



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS
Advancing Knowledge, Driving Change

Chapter Title: Wicca and Neopaganism: Magic, Feminism, and Environmentalism

Book Title: New Age, Neopagan, and New Religious Movements

Book Subtitle: Alternative Spirituality in Contemporary America

Book Author(s): HUGH B. URBAN

Published by: University of California Press

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.com/stable/10.1525/j.ctv1wxrsk.12>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <https://about.jstor.org/terms>



University of California Press is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *New Age, Neopagan, and New Religious Movements*

JSTOR

Wicca and Neopaganism

Magic, Feminism, and Environmentalism

For over thirty years, thousands of witches, Druids, Heathens, Radical Faeries, and other neopagans have gathered each July for a huge, multiday festival of drumming, chanting, bonfires, workshops, lectures, ritual performances, and magic called Starwood. Now the largest neopagan festival in North America, Starwood began in Pennsylvania in 1981 and has since been held at various locations in New York and Ohio, typically attracting between 1,400 and 1,600 people. Like other neopagan festivals held across the United States, Starwood includes a wide array of workshops on spiritual topics, various forms of political activism, performance of pagan rituals, and numerous vendors selling an array of food, drink, clothing, jewelry, and ritual implements—all of this in a lively, friendly, party-like atmosphere. Attendees arrive in every manner of attire, ranging from Druid robes and witches' hats to wildly colorful costumes, exotic belly-dancer outfits, and ordinary jeans and T-shirts. Starwood also has a "clothing-optional" policy, and it is not uncommon for participants to appear "skyclad," or naked. As the festival's organizers described the event held in the hilly woodland of southeast Ohio in July 2014, "Starwood is a seven-day exploration of mind, body and spirit, of creativity and possibilities, features over 20 performances of music, drumming, dance and theater. . . . It's a multiversity featuring over 150 classes, workshops and ceremonies offered by prominent teachers from many fields, disciplines, traditions and cultures. It's a family-friendly camping event with tenting and hiking, food vendors, co-op child care, swimming, hot showers, a Kid Village and multimedia shows. Starwood is also a social event with costume parades, jam sessions, merchants, parties, giant puppets, all-night drumming and much more, including our huge and infamous Bonfire!"¹ Although Starwood is the largest of its kind, it is just one of dozens of pagan festivals held across the United States—often in quite unexpected locations, such as Hawkfest Drum and Dance in

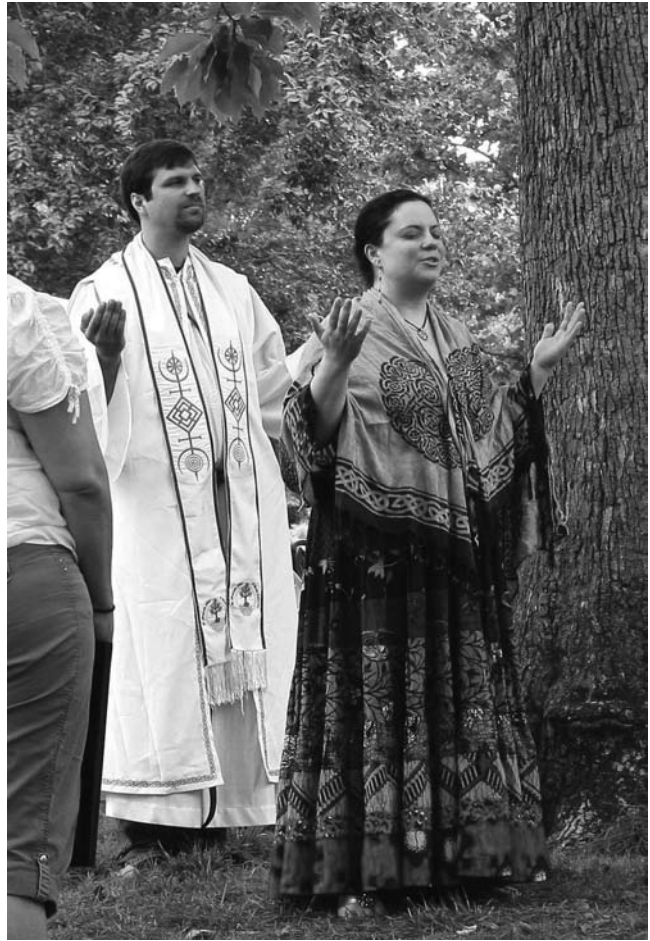


FIGURE 8.1 Ár nDraíocht Féin
(ADF) Druid ritual,
Columbus, Ohio, July 2013.
Photo by the author.

Georgia, Prometheus Rising in Pennsylvania, Women's Gathering in Indiana, Moondance in Alabama, Summerland Spirit Festival in Wisconsin, the Midwest Witches' Ball in Michigan, the Pagan Unity Festival in Tennessee, and California Witchcamp, to name but a few (figure 8.1).

This lively and eclectic festival culture reflects the vitality, breadth, and diversity of neopaganism as a religious phenomenon in the contemporary United States. Today, the United States has hundreds of neopagan groups, which include not only well-known organizations such as Wicca but also various Druid groups, which look back to ancient European Druidic traditions; Dianic groups, which focus primarily on the goddess; Heathen groups, which draw upon Germanic traditions; the Church of All Worlds, which focuses on Gaia or the Earth Goddess; gay and lesbian groups such as the Radical Faeries; and many others.

Despite their tremendous diversity, these various neopagan movements do share at least a few features. First, in contrast to New Age spirituality and to many new religious movements, neopagan groups typically look not to a future new era but rather *backward* to an

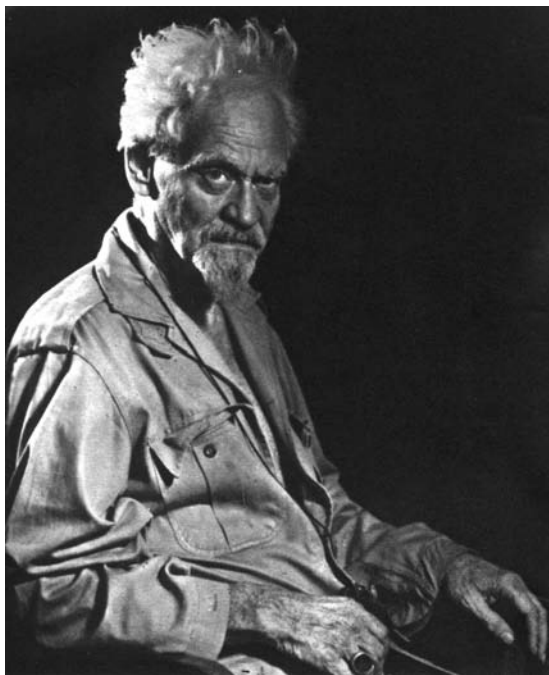


FIGURE 8.2 Gerald Gardner.
Photographer unknown.

ancient, usually pre-Christian past that they wish to either recover or draw inspiration from in the modern world. Second, neopagan groups tend to be more loosely organized than other new religious movements; rather than drawing rigid boundaries between insiders and outsiders, they tend to be organized in more fluid, flexible communities (such as covens), and individuals may be involved in multiple groups or may simply practice on their own. Third, neopaganism tends to be a very practice-oriented movement, typically with a stronger emphasis on ritual performance and magic than dogmatic belief systems. As a “religion without the middle man,” it empowers individuals to engage in magical practice themselves rather than relying on priests or other religious authorities.² Finally, as we will see in this chapter, most forms of neopaganism emphasize either women’s roles or gender equality; and most have some form of deep environmental ethic, regarding the natural world as sacred or infused with the divine.

Although all of these groups look back to much older sources, they are all “neo-” or “new” movements in the sense that they have all emerged (or some would argue “reemerged”) in America and Europe in relatively recent times, basically since the 1950s and ’60s. The most important figure in the revival of modern paganism was the eccentric British author Gerald Gardner (figure 8.2), who claimed to have been initiated into an ancient coven of witches that had secretly survived the millennia of Christian rule and was now resurfacing in the twentieth century. But Gardner’s new Wicca movement quickly spawned a tremendous array of new forms of paganism, first in England and then in Europe and the United States from the 1950s onward.

One of the most important reasons—though surely not the only reason—for the success of neopaganism in the United States has been its close association with two other social and political movements: feminism and environmentalism. Neopaganism entered the United States in a huge way in the 1960s, at the height of the American counterculture movement, amid the rise of new forms of feminism and a new environmental awareness. At the same time that modern witchcraft was spreading through San Francisco, New York, and other major American cities, radical theologians such as Mary Daly were publishing influential feminist works such as *The Church and the Second Sex* (1969). And at the same time that American neopagans began to invoke the Earth Goddess, environmentalists such as Rachel Carson were publishing *Silent Spring* (1962) and other influential books that helped spark the modern environmentalist movement. In short, just as the Spiritualist movement had gone hand in hand with powerful new social movements such as abolition and women's rights, so contemporary neopaganism has often gone hand in hand with new social movements such as post-1960s feminism and environmentalism.

Because of the tremendous diversity of contemporary neopaganism, this chapter will focus primarily on early Wicca as it developed in England and then began to influence feminist witches in the United States such as Starhawk and Z Budapest. Combining paganism and goddess worship with women's rights, political activism, and environmentalism, Starhawk in particular has developed an earth-based spirituality that works toward both environmental sustainability and social justice. Perhaps the most famous neopagan author in North America, Starhawk has also begun to be taken seriously in the academic study of religion—for example, delivering a lecture at the Harvard Divinity School in 2013.

As we will see in this chapter, however, the role of feminism and environmentalism in contemporary neopaganism raises complicated questions and debates. For example, by associating women with “the Goddess” and with “the earth,” are neopagans such as Starhawk actually challenging gender stereotypes and patriarchal traditions? Or are they in some ways ironically reinforcing traditional gender stereotypes (such as the association of women with nature, the earth, the body, and reproduction)? At the same time, they raise the question of whether we need spiritual movements such as neopaganism to help us address the many environmental crises that we face today or whether these appeals to the supernatural are a distraction from and an impediment to real action on serious environmental issues.

GERALD GARDNER AND THE BIRTH OF MODERN WICCA

While many neopagans trace their origins to ancient, pre-Christian, and even Paleolithic times, the birth of neopaganism as a modern religious movement really begins in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Interest in pagan traditions and in ancient Greek and Roman religions had been a growing trend in England throughout the nineteenth century, appearing in romantic poetry, novels, and artwork. At the same time, there was a fresh revival of the Western esoteric traditions of Kabbalah, Hermeticism, and magic, which we

discussed in chapter 1, giving birth to new ritual magical groups such as the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn in the late 1880s.

In many ways the forefather of modern neopaganism was the British occultist and magician Aleister Crowley (1875–1947). Although Crowley was demonized in the popular press as “the wickedest man in the world” and a “drug fiend,” he was one of the most important figures in the development of modern magic as a whole (as well as the development of rock ‘n’ roll and heavy metal in the 1960s and ‘70s). Crowley spelled *Magick* with a *k* in order to distinguish it from mere stage magic and parlor tricks. As he defined it, Magick is the “science and art of causing change to occur in conformity with will.” It is a science in the sense that it works by natural laws and can be tested and replicated; and it is an art in the sense that it involves a great deal of beauty, art, symbolism, and theatrical performance. Although many neopagans today disavow Crowley because of his controversial reputation, his basic definition of magic is still widely used by many practitioners. As early as 1914, moreover, Crowley had called for the birth of a new kind of “natural religion,” a more this-worldly form of spirituality based not on abstract deities but on the primal forces of the sun, moon, and earth: “The time is just ripe for a natural religion,” he wrote. “People like rites and ceremonies and they are tired of hypothetical gods. Insist on the real benefits of the sun, the Mother-Force, the Father-Force and so on. . . . Let the religion be Joy. . . . In short, be the founder of a new and greater Pagan cult.”³

A second key figure in the birth of modern witchcraft and neopaganism was a British scholar named Margaret Murray (1863–1963). In 1921, Murray published an influential but controversial book entitled *The Witch Cult in Western Europe*, which made the bold argument that the witch trials in medieval and early modern Europe were based, not on mere paranoid fantasy, but on a real religious movement that dated back to pre-Christian times. According to Murray, long before the arrival of Christianity there had been an older pagan tradition of magic and Goddess worship, which was later misunderstood, demonized, and persecuted as witchcraft. Although Murray’s account is not taken very seriously by most historians today, it would have a huge influence on the revival of neopaganism in the mid-twentieth century.

However, the most important figure in the development of modern pagan witchcraft was Gerald B. Gardner (1884–1964), a charmingly eccentric character who really sparked the modern Wicca movement. Gardner had spent his early career as a manager of tea and rubber plantations in South and Southeast Asia, but he also developed a strong interest in the occult, the supernatural, and mystical phenomena, reading widely in both Western esoteric traditions and Eastern traditions such as Hinduism and Buddhism. Gardner was strongly influenced by the occult works of Aleister Crowley, which he quoted extensively in his early manual of Wiccan rituals called the “Book of Shadows” (though, again, Crowley’s influence was later downplayed by most Wiccans because of his scandalous reputation).

Gardner retired to London in 1936 and then moved to the area called New Forest two years later. It was here that he claimed that he was introduced to a mysterious figure called

Michael Dangler is a high priest in the Druid group ADF or Ár nDraíocht Féin and the leader of its Three Cranes Grove in Ohio. He is also a former major in religious studies and spent a great deal of time reading and studying various aspects of ancient religions before joining ADF. In this interview he talks about his background, the activities of ADF, and his understanding of how magic works.

I grew up in the United Church of Christ. My grandparents were Congregationalists, and we ended up in a UCC congregation for most of my formative years. But religion wasn't a real important thing in my family's life. It wasn't something that we did twice a week or three times a week. We went on Sunday. I was an avid reader, though, and I read a lot of fiction. I can account for most of my vocabulary coming from fantasy novels. But when we talk about the influence that fantasy novels or games like Dungeons and Dragons have, in my experience with other pagans, it's not the fantasy aspect of it; it's where people encounter for the first time this concept of magic or this concept of Druids or witches.

I encountered the word *Druid*, and I said, "That sounds really interesting." At the same time, I was taking a Latin class in high school, and we were translating pieces of Caesar's *Commentaries on the Gallic Wars*, and I ran into the word there as well. I did some reading, and you know Caesar is fairly gory in his descriptions of wicker men and people being killed in various ways. But what attracted me was not that piece in book 6 where he's talking about people being burned alive but where he's talking about Druids being philosophers and Druids being judges and Druids being healers, as well as magicians and spiritual leaders. So that was the piece that turned me on to it, this idea of the polymath, someone who is skilled, these natural philosopher types. I started reading everything that I could find on it. But it wasn't until I stumbled onto ADF that I found someone who was interested in looking at archaeology and at what the ancients actually did, what we could piece back together, and then moving from there to what it is that works for us.

Within ADF we keep eight high days at least. Groves are required to do public work on those eight high days; we can't do a private Beltane rite and call it our service to the community. It has to be a public rite, and the reason for that is that in the 1980s when ADF was formed there was the Satanic Panic and this notion that there are people out there trying to eat your children. What [ADF founder] Isaac Bonewits really wanted to do was to show that, no, pagans can be good neighbors too. They're not out to steal your kid away, they're not out here to hurt the community, they're out there to participate in the community. We do it at metro parks because they're cheap, and they're public. We haven't picked one metro park where we always do stuff because we want to move around the community, so that if you live in Reynoldsburg, two or three times a

year we're doing a rite near you; if you live in Powell, two or three times a year we're doing a rite near you. We're trying to provide as much access to paganism as we can for those who want it.

I've always liked Crowley's definition of magic as changing reality to suit your will—as an art and a science. I tend to do what works, and I tend to change things around from different cultures and use them in a way that may not have originally been intended but fits what I want to do. And then I've also got this heavy streak of wanting to look at the old *grimoires* and the Greek magical papyri and try to see how well it works for me as a modern. The problem of course with the Greek magical papyri and ancient spells is that they involve things that I don't particularly care to do. We don't do animal sacrifice. I'm not going to go and dig the eyes out of a dove in order to follow a magical incantation specifically from one of those old texts. So I find ways to change and fit them into a practice that makes sense for modern folk.

To give you a good example: Earlier this year my wife and I had been trying to conceive for a while. So I went digging into these old spell books to see what I could find, and I came across this manuscript from the eighteenth century, a Germanic manuscript. It contains a very simple spell for getting someone pregnant. Every morning for several weeks while trying to conceive, the instructions say, "Carve this symbol onto a piece of cheese and give it to her to eat and she'll become pregnant." So we did that, and she ate a lot of cheese, and now we're expecting twins in October. It's one of these things where we didn't change anything else, we'd been working on it for months if not a year and a half at that point, and that's the only thing we changed. We did it with intent, we did it with a real desire to make something happen, and it worked.

There are several schools of thought on how exactly magic works. And not being able to explain it in purely scientific terms doesn't really bother a lot of pagans, and it doesn't particularly bother me. But I have the notion that, if it works for someone, and if it truly is magic, then if you give your script to somebody else and they do all the same steps, they should come out with the same end product. In some ways it is very much a scientific approach. But what actually does the work, in my mind, is the reciprocity and relationship with spirits. We're sitting here, and here's the cheese, and I'm writing instructions on the cheese to give to her to eat. To look at it in a really ancient way, there's some spirit that sees that, understands what that action is, and is able to take the appropriate action as a result. The theory that I tend to work with is that this stuff doesn't necessarily work free of those relationships. You have to have those relationships, especially if what you're doing involves calling on a deity. I don't like calling on those individuals cold. It would be like picking a random name from the phone book, calling them up, and saying, "You don't know me, but I'd really like

(continued)

(Interview with Michael Dangler, continued)

a hundred bucks. Totally, I promise I'll pay you back." Most people wouldn't do that. I tend to think the spirits and the deities are the same. Some of them are willing to take a chance, but for the most part I think that they want a relationship as much as we do.

The majority of pagans tend to be female, educated, with college degrees, and between the ages of about twenty-five and forty-five. I've seen that borne out in ADF. We seem to have mostly women—I'd say about 60 percent—and we've got most between about the ages of twenty-five and forty-five. The fact that women can find roles of authority and ritual expertise that they wouldn't find in mainstream churches is a big part of it. It goes back to the idea of "power with instead of power over." Starhawk talks about that extensively in *The Spiral Dance*. There are roles for women in just about every pagan group. Generally speaking, men and women have very equal roles, and within Wicca you can find denominations that are entirely women.

I hate to generalize about other religions, but there is a comfort in having something written down that someone can tell you is always true and always correct, and paganism doesn't have that. It's religion with homework. For the most part, pagans like to read, they like to find out about the cultures that they're interested in, they like to find out where their gods came from, and they don't deal well with someone else telling them this is how it has to be. I think a lot of that has to do with the level of education that a lot of them have.

Old Dorothy—a woman he identified as a genuine witch belonging to an ancient tradition of pagan witchcraft that had survived secretly for centuries beneath the surface of Christian society—thus confirming Margaret Murray's thesis. It was Old Dorothy (later identified as Dorothy Clutterbuck, d. 1951) who allegedly initiated Gardner into her coven and introduced him to the ancient craft of magic.

Today there is a great deal of controversy surrounding the mysterious figure of Old Dorothy. Was she in fact a representative of some ancient form of witchcraft? Did she exist at all, or was she the figment of Gardner's own lively imagination? Was she really the person identified as Dorothy Clutterbuck—who was, ironically, a well-to-do and conservative woman, highly respected in the community? Or was this just the name he gave in order to distract attention from a *real* witch, whose identity he kept secret?⁴

But whether Gardner had really been initiated into an ancient tradition of witchcraft or had instead largely invented it himself, he did become the founder of a major neopagan revival through England, Europe, and the United States from the 1950s onward. Gardner claimed that he had first been given permission to represent some of the witch beliefs and practices in the disguised form of a novel called *High Magic's Aid* (1949); then, after the

repeal of England's witchcraft laws in 1951, he was emboldened to publish these ancient secrets more openly in works such as his first major book, *Witchcraft Today* (1954).

Witchcraft Today offered a semihistorical narrative of Wicca—or what some call the “myth of Wicca”—which became widely accepted by many neopagans. As Gardner tells the story, Wicca (from the Old English term for a practitioner of magic or witchcraft) can be traced all the way back to the Stone Age, when a matriarchal culture flourished and women were the experts in the use of medicine and magic. The chief deity was the Goddess or Great Mother, with women as her priestesses, and her male counterpart was the God of the Hunt or the Horned God: “Historically, the matriarchal period had been tentatively dated from the middle of the ninth to the middle of the seventh millennium B.C., during which time caves, trees, the moon, and stars all seem to have been revered as female emblems. So the myth of the Great Goddess came into existence, and woman was her priestess. Probably at the same time the men had a hunter god who presided over the animals.”⁵ When Christianity spread across Europe and the British Isles, Gardner's narrative continues, this ancient Goddess tradition was pushed underground, matriarchy was replaced by patriarchy, the Horned God was turned into Satan, and women who practiced magic were persecuted as witches. However, this ancient tradition survived throughout the centuries of Christian rule and resurfaced in twentieth-century England.

Most historians today find Gardner's narrative of the origins of Wicca implausible. Even many practitioners today will acknowledge that neopaganism is not so much the literal continuation of an ancient Stone Age religion as a modern movement that looks for inspiration to ancient sources. And many others will argue that it simply doesn't matter. Rather, what matters is that the tradition exists now and is meaningful for people today, regardless of its precise historical origins. Indeed, even if it didn't exist in the ancient past, it needs to be invented today in order to protect the earth from widespread environmental devastation. As one Dianic priestess named Morgan McFarland put it, “At this point it doesn't matter whether or not it existed [in the ancient past]. . . . The people I know in the Craft are so desperate to bring back some balance of the Mother before she is totally raped and pillaged that we are, through that desperation, creating it or re-creating it.”⁶

Regardless of the historical accuracy of Gardner's narrative of the origins of Wicca, he was the primary inspiration for a tremendous proliferation of new forms of paganism from the 1950s onward. In addition to Gardner's early Wiccan movement—often called Gardnerian or British Traditional Wicca—an enormous variety of other movements began to spread across England, Europe, and the United States. These include all women's groups such as Dianic Wicca, modern Druid groups such as ADF (Ár nDraíocht Féin, or “A Druid Fellowship”), Heathen groups that draw upon Germanic mythology, Reconstructionist groups that study and attempt to recreate ancient traditions, queer pagan groups such as the Radical Faeries and the Minoan Brotherhood, ethnic pagan groups that draw upon Celtic, Slavic, Italian, or other regional traditions, Wotanism or white supremacist paganism, and dozens of others. Finally, there are many solitary practitioners, who perform ritual and magic on their own without necessarily affiliating with any group.

NEOPAGAN BELIEFS, ETHICS, AND RITUAL: ORTHO-PRAXY RATHER THAN ORTHO-DOXY

Because of the sheer diversity of groups that fall under the label, it is impossible to describe a single neopagan “theology.” In the Gardnerian Wiccan tradition, the emphasis is usually placed on the balance between the female and male deities. The female is typically identified as the Triple Goddess, who embodies the three phases of a woman’s life as Maiden, Mother, and Crone and is represented by the three phases of the waxing, full, and waning moon. The male, conversely, is typically identified with the Horned God and the sun. Many neopagans, however, are polytheists, celebrating a wide array of gods and goddesses, drawn either from one traditional pantheon (Norse deities, for example) or from multiple pantheons (the full Indo-European spectrum, in the case of Druidry). Finally, at least one group, the Church and School of Wicca, is monotheistic and believes in one universal Deity called “God-ess,” which includes but transcends both male and female aspects of the divine.

Most—though not all—neopagans also believe in some version of reincarnation, that is, the idea that we have lived multiple lives prior to this particular body and will take on many more after its end, undergoing a cyclical death and rebirth much like the cycles of nature. This is usually tied to some version of a belief in karma, or the idea that our actions have future consequences both in this lifetime and in future lives. And most—though, again, not all—neopagans abide by a basic ethical principle most famously embodied in the Wiccan “rede” or creed, which states: “An it harm none, do what ye will.” This is in turn a reworking of Aleister Crowley’s famous law of “Do what thou wilt,” though it adds the important provision “if it harms none.” In other words, do what makes you happy, as long as it doesn’t injure anyone else or interfere with anyone else’s happiness. As Gardner’s chief student, Doreen Valiente, argued, this simple law is “the only moral code that really makes sense. If everyone lived by it, would not the world be a very different place? If morality were not enforced by fear, by a string of Thou-shalt-nots; but if instead people had a *positive* morality, as an incentive to a happier way of living?”⁷

In many ways, neopaganism is less a movement based on beliefs than a movement based on practice. Neopagans disagree widely on theoretical and metaphysical questions such as reincarnation, the number or nature of the gods, and even how exactly magic works, but they typically do agree that ritual practice is central to what neopagans do. Hence it may be thought of as a religion of “ortho-praxy” (“right practice”) rather than “orthodoxy” (“right belief”). Most neopagans share a sort of symbolic vocabulary used in ritual practice. The most recognizable neopagan symbol is the pentacle or upward-pointing star, which is usually said to represent the four elements of earth, air, water, and fire plus the fifth element of spirit and is also identified with the four limbs and head of the human body. Most groups also use ritual implements such as the *athame* or short double-edged blade—typically identified with the male principle and the element of fire—and the chalice—usually identified with the female principle and the element of water.

Today, most neopagan groups follow a common ritual calendar organized around the solar calendar and the cycle of the seasons. The most widely used system is the Wheel of the

Year, which is oriented around eight key moments in the cycle of the earth's passage around the sun, marked by the two solstices, the two equinoxes, and the four midpoints between these solar events. These dates were widely celebrated in one form or another in most pre-Christian pagan communities in the British Isles and western Europe; hence modern neopagans claim to be either continuing or reviving these older pagan festivals. Although their names vary somewhat from one tradition to another, these eight festivals or *sabbats* are (1) Midwinter or Yule in late December, which marks the end of the shortening of daylight and the rebirth of the sun in winter; (2) Imbolc, which marks the first stirrings of spring for the year; (3) Ostara or the vernal equinox, the point when nights are no longer than days and nature begins to reawaken; (4) Beltane or May Day, which marks the transition from spring into summer; (5) Midsummer or Litha, which marks the summer solstice and the height of summer; (6) Lammas or Lughnasadh, which is the first harvest festival for the end of summer; (7) the autumn equinox or Mabon, a second harvest festival when the lengths of day and night are equal again; and (8) Samhain or Halloween, which marks the end of the year and the time to pay respect to deceased ancestors, family members, and loved ones. Many pagans regard Samhain as the time when the boundary between the living and the dead is thinnest, and it is easiest to communicate with those who have left this world.

Most of these neopagan festivals either draw upon or revive much older pre-Christian traditions of Europe and the British Isles that gradually became melded into mainstream Christianity. For example, Yule logs, evergreen trees, and flying reindeer have little to do with Jesus Christ but were drawn from pagan traditions of northern Europe that were absorbed into mainstream Christianity as it spread and accommodated older folk traditions. Similarly, pumpkins and scary costumes have little to do with the holy day of All Saints, yet they were absorbed from folk traditions of the British Isles into the modern celebration of Halloween. And the name Easter itself is drawn from Ostara or Eostre, an old Germanic goddess associated with fertility and springtime. By building their sacred calendar around these older folk traditions, contemporary neopagans are both reminding us of the older pagan roots that we still see around us today and attempting to reconnect us to the cycles of nature.

Neopagan ritual can be performed for a wide array of purposes: it can, like mainstream Christian or Jewish worship, be used to honor a deity; it can be used to celebrate the changing of the seasons, such as the transition from dark winter into early spring; or it can be used to harness spiritual energy toward some practical goal, such as protection or physical and psychological healing. It can be performed in the context of a massive festival, such as Starwood, or by a small coven or even by a solitary practitioner in his or her home. Margot Adler—who was both a pagan practitioner and a respected journalist for National Public Radio—provides a useful overview of the basic elements found in most pagan rituals. The most common way of beginning a ritual is by casting a circle, or carving out a sacred space in which to work; within this space, various implements representing the elements of earth, air, fire, and water are used; and by means of these, the deity is invoked, and then the spiritual energy generated from the group and from the deity is directed toward some particular

goal. In many neopagan groups, this is known as “raising the cone of power” or using ritual to generate spiritual and magical energy in order to focus it on some agreed-upon end:

Craft ritual usually starts with casting and creating a magical space and ritually purifying it with the ancient elements: fire, water, earth, and air. The circle is cast with a ritual sword, wand or athame (a small, usually black handled and double-bladed dagger). Different covens have different symbolism, but often the sword represents fire, the wand (or incense burner) air, the cup water, and the pentacle—a round inscribed disk of wax or metal—earth. When the circle is cast, often the gods and goddess are evoked.

Some covens use music, chanting and dancing to raise psychic energy within the circle. . . . The most common form of working is known as “raising a cone of power.” This is done by chanting or dancing (or both) or running around the circle. The “cone of power” is really the combined will of the groups, intensified through ritual and meditative techniques, focused on an end collectively agreed upon. Usually a priestess or priest directs the coven; when she or he senses that it has been raised, it is focused and directed with the mind and shot toward its destination.⁸

In other rites, a particular deity may be invoked into the circle—including the Great Goddess or Triple Goddess herself. In the Wiccan ceremony of “Drawing Down the Moon,” the Goddess is either invoked by the priest into the priestess or evoked by the priestess from within herself, who then becomes the vehicle and voice of the deity: “In some Craft rituals the priestess goes into a trance and speaks; in other traditions the ritual is a more formal dramatic dialogue, often of intense beauty, in which, again, the priestess speaks, taking the role of the Goddess. In both instances, the priestess functions as the Goddess incarnate, within the circle.”⁹

NEOPAGANISM, RELIGIOUS FREEDOM, AND TOLERANCE IN CONTEMPORARY AMERICA: THE FORT HOOD CASE

From its origins, neopaganism has often been the subject of misunderstanding, bias, and intolerance—perhaps, above all, because it is frequently confused with Satanism by the popular media and by many conservative religious groups. Not surprisingly, neopagans’ use of words such as *witch*, *coven*, and *sabbat* is often associated with devil worship in the popular imagination. Many conservative Christians, moreover, point to passages from the Bible such as Exodus 22:18, Leviticus 20:27, and Deuteronomy 18:9–12, which condemn the practices of sorcery, mediumship, and necromancy. A long history of horror movies, from early cult classics such as *Black Sunday* (1960) down to blockbuster films such as *The Blair Witch Project* (1999) and *The Book of Shadows* (2000), has helped solidify this popular image of witchcraft as evil and terrifying.

One of the most interesting examples of neopaganism's controversial role in American public life was the case of the Fort Hood military base in Texas. For years, Wiccan soldiers had been holding regular meetings and performing rituals on the base, and they were even authorized by the military to form a group called the Fort Hood Open Circle. In 1999, however, a photographer's published photos of the soldiers performing Wiccan rituals sparked a huge outcry from many politicians and Christian churches, calling for the group to be banned in the US military. Representative Bob Barr of Georgia attempted to amend a defense authorization bill in order to prohibit the practice of Wicca or any other form of neopaganism at Defense Department facilities. He was quickly joined by thirteen Christian groups and by conservative Christian leader Paul Weyrich, who described Wiccan rituals as "Satanic" and incompatible with the US military.

The Fort Hood case was even discussed as an issue in the 2000 presidential race between George W. Bush and Al Gore. When asked about the issue during the presidential debates, then governor Bush—well known for his conservative Christian beliefs—firmly expressed his opposition to the practice of Wicca at a US military base: "I don't think witchcraft is a religion, and I do not think it is in any way appropriate for the U.S. military to promote it." Then Vice-President Gore, on the other side, emphasized his strong commitment to the First Amendment and religious freedom but carefully dodged the actual question about Wicca at Fort Hood.¹⁰ Despite Bush's victory in the 2000 election, the military has not reversed its position in favor of Wicca. Ironically, in 2007, under President Bush's own administration, the Department of Veteran's Affairs went even further by allowing the pentacle and other Wiccan symbols to appear on the headstones of fallen soldiers.

NEOPAGANISM, FEMINISM, AND ENVIRONMENTALISM

One of the most important reasons for the rapid growth of neopagan movements in the United States has been the close linkage between neopaganism and feminism since the 1960s and '70s. Obviously, not all neopagans are feminists—in fact, some forms of neopaganism are men-only groups. Yet just as Spiritualism often went hand in hand with the early women's rights movements of nineteenth-century America, so too Wicca and other new forms of paganism often went hand in hand with the new forms of feminism that emerged in the 1960s and '70s. From its origins with Gerald Gardner and his claim to have been initiated by the mysterious witch "Old Dorothy," modern Wicca has placed a great deal of emphasis on the authority of women as spiritual leaders, as well as on the central role of the Great Goddess or Triple Goddess as the female counter to the male Horned God. By the 1960s and '70s, throughout the United Kingdom, Europe, and the United States, Wicca and its various pagan offshoots had begun to blend naturally with the broader counterculture, including new strains of feminism that emerged out of these decades (feminism's so-called second-wave), particularly radical feminism. Whereas the early so-called first-wave feminists of the nineteenth century sought basic and practical goals, such as women's right to vote, the second-wave feminists of the 1960s and '70s strove for broader cultural goals, such as equal

pay, equality in the workplace, and reproductive rights. With its central emphasis on the Goddess and the new roles of leadership and authority it offered to women, neopaganism made a natural fit with these feminist initiatives.

Feminist neopaganism has taken on a wide variety of forms—some of them quite extreme and aligned with the radical feminist movement of the late 1960s and some of them far more moderate. At the more radical end of the spectrum, one of the most outspoken early groups was WITCH, a collective founded in the late 1960s by women engaged in a kind of guerilla theater that mixed street performances with witch costumes and political activism. According to the group's manifesto from 1968,

WITCH is an all-woman Everything. It's theater, revolution, magic, terror, joy, garlic, flowers, spells. It's an awareness that witches and gypsies were the original guerillas and resistance fighters against oppression—particularly the oppression of women down through the ages. Witches have always been women who dared to be: groovy, courageous, aggressive, intelligent, nonconformist, explorative, curious, independent, sexually liberated, revolutionary. . . . They bowed to no man, being the living remnants of the oldest culture of all—one in which men and women were equal sharers in a truly cooperative society, before the death-dealing sexual, economic, and spiritual repression of the Imperialist Phallic Society took over and began to destroy nature and human society.¹¹

Of course, not all feminist neopagans are quite as radical or aggressive as WITCH, and most do not call for open war on the "Imperialist Phallic Society." Rather, many adhere to the more moderate definition of feminism as simply the "notion that women are human beings," as Cheris Kramarae famously put it—that is, the idea that women are as deserving of respect, recognition, and roles of authority as men are.

Two of the most influential figures in the early growth of neopaganism in the United States during the 1970s and '80s were Zsuzsanna (Z) Budapest and Starhawk. Born in Hungary in 1940, Z Budapest called herself a "hereditary witch" because she claimed to have learned her magic and spells from her mother and grandmother, who were part of a traditional witchcraft lineage that extended back to pre-Christian Europe. After coming to the United States at age nineteen and later moving to Los Angeles in 1970, Z Budapest became one of the most influential figures in the popularization of women's spirituality in America. As Z puts it, women have been systematically exploited and abused by the dominant patriarchal order, and it is now time for them to wake up and reclaim their rightful power: "Women's culture has been ripped off by the ruling class. . . . Most of the women in this world still suffer from this spiritual poverty."¹²

In 1975, Z Budapest became a controversial figure when she was arrested and charged with fortune-telling after giving an undercover policewoman a tarot card reading (at that time a violation of municipal codes in Venice, California). Outraged at the charge, she described herself as "the first witch to go on trial for my beliefs in 300 years." Declaring her-



FIGURE 8.3 Starhawk. Used with permission from Starhawk.org.

self to be a religious leader and high priestess, she demanded her freedom of belief under the First Amendment. Although the trial resulted in a \$300 fine and a probation order, it did succeed in forcing many Americans to take paganism seriously as a growing new religious movement with a powerful appeal to women as leaders.

Z would also become controversial, even for some neopagans, because of her unique form of paganism known as Dianic Wicca. Unlike most Wiccans in the Gardnerian tradition, who honor the male and female deities equally and include both male and female members, Z is a lesbian separatist who teaches witchcraft as a pure women's religion, focused exclusively on the Goddess and organized as a women-only space. As Z argues, women need a space in which they can worship as and with women, free from the oppressive influence of men: "We have women's circles. You don't put men in women's circles. . . . Our goddess is life, and women should be free to worship from their ovaries."¹³

Starhawk, on the other hand, represents a more moderate form of feminist paganism; neither a lesbian nor a separatist, she has been a powerful part of the women's spirituality movement since the 1970s (figure 8.3). Born Miriam Simos in 1951, she was raised in a Jewish family at a time when there were few opportunities for women to assume religious leadership and spiritual authority within most Jewish communities in the United States. She

first encountered neopaganism in 1968—at the height of the countercultural revolution—while starting college at UCLA. Already an active feminist, she was immediately drawn to the Goddess-centered religion of witchcraft and instantly felt a “natural connection between a movement to empower women and a spiritual tradition based on the Goddess.”¹⁴ As she explained in her widely read book *The Spiral Dance*, she and other women were taking up the title of “witch” precisely because it had such a long history of negative connotations and had for so long been used to oppress women. By reclaiming the label “witch,” she hopes to use it as a reminder of the power and magic of women’s spirituality: “The word ‘Witch’ carries so many negative connotations that many people wonder why we use the word at all. Yet to reclaim the word ‘Witch’ is to reclaim our right, as women, to be powerful; as women, to know the feminine within as divine. To be a Witch is to identify with nine million victims of bigotry and hatred and to take responsibility for shaping a world in which prejudice claims no more victims.”¹⁵ During the same period in which she began to embrace neopaganism, Starhawk was strongly influenced by the work of environmentalists and ecofeminist philosophers, such as Carolyn Merchant’s widely read book *The Death of Nature* (1980).

In 1980, Starhawk formed a group called the Reclaiming Collective, founded on the belief that contemporary witchcraft was “reclaiming” the ancient Goddess religion for a new era. According to the *Reclaiming Newsletter*, their mission was to create a “center for feminist spirituality and counseling. . . . We reclaim the Goddess, the immanent life force, the connecting pattern to all being; we reclaim the creative and healing power of women.”¹⁶ Reclaiming became involved in direct political and environmentalist action in 1981, when they joined other activists to engage in a large nonviolent civil disobedience demonstration at Diablo Canyon, California, to stop the opening of a nuclear power plant. They were arrested along with several thousand other activists and members of a wide range of alternative spiritual, political, and environmentalist groups. This was the first time the group had engaged in ritual magic in an explicitly political context and the first time the group had joined with other political movements such as the anarchist community. In turn, members of other leftist political movements began to take Reclaiming classes and to become involved in neopaganism.

The neopagan worldview, Starhawk argues, is a key ally for environmentalist political causes and a much-needed corrective to the patriarchal traditions of Judaism and Christianity. In her view, patriarchal religions reinforce the domination of humans over nature just as they reinforce the domination of male over female, which has resulted in a long history of exploitation of both women and the environment: “Estrangement is the culmination of a long historical process. Its roots lie in the Bronze-Age shift from matrifocal earth-centered cultures whose religions centered on the Goddess and Gods embodied in nature, to patriarchal urban cultures of conquest, whose Gods inspired and supported war. Yahweh of the Old Testament is a prime example, promising His Chosen People dominion over plant and animal life. . . . Christianity deepened the split, establishing a duality between spirit and matter that identified flesh, nature, woman and sexuality with the Devil.”¹⁷ The neopagan worldview, conversely, sees the entire natural world as filled with divine energy that flows through the

human body as well as through the external environment, binding all living things together in a complex magical web: "The world itself [is] a living being, made up of dynamic aspects, a world where one thing shape-shifts into another, where there are no solid separations. . . . Magic teaches that living beings are beings of energy and spirit as well as matter, that energy—what the Chinese call *chi*—flows in certain patterns throughout the human body."¹⁸

Thus the image of the Goddess is central to Starhawk's larger social and political agendas. For it gives her—and all women—a sense of connection with the Great Mother and the eternal feminine force that runs through all of creation. By participating in rituals, women are able not only to connect intellectually with the Goddess but to discover the Goddess within themselves and to realize their own identity with all of nature: "We are all the Goddess in her multitude of forms . . . a Maiden, a Mother, a Crone. We are all Persephone dragged into the underworld by the forces of patriarchy."¹⁹ As such, the Goddess offers women a radically new way to experience their own bodies and all of nature: "This symbolism of the Goddess has taken on an electrifying power for modern women. The rediscovery of the ancient matrifocal civilization has given us a deep sense of pride in women's ability to create and sustain culture. It has . . . given us models of female strength and authority. . . . She is the vaginal passage through which we are reborn."²⁰

Finally, in more practical terms, Starhawk's interests in spirituality, environmentalism, and social justice come together in her practice of permaculture. First developed by two Australians named Bill Mollison and David Holmgren in the 1970s, permaculture is a branch of ecological design and environmental engineering that seeks to create self-sustaining and regenerative habitats and agricultural systems based on natural ecosystems. As Starhawk explained the idea in a lecture at the Harvard Divinity School in 2013, permaculture is the natural application of her long-held belief that the earth is sacred and that humans need to exist in a harmonious spiritual relationship with the natural environment: "[Permaculture is] a whole system of ecological design that [is] based on the idea that, if we can observe nature, and figure out how nature is working, and work in the same way that nature works, we can actually create systems that will meet our human needs while actually regenerating the environment around us instead of destroying it. I got very interested in that and thought, 'This is the practical application of the idea that the earth is sacred.'"²¹

This emphasis on the links between neopaganism and environmentalism is not unique to prominent witches such as Starhawk. In her interviews with a wide range of neopagans, Margot Adler found that "a reverence for the earth and nature" was one of the few common bonds among pagans, despite their tremendous diversity and disagreements on almost every other issue. As one priestess named Morgan McFarland put it, "A Pagan world view is one that says the Earth is the Great Mother and has been raped, pillaged, and plundered and must once again be celebrated if we are to survive. Paganism means a return to those values which see an ecologically balanced situation so that life continues and the great Mother is venerated again. . . . If you're not into ecology, you really can't be into Paganism."²²

However, Adler also found that there was some ambivalence among neopagans as to what exactly should be done about the environment. While most affirmed the idea of

respecting nature, not all were sure what should be done about our mounting environmental crises. As one priestess from Ohio named Roberta Ann Kennedy put it, "I see people in the Craft talking about ecology, but not living it. I believe there's a problem, but until it gets a lot worse nobody's going to do anything about it."²³ At least in this respect, neopagans may not be entirely different from most other nonpagan Americans.

"MEN ARE FROM THE SUN, WOMEN ARE FROM THE MOON"? DEBATES OVER NEOPAGANISM, FEMINISM, AND ENVIRONMENTALISM

Despite their broad influence, the attempts to link neopaganism, feminism, and environmentalism have raised some important debates and critical questions. As we saw above, Starhawk and Z Budapest were part of the so-called second wave of feminism that began in the 1960s and '70s and introduced a wider range of cultural issues into feminist discussions. However, by the 1980s and '90s they had come under criticism from a later wave of feminists (so-called third-wave feminists and postfeminists). Among other things, more recent feminists have argued that Starhawk and others are burdened by the problem of "essentialism," or the assumption that there is a single, universal, and essential female nature. By identifying all women with "the Goddess" or with universal symbols such as the Moon, witches such as Starhawk risk lumping all women into one monolithic category and overlooking the tremendous diversity of women's experiences. Moreover, by identifying women with figures such as the Triple Goddess, "Maiden-Mother-Crone," they ironically reinforce the idea that women are primarily associated with their reproductive cycle and motherhood, rather than with some other quality (their intellect, their leadership skills, etc.).²⁴

Thus many recent feminist critics have wondered whether this form of neopaganism is not ironically *reinforcing* gender stereotypes and traditional ideas of femininity rather than challenging them. In other words, by identifying women with the Goddess and men with the Horned God, are witches such as Starhawk simply putting a more positive spin on the same old gender binaries? Are they simply substituting "men are from the Sun, women are from the Moon," for the usual "men are from Mars, women are from Venus" idea that dominates popular American views of the sexes? While they may be giving women's roles a far more positive interpretation, are the Goddess-centered pagans also reinforcing these old gender roles more strongly than ever by giving them a divine and metaphysical status?²⁵

These criticisms and debates have emerged not only in academic circles but within contemporary neopagan communities themselves. In the last few decades, a huge number of new movements have emerged that challenge traditional gender stereotypes, often in quite creative new ways. Today, there are dozens of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transsexual pagan groups, such as the Radical Faeries, the Minoan Brotherhood, the Minoan Sisterhood, and the Brotherhood of the Phoenix—all of which draw upon neopagan symbolism but reject traditional gender stereotypes and experiment with a wide array of alternative sexual orientations. As one Radical Faery named Jody put it, both men and women need to break free of

oppressive gender roles, and paganism should allow men to explore stereotypically “feminine” qualities and women to explore stereotypically “masculine” qualities: “Finally we have the ability to play. Men who are stuck in the role model of the stern, mature adult never truly engage in creative play.”²⁶ Particularly at pagan festivals today—such as Starwood and others—one sees quite a lot of this fluid play with gender roles. Cross-dressing, gender bending, and experimentation with alternative sexual identities are all common phenomena within the space of the festival, which allows for a kind of “serious play with the self.”²⁷

A similar debate has emerged around the links between neopaganism and environmentalism. By identifying femininity with nature and the earth, witches such as Starhawk may be seeking to undo the history of exploitation of both women and nature; but, ironically, they risk reinforcing the very old gender binaries and stereotypes of women versus men, earth versus heaven, nature versus culture, and so on. As critics such as Anne Archambault argue, this actually undermines their own larger feminist agenda: while they want to celebrate the sanctity of both women and nature, by identifying the two they repeat and reinforce the traditional stereotype that women are closer to nature, closer to biology, and closer to reproduction: “The claim that women are biologically closer to nature reinforces the patriarchal ideology of domination and limits ecofeminism’s effectiveness.”²⁸ More recent feminist environmentalists have therefore rejected the essentialist view of earlier 1970s-era ecofeminists. As the theologian Rosemary Radford Ruether argues, women may have historically been identified with “nature,” and both nature and women may have been exploited for similar reasons, but this is a social construct, not an essential quality of their being. Today, she writes, “most ecofeminists . . . reject an essentializing of women as more in tune with nature by virtue of their female body. They see this concept of affinity between women and nature as a social construct that both naturalizes women and feminizes nonhuman nature. . . . Women may also suffer more due to the abuse of the natural world . . . but this is a matter of their experience in their particular social location, not due to a ‘different nature.’”²⁹ In any case, despite these internal debates over women, nature, and essentialism, many neopagans such as Starhawk continue to work toward a new vision of a human relationship with the environment that weaves together spirituality, ecology, and political activism.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION AND DEBATE

1. Why do you think neopaganism emerged when and where it did—in the middle of the twentieth century in England, Europe, and the United States? What did it offer that many well-educated people found so appealing as an alternative to mainstream religions?
2. Does it seem strange that a tradition based on *magic* should have not only emerged but become hugely popular in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, even as our society has become increasingly technological and scientific? And how do we account for the popularity of magic in more popular media such as

the Harry Potter novels or films such as *The Craft*, *Hocus Pocus*, and countless others?

3. Gardner claimed that Wicca was an ancient pre-Christian tradition of Goddess worship that had survived underground for millennia and had finally resurfaced in the modern world. Do you find this narrative plausible? Or does it even matter? Does a religious movement *need* to have an ancient history to be persuasive, or is all that really matters the fact that it exists and is meaningful to practitioners today?
4. What do you make of the debates over neopaganism, feminism, and environmentalism? Do you agree with authors such as Starhawk that the women's movement and environmentalism need the Goddess and pagan spirituality today? Or do you agree with more critical feminists who argue that this appeal to the Goddess is a form of essentialism and more of a hindrance than a help to these other social movements? Does an environmentalist movement need spirituality at all—or is the appeal to something outside science more of a distraction from than an aid to the effort to protect the environment and address ecological crises?

SUGGESTED CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Critically examine the question of Wiccan rituals being performed at the Fort Hood military base, which was a key issue in the 2000 US presidential debates (the candidates' responses can all be viewed online, for example on the Religious Tolerance.org website: www.religioustolerance.org/wic_pres.htm). Why did this particular question involving a small new religious group in Texas become such a polarizing and divisive political issue at the national level? And why did the various candidates address it in the ways they did (for example, why did Bush firmly reject it, while Gore dodged the question?)? And what larger interests were at stake in the possibility of granting or not granting Wiccans the right to perform ceremonies on a US military base?

SUGGESTED FILM

Read, Donna, director. *Women and Spirituality: The Goddess Trilogy*. Alive Mind, 2008.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

Adler, Margot. *Drawing Down the Moon: Witches, Druids, Goddess Worshippers, and Other Pagans in America Today*. New York: Penguin, 2006.

- Farrar, Janet, and Stewart Farrar. *The Witches' Bible: The Complete Witches' Handbook*. Blaine, WA: Phoenix, 1996.
- Gardner, Gerald B. *The Gardnerian Book of Shadows*. London: Forgotten Books, 2008.
- . *Witchcraft Today*. 1970. Reprint, New York: Citadel Press, 2004.
- Hutton, Ronald. *Triumph of the Moon: A History of Modern Pagan Witchcraft*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Pike, Sarah M. *Earthly Bodies, Magical Selves: Contemporary Pagans and the Search for Community*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001.
- Ruether, Rosemary Radford. *Integrating Ecofeminism, Globalization, and World Religions*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2005.
- Salomonsen, Jone. *Enchanted Feminism: Ritual, Gender and Divinity among the Reclaiming Witches of San Francisco*. New York: Routledge, 2002.
- Starhawk. *Dreaming the Dark: Magic, Sex and Politics*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1982.
- . *The Spiral Dance: A Rebirth of the Ancient Religion of the Great Goddess*. 1979. Reprint, New York: HarperOne, 1999.
- Urban, Hugh B. *Magia Sexualis: Sex, Magic, and Liberation in Modern Western Esotericism*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006.
- Valiente, Doreen. *Witchcraft for Tomorrow*. Blaine, WA: Phoenix, 1978.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 8

1. "Overview," Starwood Festival, July 8–14, 2014, www.rosencomet.com/starwood/2014/.
2. Margot Adler, *Drawing Down the Moon: Witches, Druids, Goddess Worshipers, and Other Pagans in America Today* (New York: Penguin, 2006).
3. Aleister Crowley to Charles Stansfeld Jones, December 23, 1914, quoted in John Symonds, *The Great Beast: The Life of Aleister Crowley* (New York: Roy, 1952), 194–95. See Ronald Hutton, *Triumph of the Moon: A History of Modern Pagan Witchcraft* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001); Hugh B. Urban, *Magia Sexualis: Sex, Magic, and Liberation in Modern Western Esotericism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), chap. 4.
4. Hutton, *Triumph of the Moon*, 209–11.
5. Gerald B. Gardner, *Witchcraft Today* (1970; repr., New York: Citadel Press, 2004), 31–32.
6. Adler, *Drawing Down the Moon*, 89.
7. Doreen Valiente, *Witchcraft for Tomorrow* (Blaine, WA: Phoenix, 1978), 41.
8. Adler, *Drawing Down the Moon*, 41.
9. *Ibid.*, 19–20; see also Gerald B. Gardner, *The Gardnerian Book of Shadows* (London: Forgotten Books, 2008), 3–4.
10. "Presidential Candidates and Religious Freedom: 2000 Election," Religious Tolerance.Org, 2000, www.religioustolerance.org/wic_pres.htm. See also Hanna Rosin, "Wiccan Controversy Tests Military Religious Tolerance," *Washington Post*, June 8, 1999, A1.

11. Adler, *Drawing Down the Moon*, 179.
12. Z Budapest, interview by Cheri Lesh, "Goddess Worship: The Subversive Religion," *Twelve Together*, Los Angeles, May 1975.
13. Z Budapest, interview for *The Occult Experience*, produced for Channel 10, Sydney, Australia (1985), and released on Sony Home Video.
14. Jone Salomonsen, *Enchanted Feminism: Ritual, Gender and Divinity among the Reclaiming Witches of San Francisco* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 37.
15. Starhawk, *The Spiral Dance: A Rebirth of the Ancient Religion of the Great Goddess* (1979; repr., New York: HarperOne, 1999), 7.
16. Salomonsen, *Enchanted Feminism*, 40.
17. Starhawk, *Dreaming the Dark: Magic, Sex and Politics* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1982), 5.
18. Starhawk, *Truth or Dare: Encounters with Power, Authority and Mystery* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1987), 15, 24.
19. Starhawk, *Dreaming the Dark*, 152.
20. Starhawk, "The Goddess," in *A New Creation: America's Contemporary Spiritual Voices*, ed. Roger S. Gottlieb (New York: Crossroad, 1990), 213–14.
21. Starhawk, "Permaculture and the Sacred: A Conversation with Starhawk," Harvard Divinity School, March 7, 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zV-MsQYrWog>.
22. Adler, *Drawing Down the Moon*, 399.
23. *Ibid.*, 401.
24. For a discussion of these debates, see Urban, *Magia Sexualis*, 184–89.
25. For a critique of Starhawk, Carol Christ, and others, see Helene P. Foley, "A Question of Origins: Goddess Cults, Greek and Modern," in *Women, Gender and Religion: A Reader*, edited by Elizabeth A. Castelli (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 216–36. For a critique of essentialism in feminism more broadly, see Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1989).
26. Adler, *Drawing Down the Moon*, 348.
27. Sarah Pike, *Earthly Bodies, Magical Selves: Contemporary Pagans and the Search for Community* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 182–218.
28. Anne Archambault, "A Critique of Ecofeminism," *Canadian Women's Studies* 13, no. 3 (1993): 20.
29. Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Integrating Ecofeminism, Globalization, and World Religions* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2005), 93. See also Carol J. Adams, ed., *Ecofeminism: Feminist Intersections with Other Animals and the Earth* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2011).