divine ones, in my case as a respectful guest. I have a freedom of inclusive language that may or may not in any particular context include your very real God of Abraham. But you do not have a word for deity to which you give any respect that includes my Gods, let alone my

Goddesses, so please just stop pretending you do. It is an insult to my intelligence. Dishonest and patronizing "inclusion" is the worst kind of exclusion.

Religious Peeve The Second: Democracy did not come from Christianity. It didn't. Christianity as a religion is built upon the monarchical social system. Satan did not vote against God and his Archangel Michael, he made war on the King of Heaven. He was not defeated in an election, he was cast out of heaven into everlasting torment. Nowhere in the Christian Bible or in any Christian writing of note for the last two thousand years is Jesus called "The Good Senator." He is "The Prince." Yahweh is not the President of Heaven and Earth, he is the King, Sovereign, Lord, Master, Monarch, Ruler, Supreme One, the Omnipotent One to be Feared and Obeyed. Even the most arrogant conservative fundamentalist politician would not use that last one as a political slogan. It's unconstitutional and un-American to call a politician he who must be obeyed. The Bible admonishes the believers in Yahweh and his son to obey God not lobby him for their viewpoints or vote on his initiatives. Nobody in heaven is subject to impeachment, and the judicial, legislative, and administrative functions of government in Christianity are the dominion of the one, single, divine authority. There are no committees in the ruling class of the Biblical idea of social order and justice. There are no courts, just a single judge who cannot be questioned or challenged. The definition of "citizen" in Biblical Christianity has nothing to do with exercising civil duties like voting and paying taxes. A citizen of Christianity is a person who unquestioningly accepts Jesus as "Lord" and "Master." These are autocratic terms not Democratic terms. Can anyone with a straight face imagine a politician running for office

based on a pledge to accept him as "Lord and Master?" (Okay, maybe some conservative Republicans and Willie Brown, but they're closet monarchists anyway.) There are no equal rights for men and women in the social structure of the churches.

Voting did not originate with Christianity. On the contrary, few have not heard the common Biblical claim that "He shall reign forever and ever." There are no term limits in Christian leadership. Caucusing did not originate with Christianity. Civil Rights did not originate with Christianity. ("Slaves submit to your Masters," wrote Saint Paul, a citizen of a totalitarian Roman Empire. It's right there in black and white, so to speak.) Civil leadership did not originate with Christianity. Chambers of civil government did not originate with Christianity. Legislating the law did not originate with Christianity. Changing the law was, in fact, heresy, and affront to the *eternal* laws of God. Suing for redress of grievances did not originate with Christianity. Balance of Power did not originate with Christianity. Balance of Power requires more than a single power. States and counties and congressional districts did not originate with Christianity. Public education did not originate with Christianity. Freedom of speech and religion and press did not originate with Christianity. Taking people who suggested those things and burning them at the stake was, however, a large part of Christian governmental systems. Restrictions of unreasonable search and seizure did not originate with Christianity, and restrictions on cruel and unusual punishment most certainly did not originate with Christianity. Just ask the witches in Salem or the modern terrorist suspects. Presidency did not originate with Christianity. Constitutions and constitutional conventions did not originate with Christianity. Legislatures did not originate with Christianity.

Equal treatment under the law did not originate with Christianity. ("Wives submit to your husbands." Another Pauline doctrine.) Loyal opposition is an oxymoron still when used in the context of the majority of Christian churches. Secular leadership did not originate with Christianity. Public debate? Now there's a one-way ticket to the dungeons of the Inquisition!

Nothing that is foundational to Democracy originated with Christianity. In fact, for most of Christianity's history, the social and political foundations of Democracy and its civil liberties were concepts that challenged the central authority of the one God and his hierarchy and were considered abominations to God and affronts to the Church, worthy of the death penalty on earth and eternal condemnation in the fires of hell afterwards.

There is a reason why the majority of Western European history during the Christian era has been a time of monarchy. Kings, Kingdoms, Rulers, Crowns, Monarchs, Popes, Cardinals, Archbishops, Bishops, Priests, Royalty, Supreme Ruler, The Divine Right of Kings, Aristocracy, Princes, Overlords, Potentates, Patriarchy, Emperors, Empires, His Majesty, Hierarchy, Slavery, Feudalism, King of Kings and Lord of Lords: these are social institutions and concepts rooted in Christianity, the very foundational language of Biblical Christianity. It's in the history books. It's in the hymns. It's in the books of doctrines and the catechisms. It's in the prayers. It's clearly and unambiguously in the Bible. The myth of the Christian origins of Democracy is one of the biggest lies perpetrated by a religious system too often prone to lying when it meant its political dominance and monetary supremacy. Simply saying it, even repeatedly, does not make it true. Examining it makes it ludicrous.

Democracy in the western world came from two primary sources, both considered unsaved, unredeemed enemies of God for the bulk of Christian history and even now by many Christians: the so-called barbarian Celtic Pagans and the so-called savage Native Americans. (Rome and Greece were Republics and later dictatorships, so let's just drop that myth too.) Caucus is an Algonquin word not an Aramaic or Hebrew or Greek or Latin word. Leaders in the Celtic world were chosen by vote and could be impeached, and their sons had no more right to succeed them than anyone else's sons.....or daughters. Even the leaders of the Tuatha De Danaan, the Celtic deities, were voted into office and subject to impeachment if they did not faithfully and effectively serve the tribe.

So let's just stop repeating the bald-faced lie that Democracy originated in Christianity. And babies don't come from cabbage patches, or storks either, no matter how many parents may say so as a way of restricting the innate freedom of their children's education. Many modern Christians have exhibited the admirable ability to evolve and incorporate ideas of democratic citizenship into their spiritual practice, but that's a whole other matter than originating those ideas. And they still don't advocate lobbying Jesus as the Good Senator or appealing to the civic conscience and constitutional responsibilities of President Yahweh.

Speaking of the deceptive use of words, let's talk marriage. Why do we let people get away with saying that the Gay Marriage "issue" is simply about the definition of a word: marriage. Then they paint the definition with the 1950's myth of the happy nuclear family in the suburbs with Mom, Dad, Brother, Sister, and Fido all comfortably surrounded by a white picket fence. I know that serious

social commentary is not supposed to include words like "bullshit," but sometimes nothing else suffices.

The definition of a word? The opposition to Gay Marriage is about the definition of a word? Give me a break!

First of all, I speak English. My family, gay and straight, speaks English. My ancestors have spoken English for centuries. Now I am to suddenly kowtow to a bunch of religious bullies who want to claim yet another exclusive social privilege, i.e.: ownership of the English language? Does the arrogance of the religious right know to bounds at all?!

Secondly, the opposition to Gay Marriage is no more about linguistics than the Civil War was about states' rights. The civil war, and the battle to continue the social oppression and exclusion of gay citizens were and are both about one group of citizens trying to keep an unfair advantage, an unconstitutional, privileged status that they gained because of the ignorance and bigotry and mean-spiritedness of far too many of our religious forebears. Are we to give in to racism because the traditional definition of "slave" in this country was synonymous with "person with black skin?" It is not a coincidence that the bigots are once again resurrecting the "separate but equal" lie and calling it equality. It is a distinct and ironic tragedy however, that so many Christian Black people, the large majority in fact, are willing to become the oppressor they once fought as long as the victim isn't defined by skin color! Can you say, "missing the point?"

And as for the traditional Judeo-Christian definition of marriage, let's examine that. Traditional Biblical marriage was a socio-economic contract that transferred ownership of

a woman, actually usually a young girl, from her father to her husband. It was almost identical, by the way, to the contracting of slaves. The woman in the Biblical model of marriage, and life in fact, was property, valued for her ability to provide children and work to financially benefit the husband. She had no rights to any of the prosperity her work and her womb provided the husband. Her only choice in that regard was to kiss the derriere of the husband and hope for the best. The betrothal and marriage process even involved the transfer of other property (the dowry) to guarantee to the new owner the value of the property that was the woman. The woman had no more say in the transaction and subsequent contract than did the new mule purchased at market. And heaven help the woman (hee hee) who didn't prove valuable! An infertile woman could be returned like a defective laptop. Very often the previous owner, the father, would simply abandon such a woman to the streets because she had no financial viability for him either. (The connection of the word husband to "animal husbandry" is not coincidental, by the way. Except for the free sex, a man's legal relationship to a woman in the Biblical definition was identical to his relationship with his cow or pig. And he could have herds of all three. Would the right wing like to keep that traditional definition of a word as well? Actually . . . yes, they would.)

In the traditional Biblical model of marriage, if a woman disobeyed her "husband," her owner and legal keeper, he was within his rights to take her outside the city and stone her to death. He could divorce her with a few words. He could legally beat her without repercussion. He could force her into pregnancy. He could demand her sexual submission regardless of her feelings, needs, or even health. She owned nothing and had say over nothing. She was not even a citizen of

her own family let alone a citizen of her country. She had no rights except the right to unquestioningly serve a man chosen by her father for his own social and financial reasons.

And now these feminists come along and want to change the perfectly good definition of the words "wife" and "husband!"

Please! This is not about words. This is about traditional privilege, power, money, and exclusive status. It is about the struggle of straight, white, Christian men desperately trying to hang on to an elevated status that put them above everyone else, and they women and other formerly and currently oppressed groups who somehow think oppressing some other group of people (like gays) will give them better status with their center of the universe "husbands," literally and metaphorically speaking. This is about one-sided social and legal contracts that give the boys of one religion and sexuality all the toys and those who think they have to play by the rules of those boys in order to have even a small slice of the pie. This is about bigotry, discrimination, arrogance, and social superiority. Some days I'd almost be willing to give up equality just to have the Christians stop lying to the rest of us and acting wounded when we call them on it! How stupid do they think we unsaved masses are?

Okay, back to the religious left: I do want to be an equal opportunity pissed off fag, after all.

My leftist brothers and sisters, when you ask me how things are going with me, and I tell you "badly," I am not turning over to you the right to preach at me about positive attitudes and how a better attitude would change my circumstances. For those "compassionate" individuals who would answer another person's pain with a glib "Just fix your attitude and all will

be well," that other person's "negative attitude" is the liberal equivalent of "sin" and all the suffering individual has to do is "repent" of that attitude to make the problems go away. This response to the suffering of others conveniently releases the speaker/left-bank preacher from any responsibility to actually do anything to try to help. Finding fault with the victim, the negative karma junkie, the sinner, is all about selfish disregard for the circumstances of others, so let us stop pretending it has anything to do with caring about how I am doing. If you have no intention of engaging with my circumstances, celebrating my joys and sharing my sorrows, then just don't even bother asking "How are you?" because, fundamentally, you don't give a rat's ass. The only thing that separates your "be positive" response from the "repent" response of the right wing you so love to hate is your own unexamined, knee-jerk rhetoric. The fact that it's unexamined and knee-jerk, and self aggrandizing, those things you have very much in common with your social enemies. I refuse to buy into your intellectually dishonest attempts to set yourself above me while pretending you care. Not going to play that game anymore, k? Not with the fundies. Not with you.

Now if any of you gentle readers have a problem with my commentary here, well, pet my ppeeve! If you agree, pass it on. It'll piss off the bigots and the pseudo-egalitarians among us, and that can't be bad.

PS: A letter writer in the Sacramento Bee this morning accused people like me who support gay rights of being "intolerant" of his "views." No, honey. Bigotry that you try to force the rest of us to live by under your law is not a "view." It's a crime against nature, humanity and truth. I tend to be very intolerant of crimes against nature, humanity and truth. Guilty! And proud to be so! Is there no end to these lame

attempts to use language to hide meaning rather than express it?! Who's changing the definitions now, child?

PPS: Yes, I know that there are perfectly fair, compassionate, beautiful, loving Christians in the world. Yes, I know that there are lots of fair-minded straight men out there. Yes there are members of the racial minority communities who truly believe in Martin's vision of equality for all. Yes, there are perfectly healthy straight marriages raising fair minded children. One of the families I love and cherish the most in the world lends credence to the truth of these, my son's family. But stop trying to use those facts to intimidate me into silence about the rest of the assholes. And there are a lot of them. And they dominate the culture and intimidate the non-assholes most days. The best thing the fair minded people could do to show their commitment to honesty, compassion, and fairness is to speak up and stop letting the bigots run the show and speak for you. And the passage of Proposition 8 and the triumph of the anti-gay votes in the last election demonstrate that they are indeed still running the show. What are you going to do about that? Don't get on my case. I'm the one who just had my second class citizenship enshrined in the California Constitution and my hopes of ever being married dashed on the coastal rocks. Both coasts. Blaming me for being angry about bigotry and discrimination is just another subtle way of letting the bigots keep the power. Are you absolutely certain you aren't even subconsciously and ever so slightly motivated by the fact that you like the social status and exclusive rights you have? No? Prove it. Share them. If you don't like the way the power players try to portray you inclusively in their bigoted ranks, then get angry with them, not the messenger. Then things might actually change.

COMING FEBRUARY 1, 2010

By Kenny Klein



**HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED
WHAT FAERIES ARE REALLY
LIKE?**

<http://www.llewellyn.com/product.php?ean=9780738718835>

RAVENCAST: PODCASTS FOR ASATRU AND OTHER HEATHEN LINKS

By David Carron

Heilsa All!

Here are some links to Asatru websites that may be helpful, especially for Heathen parents.



Ravencast -
<http://ravencast.podbean.com>
 Episode 38 - Kids in Asatru, an Aussie point of view

If the subject of Heathen children holds any interest for you than you are going to want to put an hour aside to Listen to Matt and Rey Leonard as they discuss their journey thus far as heathen parents. Sandi and I were blown away by their personable nature and the candor with which they discussed some very personal sentiments. We know you will be too.

Here are some links that we feel are of interest to Heathen Parents:

Young Vikings Club -
<http://www.youngvikingsclub.com/>

Asatru Crafts for Kids (Yahoo) -
http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Asatru_Crafts_For_Kids/

Asa-Parents (Yahoo) -
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Asa-Parents/>

Heathen Parenting (Yahoo) -
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/HeathenParenting/>

Heathen_Parenting (Yahoo) -
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/HeathenParenting/>

We at Ravencast would also LOVE to hear more about the next generation of Asatruar. If you are a parent, were raised Asatru or just have something interesting to add to the discussion about kids, then please email me at: dscarron@yahoo.com

Spoken Lore -
<http://spokenlore.podbean.com>
 Egil's Saga (Chapters 10 to 12) - Episode 129

The king took Thorolf's words well, and then became merry and cheerful. Many added their good word, saying (as was true) that the banquet was most splendid, and the farewell escort magnificent, and that the king gained much strength by such men. Then they parted with much affection. The king went northwards through Halogaland as he had purposed, and returned south as summer wore on. He went to yet other banquets there that were prepared for him.

~ Egil's Saga, Chapter 11

Wes Thu Hal
 David Carron

<http://www.ravennorth.org> - Raven Kindred North
<http://ravencast.podbean.com> - The Only Asatru Podcast
<http://spokenlore.podbean.com> - Weekly Saga Readings
<http://www.eastcoastthing.org> - ECT



Ancient Egyptian grain-based pregnancy test found to be 70% accurate by archaeologists

By Anne Hart

<http://www.groundreport.com/Business/Ancient-Egyptian-grain-based-pregnancy-test-found-/2909370>

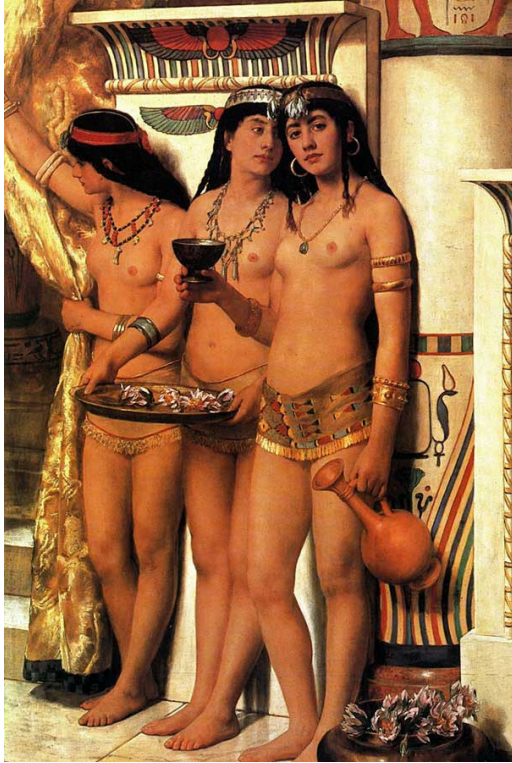
October 15, 2009 - The earliest recorded pregnancy test has been found by archaeologists examining ancient Egyptian medical training documents using barley and wheat grains/seeds. The test dates from around 1350 B.C.E. Archaeologists found a hieroglyphic document that when translated described how to find out whether someone is pregnant. The woman

who thinks she may be pregnant urinates on wheat and barley whole grains/seeds.

The ancient papyrus translated something like, "If the barley seeds sprout or grow, it means a male child will be born. If the wheat sprouts and thrives, it means a female child will arrive in a few months. If the barley and wheat grains never sprout and grow when a woman urinates on the grain seeds, the woman is not pregnant and therefore, will not give birth this time around. That part of the test that's 70% accurate is when either type of grains actually sprout and thrive when urinated upon by a pregnant woman, even in the earliest stages of pregnancy.

Archaeologists actually tested the ancient Egyptian medicinal folklore in 1963. They had pregnant women do the test and found it to be 70 percent accurate. The reason why the ancient Egyptian and probably Sumerian test works is because the urine of pregnant women contains a

high level of estrogen and progesterone, especially the estrogen that may help the grains to sprout.



John Collier **Pharaoh's Handmaidens**

Barley and wheat grains were a staple of the ancient Egyptian, Sumerian, Persian, and further back in time, even Neolithic diets throughout the grain belt--the Middle East and certain Mediterranean areas in ancient times. It might have existed back in Neolithic times when agriculture began and people experimented to see what might make barley and wheat grains sprout.

Although the test won't really predict a baby's gender, the 70 percent accuracy rate is awe inspiring. Seems the grains sprouted when the pregnant women urinated on the seeds, but not when anyone else urinated on them who was not pregnant at the time.

Perhaps there was a shortage of water and fertile soil at the dawn of grain

agriculture. What the test measured that predicted pregnancy had been the rise of hormones that help certain types of grains/edible seeds to sprout. If you're looking for modern pregnancy test information by a healthcare professional on how to take one, there's a video on uTube: Family Health: Using a Home Pregnancy Test.



Check out the immersive archaeology site at Flickr.com. Aura Lily has been using Second Life to recreate the artifacts and architecture of ancient Egypt. Using maps drawn by one of Napoleon's artist engineers, she's also working on an accurate recreation of temples and buildings on the island of Philae. Aura's work is simply amazing, and I think the educational potential to use Second Life as an immersive way to explore ancient architecture and culture is limitless. She has no formal training in 3d modeling, yet she has a true passion for this ancient era and has done all of this work completely on her own. Simply incredible. Visit her amazing space in Second Life and experience it firsthand.

Mythic Images

Sacred Statuary & Magickal Jewelry

By Oberon and Morning Glory Zell



Dear Friends,

Morning Glory and I have a special offer for you, just in time for your Holly-Daze shopping.

Most of you know that we support ourselves through our family business, Mythic Images, producing sacred art and artifacts for the Goddesses and Gods in your life. We create precise museum-quality replicas of ancient artifacts as well as original interpretations of familiar mythological subjects. I do most of these, but MG has made a few pieces as well. These unique and inspired designs (especially my "Millennial Gaia") have been well-received in the metaphysical/Pagan/Gaian community for decades, winning several awards.

But these have been very difficult times for many of us. Just in the past year or two, an alarming number of the stores we sell to have gone out of business, and we're really hurting. But we're Witches & Wizards, and

we do magick! So we came up with a way we can all help each other through the holiday season with our magickal gift-giving.

Our Mythic Images warehouse is overflowing with beautiful altar statues, votive figurines, temple wall plaques, books, and magickal jewelry. But these are not doing anyone any good just sitting in the warehouse! So to get things moving, we are now offering 40% off numerous selected items.

This 40% discount is limited to stock on hand. Sale prices are posted now at: www.MythicImages.com

Brightest Blessings for the Turning of the Wheel!

Love, Oberon

PS: If you have a list of friends you're on, or you know others who might be interested in this offer, please pass this note along!





Garden Gaia by Oberon Zell

11 years after the release of Oberon Zell's original 7"-tall figurine of the Millennial Gaia, we are finally able to offer the next phase in our long-range Vision for her—a nearly life-size statue for your garden or temple! Our Garden Gaia is hand-sculpted in meticulous detail in a village in India whose people have been creating temple statues for generations. They absolutely love Her, and they just call her "The Mother." The photo shows Jaya, our factory manager, with the first prototype. The final production version will be even better. She is 27" tall, 22" wide, and 21" deep, made of hollow-cast resin, and hand-painted with weatherproof outdoor paint. She weighs 32 lbs. She will retail for \$600, plus shipping. We expect the first shipment to be here by the end of September, but because of Her large size and our limited storage facilities, we will only be able to order as many at a time as we have advance orders for. If you would like to be in line for our first shipment, we will need to receive your advance payment immediately. As soon as we have a confirmed shipping date, we will let you know

REVIVAL OF THE YOUNG TREE PAGAN EDUCATIONAL GROVE

A Resource For Pagan Teens

As of November 5th, 2009 the Young Tree Pagan Educational Grove is now in the process of building a new content rich website! The Grove is a resource which serves mainly to act as an education resource for the next generation of Pagans, as well as those who are weighing their religious options. We also look to encourage life skills such as critical thinking.

Our new website will feature educational content as well as serve as a "Virtual Community", as site visitors have the ability to register on our website, create an account, take part in our forums, and exchange private messages via our mail system. Our site will also feature a rich resources section, which will provide visitors with ways to expand on what they have learned on the site.

We are currently in the process of looking for new staff members to help in the creation of site content. If you have interest in any of the following, we would love to hear from you.

Providing Educational Materials

Public Relations Work

Networking

Image Design

Reviewing books and websites

We have set-up a Google Group in order to facilitate the creation process. You can visit it [here](#). Or contact me at:

leoflamehand@yahoo.com

Timeless wisdom: Traditional healing in Africa

By Mercedes Sayagues

August 31, 2009 - Tall, thin and dreadlocked, Kwame Sousa is an artist, a documentary film producer, and an avid soccer player. Whenever he sprains a muscle, he visits his granny or the neighbourhood traditional healer for a rub with a homemade herbal potion. "It smells strongly of wine gone vinegary but it works," he says.



The forest is their pharmacy. Photo: M. Sayagues

Last year, when he was scratching madly with chickenpox, his granny's ointment of coconut oil and leaves relieved the itchiness. When his friend Geane Castro feels a cold coming, his grandmother makes him a hot bath with water infused with leaves and bark, then a special tea with plants she gathers in the forest. Presto, he recovers.

I meet them at Teia D'Arte, an art gallery in Sao Tome, the capital of the tiny two-island nation of Sao Tome and Principe, off the coast of Gabon. With a rich

biodiversity of 600 botanical species and 132 endemic plants, the islands' rainforest is a well-stocked pharmacy for herbalists.

Their knowledge is captured in a decade-long [ethno-pharmacological study](#) published last year. Researchers worked with 40 traditional healers, midwives and grandmothers to identify and classify 325 medicinal plants, note 1,000 recipes and test 25 plants in the lab. Many look promising for developing new medicines.

Generations of expertise

Across Africa, healers hold an impressive knowledge of medicinal plants, accumulated through generations and transmitted through years of apprenticeship. The new generation of healers blends tradition with modernity. They throw the bones, brew herbal medicines, book patients by cellphone and negotiate the complexities of modern life. They follow tradition and break away from it. Nkunzi Zandile Nkabinde is a young Zulu sangoma - the word for traditional healer in South Africa.



She works in Soweto, married her partner in June, and wrote a book about her life in an homophobic society: [Black Bull, Ancestors and Me: My Life as a Lesbian Sangoma](#).

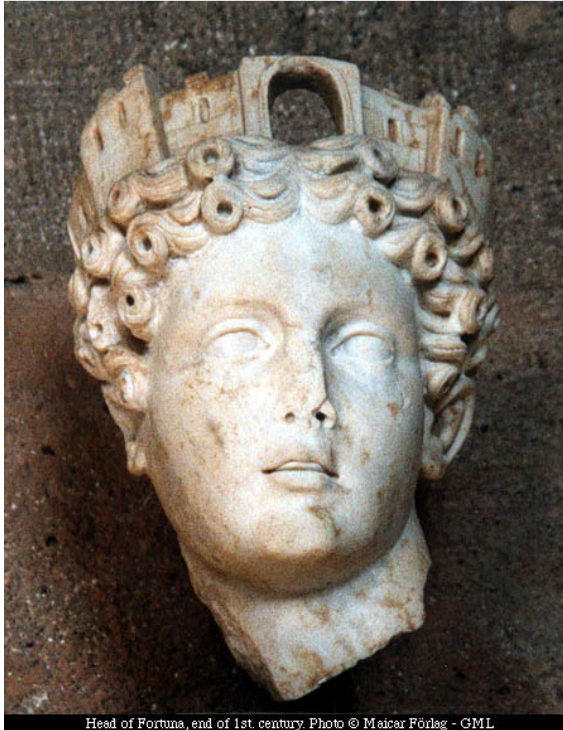
August 31 is the **African Traditional Medicine Day**, established in 2001 by the

World Health Organization. Repressed by colonial authorities, condemned as witchcraft by churches, spurned by post-colonial Marxist governments, African traditional medicine is regaining prestige. The WHO describes it as "heritage, knowledge and healing that is affordable, accessible, and culturally acceptable". For a majority of Africans, especially rural, traditional medicine is the main professional health care, sometimes the only one available, or the cheapest and closest. In the cities, many people will consult both a bio-medical doctor and a traditional healer.

In Africa, to cure is to restore human vitality and harmony with the universe. Body and soul are not separate entities; they are linked to nature, spirits and other people. The timeless wisdom of healers is an essential part of African health. "It would be sad to lose this knowledge," says Sousa.



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Head of Fortuna, end of 1st. century. Photo © Maicar Förlag - GML

Tyche.

6604: Head of Fortuna, end of 1st. century.

Archaeological Museum, Corinth.

"The prize must be worth the toil when one stakes one's life on Fortune's dice." (Dolon₁ to Hector₁. Euripides, *Rhesus* 182).

"Fortune lives a dainty life; to her the wretched pays his court and homage to win her smile; her likewise the prosperous man extols, for fear the favoring gale may leave him." (Theseus. Euripides, *Suppliants* 554).

"He is a foolish mortal who thinks his luck secure and so rejoices; for Fortune, like a madman in her moods, springs towards this man, then towards that; and no one ever experiences the same unchanging luck." (Hecabe₁. Euripides, *Daughters of Troy* 1204).

"I am not in the least surprised, as I know that heaven is always willing something new, and likewise that all things, strong or weak, increasing or decreasing, are being changed by Fortune, who drives them with imperious necessity according to her whim." (Pausanias, *Description of Greece* 8.33.1).

Tyche

Τυχη

By Carlos Parada

"The following incident proves the might of Fortune to be greater and more marvelous than is shown by the disasters and prosperity of cities. No long sail from Lemnos was once an island Chryse, where, it is said, Philoctetes met with his accident from the water-snake. But the waves utterly overwhelmed it, and Chryse sank and disappeared in the depths...So temporary and utterly weak are the fortunes of men." (Pausanias, *Description of Greece* 8.33.4).

"La fortuna no se vence con injusticia y venganza, porque antes se incita más; y así, quien vencer aguarda su fortuna, ha de ser con prudencia y con templanza." (Calderón, *La vida es sueño*, Escena XIV)

THE ROLLING WHEEL OF FORTUNA—From NEMESIS DIVINA, by Carl von Linné (Linnaeus):

In the greatest confusion the greatest order. Like in the realm of Nature. No one forges his own fortune. Not even the devil could dare to assert the contrary. When misfortune comes, the whole nature helps

along, since the will of God must be obeyed. All become the foes of the unfortunate, even the dogs. All help to push the car of misfortune. Then neither heaven nor earth can help. Pride came first, turned everyone into enemies (...) God strikes with blindness whom He wishes to destroy. No wisdom, no understanding can help against the Lord. Proverbs, XXI, 30.

When fortune is the grace of God, then a hundred hands obstruct the road of misfortune ... (Translated by Carlos Parada from *Carl von Linné i urval av Björn Julén*, Aldus klassiker, Stockholm 1962)

Sancho: "Tan de valientes corazones es, señor mío, tener sufrimiento en las desgracias como alegría en las prosperidades...porque he oído decir que esta que llaman por ahí Fortuna es una mujer borracha y antojadiza, y, sobre todo, ciega, y así, no ve lo que hace, ni sabe a quién derriba, ni a quién ensalza." (Miguel de Cervantes, *Don Quijote de la Mancha*, Segunda Parte, Capítulo LXVI).

Sancho: "... it is as much the part of great spirits to have patience when the world frowns upon them, as to be joyful when all goes well...and indeed I have heard say, that this same she thing they call Fortune, is a whimsical freakish drunken quean and blind into the bargain; so that she neither sees what she does, nor knows whom she raises, nor whom she casts down." (Miguel de Cervantes, *Don Quixote*, Part II, Chapter LXVI).

Tyche is Fortune, a powerful goddess who loves different and unpredictable ways, and permanently offers instructive examples to those who neither know nor expect the incredible changes which she can effect. Tyche is one of the OCEANIDS, but it has also been claimed that she was one of the MOERAE, and the most powerful of the sisters.

Tyche governs a vast realm

Not to be an outcast of Fortune is one of the deepest desires of most men and women. For Tyche is one of the mightiest divinities when it comes to human affairs: Beauty and good reputation, they say, are in Tyche's keeping, and even success in love depends on Fortune. In fact, some believe that most things depend on her, including such cardinal things as health, wealth, power, good marriage, and lovely children.

Dashing hopes

Now mortals, having great concern for such achievements, put their hopes in Tyche each day and each night. But on the other hand, Tyche's main pleasure consists in dashing hopes. So, what mortals might achieve and enjoy through years of efforts, she may destroy in one single day by what is called a "reversal of Fortune", a phenomenon which is normally unpredictable, and that is often regarded as "curious", for things may suddenly appear upside-down. In this manner, great careers come to abrupt ends. It does not matter how powerful, or rich, or beautiful someone is when Fortune tries one of her vicissitudes. For at any moment she may just make him or her be seized by a desperate malady and die, or she may bring to naught all achievements and plans by other means. And when this happens, Tyche is called "cruel" and "harsh"; and when things go well, she is seen as giving "gifts", and is therefore called "generous". But others call her "uncertain", for no one knows what she will bring next moment. It is known that arrogant people are hated among gods and men, and for that reason it has been considered adequate to be humble in front of this goddess, abstaining from acts that go beyond man's powers. For neither wisdom nor strength can prevail over Tyche, who works swift changes in the prosperity of men, showing that those who become elated above measure, give proof of their own weakness in the next turn, when she heaps upon them whatever calamities she pleases.

Worthy use of good fortune

And Tyche being so changeable, there are those who try to make a worthy use of their good fortune, so that they may have friends to grieve with them when Tyche is adverse, as well as friends that will rejoice at their successes when Tyche is favourable.

Compassion is not her business!



2132: Antonia, mother of the emperor Claudius, holding the horn of plenty, 1C AD. Pergamon Museum Berlin.

The advantages that may be obtained in war are, they say, determined by Tyche. Yet it is not her duty to feel compassion for her victims, but instead it is up to men not to inflict unbearable outrages to other men. In war, they say, Fortune is impartial, and the defeated must suffer

what they themselves have done to the unfortunate. Therefore, those whose affairs prosper usually add clemency to constant success, since it is known that those who indulge in cruelty are fated to shorten their own good fortune. For these reasons, it is also believed that those who show leniency towards the misfortunes of other men, reserve for themselves the hope of mercy from all men. For Fortune changes fast, and life is full with unexpected events like civil wars, robberies, and other crimes. And it is easy to see that he who excludes mercy when dealing with other men, sets up a harsh law against himself, for all time to come.

Trophies made of wood

The Greeks, some say, ordained that trophies of war should be made of wood, so that the memorials of enmity should last for a brief time. And they did so because they understood that a slight turn of Tyche brings the arrogant low, and that humane treatment of the defeated gives occasion for friendship.

Suppliants of Fortune

All situations advise to use the prosperity which Fortune gives for the benefit of other human beings, and never waste it in barbarous savagery. Those who act in such a ruinous way have no right to blame Fortune later, or to become her suppliants. For suppliants are called those who have found Fortune unkind, but still are pure in heart, and not those who have suffered serious defeats because of their own wickedness and greed.

Greedy change their minds

There are those who are not satisfied with their own gifts of Fortune, and some among them may even covet those who belong to others. But when Fortune robs one of them of the comforts he had enjoyed until then, and threatening everything he has achieved, becomes more and more bitter against him, he usually thinks that he may as well be content that at least he preserves his life. To such an extent can Tyche change the thoughts of a man, who only yesterday believed that he could conquer all kind of riches.

Confusion of names and terms

Now, some have said that the world has a soul, which is perfect intelligence and wisdom, and some call it "God", and sometimes "Providence", because it governs the heavens and also those things on earth that concern mankind. But since everything happens as ordained, they also thought that they could call this soul "Necessity" ([Ananke](#)), and since the operations of this order are unforeseen and unexpected, they came to the idea that Necessity could be called Fortune. That is how the soul of the world, God, Providence, [Ananke](#), and Tyche came to be confused and regarded as different denominations of one and the same thing.

Grateful [Palamedes](#)

In any case, the Oceanid Tyche stands by herself, usually holding the horn of plenty; for [Wealth](#), they say, is nursed by her. That is why, hoping for her generosity, many cities built sanctuaries to her, and in one of them [Palamedes](#) dedicated the dice that he had invented.

The gift of Fortune

Others say that what lies outside the sphere of the moral purpose, cannot be possessed by man, and therefore everything should be surrendered to the real owners, who are Fortune and the

gods. That is the only way to serenity, they assert. And men, they add, look as if they loved toil, working as they do night and day. But it is not industry and toil they love, but instead reputation and gold. And that is why some call them ambitious and greedy, instead of industrious and hard-working. However, what they may gain is the gift of Fortune, which she herself takes away when she pleases.

Fortune without intelligence leads to ruin. It has also been said that gold, repute, health, strength, beauty, and all other gifts of Fortune, need to be commanded by a man's intelligence. For through his intelligence, or as others put it, his moral purpose, he becomes able to make good use of all gifts, without depending on them. And without intelligence, gold, repute, beauty, and other wonderful gifts of Tyche, may act like poison and destroy a man or a woman. This is, some affirm, what [Prometheus](#), meant when he advised his brother Epimetheus not to welcome any gifts from [Zeus](#), but instead always return them. For the gifts of Tyche are external advantages, and undeserved good fortune is a source of misery for the unthinking.

<http://homepage.mac.com/cparada/GML/Tyche.html>



3903: Jan Breugel 1568-1625: Naiads filling the Horn of Plenty. Mauritshuis, Den Haag.

THE CHURCH OF ALL WORLDS AND PAGAN ECOTHEOLOGY: UNCERTAIN BOUNDARIES AND UNLIMITED POSSIBILITIES

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ABSTRACT

In the contemporary West, Pagan and alternative religions frequently place emphasis on the importance of the environment at the centre of their theology. As Jon Bloch has argued 'alternative spiritualities assert that all aspects of life are sacred... [they] argue that activities involving the protection of the earth should be conceptualized as part of one's spirituality.'¹ Mainstream religion, exemplified in the West by Christianity, is perceived as allied with the advance of capitalist modernity, which has resulted in environmental degradation, rampant materialism and the alienation of humans from Nature. The Church of All Worlds (begun in 1962 by Lance Christie and Tim Zell, later Oberon Zell-Ravenheart) is a Pagan religion inspired by Robert A. Heinlein's novel *Stranger in A Strange Land* (1961). Core religious practices of the Church of All Worlds are derived from this fiction, in which Valentine Michael Smith, raised on Mars, attempts to teach humans Martian values, including the sacredness of water (kinship is established through the 'water-sharing ritual'), the unity of all things ('Thou art God'), and the evils of sexual repression, jealousy and violence.

CAW has played a pioneering role in the development of Pagan ecotheology. The Pagan revival from Gerald Gardner onwards has focused on the Goddess and earth-based

spirituality, but in the late 1960s and early 1970s Tim Zell's vision encompassed a religious organization where Waterkin (members) are based in Nests (coven-like groupings), and where the Goddess is a 'single vast creature: Mother Earth Herself.'² CAW ecotheology is complex and highly developed; the boundaries are uncertain because Zell-Ravenheart (through the practice of grokking, from Heinlein) asserts the absolute unity of all in Gaia, which means that sexuality and social mores, as well as attitudes to deforestation or the extinction of species, all become ecological issues. Grokking literally means drinking, but '[i]n practice it means expanding one's identity to include the whole being of another person or thing.'³ CAW draws on Teilhard de Chardin's notion of the noosphere, or planetary consciousness, and argues that the process of evolution, considered as a totality, is the maturation of the Earth as a 'single vast living entity ... the Great Goddess: Mother Earth, Mother Nature.'⁴

INTRODUCTION

This paper has a five-part structure. First, ecology and the related concepts of ecotheology, environmentalism and ecospirituality will be introduced and located in the context of the 1960s, the decade in which the environment became an issue of significance for the West. Second, Robert A. Heinlein's novel *Stranger in a Strange Land* and the foundation of the Church of All Worlds are considered, with a view to determining the debt that CAW ecotheology owes to Heinlein. Third, the development of CAW as a Pagan religion dedicated to the Goddess and Tim Zell's TheaGenesis vision are outlined, and related to later scientific speculations, including Lovelock's Gaia hypothesis. Fourth, the virtually unlimited possibilities offered by the radical environmental theology of the Church of All Worlds are sketched. Due to the absolute interdependence of humans, animals,

plants and all things in the living body of the Goddess, the Earth itself, boundaries between political activism, sexual mores, educational programmes, magic, science and religion are dissolved. Ecotheology is about the Earth; it encompasses all there is. Finally, the issue of the place of the study of new religions within the wider academic study of religion is briefly touched upon.

ENVIRONMENTALISM, ECOLOGY, ECOTHEOLOGY, AND ECOSPIRITUALITY

In the 1960s the discourse of environmentalism took root amongst both scientists and the public. Rachel Carson's (1907-1964) influential *Silent Spring* (1962) brought the damage done to the environment by pesticides to a popular audience, and in 1967, the peculiarly creative time known as the Summer of Love, historian Lynn White, Jr (1907-1987) published a short article asserting that ecological devastation was a direct consequence of the Judeo-Christian worldview, in which a sharp distinction between Creator and creation was maintained, with the latter characterized as soulless matter.⁵ Although White's piece ended with an endorsement of the Christian environmental spirituality of Francis of Assisi, he praised the Pagans of the ancient world in order to sharpen his criticisms of Christianity. He wrote: '[i]n Antiquity every tree, every spring, every stream, every hill had its own genius loci, its guardian spirit. These spirits were accessible to men, but were very unlike men; centaurs, fauns, and mermaids showed their ambivalence. Before one cut a tree, mined a mountain, or dammed a brook, it was important to placate the spirit in charge of that particular situation, and to keep it placated. By destroying Pagan animism, Christianity made it possible to exploit nature in a mood of indifference to the feelings of natural objects.'⁶ Although it is possible to trace 'ecotheological' thinking farther

back, and anthologies often begin with Plato, Buddhist texts or other ancient sources, for the purposes of this paper White's 1967 challenge is an appropriate starting point.⁷

The word 'ecology' was coined by the German biologist Ernst Haeckel (1834-1919) in his *Generelle Morphologie* (1866).⁸ It comprises two Greek words, *oikos* (meaning 'house', the root of English 'economics', and broadly 'system') and *logos* (meaning knowledge or words).⁹ Technically, ecology extends further than 'environmentalism' as it demands that humans be subordinated to the whole; in environmental discourses it is still possible for humans to assume a 'stewardship' role and to attempt to retain control that way. It has been suggested that 'ecospirituality' or 'spiritual ecology' might be more appropriate to describe the teachings of Paganism than 'ecotheology', for two reasons: ecotheology is strongly associated with the Judeo-Christian tradition, and 'spirituality' is generally viewed as more inclusive than 'religion'.¹⁰ These are both valid points, but 'ecotheology' (knowledge of systems of the divine) is here preferred, as for the Church of All Worlds the whole (Nature, the Earth) is Gaia (the Goddess), and what CAW teaches is knowledge of her.

The 1960s was a decade in which a distinct counterculture developed, which was opposed to many received 'truths' of modern Western culture. 1950s 'family values' were questioned; protesters demanded equal rights for gays, blacks and women, and called for an end to the Vietnam War. The 'Beat Generation' of the 1950s, including writers Jack Kerouac (*On The Road*, 1951) and Allen Ginsburg ('Howl', 1956) had articulated alternative values, including sexual liberation, rejection of wage-slavery, anarchist politics, Eastern religion, drugs and altered states of consciousness. In the 1960s these ideas became part of mainstream youth culture.¹¹

Countercultural values were championed by 'hippies'; non-competitiveness, free love, anti-racism, anti-discrimination, peace, community building, holism, and enlightenment through alternative spiritualities. In a sense, the counterculture was a manifestation of Romanticism, which rejected Enlightenment rationalism and the material benefits of the Industrial Revolution, and rather sought emotional and spiritual fulfilment in harmony with nature.

Contemporary efforts to save the environment are divided between those who view this as a religious or spiritual duty and those who approach ecology as a scientific, secular concern. Bron Taylor has noted conflicts between members of environmental activist groups (for example, deep ecology lobby Earth First! objected to the wearing of gold and crystals by the Rainbow Family, as these were products of mining).¹² Yet he concludes that the ecological movement is a broad church, in which all members (whether they campaign for legal protections for forests or perform rituals to achieve the same result) feel 'kinship and loyalty to earth and all her life-forms and living systems.'¹³

STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND AND THE CHURCH OF ALL WORLDS

Robert Anson Heinlein (1907-1988) served in the United States Navy and worked as an aeronautical engineer before committing to writing full-time after the end of World War II. He was a prolific author, and was both popular and critically acclaimed within the science fiction community, hailed as one of the 'Big Three' (with Isaac Asimov and Arthur C. Clarke), winning four Hugo Awards and being the recipient of the first Grand Master Award granted by the Science Fiction Writers of America.¹⁴ His life and works are deeply contradictory: over his long life his politics encompassed views that were far left-wing to far right-wing; he deeply admired the military, yet he

advocated an extreme form of individualism; he was personally anti-racist and thought women superior to men, yet he often utilised racial divisions in his novels and to offer a view of sexual liberation in which women existed only to satisfy male desires.¹⁵ His refusal of an authorized biography and disinclination to explain his oeuvre resulted in serious, perhaps irresolvable, interpretive disputes existing among critics and readers alike.

Stranger in a Strange Land was published in 1961, but Heinlein had started it in 1948 (the year of his third marriage, to Virginia 'Ginny' Gerstenfeld), under the provisional title *A Martian Named Smith*. The oft-cited reason for its delayed appearance is that its sexual content was too explicit for the 1950s. *Stranger* is the story of Valentine Michael Smith, the son of two astronauts on a mission to Mars. The mission perished and he is brought up by the Martian 'Old Ones', who are very different to humans (all are both male and female at times thus erotic attraction does not exist, and they are cannibalistic). In Part 1, 'His Maculate Origin,' Mike is taken prisoner by Federation agents and, as he is unable to cope with Earth's heavier gravity, he is confined to Bethesda Medical Centre, Maryland. There he meets nurse Jill Boardman, the first female he has ever seen; she becomes his first 'water-brother' (the act of sharing water has great significance on hot, dry Mars). Jill aids Mike to escape with her lover, the journalist Ben Caxton. In Part 2, 'His Preposterous Heritage,' the Reverend Doctor Daniel Digby, the Supreme Bishop of the Church of the New Revelation, also known as the Fosterite Church, is introduced. Here Heinlein satirizes the hypocrisy and bullying tactics of Christian fundamentalist churches.¹⁶ Mike is taken by Jill and Ben to the Poconos Mountains, to Jubal Harshaw's mansion. Jubal is a Wise Old Man, a 'Heinlein-voice' character; a

millionaire who dictates novels to his three lovely secretaries, Dorcas, Miriam and Anne. Jubal educates Mike, who has paranormal powers and extraordinary intelligence. Jubal's home is a model for the Church of All Worlds, founded by Mike later in the novel. Nudism and free love are practised, and a large swimming pool emphasizes sensual pleasure and the importance of water. As Jill adjusts to the household, Jubal tells her 'This is Freedom Hall, my dear. Everybody does as he pleases.'¹⁷ The agnostic Jubal aids Mike in understanding religion. Mike 'groks' (a Martian word meaning to understand so completely as to eradicate the subject-object dichotomy) that 'Thou Art God' (the entirety of creation is divine, or pantheism).¹⁸ Mike experiments with sex and meets members of the Fosterite Church, and Jubal Harshaw's great wealth ensures his freedom when Federation agents come to the house to re-apprehend him.

In Part 3, 'His Eccentric Education,' Mike attends a Fosterite service where he meets stripper Dawn Ardent and Digby, Supreme Bishop of the Church. Mike realizes the service is different to the water-sharing ceremony, and yet is still a way to achieve closeness. He and Jill work for a while in a carnival (Mike is Dr Apollo, a magician, which is important as the book constantly contrasts the Apollonian and Dionysian modes). There they meet Patricia Paiwonski, a Fosterite 'priestess.' The carnival educates Mike in showmanship and helps Jill to accept sexual exhibition in public (as for her it was previously private, in Jubal's home). These two things are significant bridges to the Church of All Worlds, as is their hearing of the existence of the 'inner church' of Fosterism (whose members are called the 'reborn'); 'the secret church was that Dionysian cult that America had lacked and for which there was an enormous potential market.'¹⁹ Mike decides that founding

a religion might be good for people, and that all religions are true. In Part 4, 'His Scandalous Career,' Mike studies at Union Theological College, and joins the army for a while, seeking experience. Jubal is horrified when he hears that Mike is a theology graduate and has founded a new religion, the Church of All Worlds. Ben Caxton goes to the 'Nest' (as Mike calls it) to report to Jubal: he says that learning Martian is a high priority; that followers are studying telekinesis and other psychic powers with Mike; that the Church is organized in nine circles; there are obvious similarities to Fosterism; and that nudism and polyamory are customary. Patricia Paiwonski and Dawn Ardent have joined the Church of All Worlds. Ben decides to join himself, and Jubal remains the last sceptic.

In Part 5 'His Happy Destiny,' Mike is freed from his mission of spying for the Martian Old Ones, so he can serve the 'Terran angels'. Jubal is concerned by the radical activities of the CAW. Mike's Temple is incinerated and Jubal joins him a Florida hotel, where his followers are temporarily housed. The aged Jubal's long celibacy ends when he has sex with Dawn. The fact that CAW is in agreement with all religions is emphasized; Muslims, Jews, Christians, atheists and agnostics have all joined the Nest. There are discussions on polyamory and mythology, and Mike, who realizes that his time on Earth is nearly at an end, prepares to 'disincorporate.' This happens when he is violently attacked by a crowd. They menace him with bricks and a shotgun, and accuse him of blasphemy, and finally kill him.²⁰ Jubal is in despair, and attempts suicide, but is revived by members of the Nest. They plan to move the CAW to his house permanently. They drink a decoction of Mike's remains in observance of Martian cannibalism. Several of Mike's lovers are pregnant or have recently given birth. The final scene shows Mike being appointed

archangel and the supervisor of Digby and Foster, while the Martian planned invasion of Earth is aborted. Jubal is last seen dictating a novel called *A Martian Named Smith*.²¹

Stranger in a Strange Land was a smash hit, though Heinlein was often puzzled by the uses to which readers put it. Its emphasis on religion confused critics for a number of reasons. Heinlein thought that both religions and secular creeds were pointless:

'atheism and "scientific humanism" are the same sort of piffle in mirror image, and just as repugnant. Agnosticism is ... more acceptable but only in that it pleads ignorance, utter intellectual bankruptcy, and gives up. All the other religions, elsewhere and in the past, are just ... silly.'²² Yet the title is from Exodus 2:22, where Moses named his son 'Gershom: for he said, I have been a stranger in a strange land',²³ and the contrast between the two religions, Digby's Fosterite Church and Mike's Church of All Worlds, makes up the bulk of the novel. 'Michael' means 'who is like God' and he is finally seen to be (possibly) the Archangel Michael of the Bible. In the counterculture of the 1960s, intergenerational conflict and political rebellion were yoked to a spiritual quest for a new narrative to replace Christianity, which had lost credibility for many young people. *Stranger* was adopted as a religious exemplar by several groups (including the Merry Pranksters and the Manson Family), of which the real world Church of All Worlds has proved the most enduring.

Tim Zell (b. 1942) and Lance Christie (b. 1944) met at Westminster College (Fulton, Missouri) and read *Stranger in a Strange Land* as part of a reading group, in which they also explored Ayn Rand's novels and philosophy, Objectivism, and the self-actualization theories of psychologist Abraham Maslow. On April 7 1962 they shared water, and founded the Church of All Worlds and

a Maslovian water-brotherhood called Atl. Zell devised liturgies for the weekly meetings of the church, and Christie was the de facto head of Atl. The etymology of the name is given by Margot Adler as being Aztec for 'water that also had the esoteric meaning of "home of our ancestors."' The closeness of Atl to words like Atlas, Atlantic, and Atlantis was also noted. Water was ... [a] symbol of life, since the first organisms came into existence in water and water is essential to life.²⁴ Atl was an intimate group of like-minded people, loosely structured and radical, with a reading programme in politics, psychology, education and science. Lance Christie stated that Atl anticipated 'a world where the children of Man walk in the hills like Gods.'²⁵ *Stranger in a Strange Land* gave CAW its core spiritual practices (sharing water; the organization of members or Waterkin in 'nests' with a nine-circle structure; sexual freedom, multiple relationships and a commitment to non-traditional family patterns; the truth of all religions; the greeting between members 'Thou art God/ess'; and other phrases, such as 'never thirst' and 'grok').

PAGANISM, THE GODDESS AND GREEN EGG

In 1967, the year Lynn White Jr's provocative article appeared, Tim Zell used the term 'Pagan' to describe CAW (possibly due to his friendship with Frederick McLaren Adams, founder of pioneering Pagan group Feraferia). This is just a year after Kerry Thornley (1938-1998), one of the founders of Discordianism, used 'Pagan' to describe the sexually experimental intentional community, Kerista (Thornley's citation is credited by Margot Adler as the first use of 'Pagan' to refer to alternative, polytheistic, nature-based religion emerging in the 1960s).²⁶ In 1968 Zell organized CAW formally as a church and published the first issue of *Green Egg*, CAW's ground-breaking Pagan newsletter. According to Adler, members of Atl

were less than enthusiastic, although Lance Christie wrote for *Green Egg* and remains a close collaborator of Zell-Ravenheart to the present day. At the start of the 1970s the Church of All Worlds led the Pagan revival in two important ways: first, in setting up communication channels (like *Green Egg* and the Council of Themis) between the disparate groups that made up the Pagan scene; and second, in the development of an environmentally-oriented theology. *Stranger in a Strange Land* is not a particularly 'environmental' novel, although the vital importance of water is stressed throughout, and the beauty of the Poconos Mountains where Jubal Harshaw's mansion is located is described. However, Heinlein's personal commitment to naturism and concern for pristine frontier territory in his novels meant that although he admired Ayn Rand, he did not subscribe to her interpretation of humanity being at war with nature. By 1970 both Zell and Christie, also admirers of Rand, were committed environmentalists.

On September 6 1970 Tim Zell experienced a profound religious vision that changed the direction of CAW's theology significantly. He preached the substance of this revelation to members and published 'TheaGenesis' (Birth of the Goddess) in *Green Egg* in 1971. He apprehended that the Earth was alive, that the Goddess of Paganism was the divine Earth, and 'the entire Biosphere of the Earth comprises a single living Organism.'²⁷ Zell coined the term *Terrebios* (later *Terrabia*) from the Latin for 'earth' and 'life' to describe this divinity. In 1972, the English scientist James Lovelock (b. 1919) published a version of the same thesis in the journal *Atmospheric Environment*, using 'Gaia', a name suggested to him by his friend the novelist William Golding, to denote the living Earth.²⁸ Tim Zell then adopted Lovelock's nomenclature, although he usually spelled it 'Gaea'. Zell had already

grafted modern, Wiccan-inspired Pagan rituals and teachings onto the Heinlein-derived theology of the Church of All Worlds. In 1970 he oriented the Goddess worship of CAW to the Earth itself. In 1972, Lance Christie explained the change of direction as follows: 'the Church of All Worlds is evolving a vitalistic religious philosophy which subscribes to and develops the "Organic World Picture." We perceive that the 22 billion year process of evolution of life on Earth may be recognised as the developmental process of maturation of a single vast living entity; the planetary biosphere itself... We perceive the human race to be the "nerve cells" of this planetary Being - [what] Teilhard de Chardin termed the Noosphere. And further, we equate identity of our great living Biosphere (which we refer to as "Terrebia") with the ancient archetypal image of the Great Goddess: Mother Earth; Mother Nature.'²⁹ It is significant that Christie placed the emergent CAW Earth Goddess theology in an evolutionary biological framework, rather than a traditionally religious one. Also in 1972, Arne Naess, a Norwegian philosopher, coined the term 'deep ecology', which emphasized the 'primacy of the natural world over human prerogatives.'³⁰

UNCERTAIN BOUNDARIES AND UNLIMITED POSSIBILITIES

Throughout the 1970s the Church of All Worlds continued to grow and develop. In 1977 Tim Zell and his wife Morning Glory (b. Diana Moore, 1948) left Missouri for California, where they lived for a time at Coedin Brith (Welsh for 'speckled forest'), a property belonging to Alison Harlow, who with Thomas de Long had founded Nemeton. In 1978 COAW and Nemeton merged. In 1979 Zell organized a large gathering at the replica of Stonehenge at Maryhill, Washington, to celebrate the solar eclipse on 26 February. At this time Zell experienced a vision quest and

later changed his name to Otter G'Zell. At Coedin Brith the Zells founded the Ecosophical ('wisdom of systems') Research Association, taught Pagan seminars and workshops, exhibited 'unicorns' (actually one-horned goats) in Ringling Brothers' circus, and established the Holy Order of Mother Earth (HOME) with bard and neighbour Gwydion Pendderwen.³¹ They continued their open relationship with a range of partners and raised their children. CAW has upheld its commitment to polyamory and eclectic family structures, in defiance of mainstream Western society's retreat from sexual experimentation after the 1960s. Morning Glory Zell-Ravenheart's 1990 essay, 'A Bouquet of Lovers', sets out clear and sensible rules to make open relationships, responsible non-monogamy, viable. She makes a distinction between primary and secondary partnerships, advocates honesty and safe sex practices such as the use of condoms, and admits the possibility of jealousy and negative emotions threatening the primary partnership (in which case, she advises the termination of any threatening secondary partnership). This essay is also important as in it Morning Glory Zell-Ravenheart coined the term 'polyamory' for this type of relationship.³²

In 1996, when the Zells were living with Wolf Dean Stiles, Liza Gabriel and Wynter Rose, the whole family took the name 'Zell-Ravenheart.'³³ These arrangements have evolved and changed, but all appear to preserve their friendships.³⁴ In 2005 the Zell-Ravenhearts were in relationships with Stiles, Kat, and Julie Epona (and with Morning Glory's Pentecostal mother Polly Love Moore also in residence, evidencing CAW's commitment to the equality of all religious positions).³⁵ Polyamory is congruent with CAW's Gaian perspective in that it stresses human interconnectedness and holism, as opposed to the atomism of exclusive sexual relationships. The Church of

All Worlds ethic of polyamory is summarised by Oberon Zell-Ravenheart as 'Be excellent to each other'. For CAW this is part of being excellent to the self, to the environment and thus to the divine.

In the 1990s Zell-Ravenheart stepped down as Primate of CAW, and the Church of All Worlds reorganized under High Priestess Anodea Judith (psychologist and Pagan teacher, ordained in CAW in 1985) and High Priest Tom Williams (editor of *Green Egg* from 1975-1976). International expansion followed; in 1992 a branch of CAW was established in Australia by Fiona and Anthorr Nomchong, where 'it became the first recognized Goddess and Earth worshipping religion within [that] country.'³⁶ Oberon Zell-Ravenheart returned to the post of Primate of the Church of All Worlds in 2005, and in the twenty-first century has worked make CAW's legacy readily available, through an internet and paper publishing programme.³⁷ He and Morning Glory are now elders of the modern Pagan community. As elders they are deeply interested in the transmission of wisdom to the younger generation. In 2004 Oberon Zell-Ravenheart opened the Grey School of Wizardry, an online magical education system, which drew on the popular success of J. K. (Joanne Kathleen) Rowling's series of novels about the boy wizard Harry Potter.³⁸

The Grey School, with Zell-Ravenheart as Headmaster, has a seven-year programme (like Hogwarts, although six or seven years of high school is quite common in many education systems). Matching the four Hogwarts Houses of Slytherin, Gryffindor, Hufflepuff and Ravenclaw are four Houses named for the Elementals connected to the Four Quarters; Sylphs, Salamanders, Undines and Gnomes (air, fire, water and earth respectively). The first textbook published was *Grimoire for the Apprentice Wizard* (2004), which

contains instruction on magickal arts, conducting rituals, cosmology, wizards of history (including Eliphas Levi, Charles Godfrey Leland, Aleister Crowley and Gerald Gardner), and a variety of other subjects, organized in seven blocks of study.³⁹ Despite Zell-Ravenheart's well-known sense of fun, the Grey School of Wizardry is a serious project. In the West Christianity has retreated, and there are Islamic and Jewish schools, Buddhist and Steiner schools. The time was right for a magical curriculum, and Zell-Ravenheart, an innovator from his teenage years, made it happen. The membership of the Grey Council listed in the Grimoire is impressive; members include Raymond Buckland, Raven Grimassi, Donald Michael Kraig and Morning Glory Zell-Ravenheart. The school's name may be derived from the colours assigned to wizards in J. R. R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* (the wizard Gandalf is 'the Grey', and he later takes the title previously held by Saruman, 'the White'. Radagast 'the Brown' is the only other named wizard).

Another textbook, Zell-Ravenheart's *Companion for the Apprentice Wizard*, is here discussed to demonstrate its appeal to children and adolescents. The 'Preface' shows Zell-Ravenheart's attunement to his audience, and ability to address young people without patronising them. He comments on the absence of wizarding and magickal websites aimed at children and teenagers, gives a summary of the plot of *Stranger in a Strange Land* and tells the students how he and Lance Christie shared water and formed a bond 'deeper than blood or marriage'.⁴⁰ He reflects on his years as a teacher and school counsellor (even Pagan leaders need jobs), and notes that he hopes to appeal to potential students who loved the Harry Potter books and films. Finally, he states that 'Paganism and Wicca are religious orientations, whereas Magick and Wizardry are studies and practices that are independent of any

particular religion. And I felt this was an important distinction that I wanted to keep.'⁴¹ The School admits students from eleven (like Hogwarts), though many of its thousand-odd students are older. Zell-Ravenheart's educational intentions are egalitarian; the Grey School is not expensive. This is a radical programme of alternative education, and is evidence of Oberon Zell-Ravenheart's concern to transmit an ecological Pagan vision and effect widespread social transformation.

Since it became a church in 1968 CAW's main message has been environmental awareness. The Goddess Gaia is the Earth, ecological catastrophes do threaten, and Pagans must act to empower Gaia. The conservation movement is anti-consumerist and pro-sustainability. Since the mid-1980s Lance Christie, resident in Utah, has been a tireless environmental activist, publishing and campaigning on the effects of pesticides, global warming, and sustainability. He is the founder of the Association for the Tree of Life, and was a member of the Natural Resources Defence Council,⁴² and his e-mail address is 'atl@frontiernet.net', recalling the beginning of his and Zell-Ravenheart's journey in 1962. Oberon and Morning Glory Zell-Ravenheart have lived for many years in rural districts, pursuing a 'green' lifestyle as much as the freedom to be polyamorous and Pagan away from mainstream society. HOME (the Holy Order of Mother Earth) celebrates the seasons and rural life, with its patterns of birth and death in the plant and animal worlds. All CAW publications proclaim the divinity of the Earth through ritual and in teachings. This is the only dogma the Church insists upon. There are rituals to become attuned to the Earth ('imagine an interchange between you and the Earth, and as you make contact with each step, you bless one another'),⁴³ rituals for tree-planting, and chants

to use in water-sharing rituals ('I open up my body, to receive the Living Waters, that spring from the heart of life, that spring from the heart of life, the Earth is guiding me clear and true, to the living source of Love, to the living source of Love').⁴⁴ However, the Church of All Worlds remains attached to science and to science fiction, and the fact that Zell-Ravenheart and Christie both studied science at university means that their vision is future-oriented, rather than hearkening back nostalgically to a pre-modern Golden Age.

CONCLUSION

It is now irrefutable that the Church of All Worlds is a vibrant and influential Pagan religion, and that revived Paganism is an authentic spiritual path in the modern West. Scholars remain sceptical about the value of new religions (for example, the Church of Scientology, founded in 1954), and are even more dismissive of those religions that admit to being based on fictions.⁴⁵ Compared to traditions with a long history, such as Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Taoism and Christianity, which are all at least two thousand years old, new religions are often perceived as thin and insubstantial. Yet such comparisons are basically unfair. In 1974 Robert Ellwood spoke of the Church of All Worlds' vision with absolute seriousness: CAW's

members, both intellectually and sensually oriented, take this first of all to mean that man must discover himself as part, not sovereign, of a world biological unity, ...within which man must find an ecological slot, cooperating rather than competing ...with his own kind, as do all successful species. In view of current sober predictions of ...catastrophic disaster for mankind and the earth within a century if exploitation of ...resources continues at the present rate, and in view of the obvious fact that this...juggernaut to

apocalyptic doom - a world without fuel, hungry, and yet doubtless ...warring over what scraps remain - will not be halted without a swift and radical... alteration of goals, attitudes, and life style, the importance of these discussions is ...obvious. The language of ancient Paganism, like that of *Stranger in a Strange Land*, ...is taken metaphorically, but the issues are real. Recent discussion in the Nests has, ...partly under the influence of Teilhard de Chardin, moved in the direction of ...considering the whole biosphere of Earth as a single living organism. As the Mother ...of all within itself, it may be regarded as feminine - the Goddess - and the evolution ...of consciousness is reaching a point at which it can become aware of itself as such. ...Then the true nature of the cancer-like self-destruction of the tissues of the organism ...by certain malignant 'cells' within it can be grasped by its unitary mind. ...whether the world ravages itself to death, or the lovely goddess comes to consciousness on this ...planet, is up to us. This is the mirror the Church of All Worlds wishes to hold up to...the present generation.⁴⁶

It is accurate to state that the Church of All Worlds' vision for the transformation of the world is virtually unlimited: it envisages a revolutionary sexual culture based on polyamory; an ambitious magical education system based on Rowling's *Hogwart's* model (for which many textbooks have already appeared); a newly conceived periodization of history as 'Religious Epochs' (we are now in the Gaian Epoch, with Oberon Zell-Ravenheart and scientist James Lovelock as prophets); a transformed relationship between humans and nature; and a vigorous Pagan culture asserting the fundamental unity of religions. Whether this reorientation

of the world will be achieved is a moot question, but CAW is itself testimony to the power of narrative. The narrative of the divinity of the earth has great power and CAW's vision for the future is imaginative, ethical and suffused with possibilities. It may appear to be a dream, but (to quote W. B. Yeats) 'in dreams begin responsibility'.⁴⁷

NOTES

¹ Jon P. Bloch, 'Alternative Spirituality and Environmentalism,' *Review of Religious Research*. Vol. 40 (1), 1998, p. 57.

² Oberon Zell-Ravenheart, *Grimoire for the Apprentice Wizard*. (Franklin Lakes NJ: New Page Books, 2004), p. 54.

³ Liza Gabriel, *Morning Glory Zell-Ravenheart and Oberon Zell-Ravenheart, 'Appendix A: The Church of All Worlds Tradition'*, in Oberon Zell-Ravenheart and Morning Glory Zell-Ravenheart, *Creating Circles and Ceremonies: Rituals for All Seasons and Reasons*. (Franklin Lakes NJ: New Page Books, 2009), p. 268.

⁴ Lance Christie, 'Neo-Paganism: An Alternative Reality,' in Oberon Zell-Ravenheart (ed.), *Green Egg Omelette: An Anthology of Art and Articles from the Legendary Pagan Journal*. (Franklin Lakes NJ: New Page Books, 2006), pp. 120-121.

⁵ Lynn White, Jr, 'The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis', *Science*. No. 155, 1967, pp. 1203-1207 at <http://aeoe.org/resources/spiritual/rootsofcrisis.pdf>, accessed 21 August 2009.

⁶ White, Jr 'The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis', p. 6 (of pdf).

⁷ For example, Thomas Frick (ed.), *The Sacred Theory of the Earth*. (Berkeley: North Atlantic Books, 1986) begins with extracts from Plato (Phaedo), Mercator, Hegel, and others.

⁸ Mary Evelyn Tucker and John A. Grim, 'Ecology and Religion: An Overview', in *The Encyclopedia of Religion*. (Gale, 2005, 2nd ed.), p. 2608.

⁹ Peter Marshall, *Nature's Web: Rethinking Our Place on Earth*. (New York: Paragon House, 1994), p. 3.

¹⁰ Leslie E. Sponsel, 'Spiritual Ecology: One Anthropologist's Reflections', *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture*. Vol. 1 (3), 2007, p. 340.

¹¹ See A. Robert Lee, *The Beat Generation Writers*. (London and Chicago, 1996), *passim*.

¹² Bron Taylor, 'Earth and Nature-Based Spirituality (Part I): From Deep Ecology to Radical Environmentalism', *Religion*. Vol. 31, 2001, p. 184.

¹³ Bron Taylor, 'Earth and Nature-Based Spirituality (Part II): From Earth First! And Bioregionalism to Scientific Paganism and the New Age', *Religion*. Vol. 31, 2001, p. 241.

¹⁴ J. D. Gifford, Robert A. Heinlein: *A Reader's Companion*. (Sacramento: Nitrosyncretic Press, 2001), p. xiii.

¹⁵ Leon Stover, Robert A. Heinlein. (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1987), p. 65.

¹⁶ Robert A. Heinlein, *Stranger in A Strange Land*. (London, 1987 [1961]), pp. 66.

¹⁷ Heinlein, *Stranger in a Strange Land*, p. 79.

¹⁸ Heinlein, *Stranger in a Strange Land*, p. 134.

¹⁹ Heinlein, *Stranger in a Strange Land*, p. 268.

²⁰ Ronald Lee Cansler, 'Stranger in a Strange Land: Science Fiction as Literature of Creative Imagination, Social Criticism, and Entertainment', *Journal of Popular Culture*. Vol. 5 (4), 1972, pp. 944-954.

²¹ This summary of *Stranger in a Strange Land* is also used in Chapter Three of Carole M. Cusack, *Invented Religions: Imagination, Fiction and Faith* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2010), in press. A slightly different extended summary is used in Carole M. Cusack, 'Science Fiction as Scripture: Robert A. Heinlein's *Stranger in a Strange Land* and the Church of All Worlds', in Christopher H. Hartney and Alex Norman (eds), *Creative Fantasy and the Religious Imagination* (Sydney: Sydney

Society for Literature and Aesthetics, 2009), in press.

²² Robert A. Heinlein, *Grumbles from the Grave*. Virginia Heinlein (ed.) (New York: Ballantine Books, 1989), p. 229.

²³ Exodus 2, verse 22, King James Version, at <http://bible.cc/exodus/2-22.htm>.

²⁴ Margot Adler, *Drawing Down the Moon: Witches, Druids, Goddess-Worshippers, and Other Pagans in America Today*. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1986, 2nd ed.), p. 291.

²⁵ **Adler, Drawing Down the Moon, p. 292.**

²⁶ Adler, *Drawing Down the Moon*, p. 294.

²⁷ Oberon Zell-Ravenheart, 'TheaGenesis: The Birth of the Goddess', in Zell-Ravenheart, *Green Egg Omelette*, p. 95.

²⁸ Dorion Sagan and Lynn Margulis, 'Gaian Views', in Christopher Key Chapple (ed.) *Ecological Prospects: Scientific, Religious and Aesthetic Perspectives*. (Albany: SUNY, 1994), p. 3. Lovelock's theory was published as *Gaia: A New Look at Life on Earth*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979). This book has been extremely influential and is now in its third edition.

²⁹ Christie, 'Neo-Paganism: An Alternative Reality,' in Zell-Ravenheart, *Green Egg Omelette*, pp. 120-121.

³⁰ Mary Evelyn Tucker, 'Religion and Ecology', in Peter B. Clarke (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Sociology of Religion*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 824.

³¹ Oberon Zell-Ravenheart, 'Preface: A Brief Personal History of HOME', in Zell-Ravenheart and Zell-Ravenheart, *Creating Circles and Ceremonies*, p. ix.

³² Morning Glory Zell, 'A Bouquet of Lovers', in Zell-Ravenheart, *Green Egg Omelette*, pp. 228-231.

³³ Lady Chimmerley, 'Stranger in a Super-Friendly Land' at www.salon.com/health/sex/urge/1999/07/17/conference/print.html accessed 21 August 2009.

³⁴ Oberon Zell-Ravenheart podcast on Polyamory Weekly, Episode 203, 2 May 2009 at www.mefeedia.com/tags/heinlein/rss2.xml.

³⁵ Oberon Zell-Ravenheart, 'The Ravenhearts' Bio: August 2005' at www.gwsh.org/Ravenhearts/RavenheartBio.htm.

³⁶ Adam Possamai, *Religion and Popular Culture: A Hyper-Real Testament*. (Brussels, 2005), p. 58.

³⁷ See www.caw.org, accessed 21 August 2009.

³⁸ The series began with J. K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (London, 1997) and concluded with *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* (London, 2007).

³⁹ Oberon Zell-Ravenheart, *Grimoire for the Apprentice Wizard*. (Franklin Lakes NJ: New Page Books, 2004), p. vii, p. 338.

⁴⁰ Oberon Zell-Ravenheart, 'Preface: Once Upon a Time', in Oberon Zell-Ravenheart, *Companion for the Apprentice Wizard*. (Franklin Lakes NJ: New Page Books, 2006), p. ix.

⁴¹ Zell-Ravenheart, 'Preface: Once Upon a Time', p. ix.

⁴² See 'Lance Christie', *Earth Forum: Discourse, Diverse, Dynamic*, at www.earthportal.org/forum/?author=782, accessed 21 August 2009.

⁴³ Farida Ka'iwalani Fox, 'Attunement with the Earth', in Zell-Ravenheart and Zell-Ravenheart, *Creating Circles and Ceremonies*, p. 139.

⁴⁴ Liza Gabriel, 'Water Sharing Chant', in Zell-Ravenheart and Zell-Ravenheart, *Creating Circles and Ceremonies*, p. 143.

⁴⁵ See David Chidester, *Authentic Fakes: Religion and American Popular Culture*. (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 2005), *passim*.

⁴⁶ Robert Ellwood, *Religious and Spiritual Groups in Modern America*. (Prentiss-Hall, 1974), pp. 202-3.

⁴⁷ My thanks are due to Oberon Zell-Ravenheart, Primate of the Church of All Worlds, who generously gave of his time to answer my queries and who supplied me with personal papers to enhance my research on CAW. May he never thirst.



MOSS BLISS I have been an Initiated Wiccan since 1983, the middle part of my spiritual trek. The Third Movement, so to speak, is developing as I learn to integrate all spirituality into one through my studies in Kashmir Shaivism, adding a couple thousand years' worth of written works to my pagan beliefs. At the present time, I am functioning as Owner of ALT-therapies4bipolar, and am also a Moderator of Bi-Polar_Pagans Yahooogroup, and am also a co-founder of the Asheville Radical Mental Health Collective. I have training as a leader in Recovery, Inc., which provides a number of helpful tools in keeping one from making one's symptoms worse (or preventing them in the first place), and have been a group leader in NAMI CARE.

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TOM DONOHUE is a recently retired teacher from Lowell High School in San Francisco, where he taught for twenty years. Prior to that, he was a Public Health Microbiologist, first in Bacteriology then in Virology. He has been a researcher on telomerase at the Blackburn Lab, UCSF. He has been a member of CAW for over twenty years but considers himself Pagan since the age of seven. He also has an identical twin brother who is also Pagan.

LEO FLAMEHAND is the Director and Co-Founder of Young Tree Grove, a group that focuses on the Next Generation of Pagans aka Teens. Practicing eclectic Witchcraft, he brings in aspects of Druidism, Shamanism, Wicca, and just about everything else to make his own creative Path. At 14 years old, he is one of Paganism's youngest event organizers. Acting as the Voice for the Grove, Leo is the resident of "Tree-Shaker"; he also acts as a main organizer for Young Tree Camp, and various other Young Tree Functions in the East Tennessee Area where he currently resides. His knack for event organizing started in sixth grade, where he organized and managed a school fundraiser. He has also volunteered with Relay for Life, managed by the American Cancer Society. Leo has always been encouraged

to follow his heart, and credits his parents with raising him to always do so, and to be the person he has become. He lives at home with his parents, little brother and dog.

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KENNY KLEIN is a fiddler, guitarist, singer and all-around performer, a veteran of Renaissance Festivals, concert venues and smoky Country bars. Well known for both serious songs and for his tongue-in-cheek, spry lyrics, Kenny performs such original songs as "Maria's Not A Catholic Anymore," "Goth Girl Blues," and his show ender "What Do You Do With An Old Dead Gerbil?". His stories of renaissance festival life and of the streets of New York are seriously funny. Originally from New York City, Kenny has traveled throughout the U.S.A. and Europe, playing and collecting fiddle tunes and songs. He has played main stage shows and pub shows at Renaissance Festivals, including Colorado, Georgia, Maryland, New York, Ohio, Scarborough Fair (Texas), Four Winds (Texas), and Northern California; He has performed in legendary folk bars and venues including Folk City (NYC) and Speakeasy (NYC), Ramblin Conrad's (VA), and Marie Poll's (L.A.). He's played with country bands in Missouri, Celtic bands in Belgium, and he's won fiddling championships in New York and Kansas.

ARIEL MONSERRAT has been a Pagan since 1996 and was a member of the Church of All Worlds. She and her mate of 5 years, Tom Donohue, moved from Northern California to the mountains of Tennessee in 2005. After a number of various careers, including that of psychotherapist for 15 years and flight attendant, she has finally found her calling as Editor of Green Egg. You can contact her at: wolvenwood@gmail.com and also at www.greeneggzine.com

ZARYA ORLOFF My name is Zarya, I'm a pagan artist and witch, and I make art as a part of my religious practice. On the cover of this issue of Green Egg you will find an example of my work from what I call my "Painted Book of Shadows." The PBOS began several years ago, when I decided to move back to my native country Russia, as an exploration of the relationship between art and magic. My background is Russian but I grew up on the Northwest coast of British Columbia, Canada, so my magic draws on a rather eclectic mix of various traditions, from Wicca to pagan Russian folk practices. As a pagan, I

honor both the God and the Goddess; as a woman, I find the Goddess much more accessible; as an artist and witch, I find the Goddess much easier to identify with, for to me she represents the Original Source, an embodiment of all Creativity.

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MERCEDES SAYAGUES In her 18 years in Africa, Mercedes Sayagues has survived stepping barefoot on a 10 cms-long scorpion in the Kalahari, being taken hostage by Unita in Kuito during Angola's civil war and being expelled by Robert Mugabe from Zimbabwe in 2001 for her reporting on human rights abuses. She alternates years of freelancing with stable employment. In late 2008, she was the editor of an IPS series of stories on women and elections in Africa. Before, she was editor-in-chief of the Irin/PlusNews Portuguese service, from December 2005 until May 2008. PlusNews is a United Nations Web-based information service specializing in HIV and AIDS. A Uruguayan-born journalist, Sayagues specializes in AIDS, gender, sexuality, health, humanitarian issues and human rights. She has written studies on the AIDS policies in Senegal and Uganda, and on investment in Mali, for the South African Institute for International Affairs at Wits University. She enjoys writing quirky personal columns in South Africa's Mail&Guardian. She is an experienced media trainer, having facilitated more than 20 courses for the NSJ in Maputo, Fojo (Sweden), Unicef and Unaid. She has produced two manuals on reporting on HIV/AIDS, one for Unesco/NSJ in 2001 and one for PlusNews in 2008. Sayagues has an MA in Journalism from New York University. She lives with her daughter, Esmeralda, in Pretoria, and roams Africa.
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