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THE NEWSLETTER OF THE PAGAN FEDERATION INTERNATIONAL

# PAGAN WORLD

**Wow! This issue begins our tenth year of publication.... One thing that has changed over the years is that we have gone from a Western European membership base to having members all over the world. Another is that all administration work is done by email and web-based databases so our paper use is very minimal. And after 9 years we've discontinued the use of the PFI Chat list and have now moved on to a PFI Forum (see page 7).**

**But this month is another anniversary that deserves mention. It is 10 years ago nearly to the day that I met Morgana and Merlin for the first time. Morgana and Lady Bara were the new National Coordinators for the Netherlands and I was the new National Coordinator for Belgium. We hit it off immediately and talked for hours. During the last 10 years Morgana's friendship has rescued me from myself more than once... Here's to you Morgana and to the next 10 years of friendship!**

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## ***From Old Pagan Worship to Endovelico***

**by Isobel Andrade**

**PFI National Coordinator for Portugal**

**Translated by Antonia**

The proto-historic worship in the sanctuaries of Rocha da Mina and of Castelinho were not identical to the Outeiro de S. Miguel da Mota as we know it now a days under a Romanized period. However, in a closed wide circled area other sanctuaries existed, being more ancient and still marked predominantly by ancient animist cults.



The essence of the pre-Roman religion is different from the romanticized side we know. The societies and the culture develops transforming patterns and the soul's group of one society has difficulties in comprehending what doesn't exist anymore, but with the passing of time and years, remains in history. The ancient people's creed stayed in the memories of the Lusitanae people and some continued in the traditional tales even if those were modernized through the Romanization and dispersed in the following times.

Here the veneration was to a native divinity in which the worshipping evolved and consequently being altered by the arrival of new deities brought by Mediterranean people and other tribes coming from the centre and south. But with the social changes, the sacred hill always stayed with importance, the surrounding region became more populated in the times of the "Cònios and Béticos". Alongside the sacred places and for some distance, spreads a rocky formation. Ossa, was probably also by circumstance a meeting point of exchanges; a Greenish hill with water and game, with a shielding stone formation one Oasis in an immense region of great planes.



For place of cult the ancient chose the hilltops to direct their worship to the heavens marrying the sky with the earth. Because the mountain was revered; in her gorge she received the bodies of the enemies, the nicks sculpted in her stone spoke to men devoted to the divine, carriers and interpreters of the Gods voices. Behind her canyons was where the tribes hid, in the scarps were left offerings from totemic animal to cereals. The mountain also

nourished them surviving from hunting and herding. In other locations the menhir demarcated territories and other communitarian cults emerged when the times changed; the worship of the fertilization Goddess the mother earth and other tribal cults. The old religion was not the same in every region but the plurality and the diversity were part of her essence.

Here in “outeiro” the veneration was to the “ Lord of the Mountain”, to EndoVelico.

Guardian of the gone souls, he collected his children in a bowl where the river disappeared, receiving them in their eternal journey. If the mountain gorge devoured the enemies it also embraced the body of the old warrior with funeral honours where only the invited tribes attended. On the mountain top the sanctuaries. Where the ceased stone rises to the sky emanating the power of the mountain, there her voice manifested to the winds, there was the place of wisdom. Descendents of clan lords and wizards of ancient tribes, they perpetuated the believes and knew the places of power, it was the immensity of the flora that the earth here gave making possible the development of the healing arts, the wisdom was transmitted and grew.

The encounter between cultures was absorbed and the wise man not only worked for his tribe but also practiced with men, practicing the knowledge received from the Gods, received and given. Executing healing rites to perform purifications and cast out ailments. In return the people fed them. The new routes broaden the interchange and the sanctuary became popular. Here one received the wounded guardian, the caravan leader who searched for shelter and protection, the orphan child, the travellers and the messengers...



The accessibility and the adaptation to the rite, made us choose the ancient Roman temple, in which the memories lived in writing, becoming the elected place for our contemporanry pagan cult.

Where divine manifestation is, so the place becomes divine.

This sanctuary becomes known as Oracle and place of healing. It isn't odd that we as polytheists believe in the blessing of the healing God.

The cult to the EndoVellico didn't extend to Rome; it was maintained with them in the region.

If the Romans constructed a temple dedicated to a local deity and not to one from their own pantheon, then before the Roan's arrival, the deity was already of importance. Anticipating the religious search by the new civilized inhabitants, they gave significance and emphasis to the local deity- EndoVellicvs, like this perpetuating this ancient cult, transforming it into a blessed place by constructing a new temple that would attract people and consequently commerce.

The valuable surrounding quarries, the nearby commercial routes, the vast fertile planes, suitable for extensive agriculture for consume and export to other provinces, brought to this region unusual prosperity. Characteristically to the Roman culture the temple of Endovelico acquires new ways of healing and new therapies, receives the personal offerings and also grants guiding answers in diverse matters:

In front of the lord of Healing, the Oracle was consulted.

The God appeared to the pilgrims in dreams (incubatio) but not without first being submitted to a purification and preparation ritual to see and hear the God, under the guidance of the resident priests. The Oracle priests interpreted the dreams and afterwards they would indicate the treatment. The treatments in general, were spread through the Roman Empire in the healing Temples, which consisted of thermal cures, baths and aromatic smoke, exercise and diets, this way a system was developed based on observation from which the modern therapies originated.

The centuries passed, Rome had already fallen and consequently Christianity emerged. Even with the destruction of the temples and the prohibition of cults, in the interior regions certain pagan (pagani) customs were maintained, in the rural areas people kept their religious convictions. The Christian clergy had to replace the previous cults and to supplant the people's need by the given support to the old believe, by adopting martyrs and saints to substitute the old pagan divinities and the people, former worshipper of the old pagan divinities, to whom they approached with requests of healing found churches taking over their sacred pagan places.

The temples were desecrated, the pillars displaced, the flagstones were taken for rebuilding, the statues buried, broken and the altars used for the new chapels being constructed. The need to connect with the divine doesn't die on mankind, adapts, transmutes through time and acquires new forms. Chapels and churches replaced the many Pagan locations, however here in the ancient temple of EndoVelico, the Christian religion didn't develop significantly. The mountain spirit lord slept.

Men always have been pilgrim, since the beginning, from searching for new land and moving clans, the journey to distant places to receive grace or divine council, from the medieval pilgrim in the known pilgrimages, to the walker of the XX century which leaves the city's comfort and walks searching for his magical place.

So, in the beginning of the XXI century the PFI gathers the pagan walkers devoted to the ancient Lusitanian deity- The EndoVelico-and he reappears to the light of day like Phoenix reborn, proving that our practices are capable of coexisting with the modern society without trying to proselytize from our part, but allowing the folk a glimpse of a distant religious past.

Evermore,  
Oh! EndoVelico

Isobel Andrade



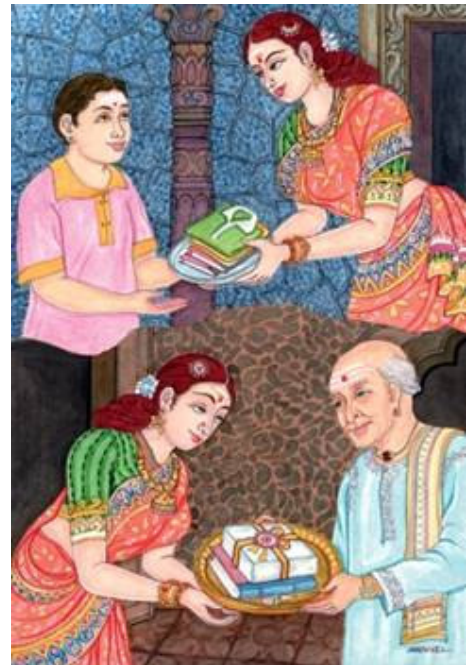


## ***A Pagan Look at Karma*** **by Sddie LaMort**

The eastern idea of karma has penetrated deep into modern day Pagan thought; but does it really belong there? In the following article I will attempt to map the ideology of Karma, compare it to the laws of nature and provide an alternative for it that might be more suitable for some Pagans.

The concept of Good and Evil was discussed even by Classical Greek philosophers, followers of Zarathustra built their whole theology around it, but it wasn't really widespread until Christianity advertised it. Because of this, the idea that there is an absolute Good and Evil is embedded in European thought and most people find it hard to let go. Even people otherwise free of Christian thought patterns tend to say things like they only work with "white magic, or warn against "black magicians".

The concept of Karma states that for every action (karma), there is a reaction (veepati). In the original context, this means all our desires attract bad veepati, especially if we act on them, for our aim should be Nirvana – a state where no desire or action exists. However, thanks to the New Age movement, Karma in modern Western thought is but a substitute for the Justice of God. The most commonly known concept is that if you do bad things, you attract bad Karma (even the meaning of the word is changed), if you do good things, you attract good Karma.



How can anyone do good (or evil for that matter) things from a Pagan point of view? From Nature's point of view, there is no such thing. Is a tiger evil because it tears apart those who step on his tail? Certainly not. Is a scorpion evil to sting the foot that violates her nice, dark hiding place in a seemingly abandoned shoe? Yet again, the answer is "No".

If we accept that Human is a creature from and of nature, it is logical to measure all it's actions with the same standards. Also, we might consider that all people want something good for themselves (even those who claim selflessness tend to feel nice and warm inside after they did something they consider "good"). From there we might ask – what is "good" in the absolute sense? We only have three possible answers, the democratic, the universal and the righteous. The democratic means Good is when the most people benefit from a certain action; the universal sees Good and Evil in the will of the person; the righteous accepts a certain set of laws – adhering to them is Good, rebelling against them is Evil.

To illustrate the Democratic, let us consider a theoretical situation, where five people are held hostage and one has to die for the other four to live. Each has their own reason to live, a family, friends etc. In this case, we cannot say that it is Good in the absolute sense that any one of them has to die, it is merely choosing the lesser evil. Anything that contains Evil cannot be Good in the absolute sense – therefore we proved that this method does not lead us to an Absolute.

Considering the universal, let us imagine a person. He is full of tender feelings towards his fellow countrymen, helps anyone even without being asked; then he suddenly realises, that the people he loves fare worse and worse, even though he's doing his best. He decides that a certain set of people is responsible for this. He starts a war and attempts to remove such people by whatever means necessary, so they cannot pose a threat anymore. Can the man be truly called evil? From one point of view, he simply did the same type of thing as a mother who kills a man that threatens her child; from another, this is Hitler we are talking about, a mad dictator who had millions murdered. Yet again, we find subjectivity in the matter – the goodwill of one leading to something that is considered by most the greatest evil of all times.

The concept of a set of laws immediately poses two questions: Are these laws manmade or god made, and are they or are they not subject to change. If the laws are manmade and subject to change, there are no grounds to declare any laws Absolute, for the best any human can do is act on their own understanding of the world, therefore any law thusly made will itself be subjective. If the laws are manmade but are not subject to change, they will be both subjective and pathetically outdated after a mere few hundred years. If they are god-made, we always have the problem of which god(s) are we talking about and who does the “translating”. Each god we ask will have a different set of rules; most gods will have rules that contradict other gods’ laws (or their own, e.g. “Thou shalt not kill” vs. “Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live”). Therefore we may conclude that while each religious person may find the set of laws given to them by their own deity perfect for themselves, none of the god-given laws can be called Absolute – therefore acting on them cannot be considered an act of objective Goodness.

We have to conclude therefore, that since there cannot be an objective set of rules towards Good or Evil, “Karma” (in the western sense, i.e. “reaction” cannot act on them; therefore from the point of view of formal logic, this concept does not work in a natural setting. What would be a natural equivalent to this then? Would that mean that carnage and destruction are bound to go without consequences? Certainly not.

Let us consider, that each action has a consequence. If I bear ill will towards



someone, it might or might not manifest around my target, but it definitely will affect my own life. If I help other people, on the other hand, it also will have an effect, this time it will be more likely beneficial on my own life (what goes around comes around). Everything will have an effect on the energy bodies of the acting person as well. Our energy bodies are mainly controlled by our worldview. What does that mean? Any action that you take with intentions to do something beneficial will most likely bear positive results for ourselves – the more people you do “good” with, the better it will be for yourself. The same goes to each action of ill will, with a “negative” outcome.

However, I cannot stress enough that I’m not talking about “good” or “bad” in any objective sense. If we paint a green line on the wall every day, sooner or later we will be surrounded by the colour green. If we play music, musicians will surround us. Like attracts like. It is up to our own perception, how we view these changes.

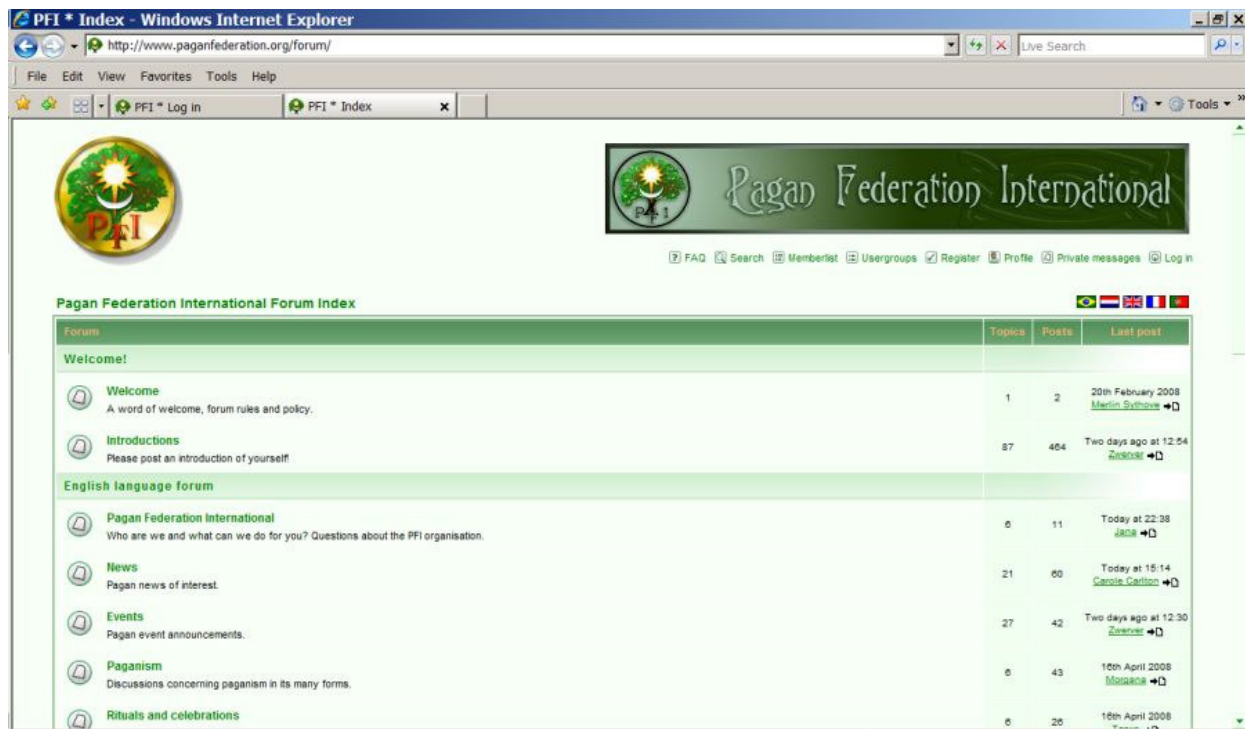
Pagan World 37, April 2008

Everything that happens to others, reach us through the filter of our senses; while everything that happens to us effects us physically, emotionally and intellectually. This is the Threefold Law. “An ye harm none, do what thou wilt” is a guideline that is there to remind us – whatever you do will have a consequence. Understanding the laws of nature therefore in itself is enough to realise the point most of the religions are trying to make by setting Divine Rules into stone: “Do unto others as you would have others do unto you”.

Taking all of this into consideration, we may conclude there is no real need to see Karma as a blind force equivalent of Santa Claus, giving presents to nice children and punishing the bad ones. Being Pagans, we can substitute a Law of Interaction, that works on the Web of Wyrd – each of our actions resonate on all the strings of the web, eventually getting back to us in the same way we set it into motion. It’s important to stress, that the Law of Interaction is a natural law, like gravity, rather than being a written rule.

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***Don't forget to sign up for the new PFI Forum!!***



**It's easy!**

**Go to <http://www.paganfederation.org/forum/>**

**And click 'Register'**

**Fill in your Profile and you are done!**

**For more info contact the Forum Administrator :**

**[saddie@paganfederation.org](mailto:saddie@paganfederation.org)**

**See you there!**

## ***PFI Poland***

In the Summer of 2007 PFI Poland was launched. One of the first things they did was to organise a weekend workshop in Warsaw on August 25 2007 with Lamia Tesenisis and Yoda from Germany. Here is a brief report from Rawimir:

“The workshops began with a lecture on Dianic Wicca and the differences between this path and other Wiccan traditions. The lecture was interwoven with singing Pagan or even Wiccan songs together in order to get into the mood. After the lecture and a short break participants divided into two groups: women and men.

Participants had a chance to be there together and to prepare for the evening ritual. Lamia led the Women’s circle and Yoda led the men’s circle. After a dinner break a Full Moon ritual took place at 7.30 p.m. Participants worshiped the Goddess in her three forms. The rituals took about 2 hours and made a big impression on many participants.

It is noteworthy that although participants represented different branches of Paganism, some different from Wicca and certainly Dianic Wicca, the workshops passed in an atmosphere of mutual respect for the different kinds of spirituality.

The atmosphere was best characterized by Yoda who stated that he had been unsure if people would be able to open up and at the same time accept their differences. But after the work in the men’s circle he felt that he was part of a family. This aspect was noted after the workshops were completed. None of the participants hurried to leave and they stood talking to each other for a long while.

I'd like to thank Lamia & Yoda who ran the workshop, for their excellent and professional approach, to Boann and Dagda for the idea of workshops and their



effort in organising it, for inviting their friends who gave us so much joy, Enenna for her help in preparations and for interpreting at the lecture, so that the basic barrier between people which is language barrier was torn down. I'd also like to thank Czeski for interpreting at the men’s circle. We could talk honestly without worrying about being misunderstood. I also thank all the participants for great atmosphere. And I hope that such events will become a regular practice.

On the occasion of the workshops Boann passed a gift from international Pagan community for Polish branch of the Federation. The gifts were objects beautifully crafted from wood: athame, chalice, water

bowl and pentacle. We thank you with all our hearts. We will be using the objects during ceremonies organized by our Federation.

Blessed Be,  
Rawimir



## **Cunning folk**

by Merlin

© from Wiccan Rede winter 2001

***Winter was traditionally a time of story telling. There was little to do on the land. Frost, snow, rain and cold kept people in the house. It was a time to repair your tools, a time to weave baskets and mend clothes, a time to sit round the fire. It was a time to remember the myths and legends, the fairy tales, and also a time to remember the stories, as well as the true history, of the clan.***

The Craft too has a history. It has what we may call a mytho-poetic history, a history of myths and legends, of archetypal imagery. And it has a historian's history, a history of real people, of existing documents and verifiable events. I find both versions of history equally valid, equally important and equally useful, but one should of course not be confused with the other. Neither should either version be used inappropriately. And of course it is important to stay informed of the latest historic evidence.

The person who has put a lot of effort into documenting the proper historian's view of the history of the Craft, is Ronald Hutton, professor of history at the University of Bristol. In this article I would like to present an overview of one chapter from his book *The Triumph of the Moon*, together with some of my own questions, insights and conclusions.

The chapter that I've picked, deals with the "hereditary Craft", with Wicca before it became Wicca: it deals with the people who practised what many these days would call "witchcraft", before Gardner came along. The chapter is called Finding a Low Magic, and it deals with real people who lived between 1740 and 1940, before Gardner published his work, and who practised magic, spells and so on.

### **Were they called witches?**

In chapter 6, Finding a Low Magic, Hutton reviews the evidence for low magic, and examines three fairly distinct groups who practised magic and spells:

- cunning folk, literate middle class traders, artisans or schoolmasters
- charmors, often lower class magical practitioners
- witches, anti-social individuals practising evil magic for their own ends



These were the "practitioners of this operative magic in England and Wales between 1740 and 1940" (p.84). They were astrologers, fortune tellers, wise women, wise men or wizards, cunning men and cunning women, conjurors, 'dyn hysbys' (Welsh) or 'pellar' (Cornish, believed to be from 'expeller', one who casts out evil spirits), but not 'witch'. "Folklore collectors themselves often employed the term 'white witch' [for cunning folk and charmors], but this formulation was very rare in the vocabulary of the ordinary people, to whom the word 'witch' almost always

signified somebody who worked magic for personal ends of profit or malice." (p.86). These cunning people usually had some regular employment too.

### **The cunning folk**

Hutton builds this chapter on top of, and supplements, the work of Owen Davies. Davies introduced the term 'cunning folk', and collected 41 case studies, male practitioners, mainly tradesmen and artisans, and the rest were herbalists or schoolmasters. Females were rare, married or widowed, although just as commercially successful. The reason for finding almost exclusively middle class people was that "literacy and learning were perceived as integral accomplishments for most types of cunning craft." (p.87) Hutton presents short case studies of over a dozen of these cunning folk, with an overview of various practices, anecdotes and so on.

### **The source of knowledge**

"The outward sign of their accomplishment was that they possessed books, an immediate distinction..." (p.90) These books were mainly works on astrology, herbalism, medicine, charms, ritual magic, astrological charts, sometimes the Key of Solomon. Writers like Cornelius Agrippa, Michel Nostradamus, Reginald Scot, William Lilly, Francis Barrett. But: "Cunning folk wrote their own notebooks" (p.92), for example "a conjuring book with large brass clasps and corners, an elaborate book of charms and recitations". Some of these are preserved in national archives, such as the National Library of Wales. Cunning folk bought their books, often by mail order, from either Leeds or London. Charmers, to the contrary, often had their simple charms passed on by personal transmission, as to write charms down would dissipate their power. (p.94)



### **Magical techniques**

Charmers often confined themselves to curing growths or rashes of skin, promoting the healing of wounds, staunching bleeding - all ailments which are very responsive to mental suggestion, and often with a near total success rate.

Magical practitioners often used a mirror, crystal, vessel of water etc. for the client to gaze into, until they saw who had bewitched them, stolen their goods, spread gossip and so forth.

Cunning men used fire to burn a special powder or incense to purify houses, people, animals. The heart of an animal could be stuck with pins, burnt or roasted. Hair and nail clippings could be put in a bottle, boiled or buried. Wax effigies were used as well to get even with a witch who put a spell on a household. Apart from this, amulets, charms, healing potions and poultices, horoscopes, card reading and tea-leaf reading, trickery, ventriloquism and slight of hand were all used. "Above all, they devised spells and rites according to their own whims and creative talents, and the needs of their customers". (p.97)

### **Lodges and covens**

"Did cunning folk ever work together, or meet in lodges, guilds or covens? The answer seems to be an almost complete negative..." (p.98) There are exceptions, such as husband and wife teams, or a gathering of wisemen in Manchester in the early nineteenth century. But cunning folk in general were competitors of each other, and their craft was a sideline to their regular employment.

There are plenty of references to witches, but they are the opponents of the cunning people: "individuals possessed of magical powers who chose to use them maliciously against their neighbours, from motives of revenge or entertainment". (p.98) Folklore collectors on the other hand refer to cunning folk as 'white witches', confusing the issue and using a word which the people themselves never used.

Witches always worked alone. There are exceptions: in the tip of Cornwall witches were thought to gather every Midsummer Eve to feast. It is possible that maritime contact from France or Spain planted this idea, which is unusual in England. The word Sabbath for example was used by French and German demonologists, and is not found in eighteenth- or nineteenth-century English folklore.

Other beliefs include witch conventions in Lincolnshire, in Dorset, and south Staffordshire, were "each Midsummer Night all the witches of the world met on the moon to determine the fate of ordinary mortals during the next twelve months". (p.100) There are also a few traces of social contact between witches. But these are rare exceptions. In general, a witch, was an anti-social, isolated figure. The word coven was unknown. It is of Scottish origin, but even there it was not popular, deriving from one sensational and very atypical case of witchcraft, the case of Isobel Gowdie in 1662. Through scholars and writers the word has been popularised.

### **A belief?**

In general, the belief of cunning folk "did not reflect a single cosmology, but was made up of the debris of many" (p.101). So they believed pretty much what everyone else believed, and were mostly Christian, albeit with the addition of what we now would call 'superstition'. The charms and spells too had a clear Christian character - the Bible being used as a spell book more than a theological message. There is no record of a pagan belief system in existence at this time.

### **Hereditary craft?**

Cunning folk's talents were individual, like a talent for music, or beauty. At most, talents like this lasted for one or two generations (p.103). Charmers, who used just one skill to heal one particular ailment, often did pass this on through the family or a close friend. Sometimes people were supposedly born with the gift. In the West Country a charm should be passed down between members of the opposite gender.

In witches it tended to run in families, but that may just be because a family had a bad name anyway. There was also the belief that the power must be passed on when the witch was close to death.

### **Rich and famous**

Charmers regarded their power as a gift, so usually accepted no payment, only gifts. Cunning folk usually charged a fixed fee - usually a low one for the poor, a high one for the gentry. In general these people were commercially successful and had a handsome income - note that they had regular employment as well - and could live comfortably.

### **Persecution?**

The Witchcraft act of 1736 made it an offence to call somebody else a witch, and outlined penalties for people who claimed to work magic, up to 1 year imprisonment.. But for the rest of that century, the law remained a dead letter (p.107) In 1824 the Vagrancy act outlawed persons telling fortunes or using anything like palmistry to deceive and impose (p.107), and this law was enforced and did make life more difficult for cunning folk. The prosecutions rose with the installation of the professional county police forces in 1851, but they also helped to wipe out mobbing of suspected witches. Prosecution usually was the result of unhappy clients being charged exorbitant fees, but most cunning folk who charged normal fees had no problems. The decline in prosecutions around 1900 continued until both acts were repealed in 1951. So these laws never had any real impact: "ordinary people valued magic too much" (p.109).

### **A decline?**

Astrology, herbalism, card reading, spiritual healing - they are still here and have never been away. But the labels have changed, to homeopathy, hypnotherapy, aromatherapy and so on. So no, the profession is still there, but the name has changed.

### **Personal summary**

Hutton finds it a paradox that cunning folk, which most modern witches see as being very relevant to witchcraft, in fact are least relevant! (p.111). And as far as characteristics like religion and coven meetings are concerned, he is right: cunning folk did not have a separate pagan religion, did not meet in groups, did not have initiations, did not pass on things within the family, were not born with "the gift", and so on. At least... if we ignore all the "odd" folklore, that is.

However, cunning folk and charmers between 1740 and 1940 provided the same services which are now being provided by the palmist, tarot-reader, astrologer, holistic healer, herbalist or therapist! And then as now, these people usually work alone, they often have a normal job as well, they earn a decent living, they are literate, learn from books and each other, they do not inherit their skills nor pass them on within the family, they do not meet in lodges or covens, and their religious outlook reflects that of the society in which they live - in the past that was usually Christianity, today it is more "new age": Wicca, paganism, shamanism, Indian or a more free form of Christianity.

Modern day witches (Wiccans) see their "craft" part of "witch-craft" often in this perspective. They become proficient at one or two of these crafts, like astrology or herbalism, in order to help their fellow man. In this sense, they continue (just as the new age therapist does) the tradition of the wise women, wise men, cunning folk and charmers of past centuries: they help their fellow men with natural and magical techniques, above and beyond what science and society provide.

So I don't subscribe to Hutton's conclusion that the cunning folk were the least relevant to modern Wicca. I recognise in their contribution roughly half of what Wicca is today!

What Hutton does point out, is that folklorists mistakenly called cunning folk and charmers "white witches". Also, "Sabbath" and "coven" were imported words from the continent or Scotland respectively, and generally unused in England. But the people themselves used the word "witch" between 1740 and 1940 for the traditional single, evil and anti-social practitioner.



The confusion about the word "witch" is again on the rise today. More and more people (and writers!) believe that one who works with herbs or precious stones or simple spells, is practising white or modern "witchcraft". However, this occupation is at most just a "craft" - a therapy - completely in line with the cunning folk which Hutton describes. Even a Christian can practice such a craft, just like most cunning folk in past centuries were devout Christians. To call such a practice "witchcraft" is incorrect in the historical sense of the word as Hutton has shown. And it is also incorrect in the modern sense of the word, where practices like these are at most only half of modern witchcraft or Wicca.

Hutton says that there is no evidence of a pagan religion at this time. But he does give anecdotal evidence for many practices which are now considered normal in modern Wicca, such as meeting in groups, passing on of power, working male to female, not charging money for the gift, working with magic, charms and spells. The anecdotes are exceptions, and come from all three groups: cunning folk, charmers and witches. Witches, in this historical context, are the anti-social evil competitors of the cunning folk.

### **One Dalmatian...**

Modern Wicca has in effect assimilated all sorts of exceptions from these three competing groups, as well as aspects of the groups themselves, into one coherent working philosophy. It has incorporated the cunning folk practice or "craft" - a practice which of course continues in main stream society too, with all the "new age therapy" practitioners. It has incorporated the charmers' simple spells, and the principle of not charging money. And it has incorporated the exceptions from the folklore about the evil witches, such as working in a group, passing on power, working male to female etc. The one thing it has not incorporated, is the evil, anti-social and solo-aspects of the witches from past centuries. However, even this aspect is still present in a certain way: it is the archetypal image of the (fairytale) witch - an image that symbolises a certain state of psychological and spiritual development that we all need to come to grips with. More often than not it manifests as someone who falls into the trap of being "powerful", or someone who is blinded by the glamour of Wicca.

Modern witchcraft or Wicca therefore is not a simple continuation of the cunning folk practices, nor of the charmers, and certainly not of the evil witches. But it does have things in common with all of these groups.

Is it possible that the folklore, and the practices of cunning folk, charmers and witches, are the fragmented reflections of an older and more coherent body of knowledge and practice? Just like today's psychologists, doctors and priests are different professional groups, performing functions which used to be performed by the shaman, or by the wise woman or priestess of the tribe in (pre)historic times? Is the evidence which Hutton gives more like the description of a few branches of a tree, whilst the tree itself remains invisible to the historian?



Gardner had travelled extensively all over the near and far east. He spent many years in Ceylon, and later in Indonesia. He was well versed in folk magic, and wrote a book about

the Kris. He already had a spiritual connection to the Goddess. See his biography, "Gardner, witch", and his own book, "A Goddess Arrives".

If there ever had existed an old tradition that could be considered a precursor to modern witchcraft, then Gardner's knowledge and interests would have put him in the unique position to recognise the scattered remains of such an old pattern behind surviving remnants such as cunning folk, charmers and witches. He would have been able to intuitively see the outline of such an old tradition. He would have been able to recognise the invisible tree, from looking at the branches and the scattered odd leaves. Just like an archaeologist can see the outline of a building in the colours of the plants in a meadow. And just like you and I can recognise the Dalmatian dog in the scattered dots in this picture. Yes, the dots could represent something else. Yes, they could be random. No, the outline of the dog is not present. But does anyone doubt what it represents?

Gardner's life long interests in folklore and magic may have given him the edge, in being able to pick and choose correctly from what appears to others as "mere folklore". Gardner may have been simply "connecting dots" in a picture that was clear in his own mind. A picture, established over many many years of contact with folk magic all over the world, and quite possibly inspired by the Goddess he loved. As far as I am concerned, and judging by the strength and vitality of Wicca, this is exactly what Gardner did.

Ronald Hutton: *The Triumph of the Moon, A History of Modern Pagan Witchcraft.*  
Oxford University Press, [www.oup.com](http://www.oup.com), ISBN 0-19-820744-1

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***Cultural Diversity and Religious Pluralism:  
the possible Dialogue in Europe***  
**19-20 October 2007, Rome -Italy**  
**Report by Saddle LaMort**

In the middle of October, Morgana and I set out to Rome to participate in a conference on religious pluralism, probing into the possibility of dialogue, for there can be no multicultural society without each party letting the others know what their aims and beliefs are - and this issue is even more pronounced in the case of religions.

The conference itself begun on the 19th, it was held in the library of the Link campus of the University of Malta, a beautiful building in the heart of picturesque Rome. After the greetings and introductions, Dr. Viggo Mortensen gave a talk, painting us a grim picture of a possible future where Europe has a Muslim majority and the method of conquest is procreation. He seemed to take a mostly Christian outlook on the events, and finished with "to understand is to change". After this Prof. Thadeusz Rachwal talked about religious philosophy from a mostly materialistic viewpoint - he understood religion as the grown-ups' substitute for parental protection. Jorn Borup held a very interesting lecture on Danish Buddhism.

Giuseppe Cali told us about the Universal Peace Foundation, where ambassadors of various religions (strictly monotheistic ones, though) found out that the basis of dialogue should be love towards one another. Prof. Andras Mate-Toth from the University of Pecs, Hungary talked about the functions of religion in the ex-eastern block, and that concluded our day one of the conference.

I left with a distinct feeling that there might be hope yet for peaceful discussion between religious, materialistic and atheistic groups.

The next day Dr. Anne Leuchars began with an excellent report on the religious dialogue project in Sweden. They have already got the Christians and Muslims talking to each other, and the minutes and conclusions of these meetings and conferences were simply breathtaking - we learnt that the Muslims in Europe are mostly on the side of democracy; and that "jihad" means strife rather than a holy war, striving for being good in God's eyes; a concept that is strongly embedded in Christianity as well. The project is called Nya Vagar (New Paths).

The theme of Prof. Peter Gundelach's speech was somewhat similar - he made an anthropologic research on Muslims and democracy in Europe. His original theory was that the longer a Muslim lives in a European country, the more they will be pro-democracy.

There were three main questions: do they agree with the concept of democracy, would they curtail the freedom of radical groups gathering and spreading their ideologies, and are their children (or would their children be) free in their choice of career and life partner. The Muslims were very supportive of free speech for radical groups - but the Professor admitted they might have not thought of any other radical groups, but Muslims. The conclusion of the survey was that living or even being born in a certain country has less impact on one's views on democracy, than nationality. Dr. Enwereuzor Udo talked about the racial rights committee of the EU, of which he was a member.

After a short break, Morgana came with her talk on Wicca, an Example of a Nature Religion. 45 minutes of silence ensued as the scholars struggled with unfamiliar concepts - a religion without dogma, without Holy Scriptures, without saints. They welcomed the concept of Paganism with an open heart and they kept asking questions even during the meal that followed. Of course, they were mostly interested in numbers, members and hierarchy, but Morgana definitely brought a new item into their perspective. They eagerly await all data and ideas on how to integrate Paganism into the ongoing inter-religious dialogue.

After the meal, Prof. Reka Szilardi, a young Hungarian lady gave an excellent report on nationalistic paganism in Hungary. She mentioned the Wicca community as a rare example of the European type Paganism, and talked about the "Shamans", the "Taltos", and likeminded groups, and how they create a romantic new history that suits their romantic ideals better. She also mentioned, that these groups, although they belong to the majority, still behave as if they were a minority.

Emanuela C. del Re talked about profiling terrorists - turns out, that the most likely person to be chosen is the least memorable type of person -, and she mentioned that a Muslim was arrested, because he relaxed to the verses of the Quran; those who had him under surveillance thought him a fanatic. Human rights were not mentioned at any point.

We were shown the homepage, agreed on where the next meeting shall be held next year (in Hungary, strangely enough), and parted ways - and perhaps a little more hopeful for the future of religious pluralism.

**Joan of Arc**  
**from The God of the Witches**  
**By Margaret Alice Murray**

The story of Joan of Arc has been told and re-told many times, usually with a markedly ecclesiastical bias, often with a surprising want of critical acumen and even of historical facts.

She came from Lorraine, a district where a century earlier the Synod of Trèves had fulminated against "all kinds of magic, sorcery, witchcraft, auguries, superstitious writings, observings of days and months, prognostics drawn from the flight of birds or similar things, observation of the stars in order to judge of the destiny of persons born under certain constellations, the illusions of women who boast that they ride at night with Diana or with Herodias and a multitude of other women". A century after Joan's trial, the inquisitor Nicolas Remy could pride himself on having put to death hundreds of "witches" in that same district.



One of the chief accusations against Joan, and one which she could not refute, was that she had dealings with the fairies. Even her godmother, who should have seen that she was brought up as a Christian, was acquainted with the fairies; and the Sieur de Bourlemont, one of the principal land-owners near Domremy, was married to a fairy lady. It was while engaged in religious ceremonies at the Fairy Tree of Bourlemont that Joan first saw the personages whom she called her Voices, and to whom she gave the names of Christian saints.

Before accepting her, the Dauphin insisted that she should be examined by a body of learned doctors of the Church in order to ascertain if her mission had in it anything "contrary to the Faith". Had the whole country been Christian, as we are always led to believe, such an examination would not have been thought of, but if the greater part of the peasantry, especially in out-of-the-way districts like Lorraine, were still Pagan, an examination of the kind was a necessary preliminary precaution for a Christian prince. When Charles appointed her to her high position in the army he told her to choose from his suite the man whom she desired to be her protector in battle. Out of all those courtiers and soldiers she chose Gilles de Rais, the man who nine years afterwards was tried and suffered for his faith as she did. It was at this time that she said to the Dauphin, "Make the most of me, for I shall last only one year", a significant remark which showed that, like many other Divine Victims, she knew that her end would come at an appointed time.

Her career of victory is too well known to recapitulate here. Only one comment is needed: if she were regarded by the Pagan men-at-arms as God Incarnate her marvellous power over them is accounted for; they would follow where she led in battle, counting it an honour to give their lives in defence of hers. It was the coming



of God in person which put heart into the French troops. The records show that in the eyes of the people she was divine. Article III of the Articles of Accusation states this in plain terms: "the said Joan by her inventions has seduced the Catholic people, many in her presence adored her as a saint and adored her also in her absence, commanding in her honour masses and collects in the churches; even more, they declared her the greatest of all the saints after the holy Virgin; they set up images and representations of her in the shrines of the saints, and also carried on their persons her representation in lead or in other metal as they are wont to do for the memorials and representations of saints canonised by the Church; they say everywhere that she is 'the envoy of God and that she is more angel than woman.'" According to the records she raised the dead, the sick were cured of all diseases by the touch of her garments; and as even professed Christians counted her as almost equal to the Virgin it is more than likely that in the eyes of her Pagan followers she was God indeed. Thibauld de Termes, Bailly of Chartres, was of opinion that what she did was more divine than human. Her own opinion of herself is best expressed in her own words when, in the course of her trial, she boasted to her judges that her Voices spoke of her as "Johanna Puella Filia Dei."

Joan was taken prisoner at Compiègne on May 23rd, 1430, by the Burgundian noble, Jean de Luxembourg. Three days later the Greffier of the University of Paris sent a summons under the seal of the Inquisitor to the Duke of Burgundy demanding that Joan should be sent to Paris to be questioned by the ecclesiastical authority. Joan was not sent to Paris and remained for six months in Burgundian hands. This is a surprising fact, for at that period to capture in battle a person of high rank meant a great accession of wealth to the lucky captor, whose fortune was often made by the ransom. Joan was rich, thanks to the king's generosity. Charles owed everything to her and might be expected to feel his indebtedness; Gilles de Rais, her chosen protector, had vast wealth; the city of Orleans, which regarded her as its saviour, was not poor. Yet no trace or tradition remains that any Frenchman offered to ransom or rescue her; she was left to her fate. At the end of six months, when there was still no sign of a French ransom, the Burgundians sold her to the English, and at once the Church, through the Bishop of Beauvais, demanded that ecclesiastical trial which had previously been vainly demanded by the University of Paris.

The trial began on the 9th of January, 1431. The court was composed entirely of priests and monks, presided over by the Bishop of Beauvais and the deputy of the Inquisitor of France. She was tried for her faith as the articles of Accusation make clear. A damning fact was that she had held communication with "evil spirits" at the Fairy Tree; in fact, like many others, her connection with the fairies was proof positive that she was not of the Church. To the modern mind imbued with the present-day ideas of fairies, such an accusation appears too silly to be taken seriously, but the proofs that a connection of the kind was considered as a capital offence are too frequent to be disregarded.

She was often excessively offhand to her judges, treating them consistently with a disrespect unexpected from a Christian towards those in authority in the Church. She often refused to answer a question, saying "Pass that by". Sometimes she would say that she would answer a question after an interval of time, two days or four days, or even as long as eight days. At the end of the time required her answer would be ready, showing that she was receiving advice from a distance.

There was a strong feeling at the time that she was not burned, but either escaped or was set free. This opinion was openly expressed and does not seem to have been

contradicted by any responsible person. Thus in the Chronique de Lorraine it is stated that "the Pucelle was lost at Compiègne, and no one knew what had become of her; many said that the English had captured her, had taken her to Rouen and burned her; others said that some of the army had killed her because she took all the honour of feats of arms to herself." The Chronique de Metz also discredits the story of the burning, "Then she was sent to the city of Rouen in Normandy, and there was placed on a scaffold and burned in a fire, so it was said, but since then was found to be the contrary". Jean Chartier says, "She was burnt publicly, or another woman resembling her; concerning which many people have been and still are of diverse opinions." The author of the Journal d'un Bourgeois de Paris states that "many persons who were deceived by her believed firmly that by her holiness she had escaped the fire, and that someone else had been burned and not herself". It is the same Bourgeois de Paris who speaks of her as "a creature in the form of a woman, who was called the Maiden of God. Who she was God knows".

In all these statements Joan is always styled La Pucelle (the maiden of God) de France. Even the English call her by the same title. Thus the Duke of Bedford writing officially to the king speaks of "a disciple and limb of the Fiend, called the Pucelle". The Continuation of the Brut gives her the same title: "At that same Journey was take the wicche of Fraunce that was called the Pushell; and she was take alle armd as a man of armys; and by her crafte and sorserie all the Frensshe men and her company Trystid to have ovrcome all the Englysshe pepull. But God was lord and maister of that victorie and scomfiture, and so she was taken, and brought and kept in hold bi the Kynge and his counseill all tymes at his commaundement and wille". The English regarded her throughout as a witch and therefore believed very naturally that God had delivered her into their hands as a special mark of divine favour to them.

The title of Pucelle of France is peculiar, its exact significance has never been explained. Joan was first the Pucelle of Orleans, but when she quartered the royal Lilies she became the Pucelle of France. This was clearly a definite title, and possibly showed some special relation to the crown. If the king were still regarded as the Incarnate God whose coven was at this time called his Council, Joan might well be the Maiden of the Coven, such as was found so often in Scotland two centuries later. The title Pucelle has otherwise no meaning as it stands.

In 1436, five years after the trial, the herald-at-arms, Fleur de Lils, and Joan's brother, Jean du Lys, arrived at Orleans to announce officially to the town that Joan, was still alive. The accounts of the city show that on Sunday, the 6th of August, 1436, Jean du Lys, brother of "Jehane la Pucelle", was in Orleans carrying letters from his sister to the king.

In July, 1439, Joan's brothers came to Orleans bringing with them the lady whom they claimed to be their sister Joan, now married to the Sieur des Armoises (also spelt Harmoises). The Council of the city of Orleans presented to Jeanne des Armoises 210 livres parisis "pour le bien qu'elle a fait à ladicte ville durant le siège". She appears to have stayed till September the 4th, about six weeks, during which time she must have met many persons who had known Joan of Arc well both personally and by sight. Still more important is the fact that Joan's own mother was in Orleans at the time of the visit of Jeanne des Armoises, yet raised no protest. Most significant of all was the discontinuance of the masses said for the repose of Joan's soul, which had been celebrated in Orleans on the anniversary of the burning at Rouen but after the visit of Jeanne des Armoises they were said no longer. In 1443 Pierre du Lys, Joan's youngest brother, petitioned the Duke of

Orleans for financial help, pointing out how bravely he had fought in company with his sister, Jeanne la Pucelle, "until her absence and since then up to the present time"; which can only mean that he still regarded or feigned to regard the Dame des Armoises as Joan of Arc.



Whether Jeanne des Armoises was an imposter or not cannot be satisfactorily decided, but one fact emerges clearly, which is that Joan's brothers acknowledged her as their sister and Joan's mother did not deny her. Yet in 1450 an attempt at Rehabilitation was begun and lapsed. In 1452 the mother claimed ecclesiastical and civil rehabilitation for Joan; Pierre du Lys seems to have joined in the claim, for he was poor and Joan's wealth had been great. The proceedings dragged on till 1456; in other words, the Sentence of Rehabilitation was not promulgated till twenty-five years after the trial at Rouen. The interesting point is that the relatives, who in 1439 had recognised the Dame des Armoises as the Joan of Arc who had been tried at Rouen, now in 1456 claimed that the same Joan had been put to death by the English in 1431. In both cases money seems to have been the object. The family had made a

good thing by exploiting the Dame des Armoises, but they made far more by the exaggeratedly heart-rending details which they collected in order to move the hearts of the judges who presided over the Enquiry for Rehabilitation. The Rehabilitation was for the financial benefit of a family who had already foresworn themselves over the Dame des Armoises.

If Joan were a Pagan, and in the eyes of her Pagan followers the substitute for the king and therefore God Incarnate for the time being, much of the obscurity which surrounds her life and death is cleared away. She came from a part of the country so well known to be Pagan that she had to be examined by persons whose own Christianity was beyond question before the king could accept her. To announce her mission she went first to Robert de Beaudricourt, agent in Lorraine for King René of Provence, a king whose magical practices would have brought upon him the wrath of the Church but for his high position. Her "Voices" were called by the names most common among witches, and at her trial she spoke of seeing them among the Christians, they themselves unseen. This use of the word Christian again shows that Christianity was not universal. The remark should be compared with the statement by Danaeus that "among a great company of men, the Sorcerer only knoweth Satan that is present, when other do not know him, though they see another man, but who or what he is they know not". It is also reminiscent of the stories of fairies, who were recognised only by the initiates, when in the company of others.

Joan chose for her protector that great soldier who was of her own religion, and who was later tried and executed as a Pagan. She announced that she would last only one year, and during that time she received almost divine honours from the common people, but she was quite aware that at the end of that year she would suffer martyrdom. When the time came for the sacrifice not one of her friends or worshippers stirred a finger to save her. Throughout her trial she spoke of her god

as "the King of Heaven" as "my Lord", or simply as "God"; she never mentioned "Christ" or "our Saviour", or even "our Lord". It is only in the Rehabilitation that she is reported to have used the name of Jesus. Many people vouched for her having cried Jhesu with her last breath, but no one, not even the priests, were very near her at the end. Massieu, however, stated that she called on God, St. Michael and St. Katherine; in other words, on the very "saints" with whom she had been in communication since her first encounter with them at the Fairy-Tree of Bourlemont.



She used Christian symbols, such as the cross or the words "Jhesu Maria", on her letters when they were intended to deceive. She steadfastly refused to say the Lord's Prayer, a refusal which in later times would have been tantamount to confessing herself a witch. She utterly refused to acknowledge the authority of the Church, though she understood what was meant by the Pope and asked to be taken to him. She declined to take the oath on the Gospels, and after much persuasion and very unwillingly she swore on the Missal. She treated the ecclesiastics who examined her at Poitiers with familiarity; when Pierre Séguin de Séguin, Dean of the Faculty of Theology in the University of Poitiers, asked her what dialect (idioma) her Voices spoke, she answered "A better one than yours", for he spoke in the Limousin dialect. He then asked her if she believed in

God, to which she replied, "More than you do". At the trial at Rouen she treated her judges with contempt. When asked direct questions regarding her faith, she invariably prevaricated; thus, when asked whether she had ever blasphemed God, she answered that she had never cursed (maledixit ) the saints; when pressed to say if she had ever denied God, she would make no other reply than that she had never denied the saints. One remark recorded in the Rehabilitation appears significant; it is in the evidence of Dame Margareta La Touroulde; Joan narrated to her hostess how she had been examined by the clergy at Poitiers, and how she had said to them, "There is more in the books of our Lord than in yours". With a slight emphasis on the word our, the signification is apparent, otherwise the remark has no meaning.

The wearing of the male costume seems to have had a signification which was clear to the people of her own time though hidden from us. She insisted that she wore it not by the advice of mortal man, and she refused to wear a woman's dress except by the direct command of God. It is impossible to say why so much stress was laid on her attire, as in itself it has never been a capital crime for a woman to appear as a man. Many a lady dressed as a page and went with her husband or lover to the Crusades, more than one woman was known to have donned armour and given a good account of herself in defending her castle. Yet when Joan discarded her woman's dress in prison and put on a man's habit it was the signal for her condemnation. It is possible that the resumption of the dress connoted a resumption of the Old Religion, and that she thereby acknowledged herself a Pagan and the Incarnate God.



***WICCA, a modern nature Religion -  
the impact and implications within Europe***

**by Morgana**

**(This paper was presented at the R.I.P.E. conference: “Cultural Diversity and Religious Pluralism. The possible dialogue in Europe”, Rome 19th-20 October 2007)**

**Origins and Brief History**

I would like to begin with a brief overview of “What Wicca Is”, and the present situation, followed by an giving account of the actual social impact and the possible social impact in the future.

**Wicca is a modern religion but has its roots in ancient times.**

Thanks to archaeological discoveries, there is evidence that the origins of Wiccan beliefs can be traced back to Pre-Christian time when people worshipped, for example, a Mother Goddess.

But today I would like to describe what Wicca is – now, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It is a personal view based on my own experiences. Not everyone will agree with me but perhaps this is one of the beauties about Wicca, that there is no single authoritative definition. Wicca is in essence ever changing as Nature itself is ever changing and adapting. Wicca can be described as “organic” and if it becomes inflexible and dogmatic it will lose its vitality.

In the last decennia Wicca practitioners have been experimenting with different types of structures. From the strict structure of a group of initiated witches, also called a coven, within the so-called “Initiatory Tradition” to loose groups of witches working together within the so-called “Eclectic Groups”.

**Wicca is a Mystery religion.**

Is it duotheistic, polytheistic, pantheistic or animistic? Wicca can be described as being all of these. It is not limited in the way divinity is seen. Manifestation of the divine here on Earth, is something that is striven for. This can be done by exploring the imagination and fantasy, using powers of visualization, using intuition & intellect. And by giving expression to the divine it is accepted that truth is always subjective.



It is an experiential religion, where the mysteries of life are revealed in a personal way. It is also an oral tradition whereby first hand experience is of paramount importance. It can only be passed on by what we call "osmosis". Learning by imitation and assimilation. For many people this is a new way of learning and can be quite unnerving. In our society where intellectual prowess is highly regarded it is difficult to accept that learning without logical explanations can be valid.

**Gerald Brousseau Gardner**

Gerald Gardner can be viewed as the luminary of modern Wicca. He spent most of his adulthood in the far East – mainly Malaysia and Borneo. There he

encountered people, who followed spiritualities akin to prehistoric animism, where the mundane, the religious and the magical were all part of everyday life. In these societies the Rites of Passage, initiations marking the entering into a new part of the life cycle, are mandatory and part of the folk tradition. Wicca too observes these kinds of initiation.

When Gardner returned home, this was the mindset he was looking for – something ancient, but connected to England. This was what he thought to find with the people who identified themselves to him as “Witches”. Gardner referred to the people as a group as „the Wicca”; he called the religion itself Witchcraft, and the followers Witches. Nowadays, however, many, if not most, people use the term Wicca to describe the religion, and “Wiccan” as the follower.

Gardner took the little he had from his original Witch group (or “coven”) and started to experiment with it, adding and reworking material from Rosicrucian, freemasonry, and Hermetic sources as well as folklore texts. Gardner died in 1964, leaving behind a religion that is both old and new. Gardnerians are those who continue to explore and evolve Gardner’s work.

### **Nature and Earth based.**



As the Seasonal cycle is followed the connection with Nature is strengthened. Using Nature as a guide – bending towards natural circumstance instead of trying to adapt nature. In trying to understand the natural world, natural laws are observed and patterns recognized to help understand the necessity for ecological balance.

### **Seasonal cycles**

In following the seasonal cycle one tries try to deepen the knowledge of the Natural world by becoming aware of the changing seasons. Recognizing the natural pattern of conception birth – growth – fruition – death – rebirth, in all processes, whether we are tending our gardens or working in the office. Above all Wiccans are pragmatic. Using insights one

strives towards practical solutions.

### **Lunar and Solar cycles**

Becoming aware of the influences of the sun & moon are also important. As the seasons are influenced by the solar and lunar cycles so are we. It is well known that the moon influences for example the tides, the menstrual cycle and moods in general. (Think also of the word “lunatic”.)

### **Rituals Rites of Passage & festivals.**

Not only are the seasonal cycles celebrated but also important milestones, such as birth and death. These moments are called “Rites of Passage”. Some examples of these rites of Passage are “the naming ritual” or Wiccaning. Here a baby is blessed. Another major “Rite of Passage” is that of entering man/womanhood. For young women this is the celebration of their first menstrual blood. Young men too can also feel the need to mark the period when their voices break and they want to break free of maternal bonds.

(Many groups make up their own Rites of Passage since they weren't included in the core material passed on from one generation of Witches to the next. Often referred to as the "Book of Shadows" – certainly within the Gardnerian rituals they were not included. I should add that the BoS would appear to a relatively recent addition since most country people would not write things down.)

As so often is the case existing rituals are used for inspiration. For example in the case of a Pagan Marriage or "handfasting". The concept of a handfasting has existed for a long time and we even have the expression "tying the knot" which to me would indicate an old custom of binding the couple at marriage.

### **Sense of community**

Rites of Passage can also create a strong sense of community. In our society people come together to celebrate birth and death, but as we have seen there are other rituals, which celebrate a milestone in a human life. Sometimes we can find ritual texts that perfectly describe the situation we are trying to create. Some of them are in fact old pagan rituals that have been Christianized! And the original meaning has been lost.



For example at Easter – in the North of England where I spent my school years - we used to roll eggs down a hill. When participants were asked why they did this, when I saw this same ritual being performed years later, they said "Oh this symbolizes the stone being removed from the Tomb of Jesus. When the stone was rolled away he resurrected." That eggs symbolize fertility and rolling them to break them open as Spring awakes was something, which had been completely lost!

In a similar way the Spirits of Land - or genius loci- have also been forgotten. Well, almost... in many rural areas the old gods have not been completely forgotten and have been immortalized as figures in Churches, such as the motif "The Green Man".

Old customs still bring people together and create a sense of belonging, a sense of community. Although Witches work in small groups, by celebrating the seasonal festivals they link together and know that they are participating along with many others, and although great emphasis is put on self-development the group dynamic is also valued. It is somewhat of a paradox: on the one hand one works as an individual but also as a group.

### **The Urban Situation**

The rituals have a social impact even (if not more so) in the urban situation. When one is outside in a beautiful forest it is not difficult to imagine and feel the spirit of nature. It is however more difficult to feel inspired in the so-called "concrete jungle" and yet this is what the rituals can do. They can provide a moment when one remembers the link with nature and the world around us.

(Nature spirits are all around us. We may refer to them as "Angels" (such as healing angels, who guard a hospital for example. In fact it could be argued that we need to spend **more** time building up a rapport with the "Spirits of the City". )

### **Primary focus**

The spiritual, religious side is primary – it forms the basis of our conscience. How problems are solved depends on how the world is viewed and how the world within is linked to the outside world.

Good and evil are not opposites or forces that exist solely outside of us. We interact with the outside world and our impact in the world will be interpreted by others as being “good or bad”, “just or unjust”, “loving or hateful” or the myriad of nuances between the two seemingly opposites. The Law of Polarity helps us to recognise when things are in harmony. When things are “at-ease” instead of “dis-ease”.

### **Ethics, personal responsibility**

From a sense of community it is a small step to the subject of standards and cultural norms. Within Wicca there is a “Golden Rule” – “An (if) it harm none do what you will”.

Originally a piece of advice on how to do magical work from an ethical point of view – it has become the Wiccan tenet. There are few written laws and the “Wiccan Rede” is a very short piece of advice. And that is all it is. A guideline, whereby one is reminded of personal responsibility. For a Witch evil does not exist as a separate entity outside of them but is the effect of bad timing or place. An action, which in some cases may be “good”, may in fact be “bad” in another situation.

(Example: stealing a loaf of bread to feed starving family. The Law – thou shalt not steal – is being broken but there are mitigating circumstances. And one may be judged on intent rather than the black & white action. Crimes of passion also fall under this category.)

Also “how” the Divine is interpreted falls under the category of “personal insights and responsibility.”

### **The impact of a new religious movement and the implications within Europe.**

A New Religious Movement has been described as: a religious faith, or an ethical, spiritual or philosophical movement of recent origin that isn't part of an established denomination, church, or religious body.

However although Wicca is a modern religion it is rooted in ancient traditions. It is basically an animistic religion. Gerald Brousseau Gardner who is regarded as the luminary behind modern Wicca, gave a native folk religion a liturgy. For this reason Wicca does not fit well into the definition of NRM.

Gardner referred to the people as a group as “the Wicca”; and the religion “The Old Religion”. The followers were Witches. Nowadays, however, many, people use the term Wicca to describe the religion, and “Wiccan” as the follower. Wicca and (neo) paganism have also been described as “the fastest growing religion” in the Western World.

### **Wiccan growth rate:**

The ARIS survey of the American adult population indicates a growth in the Wiccan community of 17 fold between 1990 and 2001 - the highest of any faith group monitored. This would indicate a doubling in numbers of adherents about ever 2.5 years. If the latter growth rate is accurate and if it continues, then Wicca would be the third largest religious group in the U.S. by about 2012, behind Christianity and Judaism”.

But the general misuse of the word Wicca makes it very difficult to assess how many adherents there really are. Recent information in the UK reveals that there are: "Over 42.5 thousand Pagans in the UK. The University of Derby's new handbook, "Religions in the UK", has the figures. ... concluding that the total number of Pagans in Scotland can be seen as 1,966, and in Britain as a whole as 42,890." Certainly in Europe it is enjoying growing popularity. The real boom began in the early 1980's – 30 years after the "Fraudulent Mediums Act (1951) had been repealed in the UK.



Small groups became more public after Gerald Gardner (1884-1964) and later Alex Sanders (1926- 1988) became active and gave Wicca the face we know today.

The Pagan Federation was established in 1971 and was set up “ originally as primarily a campaigning organisation: one that would actively fight the ignorance and negative attitudes towards Paganism which were at large in the country (UK) then and which obviously still exist in various forms today.”

Today the PF International has representatives in all western European countries and in recent years has also branched out into Hungary and Poland. The majority of members are Wiccan.

Its major social impact has been to answer the call of many thousands of young people in search of a new spirituality. After the sexual revolution of the 1960's, the so-called "Hippy Generation" and the Feminist Movement the time was ripe for a religion in which sexuality, mysticism, pro-women attitudes and a different, less formal hierarchical structure won terrain.

It has also reflected changing attitudes towards ethic and social responsibilities. As we move towards greater mobility within the EU people are looking for a sense of belonging. The "Clan" aspect of Wicca and paganism can offer small meaningful communities in which new citizens can relate to. There is also a deep-seated recognition that it is Nature that binds us all together. The growing concern for Nature and Ecology has also drawn people to Wicca, which can provide a spiritual backdrop.



One other aspect, which is slowly emerging in Europe, is the necessity for a cultural identity. Much pagan heritage has still to be uncovered in Europe and this is a challenge for all of us. It is part of our European identity and modern pagans are making a serious effort to rejuvenate this past in creating a new spiritual and cultural awareness.

Thank you.



***First Wiccan Minister  
Invited to Speak to Commission for Civil Rights  
By Christopher Blackwell***

On Feb. 3 a joint news release from Circle Sanctuary and Cherry Hill Seminary announced that Rev. Patrick McCollum, the Lady Liberty League National Coordinator of Prison Ministry and also Cherry Hill Seminary Director of Chaplaincy, was invited to be part of a six member panel of experts to present on Religious Discrimination and Prisoners' Rights to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights on Friday, Feb. 8. The panel was being convened to shed light on the nature and extent of the problems which have arisen in this context and to discuss what can be done to resolve inmate grievances. After a period of public comment, a report by the Commission will be made available to Congress.



McCollum is the Director and Chair of the National Correctional Chaplaincy Directors Association, and is the statewide Wiccan chaplain for the California Department of Corrections, and has served as a Wiccan chaplain in the Federal Bureau of Prisons.

McCollum is the National Coordinator of the Lady Liberty League Prison Ministries Program, and a member of the National Advisory Council of Americans United for the Separation of Church and State.

As the newly appointed Director of the Chaplaincy Program of Cherry Hill Seminary, McCollum specializes in courses which address issues encountered by chaplains ministering in institutional settings, such as prisons. Cherry Hill Seminary provides distance-learning graduate-level higher education for Pagan ministry.

The Feb. 3 news release reported McCollum said, "It is an honor to be invited to participate in the dialogue and to share a Wiccan's point of view. Those in minority faiths are seldom given the opportunity to be heard, even when the issue concerns their rights. I am hopeful that this invitation is indicative of what we can expect going forward; that there is truly a desire on the part of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights to ensure that inmates receive equal treatment, and a willingness to better serve minority religions."

*Below is the transcript of Patrick's Briefing on Prisoners' Religious Rights to the U.S. Commission of Civil Rights given on Friday, February 8, 2008 in Washington, DC*

Good morning.

I would like to thank the Commission on behalf of the Wiccan community and on behalf of minority faiths in general, for offering us the opportunity to contribute to the dialogue on religious discrimination in United States' prisons. I will focus primarily on the accommodation of Wicca and the discrimination Wiccans face in State and federal prisons, but I would like the commission to recognize that one can

easily insert the name of any other minority faith in place of Wicca, and still have the exact same end result. That is, these problems are endemic for all minority faiths that are not in the family of religions of Abraham.

I'd like to start with a few true examples of discrimination to illustrate the severity of the problem:



A Wiccan inmate has cancer and the prison guards refuse to transport him to his chemotherapy treatments unless he removes his religious pentacle medallion which they have objections to. He chooses to forgo his chemotherapy and keep his pentacle.

A Wiccan inmate has been trying to go to Wiccan services for months, but the guard at her dorm refuses to give her a pass. The guard says it is for the good of the Wiccan inmate's soul.

Another dying Wiccan writes his volunteer chaplain that he needs to see him before he crosses over. The chaplain makes numerous attempts to reach prison staff to receive the necessary clearances, but no one responds. But worse, prison mailroom staff refuse to forward the chaplain's mail, so that the inmate knows why his chaplain isn't coming.

Over more than a decade, I've had the opportunity to interact nationally with both administrators and inmates on religious accommodation issues. While practices differ from state to state, I found discrimination against minority faiths everywhere. The reason for this is what I call the Dominant Religion Lens Factor.

The Dominant Religion Lens Factor is a process whereby administrators and security staff view all faith practices from the perspective of the Dominant faiths only, leaving no consideration that there are different ways to practice religion. The Dominant Religion Lens Factor is exacerbated by the fact that almost all of the administrators, who oversee religion programs in prisons, are members, and often clergy, of the very same Dominant faiths from which they take their cues, and even worse, many of them believe that their particular faith should dominate the landscape. Consequently, these people make determinations of what faith practices are or are not acceptable, based on the premise that if it looks like the Dominant faith's practices, then the practices are probably okay and should be accommodated, but if the practices do not look like the dominant faith's practices, then both the practices and the faith itself are suspect, and accommodation should be restricted. This particular way of viewing religion, replicates the very same kind of oppressive view that our forefathers and foremothers left Europe to escape, and if there is to be any hope of achieving equal religious rights for prisoners, then this whole way of viewing religion by those in charge, needs to be changed.

Here's how this works:

I arrived one morning at a prison to conduct Wiccan religious services. I put the inmates to work moving the chairs in the chapel into a circle, which is the typical configuration utilized for Wiccan religious services. Almost immediately security stopped us, saying that we could not conduct our services sitting in a circle, citing security. They instructed me that as the chaplain, I had to stand up front at the pulpit and that the inmates had to sit in the pews and that I had to conduct "sermons" from there. I tried to explain that Wiccan clergy do not give sermons and that creating a circle is the Wiccan way of creating "Sacred Space", but they would have none of it. They forced me to conduct my services from the pulpit, completely negating all of the necessary steps to actually conduct a legitimate Wiccan religious service.

What was particularly odd about this scenario is the fact that staff and chaplains, regularly stand, sit, and closely interact, with inmates all of the time, and that's not seen to be a security issue, but conducting religious services in what to them appeared to be a non-traditional way, seemed in their mind to pose a problem. Eventually I was able hold appropriate services, but to this day, staff still make comments about the inappropriateness of this type of a service, and for that reason, among others, ridicule Wicca as not being a real religion.

So, let's take a look at where the Dominant Religion Lens Factor ultimately leads:

I had a Wiccan inmate whose wife died. He was called in by a staff chaplain and given the news. In the course of the conversation, the inmate was told that perhaps his had wife died because of his participation in the Wiccan services, and that if he repented and started attending "real" religious services, there was a chance he could still be saved.

These kinds of interactions are common for minority faiths in prison. And while administrators may not be aware that they are operating in this prejudicial way, the end result for Wiccans is still the same - discrimination.

And then there's the worst case scenario, which actually occurs often, where certain prison administrators, staff, and chaplains fully believe that they have a mission to discourage minority faiths from practicing at all. In this context, the Dominant Religion Lens Factor empowers them and encourages them to act on their biases, which ultimately leads to the kind of behavior in the case cited.

Another problem I've observed is the great difficulty that Wiccans face when trying to gain access to their sacred religious items. In this instance, the number one reason cited for denying them is security, when in fact there isn't a security issue at all.

Wiccans typically use an altar adorned with various religious items. These items are usually composed of a chalice, a few candles, incense, and typically a few natural objects like, a feather, a small crystal, or a flower. A small statue or depiction of deity might also be included, and sometimes a Wiccan religious book. These items are highly sacred to Wiccans and play a critical role in their ability to conduct their religious services. Even so, Wiccans are regularly denied these items nationwide.

Now, here's the kicker:

In every case I've investigated, every single institution that denied these sacred items to Wiccans, allowed the very same items to be used in services conducted by

the dominant faiths. For example Catholics use a chalice during communion, and Muslims and the Catholics use incense. Protestants & Catholics use candles, and both also have sacred art present. Depictions of Jesus and Mary in prison chapels are commonplace, as are other symbols of Christian faith and deity. I've also attended many services where flowers are present, and all of these faiths use a holy book. So why is it that these dominant faiths get all of this without a problem, and yet Wiccans and other minority faiths don't? It's because the administrators and security staff see the dominant faith's use of these items as normal, and the minority faith's use of these exact same items as weird or dangerous, because the services in which minority faiths utilize these items look different to them than those that they are used to.



Another area in which the Dominant Religion Lens Factor plays out involves accommodations that involve significant resources. A good example is the allocation of regularly employed chaplains.

This is a problem throughout the country. California is an example. Even though there are more Wiccans attending religious services at the institutions in question than there are of some of the dominant faith groups who already have regularly employed chaplains, the State has told the Wiccans that they have to prove that their religious tenets require a chaplain before the institution will consider hiring one. So, far the inmates haven't been able to prove that, although they've been trying for nearly five years. But the odd thing about this proof requirement is that the Protestant inmates, who do have regularly employed chaplains, were never required to prove their need for a chaplain at all. And even more telling is the fact that Protestant religious tenets specifically state that clergy is not necessary to practice the Protestant faith, and in fact, the whole Protestant reformation was based on that principle. So, to clarify this situation, if the same standards that are being required of the Wiccans were to be applied to the Protestants, then all the Protestant chaplains would have to be fired.

This is the same issue for other resource allocations, such as space, budget, books, special religious programming and the like. Protestant congregations in most prisons have bible classes, revivals, videos, and choirs; and I even recently attended an event where Bikers for Christ, brought in a dozen full dressed Harleys for the inmates at a several institutions to interact with. All of these accommodations are provided to the Protestants even though none of these things are required by their tenets. Yet the Wiccans are permitted only those things that they can prove are required by their faith tenets. This sets up a very unfair situation, where resource allocation is not accomplished by an equitable formula.

In addition, those who review inmate grievances, including even some courts, also tend to look at the issues through the Dominant Religion Lens, as well, making it difficult for even the most egregious of these problems to be addressed.

The issues I've discussed involve clear and obvious violations of the Constitution of the United States, RLUIPA, and RFRA, as they directly violate the civil rights of the Wiccans involved, yet no one questions them. Why is that? Could it be that our government has established religious favorites? Here are my recommendations to this commission:



If we want to achieve religious equality in prisons, then we have to restrict the hiring of administrators, staff, and chaplains into gatekeeper positions for our nations' correctional religious programs. Only individuals who do not see it as their duty to promote certain religious practices over others should be hired in such positions. This should be a Bona Fide Occupational Qualification. We must also educate those who do act as gatekeepers, about pluralism and the guiding principles of religious accommodation in general, so that all inmates will be permitted a reasonable and equitable opportunity to practice their faiths. And we need to establish a separate grievance process for religious issues, which gives inmates a direct line to action in these areas and protection from retaliation. This new grievance process should include experts in non-traditional faiths, so that the Dominant Religion Lens Process is avoided. And lastly, we also need to get rid of administrators and chaplains who believe that breaking the law by violating inmates' religious rights is justified by faith.

Thank you.  
Rev. Patrick McCollum

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### ***Has a Black Cat crossed your path?***

If you live in the United States, or most European countries, then black cats passing in front of you will likely make you believe that bad luck is on its way. If however you live in the UK or in Japan, black cats crossing your path will probably make you smile and think that good fortune is on its way. Live in Germany and you will probably believe that black cats crossing your path from right to left, is a bad omen. But from left to right, and the cat is granting favorable times for you.

In Italy many hold the superstition that if an inky feline lays on a sick persons bed, death will follow. In China there are those that believe black cats to be harbingers of famine and poverty. Latvian farmers, that find black kitties in their grain silos, dance with joy. They believe these felines to be the spirit of Rungis, a god of harvests.

Crossing the path of a black cat, as opposed to it crossing yours, is generally thought of as inviting the very worst of luck. In Scotland folks believe finding back kittens sitting in their porch is a sure sign of riches, and happiness to come. In most parts of the world it is thought that a black cat walking towards you is a certainty of good luck coming your way.

Chasing black cats out of your house is a certain way to ensure that yours will not be a lucky house. Stroking the fur of black felines will bring you both health, and wealth. In some fishing communities, the fishermen's wives keep their cats indoors, believing that this will keep their men folk safe from peril whilst at sea.

Many people around the world believe that there is a single white hair to be found, on even the blackest of cats. Pull out that hair, without getting a scratch, and yours will be a long, happy and prosperous marriage.

Whatever the local superstitions about cats that are black, most owners of cats consider themselves lucky and blessed. And indeed it is a blessing to own a cat, black or not.



***Germany's PFI Conference 2008 – from my point of view***  
**by MoonDancer**

A little over two months ago, I didn't even know what the PFI was. It was simply out of curiosity that I decided to sign up for the weekend in Schwerte, Germany: I wanted to learn about the "scene" in Europe and particularly in Germany, I wanted to meet people and learn new things – especially about myself.

My background is American Wicca; since my divorce nine years ago I have been without a Coven – and without the need for it. A little over two months ago I accidentally – is there any other way? – happened upon the German "Sternenkreis" Forum on the Internet, and there I learned about the PFI, among other things.

So much to what happened before. The conference itself started on Saturday morning with a beautiful opening ritual attended by almost everybody (who was not caught in a traffic jam that morning). Vicky Gabriel and William Anderson soon made me feel as if I was standing on the edge of the woods, with birds singing and sunshine lighting up everything – instead of a rather drab Youth Hostel. A very promising start indeed.

We were about 65 people; half of them stayed the night. Aside from a few organizational problems (for example, you had to be quick coming to dinner – else you had to stand in line at the kitchen, asking for seconds), or last-minute changes (music? Eh, no, no music – we're going to dance now..), the weekend was harmonious, constructive, and most of all filled with positive impressions people.

After the opening ritual, there were three workshops to choose from: Astrology, Tarot, and Transition Rituals for parents. I went to the Tarot workshop hosted by Ina Custers-van Bergen, where she showed us some of the underlying principles of the cards that provide the basis for their interpretation. Her detailed analysis of cards 0 and 1 (The Magician and The Fool) in the Rider-Whaite and the Thoth deck was intended to serve as motivation for us to deal with these principles that symbolically manifest and intensify the cards' divinatory interpretation.

During lunch (why, my children have been asking me for years, do Youth Hostels always serve spaghetti on the first day? I still don't know...) we had ample opportunity to make new contacts and intensify current ones, thanks to the fact that as a group, we were on our own. In my opinion, the lunch break went on for a long time; the agenda did not pick up again until 15:00 hrs. But then again, I did not yet know that many people. At least that meant enough time to visit the various vendors and artisans; to look through various books, try on some jewelry, hear about all-natural cosmetics, try some homemade jelly, or talk to GardenStone about his books. I have to admit, I spent most of the time looking at books.

The scheduled workshop on "Musical journeys", unfortunately, had to be cancelled; instead Sandra (PFI Coordinator for Germany) taught us some first steps and basics of "Tribal Dance", a mixture of various dancing styles on the basis of Oriental belly dance. It is danced in a group, though.

After that followed a presentation of the "Wicca-First Steps on the Path" program by Morgana and Saddie. In case anybody does not know then: Morgana is the PFI International Coordinator, and Saddie the Coordinator for Hungary. He also administers the PFI Forum.

Among the participants were experienced Wicca as well as new and curious guests. However, they all had in common a sound knowledge of the subject in question, and so Morgana and Saddle were able to concentrate on telling us about their work with the PFI. The next day, we wanted to do some real-life practice then.

Of course there were other workshops taking place at the same time: there was one where you could learn about Nehalennia – The Return of a Goddess; and one where the men among us (and within us?) could learn something about vision quests. But I'm only one person ;-)

After dinner it was time for Pagan Party, complete with drums and everything else that goes with it.

Sunday morning came much too early, and me almost late for breakfast – I had to get in line for fresh rolls. Actually I had been planning to attend part 2 of Morgana's workshop, but then Diane asked if I would come along to Paul and his discussion group. And she was right, that was an excellent idea! A very well moderated group session on „*Trying to find out what Paganism is, instead of what it is not*“. It is always fascinating to see how good we are at not agreeing with each other! We were no more than 20 people with just as many different opinions on the subject, but the important thing was: we all got along with each other famously and accepted each other's opinions! That is reason for hope indeed. You could probably fill several books on „*Definition or What to enter in a form asking about my religion, if I don't want to enter 'none'*“ alone. But in the end, it seemed to me, everybody had found their own definition to take home with them, at least. And we had learned much about the thoughts of the other participants, as well.

Afterwards I joined the last hour of Morgana and Saddle's workshop; today's schedule called for the practical aspects: first steps in Wicca, the seasons and their significance in our daily life, as well as our own cycle of life. The topic finished with a short meditation, wherein Saddle guided us to some of our own symbolic keys to take home with us. .

Lunchtime – vegetarians had to make do with French Fries, the others had chicken. The evening before we had already agreed to tighten up the schedule a little bit, so we quickly proceeded to the next workshops. On account of the large demand, Ina repeated her Tarot workshop from the day, and Vicky and William introduced us to something they called „*Healing in Movement*“ – and what that can do for us. And what those two hours have done for me, I cannot put into words.. except for those that I said at the end to the others in the group: Now I know why I came here.

The closing ritual was of a very special, celebratory beauty. In keeping with the season we invited Ostara to join us in our celebration, and she not only presented all of us with multi-colored eggs, that we each sent on to others with our good wishes, but also with her blessing as we embark on a new year. It was a beautiful ending to an event that will be with me for a very long time.

It was hard for me to say good-bye to the people that had shared that weekend with me. I had felt very much at home there in that Hostel – more so than I can recall anywhere else. But I take with me the memories, and I bring them to life again every day that I walk the new, old paths. And I look forward to seeing all of you again – let the circle be open but never be broken...

Merry meet, Petra/MoonDancer

## **Books Books Books !!!** **by Diana Aventina**

Some people like books, but I don't like books- I **love** books. I could kiss some of my books because I love them so much ☺

Other girls buy shoes, clothes and jewelry, but I buy books books books! Do you know how certain people elbow their way to the front of a buffet dinner while others of us stay back away wondering if we would starve to death had our life depended on being pushy at meals? Well my dominant alpha female-ness only shows at a book market or a bookstore. Then I become all elbows, hip-checks and shoulder butts.

A few months ago I probably met the man of my dreams in De Slegte bookstore in Hasselt Belgium. He was about 45 or 50 and looked like a professor. He wasn't dressed great, but not bad either and either way, I wouldn't want a relationship with a flashy dresser because then he would want me to dress flashy. So there I was in De Slegte looking for 'Roma Sub Rosa', a series of mystery books written by Steven Saylor which take place in Roman times.

But where were these books filed in De Slegte? In the used section or the new section? Under English mystery, fiction, history? After checking all of the used Book sections I began to give up hope. But everywhere I went, this professor guy was there before me. I was wondering if he thought that I was following him. So I headed for the new books and there they were! Under new English fiction there were 2 books of the series. I reached for one of them and a hand bumped into mine. The professor apparently had been looking for the same author and had reached for the same book. But all's fair in love and book shopping and so with lightning speed my hand darted out and I grabbed the book. Then I batted my eyelashes at him and smiled coyly and said 'Oh did you want this book?' He smiled back and said "That's ok, I'll take this one then' as he grabbed the other Steven Saylor book.

I went to the check-out and paid for 'Roman Blood'. The professor bought 'Rubicon'. Two ships passing in the night, but forever linked by our love of a certain author;s books ☺

### **Free Online Books!**

Are you a book lover just like I am? Then you are going to love this!! I found some great websites where you can download books totally for free and without having to register your name etc. The great thing is that you can download books just to see if you might be interested in that subject. I mean, why not? It's free!

My favorite of them all is <http://www.munseys.com/site/new>  
There is a nice esoteric section too.

Project Gutenberg- <http://www.gutenberg.org> 25000 free books!

Sacred Texts- The largest free archive of online books about religion, mythology, folklore and the esoteric on the Internet. <http://www.sacred-texts.com/>

Bright blessings and happy reading!  
Diana

## **Pagan Federation International Activities in Belgium**

***PFI Belgium and Het Element present:***

***Litha Lier Midzomerfeest!***

***Sunday June 22 2008***

***Donkhoeve, Galgeveld 17, Lier, Belgium***

***Free entrance!***

***Continuous from 13:00 through 18:00:***

***Pagan Market, workshops, guided walks, entertainment***

***19:00: Midsummer Ritual and Midsummer fire***

***Food and drinks are available to purchase at the site***

***For more information call: +32 3/455 95 93***

***or email [het.element@scarlet.be](mailto:het.element@scarlet.be)***

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### ***The First ever PFI Belgium Conference!***

***Mabon Conference***

***Saturday September 20, 2008***

***EMABB, Noeveren 67, 2850 Boom, Belgium***

***Continuous from 10:00 to 22:00***

***Mabon ritual, workshops, lectures, Pagan market, evening entertainment***

***Food and drinks are available for purchase***

***Entry price: PFI members €13.00, non-members pay €15.00***

***Registration is mandatory as the number of places are limited.***

***Contact & info:***

***Maya + 32 486 80 10 13***

***Or email [maya@paganfederation.org](mailto:maya@paganfederation.org)***

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### ***PaGE 2008***

***Pagan Gathering Europe 2008***

***Westmalle, Belgium***

***September 26, 27 & 28, 2008***

From Friday September 26 at 6:00 PM through Sunday evening at 6:00 PM there will be fascinating workshops, pathworkings, an opening and closing ritual, & Janet Farrar & Gavin Bone have confirmed their presence !

Children are welcome, but participation to the workshops and other activities is reserved for 18+. Parents remain responsible for their kids at all times.

#### **Price?**

Participation to PaGE is only possible in full board. The price includes lodging, breakfast, lunch and dinner and two coffee breaks. The price for the entire weekend for PFI members is €165, non members pay 175.

Registration is mandatory as the number of places are limited. See [www.arcadiacoven.be](http://www.arcadiacoven.be) for the registration form and for much more info. Questions? [fjierra@paganfederation.org](mailto:fjierra@paganfederation.org)



**Contact us !**

On a national level, each country has a National Coordinator. This is the person you should write to with all your questions and you should keep him/her informed of changes of address or e-mail! If you cannot contact your National Coordinator, you can contact the International Coordinator.

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