

The Book of Novicia, Chapter Thirteen

THE MAGICKAL PANTHEON

We will begin this lesson with a short discussion of how you and I came to be studying together. We will call that Part I. In Part II we will look more closely at the strange relationship between modern Witchcraft (and Wicca) and the ancient Pagan pantheon.

Outline

- 1.) How we got here.
- 2.) The relationship between modern Witchcraft and the ancient Pagan pantheon.
 - a. Part of the resolution can be found in the most surprising place: modern psychology, particularly in the works of C.J. Jung.
 - b. The other part can be found in the mythos of the mystic.

PART I HOW WE GOT HERE (The Reclamation)

In the mid-seventies, second wave Feminism was gaining steam. It was the catalyst for other waves of change that, together, turned traditional perspectives inside out for a good, healthy, analytical look. I can condense what happened down to a few hops. Those of us who had been called “nonconformists” by our parents learned to wear that badge with pride.

Riane Eisler, author of *The Chalice and The Blade*



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1. Second Wave Feminism led to a rebellion against male-centric, Patriarchal religions. In the U.S. those are principally Judaism and Christianity.
2. The Beatles visit to India opened the door to Eastern thought on spirituality.
3. The new interest in all that was not Western and not Patriarchal became easily accessible to seekers and was dubbed New Age.



The Beatles with the guru who indirectly influenced the birth of the New Age movement.

4. Books like *The Chalice and The Blade*, normally consumed by academics, became popular reading. The example of witch persecution was used by feminists to point out what happens when cultures are drastically out of balance. While it may have begun as an historical anecdote, it stirred a curiosity about Witches. We'd been told many lies about politics and religion. It was the best of times in that we were finally free from the shackles of "faith" to openly ask the questions that had smothered our spirits. It was the worst of times because we had to fight the battles in our own homes with our own families. We had no sanctuary and little camaraderie, but we won much for daughters and granddaughters whether they will ever understand that or not.

5. The third thing that triangulated feminism and the discovery of Witch persecutions in circles outside academia was the reinstatement of feminine deity. It was as if throngs of us who had been damaged in various ways by Patriarchal religion said collectively, "We will see your god who was invented by illiterate shepherds to explain the world and raise you twenty-four gods who were invented by illiterate shepherds to explain the world." It's not so much that we intended to worship Artemis as that we were infatuated with the fact that there was a time when deity wasn't male-exclusive. I can't express how important this is as a factor in modern Witchcraft. It changed every part of our lives and society and, eventually, created an Evangelical backlash of monumental proportions,

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but that is a story for another day.

6. It was a wonderful time of spinning the old wisdom in new ways. Take the Garden of Eden fable for instance. As retold by ourselves as women who were blind, but now could see, Eve didn't demonstrate wickedness in deciding to eat from the Tree of Knowledge. She showed gumption. She didn't bring evil into the World. What she brought humanity was free will and the spirit of risk-taking for gain. Adam, on the other hand, would have remained forever content to live as a docile pet in a well-planned zoo were it not for Eve's leadership. Yes. It was a time of Renaissance; of reexamining the "wisdom" that had gone unquestioned for thousands of years -- that the Garden God created a male complete with genitalia and woman as an afterthought. What, then, did the God plan for Adam to do with that reproductive equipment? Surely. Surely. Our eyes were opened wide.

There was a flow that carried some of us quickly down a river past Eastern spirituality and left us at the door of Witchcraft. Along the way we fell in love with the ancient Pantheon of Pagan deities from many cultures.

7. I have called this next period The Reclamation because of the reclaiming of a Pagan heritage. It is the period during which we, as a movement, began to attempt the reconstruction of Pagan systems. Some of that has flowered into a revival of Druidry. Some as Wicca. Some as more traditional Witchcraft. Some sects have rejected anything that is not part of a partially reconstructed ancient system. Some, such as the one I teach, are receptive and open to additions and modifications when new ideas or discoveries may enhance the Old Ways for more modern people in modern times.

In honor of the subject matter, I am including a preview of some of the pieces from my goddess series in this lesson.

Kwan Yin



PART II The relationship between modern Witchcraft and the ancient Pagan pantheon.

As said earlier, few believed we were resurrecting an actual Mount Olympus or that prayers to Isis would bring results. **What we did think is that there is intrinsic value in the beliefs of pre-Christians and lessons to be learned from them.** We, as feminists who grew up to be Witches, cleave to the weaving of ancient Pagan gods into the web we spin even if our modern perspective filters it as fantasy.

So, what am I saying? That we call to these gods knowing that they do not exist? What I am saying is that an uneasy peace exists between what we can know (scientific age), what we may wish (fantasy) and what we suspect (intuition, inspiration). There is not a single answer for resolution of this proposition, but there are two explanations that, when taken together, will suffice.

A. C.J. Jung

Part of the resolution can be found in the most surprising place: modern psychology, particularly in the works of C.J. Jung. It is this part of Jung's definition of "archetype" that applies here:

An archetype is an inherited idea or mode of thought in the psychology of C. G. Jung that is derived from the experience of the race and is present in the unconscious of the individual.

In other words, a belief in Artemis can be so profound that it is actually passed to another generation. That belief may appear to be dormant for hundreds, even thousands of years, but may be easily awakened because it is present in the consciousness of the race.

The beautiful and unique thing about the Greek myths is that they deified and acted out every single thought and deed of which humankind is capable. Rape, murder, treachery, betrayal, brutality and infidelity were daily fare for the gods. Being immortal they

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weren't capable of either cowardice or courage. So they made half-gods such as Jason and Hercules to act out heroism. When they found themselves incapable of compassion, they gave magical powers to creatures -- ants, for instance, in the case of Psyche's tests. These could act out mercy on their behalf. The reason why the system didn't survive is because it reported the behavior without drawing moral conclusions or showcasing consequences.

Just as every trait and characteristic has been deified in the vast panorama of Pagan gods, the potential for every one of those traits is present in you. This is what makes the representative deity useful in Magick. The gods, chosen carefully, are a ready-made focus for use in increasing a trait or essence in you.

B. The Mythos of the Mystic

The other part of this explanation can be found in the mythos of the mystic. Bear with me while I pose a hypothetical question.

What if there is stuff – stuff akin to ectoplasm¹, maybe – that functions like mystical clay, to be formed by the sculptor or, in this case, caster of spells? It doesn't have a name until you give it. It doesn't have form or traits or purpose until you bestow them. And from this stuff, with enough focus and intention, you could form angels, demons or deities, even if to exist briefly before reverting back to true form which is formlessness.

Can I prove this? Absolutely not. Nor do I expect you to blindly accept my word for it. Perhaps the idea resonates with your intuition. Perhaps it will someday or maybe not. This is an idea that I will leave to simmer lightly on your consciousness while you go about your studies and begin to accumulate experiences of a Magickal nature.

THE POINT is that many practitioners of the Arts have found it Magickally useful to put a name, or face, on an essence or trait just as the Ancients did.

PRINCIPLE: Everything that is human exists within each of us.

¹ A substance held to produce spirit materialization and telekinesis.

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You are capable of expressing the spectrum of human behavior; ranging from the heights of heroism to the depths of cowardice, the quietest peace of patience to desperate impulse.

KEY: You can utilize the personas of deities to represent traits you would like to call forward in yourself. You can use the personas of deities to represent other people as well.

This is my *Call-Forth/Send-Away technique*. For instance, "The Aphrodite¹ in me calls to the Pan² in you," is a sample of how a female Witch who is half of a heterosexual couple might use this principle to add some excitement to intimacy in need of revival. Note that this sort of Magick does not command, compel or manipulate another person, but, rather, issues an invitation. The partner is completely free to accept or not.

Yes. This is a form of invocation, but it is not a dangerous form. You are not attempting to call an "actual" god into your Circle or to channel a foreign entity. You are simply appealing to the part of you that matches traits with a particular deity.

¹*Notes on Aphrodite:* Aphrodite is one of the fourteen Olympian deities. She is most often called the Goddess of Love, but she is really Goddess of seduction, lust and sex. In Greek there are seven words to define situations that English lumps together as "love".

²*Notes on Pan:* Pan is the horned god of shepherds, pastures, hunting and wild forests. He is depicted as a satyr; often with erect phallus. (Human from the waist up, except for horns, and goat from the waist down.)

Aphrodite



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This is an area of Magick that will require both creativity and research on your part. It would be impossible to list all the variants because the number of situations paired with the number of cross-culture deities renders endless possibilities.

PRINCIPLE: Like everything else, Magick will become stale if you repeat the same thing in the same way over and over.

After awhile you will find yourself “going through the motions” of rituals or casting. When that happens, you are not fully engaged, intellectually and emotionally, as you were the first time you performed a particular spell or ritual. The Magick loses its potency. This happens to experienced practitioners frequently and, unfortunately, they often don’t know why or how to correct. This is one of the pitfalls of a rigid, formal approach.

KEY: You can take advantage of the principle of “Beginners’ Luck” by trying, or adding, new things to keep your Magickal workings “fresh”.

Regarding research, you will probably find yourself Magickally at home with the deities from these traditions: Greek/Roman, Celtic (also Irish and Welsh) and Norse. You may also find what you seek among the Egyptian, Slavic or Chinese gods. There is virtually a god, or demigod¹, for every situation. The internet can be a fairly reliable resource for material. A good starting place is Wikipedia. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greek_gods

To recap, the panorama of deities serve your Magickal practice by animating essences and traits. They also serve to remind us of the divinity in each of us. It is a great Blessing to grasp this in spite of the maelstrom of contrary opinion that swirls around us. And, just to prove the point that you can use the bible to support ANY position, here’s a quote:

10:34 (Jesus speaking:) *Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods?*

¹ A mythological being with more power than a mortal but less than a god.

ASSIGNMENT:

Your assignment for this lesson is to integrate this material into two spells or rituals. For example, you could use the essence of a particular deity to boost your self-confidence. "I call to the Diana in me. Let me fear **no** thing!"

You could even ask someone you know to tone down something that is counterproductive to your relationship or well-being. For instance, if you happened to work with a person whose personality is so unpredictable that it is disruptive to the flow of energy, you might try this.

"The Queen of Gods in me, Majestic Freya, banishes the Loki¹ in you."

Here are a few further guidelines:

1. If you are going to pair gods, they should hail from the same source pantheon. Don't mix Egyptian with Welsh.
2. Learn the correct pronunciation. This is important because, all the people who have gone before and spoken this name out loud, have done part of the work for you. The entity will respond quicker to a name with an established history and expectation. You are not starting from scratch. Your archetype knows its name.

¹ :Loki, often called "The Trickster" is a figure from the Norse pantheon known for shapeshifting.



Freya

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3. Speak the command at least nine times with authority. (This can work without belief. I proved this once by quickly healing myself of an inconvenient sprain with the name Jesus. I do not believe that Jesus was more than a man, but I do believe in my power to heal on the right command. I simply took advantage of a powerful, collective belief that is already “set-up” and available to pull from the atmosphere for my purposes.)

4.) OPTIONAL: When developing your plans for a “**Call Forth**” ritual or casting, consider props and clothing that would complement the deity. For example, a tunic or costume jewelry pin in the shape of a bow and arrow would honor and flatter Diana.

Further Reading on the period of Reclamation:

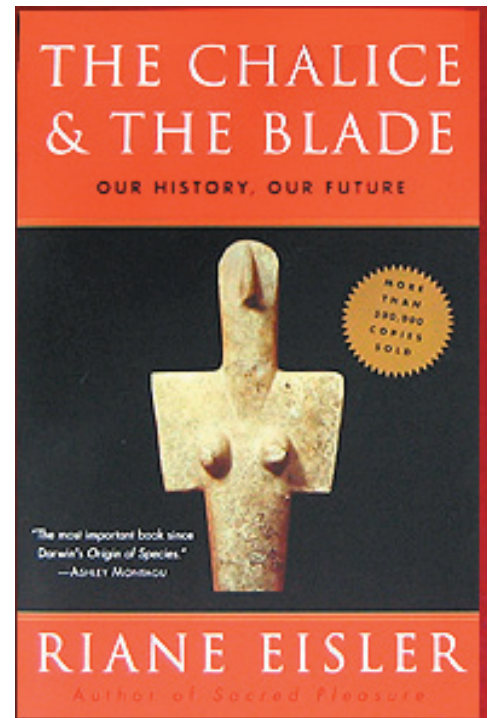
The Chalice and The Blade, Riane Eisler

When God Was A Woman, Merlin Stone (Oddly enough, written by a man.)

Restoring The Goddess, Barbara G. Walker

The History of Modern Witchcraft, Ann Moura

A very hearty congratulations to you for completing first year. I told you in the beginning that this particular training is not for everyone. To be more specific, it is not for those who must be led. Everyone is not capable of rising to the challenge of accepting personal responsibility for your own divinity and spiritual authority. It's beginning to look like you are such a person or you would have found many reasons to discontinue before this. Many who began this journey retreated to the safety of “absolutes” suitable for memorization and repetition or to the ease of simply not thinking about things too hard. I don't judge them, but assume instead that they are using this lifetime to work on the confidence and resolve required to see this journey through.



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REMEMBER. You put a little in, you get a little out. You put a lot in, you get a lot out.

Don't forget your journaling. The keeping of a Witch's Diary is a big part of the process. No detail is too unimportant to record.

Your Chapter Thirteen notes will include your thoughts on the subject plus any research you may do in conjunction with preparing for a future working. I suggest that you keep specific notes regarding the deities you choose to include in Call Forth/Send Away rituals. That include anything that calls your attention during the working itself and, eventually, results, although you probably will not be able to judge your results for some time.

I hope you will join us for the first lesson of second year training as we fire up the cauldron for herbal Magick and Hedgewitchery. Till then this is Victoria David Danann wishing you a High Adventure from Seasons in Avalon School of Witch Arts.