A NATURE-BASED RELIGION IN THE CITY: CONTEMPORARY NORTH AMERICAN PAGAN RELATIONSHIPS WITH URBAN ENVIRONMENTS

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Contemporary North American Pagan Relationships with Urban Environments

by

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A thesis submitted to the

School of Graduate Studies

in partial fulfilment of the

requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

Department of Religious Studies

Memorial University of Newfoundland

31 October 2004

St. John's Newfoundland

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ABSTRACT

As a nature-based religion, it is often assumed that contemporary Paganism would be antithetical to urban life. Yet, Paganism has developed and grown in urban centers as the majority of Pagans continue to dwell there. This seeming paradox is resolved through an examination of the basic tenets of Pagan beliefs, specifically the cosmologies and worldviews of Paganism, and the realities of daily Pagan practices. Despite dichotomies between nature and civilization or rural and urban habitats, Paganism's holistic worldview, in which all things are interconnected and the divine is immanent in all of creation, re-envisions cities as participating in the 'Nature' that Pagans honour. As a defining worldview, Paganism is a lived religion that not only influences perceptions of the city but is in turn influenced by regular interactions with the urban world. A study of urban expressions of Paganism is crucial to understanding Paganism as a viable, dynamic, contemporary religion.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the many people who have helped me through the process of creating this thesis. I have been blessed with many wonderful people in my life, and I hope they realize that I appreciate every effort.

First I extend my sincere gratitude to all the individuals who shared their stories and their personal beliefs with me – I truly enjoyed every conversation.

My thanks to the department of Religious Studies at Memorial University for their patience and support and to my community of friends in St. John's; you were my bedrock. I must also thank my faithful cat Jenny who was my closest companion through two years on an island far from home.

I have been blessed with great love from many friends across the country, my mom, dad, and sister Veronica, who continue to support all of my endeavors, for which I am forever thankful.

Finally, my greatest appreciation is for my husband Robin who has motivated me to keep going whenever I felt like giving up. I could never have finished this without his encouragement.

CHAPTER 1

"OLD WAYS LEAD TO NEW WAYS"
AN INTRODUCTION

Charge of the Urban Gods

Hear our words and know us, the Gods who have been with you since before time was, and will be with you for eternity, for we are forever One in Spirit.
Hear us in our thousand voices, seek us out in our many faces, and know that whether in the deep of the forest or the heart of the concrete jungle, that we are with you always.
Witness our creation and know our works,
For in the labouring Tower Crane and the budding flower, We are there.
At the peaks of the Skyscrapers and the heights of the Mountains, we are there.
In the rushing rivers, and in the sea of Humanity that surrounds you, we are there.
In the fires of the sun and the electric hum, we are there.
Learn to love and honour your own creations as you love ours, and to use with wisdom the gifts you have been given, and all that We continue to give you.
Know that wherever your journeys take you, We are always with you, and will be with you always, dancing the dance of life, and singing the song of creation.
And when night comes to the universe, we will be there, to take you in our arms, and give you rest, that creation may rise again.

(Amanita 2003)

The opening passage is a liturgical creation written by a Pagan informant, which mirrors the more traditional "Charge of the Goddess" (written by Doreen Valiente) found in contemporary Pagan publications and recited in rituals. It is a devotional description of what Urban Paganism could be as it embraces the unique landscapes of cities large and small. Statistically, the majority of contemporary Pagans live in cities (Adler 1986; Berger 1999, 2003; Kirkpatrick, Rainey and Rubi 1986; Orion 1995), contrary to the

historical definition of 'pagan,' from the Latin *paganus*, denoting a rustic or country dweller (Adler 1986 9, 45; Buckland 1993, 5; Guiley 1991, 401; Hutton 1999, 4; Rabinovitch 1996, 75). This paper is a study of the seemingly paradoxical situation of a nature-based religion thriving in modern urban centres. I argue that, despite the dominant contemporary Pagan discourse of nature that insinuates an idyllic, romantic, wild realm outdoors and out "there," the routine practices of Pagans and their daily interactions with urban worlds reveal that Pagans are negotiating between a nature-centred worldview and an urban spirituality as they incorporate the modern urban realm into their concepts of nature and Paganism.

When I speak of Pagan relationships with natural and urban environments I mean to evoke the mutual interactions that are taking place between contemporary Pagans and the world in which they live. Pagans describe having a spiritual connection with nature, which is one facet of their relationship with the natural world. There are also physical, emotional, and social connection between humans and the earth (including all its organisms) that Pagans have incorporated into their worldview. These connections are also applicable to the urban environments that are home to many organisms. Many Pagans are exploring such urban spiritual, physical, emotional, and social connections as they re-envision how they might practice their religion in the "real world" in which they live. Such concerns are insidious, if not explicit, in many Pagan books and magazine articles. Discussions about relationships with urban environments are becoming more common among Pagans and the topic of workshops and articles, but they are still not a central topic of focus for most Pagans. Nevertheless, even those Pagans not specifically

discussing the implications of practicing their religion in a city develop these relationships through their actions and interactions on a daily basis while living within cities, suburbs, and towns.

In order to contextualize the following study of this process of redefinition I must first provide the reader with some insight regarding my methodology and my use of the terms "Paganism," "nature," and "modern urban world." Prior to elaborating upon my evidence for this process I will also provide a brief outline of the chapters to follow.

Methodology

In accordance with an interpretive model of research that assumes a social construction of reality and remains open to multi-vocal interpretations of phenomena (LeCompte and Schensul 1999, 48-51) I have primarily relied upon Pagan narratives to describe the phenomena of urban Paganism. By employing Strauss' grounded theory (Strauss and Corbin 1998), I have coded an ocean of primary sources gathered through various media, including: interviews, participant observation, casual conversations, public bulletin board discussions, articles in print, internet publications, and Pagan books. Through a careful examination of these multiple voices I have attempted to discern patterns, themes, and the complex relations that exist between the personal worldviews and opinions of Pagans and their environments. Each interview (and each published exposition) is a unique example of how Pagans interact with an urban environment in a spiritually fulfilling manner. There are shared positions taken as Pagans create connections between their religion and their cities, but there are also idiosyncratic

differences. Some urban Pagans are more engaged with their environment than others, however, regardless of their explicit attempts to navigate an urban Pagan environment, all city dwellers must establish some form of relationship with their environment. In my current research, I seek to identify some of the interrelationships between Pagan individuals, their nature-based religion, and their urban life-world.

Although I reference literature written by Pagans (online and in print), I do not mean to imply that these texts necessarily carry any significant weight in the wider Pagan community. In most cases, these texts serve as reflections of Pagan thought, not authoritative directions. Pagan magazines solicit articles from general readers, resulting in a multi-vocal publication that includes a range of interpretations on any given topic. Websites and Pagan books provide a similar opportunity for individuals. Read together, Pagan Internet articles, books, and magazines present a corpus of texts that represent the views of every Pagan who chooses to write and share his or her beliefs, opinions, and practices.

Several articles and books have been published that specifically address being a modern, urban Pagan (Budapest 1993; Hunter 1997; Kaldera and Schwartzstein 2002; Morrison 2002; Penczak 2001; Telesco 1993, 2000; Adenaire 1999; Link 1996, n.d.; Faolan n.d.). These texts provide an excellent resource for researchers in their representation of Pagan views on living in a city, though the reader must keep in mind that these are not authoritative texts and may not represent the views of other individuals. Public bulletin boards (online) are similarly rich with interactive discussions concerning urban Pagan practices and beliefs. When referencing public postings I have chosen to

observe the individual's rights to anonymity and have not cited names or pseudonyms.

Participant observation is a natural by-product of my membership in the Pagan community (which will be addressed below) wherein I am able to immerse myself in the activities and later record my observations and experiences. However, in light of individual and group rights to anonymity, references to any public events I have attended (as a participant who is also a scholar) will remain anonymous.

In addition to the above methods of gathering information I have conducted semi-structured, open-ended interviews. My sample of Pagan interviews included participants from across North America who responded to online postings made in targeted internet newsgroups[1] as well as on Pagan web-pages (including Witchvox - the most widely accessed Pagan site) that described my research and my interest in speaking with urban dwelling Pagans. Potential interviewees contacted me if and when they were interested in participating. (Even in-person interviews conducted locally were often organized through e-mail for the convenience of both parties.) Although this sampling method excludes Pagans without internet access, it greatly expands the resource base by effectively transcending geographic limitations.[2] Also, as interviewees had actively chosen to participate in my study and had shown considerable interest, I was not imposing myself on any specific group, coven, or individuals. Participants were gathered from a wide sample and interviews were conducted both in cyberspace and in person. In-person interviews were conducted in Winnipeg, Manitoba, St. John's, Newfoundland, and Halifax, Nova Scotia. My sampling was purposive (Bernard 2001, 182-4): I sought informants who could speak from experience on the topic of Paganism and living in a

city. As a non-random and limited sample, I realize that my informants do not represent the entirety of the Pagan community. This is endemic of all interviews with Pagans, of whom it is often said (by Pagans): "Ask ten Pagans and you'll get fifteen different answers." This variety is to my benefit as the purpose of my research is to discern and analyse the variety of ways in which Pagans interact with their urban environment. For this purpose I desired a wide sample of informants. I interviewed all willing participants without prejudice. I did not necessarily know their gender, age, or location before specifically inquiring about such demographic information. My resulting sample includes males (approximately 25%) and females, Pagans from across North America residing in cities of various sizes, residents of downtown, suburban, and town homes, persons aged from late teens to fifties, and individuals with explicit experience in the Pagan movement from one year to a lifetime.

The majority of my interviews were mediated through the Internet with "e-interviews" (Bampton and Cowton 2002). I utilized both synchronous (MSN messenger) and asynchronous (e-mail) methods. Internet mediated research is a relatively new topic for ethical and methodological discussions, however, many relevant texts have been published to date (Bampton and Cowton 2002; Clarke 2000; Dawson 2000; Hewson *et al.* 2003). Drawing upon these published sources and my own experiences, I have carefully weighed the potential strengths and weaknesses to conclude that e-interviews are a valuable tool in my research.

The process of interviewing Pagans has been facilitated by my open and acknowledged involvement with Paganism. I am an insider to the Pagan worldview as a

solitary practitioner of over ten years and an organizer of local Pagan communities and events. I share a common language with most of my informants and subsequently our interviews and discussions were enhanced by our ability to share our knowledge and perceptions. It should be noted that, as is common in the Pagan community, I hold different beliefs and perspectives from some of the Pagans I speak with so that common words and concepts sometimes require additional explanation on both sides. As an insider to my research topic, I am also an urbanite who understands life in a city from my experience as a middle-class female who has moved seven times to cities of various size. Last, but certainly not least, I am a scholar of religions mediating between Pagan co-religionists and the academic world. Although the intended readership of this thesis is an academic committee, I know that many Pagans I spoke with formally and informally during the research process are expecting to read the final product of my research to which many contributed their personal worldviews.

Living as a Pagan in the urban world provided the impetus to begin this research. I had observed that Paganism was an urban phenomenon, but at the time none of the academic literature or Pagan texts I had encountered addressed or openly acknowledged the issue. My curiosity was peaked as both a practitioner and more notably as a researcher.

I am certainly not alone in being both a contemporary Pagan and an academic studying Paganism. Wendy Griffin (Foltz and Griffin 1996), Joanne Pearson (2001), Nancy Ramsey Tosh (2001), and Michael York (2003) have each explicitly addressed the issue of their insider status as Pagans studying and writing about Paganism from various

academic fields. Whether an insider or an outsider to the group being studied, every ethnologist, anthropologist, and sociologist has personal biases that must be acknowledged during research. As a participant in the Pagan worldview I am influenced by my personal, invested interest in pursuing this research, but my methodologies and theories are determined by my training as a scholar. My insider status provides many benefits in studying a diverse and diffuse minority religious group and is balanced by my academically motivated endeavours to critically examine my research material in order to consider and present a balanced analysis.

Defining Paganism

Contemporary Paganism is a steadily growing minority religion in North America. The 2001 Canadian Census posits that there are 21,080 self-identified Pagans and Wiccans indicating a 281.2% increase from the 1991 census (Statistics Canada 2001). There has been no equivalent federal census of religion in the United States. Estimates have ranged from 150,000 to over a million. The most frequently cited estimate of 300,000 Pagans by Aidan Kelly (1992, 141) or the more conservative estimation of 150,000-200,000 by Helen Berger (1999, 8-11) are dated and debateable. The 2001 American Religious Identification Survey (ARIS 2001) estimates a cumulative number of 307,000 Wiccans, Druids and Pagans in the continental U.S. In the similar 1990 National Survey of Religious Identification only 8,000 Wiccans were self-identified, implying a 1,675% increase of Wiccans in the U.S. over the last decade.[3] These statistics are problematic for several reasons, including that many Pagans choose to not reveal their

religious adherence publicly. [4] Given the divergent estimations and the problems associated with national census results, it is difficult to determine an accurate population size for Pagans. However, the numbers provided present a minimum number for discussing Pagan populations and an indication of the relative size of the community within a national population. According to 2001 census statistics in Australia, Britain, Canada, and the United States, Pagans represent approximately one tenth of a percentage of each nation's population.

One of the greatest difficulties in quantifying and defining Paganism is the wide range of religious and spiritual beliefs that this term is often used to describe. The definition of Pagan is fluid – it changes between and within the contexts of researchers, practitioners, and detractors.[5] It is sometimes used as an umbrella term encompassing various religious paths, and other times as a specific designation – especially by practitioners who self-identify with what they perceive to be the traits of Paganism.[6] In common usage, the terms "Pagan," "Wiccan," and "Witch" are often used interchangeably by practitioners and academics, despite the adamant concerns of some practitioners and academics that these terms describe overlapping, but ultimately different, groups. Unfortunately, there is no clearly emerging consensus in scholarly (or lay) literature concerning the definition of Paganism. Alternative terms such as nature-based and earth-centred religion have been suggested, which have only added to the list of possible labels for this movement.[7] I have chosen to use the term "contemporary Paganism" (often shortened to simply "Paganism") rather than Neopaganism because the prefix "neo-" presumes that there was an original Pagan movement. Contrary to the

mytho-history of modern Paganism that presumes the current religion is a direct continuation and re-enactment of pre-historic religion and despite significant arguments for tracing some roots of the movement back as early as the Renaissance, contemporary Paganism is a uniquely modern religion shaped by present-day forces and concerns.

The following definitions by scholars from divergent fields studying contemporary Paganism have influenced my definition of the term. (I have maintained their use of the term Neopaganism for the sake of accurately representing their definitions.) Cultural anthropologist Loretta Orion states that American Neopaganism is a blending of European pagan customs and beliefs with other non-Judeo-Christian magico-religious systems from AmerIndian to Egyptian, Celtic, Norse, Voodoo, Cabala and science fiction (1995, 41-2). Wouter J. Hanegraaff, a scholar of Hermetic Philosophy, defines Neopaganism as "all those modern movements which are, firstly, based on the conviction that what Christianity has traditionally denounced as idolatry and superstition actually represents/represented a profound and meaningful religious worldview and, secondly, that a religious practice based on this worldview can and should be revitalized in our modern world" (1998, 77). These definitions highlight the plurality of both the modern manifestations of Paganism and its historical predecessors and influences.

Michael York, a noted religious studies scholar in the field of new religions, has provided the most thorough and, in many ways highly inclusive, designation in his essay "Defining Paganism" (2000) that locates the contemporary movement in a historical tradition of pagan worldviews. His analysis of paganism (of which the contemporary

Pagan movement is one example) as a broad form of religion, which has been elaborated upon in his recent publication titled *Pagan Theology: Paganism as a World Religion* (2003), provides much insight into the contemporary movement of Paganism. According to York, paganism is highly polymorphic in its lack of a central authority "because pagan identity is locally determined – by both individuals and communities" (2000, 8). Furthermore, "any religious perspective that honors the natural [and the human and preternatural] as the sacred itself made tangible, as immanent holiness, is pagan" (2000, 7).

In accordance with this last quality of paganism, a central tenet for the majority of contemporary Pagans states that the sacred, often called (the) Goddess, is immanent in this world and manifested in nature as well as humans. Acknowledged Pagan elder Starhawk asserts that the immanence of the divine in nature is the most important concept of Witchcraft (1999, 226). This is best summarized by the first defining principle of the Pagan Federation (2004; a founding and influential European umbrella organization), which is "Love for and kinship with nature." This sentiment is echoed by many Pagans I have encountered, such as Justin, a twenty-one years old practitioner from Atlanta, who defined Paganism "as a form of spirituality in which one attempts to find a harmonious coexistence with nature and other living beings." The assertion that Pagans honour nature as a central element of their religion is the basis of this study and shapes my definition of Paganism.

For my purposes, I will use the term Paganism to refer to the plenitude of contemporary nature-based religions[8] in North America that have developed since the

1950s and 1960s.[9] My study examines the seeming paradox of a nature-based religion thriving in an environment that is presumably lacking in nature: the modern urban world.

Defining Nature

Pagans and scholars of Paganism alike often use the term "nature" with implicit reference to "natural scenery" wherein "natural" denotes "a) growing without human care; also: not cultivated … b) existing in or produced by nature: not artificial …[and/or] c) living in or as if in a state of nature untouched by the influences of civilization and society" (Merriam-Webster) and is thus contrasted with the constructed urban world. In this form, -nature is usually identified with a green world; green represents the colour of vital plant life that is most often associated with natural landscapes. Nature is perceived in a variety of forms, which have been schematized by Adrian Ivakhiv into four models or root metaphors (2001, 37-43). The first two metaphors reflect the dominant models of science and economics respectively: "Nature as Object" and "Nature as Resource." The remaining two metaphors are those that affect Paganism's concepts of nature: "Nature as Spirit" (as voiced by deep ecologists and nature mystics) and "Nature as Home" (found in social ecology and traditional agriculture). As Spirit, nature is described as a "numinous Other, worthy of reverence and awe;" as Home it is a "source of emotional identification, relationship, [and] tradition" (ibid., 37). In New Age and eco-spiritual discourses these latter metaphors respectively metamorphose into "Nature as Trickster-Teacher," wherein nature is "unpredictable, changeable, ultimately unknowable, but highly responsive" (ibid., 42), and "Nature as Mother/Goddess." Pagan discourses fall between these two metaphors in the form of "pagan animism" (ibid., 41-2). According to Ivakhiv, "the terrain between the Mother and Trickster-Teacher models suggests a less monolithic,

more polytheistic image of a sentient divinity within nature – one according to which the Goddess has many aspects… or, conversely, according to which a variety of gods, goddesses, or spirits, are included within a larger unified whole (Gaia)" (ibid., 41). For Ivakhiv, the term nature is used "as a categorical stand-in for the nonhuman and non-artificial world which surrounds and interpenetrates with human social communities" (ibid., 36).

In comparison to the definition of nature as that which exists naturally, an alternative and more inclusive dictionary definition is available; nature may be described as: "a creative and controlling force in its entirety" or "the external world in its entirety." When asked to elaborate upon the Nature that they revere, Pagans often admit a more inclusive conceptualization of nature that is aptly illustrated in the following examples. Ashlar Ziven, a Pagan practitioner of nine years from Phoenix, defines nature as "The universe, in both physical and non-physical form. Nature is made up of possibilities." He includes man-made[10] objects as part of nature because "they are part of the universe and are one of the possibilities that the matter could have become." Bright Eagle, a thirty-eight years old city dweller who desires a more spacious rural home, concurs that "the universe is made up of living energy molded into different shapes (or functions)… I see nature as the living world all around us – the different 'shapes' that energy has taken." However, he does state that he has an "out-of-doors" bias in his relationship with nature and prefers forms of nature located beyond city limits; he feels isolated from nature when he is within the city. Bright Eagle provides an example of how Pagans are attempting to mediate between two dominant worldviews in Paganism: 1) nature/ the natural is green

and outside and 2) nature is everywhere and everything.

The majority of academic studies concerning Paganism (that I have discovered in my research) have primarily focused on the former green and idyllic vision of nature as a source of Pagan inspiration, worship and the setting for Pagan rituals, while neglecting the realities of daily urban life for Pagans and their religion. This is not surprising as the majority of Pagan literature also emphasizes the importance of nature, outdoor worship, and setting aside sacred time and place.

Although it is considered a fact that most Pagans live in cities (Adler 1986, 4; Berger 1999, 9; Kelly 1992, 146; Luhrmann 1989, 29; Orion 1995, 59) academic studies of Paganism to date have merely noted in passing the paradox of a nature-based religion developing and existing in urban environments. When Pagans have been discussed in the context of an urban or modern world (Ludeke 1989; Moody 1974; Pearce 2000) the authors have usually done so in order to acknowledge the social situation of many Pagans and to contextualize the study, rather than to explore the spiritually meaningful connections that Pagans develop in relation to cityscapes. Wendy Griffin, Gus diZerega and Graham Harvey are three scholars who have given some attention to this issue. As I was preparing my thesis, Griffin, a women's studies scholar, was researching and preparing a paper titled "City Witches, Romantic Greens and Nature Mystics: Goddess Women and Nature." This research could potentially have relevance to my own, although Griffin's focus seems to be on more traditional concepts of nature as they are understood within urban areas.[11] DiZerega, a political science professor who also frequently writes about Paganism, the modern world, and nature, has addressed Paganism and its

connection to the modern world from a perspective of the changing social needs of humans in his article "Nature Religion and the Modern World: the Returning Relevance of Pagan Spirituality" (2000). DiZerega presents a noteworthy analysis of the application of nature religions in the modern world, however, his central concern is how Pagans embrace the Sacred immanent in nature and the world, and does not specifically address how this is experienced or enacted within an urban environment. Harvey also touches upon the subject occasionally in his book *Contemporary Paganism: Listening People, Speaking Earth* (1997), but unfortunately he provides only a few statements acknowledging that Pagans do practice their religion in cities. My research is unique compared to every study of urban Pagans that I have found to date because it focuses on Pagan relationships with the city that is their immediate, daily environment and applies the concept of nature to this urban aspect of the world.

Defining the Modern Urban World

Modernity

The urban world is often characterized by one of its primary sociological features: modernity. I am using the terms "modern" and "modernity" to refer to the current historical era, beginning with the post-Enlightenment period of North American and Western European history. Modernity is a highly abstract term that is often used to denote the multi-faceted quality of the current social, moral, philosophical, aesthetic, political, and economic conditions. Modernity is often equated with the secular, technological, industrialized, commercialized, and capitalist worldviews that transcend

physical, political, and cultural boundaries. As an abstract and ambiguous term, modernity is subject to multiple interpretations and applications. I make no attempts to fully engage the debates concerning definitions of modernity and will here rely upon the definition provided by Gustavo Benavides in *Critical Terms for Religious Studies.* Benavides, a theologian and religious studies scholar, clarifies that modernity is not a singular phenomenon but is rather a self-reflexive condition that distinguishes itself from all which came before, all that is *antiqui* (Benavides 1998, 186). The reflexivity of modernity is one of its defining features, one which spawns new innovations as well as new critiques. Pagans are active participants in modernity as their religion both critiques and draws from the modern world. In some situations (especially in the 1960s and 1970s) Paganism has been associated with the counter cultural movement. This seems to be facilitated by the marginal status of Pagans and their self-designation as religionists renewing an ancient, pre-modern worldview. Although Pagans often embrace aspects of the counter-cultural, such as environmental degradation, feminism, and political issues, Paganism also embraces the technologies, innovations, and knowledge of the modern world.

A Disenchanted World

One source of the presumed paradox between Paganism and the modern urban world is the disenchanted, rationalized character of modernity. At the turn of the last century Max Weber equated *die Entzauberung der Welt,* "the disenchantment of the world," with the progressive rationalization of the world. Increased rationalization was

negatively mirrored by the submergence of "the ultimate and most sublime values" from the everyday life of society. Religion was subsequently relegated to a personal "transcendental realm of mystic life" or to private, small-scale human relations (Weber 1952, 155). Furthermore, a binary distinction was drawn between that which is "profane" and that which is "sacred." In comparison to the rationalized world, Weber describes the "primitive image of the world" as being a holistic world "in which everything was concrete magic" (ibid., 282) without the need for systematic justifications. In addition to this forced distinction and separation, that which was relegated to the transcendental realm of the sacred was deemed irrational (ibid., 281) and thus less worthy of consideration.[12]

Weber locates the origins of this process of rationalization, and the subsequent disenchantment of the world, within the earliest developments of civilization and organized religion. According to Weber, "all theology represents an intellectual rationalization of the possession of sacred values" (ibid., 153). Morris Berman, cultural historian and social critic, correspondingly traces the disenchantment of the world to approximately 2000 BCE when Judaism initiated a progressive inclination towards separating the Divine from the world and Nature from ourselves (1981, 70). The further development of Greek thought, carried through to modern science, gave rise to a dualistic framework that denies an "original participation," or totality of experience, and a holistic worldview that understands subject and object, self and other, and man and environment to be, ultimately, identical (ibid., 76-77). By evoking the worldview of their pagan ancestors, contemporary Pagans seek to regain the holistic original participation (a direct

connection with, and participation in, the natural world) that they feel has been lost in modern culture.

In his study of the relationship between ecology and religion, religious studies scholar David Kinsley examines the modern view of nature "that is thoroughly desacralized and mechanistic. And it is this view that still dominates modern perceptions of the world" (1995, 127). According to Kinsley, "[t]he disenchantment of nature, viewing nature as primarily matter in motion, as mechanical, as soulless, led to the disengagement of human beings from nature. Nature has been objectified" (ibid., 130). The objectification of nature as a commodity with no inherent value is a primary issue addressed by Pagans, who teach that all things are inherently sacred without humans attributing value to them.

In regards to the disenchantment process, one clarification should be emphasized. As social historian Patrick Curry has noted, the perceived disenchantment of the world is not absolute. Enchantment was never fully removed from human perceptions of the world, but was quite successfully displaced by the privileging of rational thought within Western societies, which strove to understand the world through universal laws and neatly classified limitations. Rational thought was subsequently employed by members of scientifically influenced societies in attempts to control the newly classified world by exercising power over it and endeavoring to defy natural limits. Re-enchantment is thus not a re-introduction of enchantment by Pagans – for it has always existed – but rather a re-cognition of the enchantment that already exists below the rationalized surface of modernity (Curry 1999, 406-7).

The disenchantment of the world has involved the repression of the sacred, mystical, and enchanted perceptions of the world. In recent history, these aspects have essentially been compartmentalized into the private sphere (of churches, home altars, and personal practices) and out of the daily public life of the modern world through a process of secularization. The enchanted worldviews of animism and pantheism, which attribute vital and divine forces to the physical world, were replaced with concepts of a God removed from the world, such as Deism. This has remained the dominant structure of religion in the modern era. In the dualistic framework described by Weber, the Ultimate Source is always posited to exist both outside of our selves and outside of this world; it is elsewhere, alien, unknowable, mysterious, and private. Many of these attributes are also present in Pagan theologies, which are rooted in esoteric and modern worldviews, but are actively being challenged through concepts such as immanent divinity and animism.

Late Modernity

As stated above, modernity is characterized by its reflexivity and recognition of the contingent nature of all knowledge. When this reflexivity is turned upon modernity itself, the result is what sociologist Anthony Giddens has labelled Late Modernity (1990). Societies throughout history have continually challenged that which preceded them through an evolutionary framework that presumes previous concepts and worldviews are misguided, even naïve (Giddens 1990 36ff; Benavides 1998, 186). Sociologist Zygmunt Bauman most effectively defines this condition when he states: "The postmodern state of mind is the radical… victory of modern (that is, inherently critical, restless, unsatisfied,

insatiable) culture over the modern society it aimed to improve through throwing it open wide to its own potential" (1992, viii). Postmodernity in this understanding is equivalent to Gidden's late modernity.

According to Helen Berger, in its challenge of the secularized, institutionalized, disenchanted modern world, contemporary Paganism participates in Giddens' late modernity as it seeks to re-enchant the world (1999, 5-6). In her doctoral dissertation, sociologist Sian Reid agrees that "Neopaganism does not require the label 'postmodern' in order to be designated as a possible site of resistance nor to be utilized as an identity-constructing resource. To characterize it as 'postmodern' ignores its essential continuity with many of the central intellectual and moral strands of classical modernity" (2001, 307-8; cf. Pearce 2000; Green 2003; Hutton 1999, vii).

Contemporary Paganism shares many historical influences with the modern worldview, as Hanegraaff effectively demonstrates in *New Age Religion and Western Culture: Esotericism in the Mirror of Secular Thought* (1998). British historian Ronald Hutton has similarly provided a "history of modern Pagan Witchcraft," which illustrates how Paganism is thoroughly rooted in western culture, in *The triumph of the Moon* (1999).

Contemporary Paganism employs modern concepts and practices to transform and re-envision physical and social aspects of the modern world. The definition and use of magic among Pagans is a primary example of how Paganism and modernity share common approaches to the world, but utilize them to different ends. The most commonly cited definition of "magic" within Paganism is derived from the occult teachings of

Aleister Crowley. In his simplified text *Magick without Tears*, Crowley defines magic as "the science and art of causing change to occur in conformity to will" (1954, ch. 1). As such, magic can be framed as a utilitarian and manipulative technique. In his analysis of magic and enchantment, Patrick Curry draws convincing parallels between magic and modern science. According to Curry, "the principal goal of both is to engineer changes in the Primary world, and both try to amass knowledge in order to predict and control that world; both adhere to the idea of laws of nature which can be manipulated for human gain" (1999, 402). Belief in magic is part of the re-enchantment process employed by contemporary Paganism. As a practice, magic justifies belief in a enchanted world insofar as successful magic provides examples that demonstrate the effectiveness and truth of an holistic worldview, one in which changes in the macrocosmic world affect the microcosm, and vice-versa.

As a late modern religion, Paganism represents a balancing of rational modernity with an enchanted late modernity. Hanegraaff argues that "the magical worldview is purposely adopted as a reaction to the 'disenchanted' world of modern western society" (1998, 84). An excerpt from *Witchcraft Today* by Gerald Gardner supports this description of the Pagan movement. Gardner notes that Witches "are people who want release from this world into the world of fantasy. To certain kinds of person the relief gained has been of enormous benefit and these occasional nights of release are something to live for" (1999, 111). Gardner's description is indicative of an early trend in the contemporary Pagan movement to re-enchant the world, even if the process was not conceived of in these terms. Contemporary Paganism's focus on the immanent sacrality

of nature and animism is directly opposed to modern, secular, rationalized concepts of nature; the contemporary interest in Nature as sacred has arguably arisen in response to the modern world's denial of any intrinsic meaningfulness of nature (diZerega 2000; cf. Von Stuckrad 2002, 773).

Pagans and the Urban World

It seems to me from observations as a participant and observer of the movement, that as the contemporary Pagan movement gains confidence, practitioners are increasingly reflecting upon their contemporary situation. Most Pagans live in cities, in urban or suburban areas, and they are applying an animistic and pantheistic worldview to the streets, public buildings, workplaces, and homes that comprise their life-world. Urban Paganism has been the topic for many Pagan workshops and presentations since at least the mid-1990s[13] and the subject of numerous online discussions, indicating a wide spread interest in this modern manifestation.

Although modernity in its multiple forms is not simply an urban phenomenon – as it encompasses everything from contemporary agriculture practices to the futuristic technology of computers – it has most often been identified with the city and urban culture (Savage *et al.* 2003, 106-134). The affects of modernity at any given time are most evident in the city.

The city is an ecosystem distinct from the rural environments and wild landscapes romanticized by Pagans. As social geographer Michael Dear has outlined, the urban environment is distinct from rural life because of its obvious "hard elements": buildings

large and small, concentrated roads and highways, copious shopping malls and street markets, cultivated gardens and homogenous trees, extensive, obtrusive sewers and power lines, and a high population density (Dear 2002, 61). A city is also defined by its "soft elements": the individual interpretations and perceptions given to it by its dwellers (ibid.), which also differ from perceptions of rural locations. It is through manipulation of the soft elements that individuals are able to re-make a city. Robert Orsi's anthology of sociological studies of urban religion, *Gods of the City: Religion and the American Urban Landscape* (1999), demonstrates how diverse social and cultural groups re-make or re-imagine the city according to their needs. Orsi's introductory chapter and David Brown's article "Urban Spaces: Afro-Cuban religion and the urban landscape in Cuba and the United States" were particularly useful. Although none of the articles specifically address Paganism, they provide a framework for understanding the urban manifestations of contemporary Paganism. As a unique social group, urban Pagans are also re-envisioning their cities with images appropriate to their beliefs and worldviews.

I propose that there are two categories of Pagan responses to the urban environment. The first is what we might expect of a nature-based religion that romanticizes wild places: the city is perceived as an obstacle to Pagan practices and direct relationships with Nature. Pagans will often seek to travel outside of the city, into rural areas or the wilderness, to establish a more immediate connection with Nature and the Divine. Although they may wish to travel beyond the city, Pagans are not always able to escape the city boundaries. They may use visualization techniques in lieu of physically travelling to the wilderness. Rural environments are frequently romanticized as free from

the constraints of modernity and life outside the city is considered to be more pure, that is, more true to the Pagan ideal of living in harmony with all of creation. Beginner guides for Pagan practices, which presume most readers and practitioners live within the city, often address the need to mentally and physically block out the outside world, the noise of the city, telephones, and other people in order to find the Sacred. These texts also preference wild as well as rural nature in their teachings, imagery, and practices. Pagans are encouraged to go outside in order to commune with nature. This emphasis on a natural uncultivated environment is the dominant discourse among Pagans.

In comparison, the reality of Pagan practices for the majority of contemporary Pagans, who live in cities and suburbs are that they are conducted within urban homes, and have variable access to the untamed nature prominent in Pagan discourses. Consequently, the second response involves a changing perception of the city: a re-enchantment of the urban environment. Paganism employs an animistic, polytheistic, pantheistic, and holistic worldview in which all things have a spirit or energy, the Goddess/Divine is immanent in all of Nature, and everything in the world is connected. Applied to the urban world, the Pagan worldview implies that even the mundane things of the city are a part of Nature, embody the Goddess or Divine, and are animated. Many urban Pagans are creating this enchanted vision of the city through their active revisionings of the urban landscape. When nature is conceived of as the green world, then Pagans suggest many ways it can be found in the city or brought into the home. When nature is defined as energy or all that exists, it does not need to be sought out or cultivated because it is already present everywhere by definition. These are the two basic

definitions of nature found in Pagan discourses.

Although these two responses to the urban world seem opposed, in reality they exist along a continuum. Urban Pagans are trying to balance their initial rejection of the urban world with their lived experiences as urban dwellers who, as Pagans, celebrate the Sacred immanent in all of creation and live a daily spiritual life.

What Lies Ahead

In the following chapters I will elaborate upon the issues I have raised in this introduction to illustrate how contemporary Pagans are re-envisioning urban environments. The title of each chapter is derived from Pagan chants that are thematically tied to the content of each chapter. I have used chants because they are a medium for communicating the basic worldview of Paganism and are shared among Pagans through a folkloric process at festivals, open circles, and online.

Chapter two further elaborates upon the perceived dichotomy of an urban nature-based religion through an examination of how Pagans understand and relate to nature as an object of inspiration (as illustrated by the title chant "we are one with the soul of the earth") and as an ideal location for religious practices. This vision of nature is then compared with Pagan conceptions of the urban realm and their participation therein. In chapter three ("She changes everything She touches") I outline the basic beliefs that define Paganism's enchanted worldview and how these are applied in the urban world, with particular attention to how they re-enchant the urban environment. Chapter four ("Goddess is alive; magic is afoot") introduces the plethora of other-than-human beings

that populate the urban Pagan world and, through a case study of belief in faeries, illustrates how belief in such beings operates to re-enchant the urban world. Chapter five ("We are a circle within a circle") is a study of sacred space and place that focuses on the important role of location in creating a meaningful relevant cosmos and illustrates how urban locations play significant roles in Paganism. Finally, chapter six concludes the thesis by "winding, binding the seeds we've sown, weaving the truths we've known and drawing them home again" as it situates the preceding topics within a study of Paganism as an urban religion enacted in daily life.

CHAPTER 2

"WE ARE ONE WITH THE SOUL OF THE EARTH" AN URBAN NATURE-BASED RELIGION?

In addition to the disenchanted character of the modern world, a second paradox exists between Paganism and an urban religion: the physical, literally concrete nature of cities that do not seem to allow for the green, living Nature that Pagans honour. Contemporary Western Pagans seek to harmonize the assumed contradiction of a nature-based religion that is located in seemingly antithetical urban spaces. Dominant Pagan discourses emphasize the prominence of pristine and wild nature for Pagan spirituality and practices. In contrast, the daily religious experiences and practices of Pagans take place in cities and are situated in the modern, mundane world.

City/Country Polarities

Since the beginning of civilization the city has been juxtaposed with nature, the countryside, and wild regions. Among early civilizations in the Mediterranean and Americas, cities were constructed as mirrors of the heavenly cosmos and were perceived as ordered and distinct systems juxtaposed with the chaos of nature equated with the land outside of the city and beyond human control (Atherton 1986; Cole 1994; Eck 1986; Pezzoli-Oligato 2000; Tuan 1974). Cities were principally considered the ideal living places of a civilized world. Following the Industrial Revolution, the countryside and

natural landscapes came to be valued over the city. According to Yi-Fu Tuan, from the perspective of city dwellers, the wilderness once embodied chaos and purity, farming was left for peasants, and country estates were sanatoriums for the melancholic. The city, by contrast, represented "order, freedom, glory, but also worldliness, the corruption of natural virtues, and oppression" (Tuan 1974, 248). In the 19th century this concept was revised as the wilderness came to represent "order (ecological order) and freedom whereas the central city is chaotic, a jungle ruled by social outcasts" (ibid.). In this dualistic paradigm, rural and wild landscapes are equated with nature and the sacred while the urban world of man-made objects and structures is associated with civilization (including its negative effects on the natural world) and the mundane or profane.

The Other

In its opposition to the civilized urban world, nature is most often experienced as "other than us, namely, the forces and life forms, surrounding us, impacting us, beyond our control, but in reciprocal relationship with us" (Taylor 2001, n.p.). The wild landscapes of nature position it as the sacred other that is distinctly different from the daily experiences of Pagans and most urban dwellers. This is largely due to the dominant agrarian myth of North America. According to Tuan, "The dominant myths of America are non non-urban. They are often anti-urban… The dominant spatial metaphors for American destiny, particularly in the nineteenth century, are the garden, the West, the frontier, and wilderness. The city, by contrast, stands for the world's temptations and iniquities" (1974, 193). In the current century, the city is also the locus of materialism

and consumerism, which exemplify "the world's temptations." In Orsi's examination of the influence American cities have historically had on religion, he attributes the source of the agrarian myth to "Nostalgia and dissatisfaction with the qualities of urban life in an industrial and then post-industrial society" (1999, 13). The nature myth of North American culture also functions in the personal and collective mythologies (Rees 1995) of contemporary Pagans as they re-envision their relationships with the natural and urban worlds. According to Orsi, "it is often precisely the disjuncture between environment and religious idioms that occasion crises, cultural creativity, and religious innovation" (1999, 42). Such is the situation of contemporary Paganism as it attempts to bridge the nature-urban dichotomy and position itself as a religion of nature within cities.

Embracing Nature

Pagans are usually self-proclaimed nature-enthusiasts; all of my informants assumed that nature was a basic aspect of Paganism. Scott Cunningham, an influential Pagan author, provides a prime example of this sentiment in the following recollection:

> From the earliest years of my life I have been attracted to Nature in all its manifestations. The sight of a field of blooming wildflowers, the texture of a granite cliff, the untameable fury of a prairie thunderstorm – these are some of my most vivid childhood impressions.
>
> While my peers tossed around footballs or investigated the mysteries of engines and carburetors, I gazed into the night sky, attempting to comprehend its vastness…
>
> After many years I finally realized that the ways of magic are revealed to those who work with the forces of nature. The secrets are written in meandering streams and drifting clouds; they are whispered by the roaring ocean and cooling breeze; they echo in caves and rocks and forests…
>
> The forces of Nature – as they are expressed in the Earth, Air, Fire and Water –

> were pre-existent to our appearance on this planet. These forces could be thought of as our spiritual ancestors who paved the way for our emergence from the balmy prehistoric seas of creation. (1999a, preface)

In his early historical study of contemporary Paganism, Robert Ellwood also observes: "The Neo-Pagans hold that… man must find a niche in the world, neither high nor low, where he cooperates with nature and its deep forces on a basis of reverence and exchange… What wonders he sees of nature and of himself he leaves untouched, save to glorify and celebrate them" (1973, 188). Many Pagan groups have focused on an unabashed worship of nature as the ideal model for life, which may be enacted in communal living, especially in the early period of the contemporary Pagan movement that overlapped with the anti-establishment movements of the 1960s and 1970s. For example, Fred Adams and his group Feraferia (which means "nature celebration") sought to remove themselves from the urban environments to inhabit rural communal space. In 1970, Adams wrote: "These sanctuaries are intended to replace trash heap cities as normative environs for human community. From these centers, men, women, and children will find their true pagan vocation in seasonal celebration and service to the surrounding Wilderness region, and thus generate Faerieland" (in Ellwood 1973, 200).

Rejecting the City

Numerous contemporary Pagans have continued to advocate for practitioners to leave the city to worship, though they do so knowing that most Pagans live in the city. Z. Budapest encourages Pagans to "Try to worship outdoors as much as possible. Don't let yourself become too much of a backyard pagan or a livingroom witch. That's missing the

point" (1989, 21). Similarly, in the introduction to her book *Creating Circles of Power and Magic* Caitlin Libra asks her readers: "Do you see the sacred within the mundane? Do you find ways to take yourself out of the city and into Nature, and do you feel reverence and awe in the face of Nature's beauty?" (1994, 2). The latter example also illustrates how many Pagans have not fully formulated their complex relationship with a mundane city that is balanced with a love of Nature beyond the city boundaries. It is a difficult step to make because a mytho-historical precedence binds contemporary Paganism with nature worship and a return to a simpler, more natural way of life that was to be harmonious with nature. Raymond Buckland evokes this vital relationship between Pagans and nature when he states:

> Early people lived hand-in-hand with nature through necessity. They were a part of nature, not separate from it... Modern Wo/Man has lost much, if not all, of that closeness. Civilization has cut them off. But not so the Witch! Even today, in this mechanized, super-sophisticated world that this branch of nature (Woman and Man) has created, the Wicca retain their ties with Mother Nature. ... It is not unusual to see a Witch, walking through the woods, stop and hug a tree. It is not peculiar to see a Witch throw off her shoes and walk barefoot across a ploughed field. This is all a part of keeping in touch with nature; of not losing our heritage. (1993, 8)

Such steps to physically connect with the natural world are considered necessary because Pagans and scholars alike often believe that cities alienate their inhabitants from nature. In their study of a modern coven, Allen Scarboro, Nancy Campbell, and Shirley Stave describe their interpretation of one Pagan woman's relationship to her urban environment: "Lady Devayana chose a form of Diana [as her name], the Huntress Mother of Animals, as a way of expressing her concern for ecology and animal rights, to deepen her sense of herself as woman in tune with the moon, and to learn ways of bridging our

citified estrangement from untamed nature" (1994, 45). Unfortunately, Scarboro, Campbell, and Stave do not offer further examples of this bridging process or elaborate upon the sources or effects of a "citified estrangement from untamed nature." Nevertheless, it is significant that they observed and wrote about this phenomenon, if only briefly, as it indicates an assumption that urban Pagans are isolated from nature.

In their desires to re-establish a personal relationship with untamed nature, contemporary Pagans are restricted by the boundaries established by cities, especially by the physical constructs of roads and buildings that visibly disrupt the natural world. Michael York notes: "the urban and engineering creations of human civilisation may or may not be considered natural evolutionary developments, but for the 'nature religionist' they tend to be seen as obstructions or masks of the earth's natural equilibrium, that balance that we perceive in undisturbed and uncontaminated environments" (2000, n.p.). However, the concept of a citified estrangement does not adequately describe the situation. City boundaries are permeable and ever changing. Animals may pass through, plant seeds drift across, humans traverse them, and suburban construction continues to push the borders ever further from a true urban center. Modern agriculture and the growth of cottage-country has created a grey zone that is neither urban nor untamed nature. It is not merely cities that estrange their inhabitants from the wilds of nature, but rather all human constructions, which create the boundaries that have isolated humans and all their creations from the chaos of nature. Despite these boundaries however, nature relentlessly impinges upon human environments.

Rural Ritual Spaces

The acquisition of private rural areas of land by Pagan groups is often cited as examples of Pagans as a whole preferring to practice outside of cities. In their 1999 survey of Pagan social identities, Jorgensen and Russell note that "Neopagans prefer meeting whenever possible in a nature setting (such as public parklands, forests, or more rural areas) away from outsiders. Large festivals and other gatherings, for instance, almost always are located on public lands or private properties (such as campgrounds or farms) in more rural areas" (1999, 331). The authors do not hypothesize why this is the case, however, some Pagans and scholars seem to assume that Pagans gather in rural areas primarily to be closer to the natural world. This hypothesis is supported by the dominant discourses of Paganism concerning nature, however, I argue that it does not reflect the primary reason for large rural gatherings and that this assumption ignores the urban experiences of Pagans.

Contemporary Pagan groups such as Circle Sanctuary and Elf Lore Family have secured private land to serve as sacred sites and communities and for annual festivals. According to their quarterly magazine, Circle Sanctuary, which was established in 1983, is "a non-profit international Nature Spirituality resource center and Shamanic Wiccan Church headquartered on a Nature Preserve near Mt. Horeb, Wisconsin" that offers workshops, classes, weekend retreats and sabbat celebrations. Many who venture to this sanctuary are urban dwellers vacationing in a nature environment and developing their knowledge and experience within the Pagan worldview. The natural environment is

employed as an ideal teaching ground for Pagans because of their dominant nature-based discourses.

Similarly, the popularity of festivals and other rural ritual gatherings is in part facilitated by the presence of nature in these locations, but this is not the only reason Pagans travel beyond the congested city limits. Access to relative privacy and large open spaces are important factors in hosting Pagan festivals and large rituals, which are most easily located outside of city limits. However, it is the creation of a community and the dissolution of mundane boundaries that draws hundreds of Pagans from across the continent to these annual festivals.

Sarah Pike's *Earthly Bodies, Magical Selves*, an ethnography of contemporary Pagan festivals, provides an insightful study of the motivations for Pagan festivals. She assesses festival space as primarily sacred space set apart from the daily, modern, mundane world. According to Pike, "NeoPagans approach all festivals as opportunities to participate in a community of others who share some of their beliefs and practices" (2001, 11). Festivals also function as "places of contrast with the rest of the world" (ibid.) as they become liminal spaces established between the physical and spiritual worlds. Because they are physically set apart from the urban world of mundania, the whole of festival space is more easily bounded as sacred and liminal space. As liminal space, festivals are metaphysically set between the worlds of mundania and the gods, while physically they are between the urban world and untamed nature.

The appeal of Pagan festivals, in large part, lies in their being hosted far from cities and separate from both the mundane home and work-places of participants (Pike

2001, 12; Adler 1986, 424). One festival organizer told Margot Adler, "It's a trip to the land of faery, where for a couple of days you can exist without worrying about the 'real' world" (Adler 1986, 425). Festival space is structured differently than urban space and enables participants to behave in ways they might not feel comfortable about in the mundane world of their local neighbourhoods and workplace communities. As they meet with other Pagans, festival attendees become, at least for the weekend of the gathering, part of a larger close-knit community of like-minded persons (Adler 1986, 424-5; Pike 2001, 21). It is the liminal community aspects of Pagan festivals that entice Pagans to leave their urban homes. The omnipresence of nature is part of the atmosphere and idealized setting that enhances the experience for participants, but does not seem to be the primary motivation for festival attendees.

Festival attendance is often cited as an example of Pagans preferring to conduct their rituals beyond the city. As I have argued, festival attendance is not dependant upon a preference to practice in nature. These same assumptions are often based upon surveys of festival attendees and thus do not reflect the preferences of Pagans who do not attend festivals. Jorgensen and Russell assert: "Festival participants, we strongly suspect, are among the most devoted and active members of this movement, and they may differ in other ways from the larger Neopagan population" (1999, 326). Jorgensen and Russell assume that festival attendees represent the ideal Pagans who are the most fully committed to Paganism. They do not elaborate how they came to this conclusion or what it means to be a devoted Pagan. Notably, they do acknowledge that festival attendees do not necessarily represent the views of non-attendees and the larger Pagan population. [14]

Helen Berger attempted to address this issue in *Voices form the Pagan Census*. She notes certain demographic differences between those respondents who did and did not attend a festival in the previous year,[15] however, she does not draw any conclusion regarding personal commitments (2003, 26, 209). It is problematic to assume that those Pagans who do not attend festivals by choice or because they cannot afford to (ibid., 207) are less devoted to their chosen religion.

In accordance with a common ignorance of the role of urban environments, Pike concludes that by participating in festivals Pagans indicate their "intense dissatisfaction with their everyday world and the depth of their desire for something more" (2001, 22). She describes the urban world as being void of the spiritual things that Pagans seek. While it is true that festivals may offer more intense experiences because they are liminal and bring together a large community of like-minded persons to celebrate and share their energy, knowledge, beliefs, practices, and creativity, this does not preclude the possibilities that similar religious and spiritual experiences can occur in the urban realm. Pagan gatherings are often located within city boundaries and any space can be created as liminal sacred space through Pagan ritual and circle casting. The assumption that Pagan religious experiences are lacking in cities is evidence of the dominant nature myth among scholars of Paganism who focus on links between Pagans and the natural world rather than the lived world. In addition, those Pagans who attend festivals do so occasionally, perhaps once or twice a year for an annual gathering,[16] and individuals who are cited in academic surveys are not quoted as being unable to practice their religion during the rest of the year. They are not festival-only Pagans but modern Pagans in an urban world.

Romanticizing Nature

Pagan excursions into nature are often akin to vacationing in a foreign place. As Aidan Kelly has noted, it is easy to romanticize about cows when you don't have any (1992, 146). Without living in an uncultivated environment on a daily basis it is easy to forget the hardships that accompany life without modern conveniences, including electricity and grocery stores. Although some Pagans do live beyond city and town limits, in rural or secluded areas, the majority of Pagans continue to inhabit familiar urban spheres and only fantasize about life in the natural world. When Pagans venture out into wild landscapes they are able to choose their level of involvement or connection with natural environments.

In contrast, it is more difficult for individuals to separate themselves from a hectic urban life because they have chosen to be involved. Like many urban dwellers, Pagans are often workaholics, busy activists and volunteers, engaged stay-at-home parents, or involved in some other form of diligent work and leisure. In their fantasies of life beyond the city borders, Pagans partake of an urbanized relationship with the wilderness that is respectful but distant from nature. By idealizing the natural world, Paganism subsequently marginalizes the urban world. As one Pagan states in a lengthy post titled "The Goddess of concrete and asphalt" on the Usenet newsgroup alt.pagan: "Many of our kind bemoan the cities as dead, barren wastelands of concrete and twisted metal, and then try to find the goddess away from where most of us live, work and die. In my opinion, this is foolish and harmful. What is such an act of removing one's spirituality from one's

everyday existence other than pointless escapism?" In a similar article published by a Pagan magazine called *Widdershins*, a Pagan named Lewis concurs that

> we live in the midst of nature – we breathe, eat, shit, love, dream, and die in nature. Therefore it is silliness to 'get back to nature.' We never left it, nor is that even possible. What we can do is close ourselves up to the awareness of nature, attempt to convince ourselves that we live in a nightmarish mechanical universe devoid of meaning and connection. And we suffer greatly for that blindness…
>
> Paganism is about communing with the vital forces of existence, about celebrating the sacredness of the land and of where one lives. Instead of doing precisely that, many pagans hold to an idealized view of nature, and despise the places where they live. This is, I think, a great shame and something that must be remedied. We live in cities and suburbs. They are our homes, they nurture us, provide for our needs, intrinsically shape the lives that we lead. (2002, n.p.)

Embracing Urban Centres

These individuals are not alone as they embrace the urban world. Many urban Pagans have expressed that they feel more comfortable in the city than in rural areas and that they have no difficulties finding or connecting spiritually and physically with nature from their urban locations. There are multiple factors that Pagans use to justify the inclusion of cities in their nature-based religions, which can broadly be categorized as 1) the recognition of pockets of nature within urban landscapes and 2) the acknowledgement that, in some form, all things are a part of holistic nature. A Pagan contributor to the online Usenet bulletin board system aptly illustrates an application of both these categories: "I happen to feel that one can find nature and beauty in the most urban of landscapes. There is sky, clouds, rain, snow, winds, birds, weeds, flowers, squirrels, and so on. And the city itself has a beauty all its own"

(1997).

Pockets of nature

Even when nature is limited by definition to the green aspects of the world, it can easily be found within urban areas. Ellen Evert Hopman and Lawrence Bond were seemingly as intrigued by the existence of Paganism within major cities as I have been when they interviewed a wide variety of Pagans (most of whom are well-known figures in the Pagan community) for their book *Being a Pagan: Druids, Wiccans, and Witches Today* (2002). The following excerpt demonstrates one line of questioning used by the authors with a couple of their interviewees:

> *You live in New York City. How do you retain that mystical connection? How do you stay in relationship with nature living in that environment?*
>
> Alexei Kondrateiv: New York City is not what people imagine it to be. I live in Flushing, Queens, which is a fairly green suburb. I have a garden, I can plant things, there is green all around me. It's not like I look at a brick wall outside of my window, though some of my friends do. I'd have a very hard time living that way.
>
> I've never lived in a completely urban environment on my life. Even in other parts of the city you always have the sky; you don't have to go very far to find water. The native configuration of the land is still there, even though we've put buildings on it.
>
> The northern tip of Manhattan has a very beautiful park, which is currently being terribly misused and is under a great deal of stress. It's the last natural forest on the island of Manhattan. It's also a very powerful place. At some point about a hundred years ago some trees were planted on top of the hill there, but it's been wild for quite some time. There is a beech tree there that sends out this enormous vortex of power across the entire hill. I notice that other people have found that beech tree independently, and it is obviously the focus of rituals. So there are magical places that are within a subway ride of anyone living in Manhattan. (2002, 24-25)

Many of the Pagans I interviewed responded to my question "How do you practice a

nature-based religion within an urban environment?" by referring to the presence of city parks and gardens as examples of where nature can be found. In addition to visiting city parks as outdoor nature enclosures, urban Pagans also make a conscious effort to bring nature into their homes in the form of gardens, houseplants and pets. As Devi, a Pagan of four years from Pittsburgh, explained to me in response to the above question: "I've kind of turned my room into the outside. I have plants everywhere. Flowers, herbs, everything. I get pretty good sunlight from my windows. That brings the nature inside for me. It helps a lot." Mehtare, a 27-years old Pagan from Atlanta similarly responded: "I don't find the environment a problem… My altar is indoors, I use *symbols* of nature on it – pebbles I picked up along the Pacific and Mediterranean, and I always have a sprig or branch of something from my backyard."

Graham Harvey explains this process of identifying greenery in the home (as a symbol or part of nature) as a way in which Pagans are able to connect with something greater than the city. "[Pagans] go into the woods to collect greenery with which to decorate their homes and, for a while, the home is absorbed into the Greenwood – that part of nature which is less human dominated, if not actually wildwood, than other places and is thus some steps nearer to the Otherworld" (1997, 6-7). The Greenwood is also the idealized vision of nature – of something pure and other.

The presence of nature may also be subtler than simple greenery; nature embodies a combination of flora and fauna and is characterized as a metaphysical

state of being. As one Pagans notes in a online article, "Our religion stresses spirituality as an experiential thing, something we must work with in order to help it grow. We need to connect with the forces around us because they are the ones that are always there. The places where the plants and animals of our homes live are natural, even if covered in building and asphalt. Although it may be changed in appearance, Nature is always at work where we live" (Faolan n.d.).

Nature is also popularly equated by Pagans with the changing seasons of the earth and cycles of life. As one Usenet poster writes: "I am a hard core Urban Pagan. But even in the concrete, plasticized, driveup world I live in it's easy to see that the changing seasons still cause the same effects that [they have] for thousands of years" (1999). In her reply to Hopman and Bond, Judy Harrow provides a similar description of her relationship with the seasons from an urban locale.

> *You said that what attracted you to Paganism was the relationship with the earth, yet you are living in New York City. How do you maintain that focus on nature when you live in New York?*
>
> Judy Harrow: That's a good question. The natural cycles *do* happen here, and the wheel of the year does manifest itself in the streets of the city if you are open to it. You can feel the changes in the air and the light and in the way people act and react to the seasonal change. I once wrote a Beltane ritual about spring coming to the city, about people being out with their boom boxes, washing their cars, being out on the steps, on the block." (Hopman and Bond 2002, 234)

In the above examples nature is thought to be found *in* urban environments, which is one possible description of the relationship between cities and nature. The alternative is to state that cities are *a part of* nature.

Cities Participate in Nature

Several of the Pagans I have encountered, describe cities as an aspect of nature. The premise for this understanding is that humans are a part of nature (i.e, humans are animals) and thus human creations are also part of nature. As animals, humans are comparable to other creatures that manipulate their environment. Common examples cited by Pagans include nests, ant hills, and beaver dams. As Oblivion explained to me, "Bees make hives and control the environment within. Ants will make compost heaps to warm up their underground nests. Other animals and plants strive to control their immediate environments to suit their living tastes" (2003; cf. Tuan 1977, 101). In like manner, human control over our habitat, culminating in cities, is thought to be a natural phenomenon. Mary Willow Moon, a 34-yers old Pagan of ten years, stated: "Nature-based religions are easy to honor within any environment. Everything around us was created by man who is also part of nature… All he builds has energy, energy originating from nature itself." Her depiction of the role of energy is important in developing an understanding of how man-made objects, including cities, are situated within nature. The concept of shared energy as a unifying force will be explored further in the following chapter.

In the Pagan worldview, all that exists is composed of the four Platonic elements: earth, air, fire, and water. These elements can also be located within urban environments and can be associated with common aspects of daily urban life. For example, water is abundant and easily accessible by pipelines in the city (cf. Clifton 1998, 19); earth is part of the cement and bricks that make up the roads and buildings of a city; air is circulated in buildings by air conditioners, fans, and other ventilation systems; and fire can be equated

with the electricity that runs everything as well as the furnaces that keep us warm. These examples are in addition to the more obvious and traditional forms of the elements that can be experienced from both urban and rural environments: rain, the ground, wind, and the sun. Although Pagans are more likely to refer to the latter manifestations of the elements (because of the dominant place of nature, as that which exists beyond cities, in their discourse), the urban manifestations are no less implicit in the daily experiences of contemporary urban Pagans. In addition to the four elements, a wide range of flora and fauna can be found within cities from rodents, insects, and birds to weeds, trees, and flowers. In their urban forms these living aspects of nature are embodied by gardens and pets, which, while cultivated, are nevertheless creations of nature.

Degrees of Nature

To say that something is part of nature does not always mean that it is natural or in an original state. There is an implicit degree system when describing things as part of nature. A virgin mountain peak may be perceived as a more pure form of nature than the polluted river at its base, which is nevertheless more clearly part of nature than a silicone computer chip.[17] The degree to which something is considered natural is proportional to the object's proximity to an assumed original state. The degree to which something has been refined by human processes as well as how it is used defines how Pagans categorize things of nature. For example, I have never encountered a Pagan who thought that a cut and polished crystal sphere was any less natural than a raw unrefined mineral while I suspect most Pagans would not immediately perceive a cast-iron skillet to be equally

natural. Both the crystal and iron exist in an original state and have been minimally changed by the refinement processes involved in making a crystal point or skillet.

Though the entire physical world of creation constitutes nature, certain things within it are considered *more* natural. Pagans believe that unrefined objects and uncultivated places facilitate a more direct experience of the divine that is inherent in nature. Hence Pagans profess a desire to meditate in pristine areas of nature and sometimes express greater difficulty in directly connecting with nature and the divine from within urban centers. This assumption exists in opposition to Pagan concepts of sacred space, which can be created in any place (without known exception) and provides direct contact with the metaphysical world and the divine (Hume 1998, 312).

Nevertheless, Pagans profess that it is not always easy to establish a direct personal and spiritually fulfilling connection with nature in the city. Phoenix, a Pagan practitioner for four years, told me: "At times when I lived in Toronto, and the smog was so thick you couldn't see the stars, I felt distant from deity, and how we as humans have continuously harmed it, but then I sit back and look a the (only) tree out my window, and see the squirrels and birds frolicking about. I feel the breeze on my face and I know that deity is still there, and will always be around me." For Phoenix, as for most Pagans, nature is the Divine manifested in the physical world. Though all that exists is of nature, not all things are considered natural. Pagan negotiations if these concepts reflect the ambiguous use of the terms nature and natural as well as an internal negotiation process. For example, a Pagan living in a city may initially feel that the urban world lacks nature in comparison to uncultivated locations (this is a common Pagan perception). However,

through personal experience, revelation and /or discussions with other urban Pagans, she may revise her previous perceptions and chose to acknowledge ways in which her urban environment includes (and is a part of) nature.

Many of the Pagans I have spoken with have demonstrated that they are actively in the process of redefining their concepts of what constitutes (or does not constitute) nature. During the interview process I witnessed several Pagans addressing this issue for the first time and struggling to locate the urban environment and human artifacts along a continuum of what I have described as degrees of nature. The following excerpts from my MSN messenger-mediated interview with a young Pagan named Justin illustrate this negotiation process:

> *How do you define Nature?*
> Justin: Well, I define nature as all of the world, all of the cosmos. Even though there are cities with their concrete jungles, they are still <u>in</u> nature, though they may not be directly a part of it or as in-tune with it as say the Himalayas or Antarctica.
> *What is (the) Sacred and where do you find it?*
> J: By Sacred, I assume you mean deity or that which is most closely aligned with deity. If that is the case I would say that (the) Sacred is found out in areas of nature untouched by human machinations. I say this because these areas are more in tune with the balance of nature [that] the cosmos intended. Yes, one can find even deity and (the) Sacred in the cities, take churches for example. However I think that the urban landscape of our cities, even though they are a part of nature, are not in balance with nature.
> *Where do you communicate with deity?*
> J: Personally, I communicate with deity whenever and wherever I please. Deity and the Sacred are everywhere to me, even in a pencil and in the keyboard of the computer I am typing on. I do not feel as close to Deity at this console as I would by a pristine river in an undeveloped countryside out in the middle of nowhere, but still I recognize that deity is everywhere and in everyone/thing.

Although nature and the Sacred or Deity are believed to exist everywhere, the degree to which they are experienced in a given location is personalized and subjective.

In his 1997 study of contemporary Paganism, Graham Harvey provides a succinct discussion of this phenomenon, which deserves to be quoted in full. He states:

> While rejecting the dualistic separation of 'spirit' from 'matter,' the Pagan stress on the countryside as a location for significant encounters with Nature and with 'the sacred' could be decried as 'mere romanticism.' It is, however, a more positive experience and vision. Many Pagans do regularly and easily celebrate seasonal festivals in their urban environment, the city too is part of Nature, but the countryside is a place of greater bio-diversity. There are more types of living being [sic], more life, 'out there' in the woods... But even in the city parks or working woods... it is possible to encounter a less human-centred, more varied manifestation of the profligate abundance of life... Life survives in the margins: motorway verges, bits of hedge, wood, marsh or pond ignored by industrial agriculture and road builders." (137)

Purportedly, the richness of life, including organisms and metaphysical entities, is more easily realized beyond the city. However, as I shall illustrate in the following chapter (and as Harvey suggests), nature can be found in city streets as readily as forest glens. It is also helpful to keep in mind Ivakhiv's description of nature as "the more-than-human life that lives and expresses itself locally, in specific places, in ways we can come to know in our everyday lives" (1999, n.p.).

CHAPTER 3

"SHE CHANGES EVERYTHING SHE TOUCHES"
RE-ENCHANTING THE MUNDANE URBAN WORLD

The expansion of the Pagan concept of nature to include the urban world and everything that exists is made possible by the contemporary Pagan worldview that seeks to re-enchant and re-engage the world. In accordance with Lawrence Sullivan's description of nature worship, Pagans are well aware "that the sacred can appear in any guise… The worship of nature… highlights both the freedom of the sacred to appear in any form, and the capacity of the human being to recognize it for what it is in any expression" (1987, 324). For Pagans, the concept of Nature as a thing to be respected and as something that embodies the world in its entirety is shaped by the permeation of Nature with divine and creative energy. It is this energy, an ambiguous and polymorphic concept evoking a basic life force that underlies everything in existence, that infuses and re-enchants the world as Pagans re-envision it. An examination of the modern Pagan worldviews reveals that Pagans are holistic, animists, and pantheists (or panentheists), all of which are worldviews that are antithetical to a disenchanted modernist worldview. These concepts are intimately connected in a cohesive, and distinctly contemporary, Pagan worldview.

Enchantment

"Enchantment is a result of right relationship with the Earth" says Patrick Curry in his study of magic and enchantment (1999, 411). Pagans would agree that the development of such a relationship requires a cultivation of "the art of living in and with nature. This requires forswearing the modernist dream of mastery" (Curry 1999, 411). For Curry, enchantment is defined as "the realization of imagined wonder" (J.R.R. Tolkein in Curry 1999, 403). Enchantment is a participatory and receptive relationship with the Earth, as opposed to magic and science that seek knowledge in order to manipulate the world. Enchantment and wonder are both other acknowledging because they experience "nature as endlessly plural, particular and unique" (Curry 1999, 409). Paganism also champions plurality and multiplicity in all its interpretations and experiences (York 2000, n.p.), thus making it conducive of an enchanted worldview. Enchantment and wonder are also spontaneous and in the moment; they can not be forced, although the situation for their occurrence can be encouraged and even facilitated by magic, science or technology (Curry 1999, 405). Pagans use magic as a manipulative tool to make change in the world, but also as an enchanting concept that allows for possibilities of unexpected good fortune and glimpses into the spirit world that exists on the periphery of their experiences. "The contemporary resurgence of magical religion can be seen, then, as an attempt to enrich the 'psychic ecology' of contemporary culture by remythicizing and re-'story-ing' our world and the living beings that make it up" (Ivakhiv 1996, 256). In their engaged relationships with the world, as they try to become "in tune with," or spiritually connected to, the Earth by various means of action and by redefining

personalized understandings of nature, Pagans create situations that provide opportunities for enchantment. "In a chosen special place within the one, sacred and living Earth, a Pagan experiences and pays attention to a particular moment and place" (Harvey 2000, 163). Gordon MacLellan critiques those persons who go out into nature for the express purpose of encountering something other. He encourages Pagans to explore their immediate environments and "entertain faeries" from their own home, that is, to entertain the idea that faery (or the spirit world) is all about, and like wonder, needs to be received rather than required. He advises Pagans to "Take it easy. Work to create spaces where They know They are welcome… Practice your stillness. Expect nothing. Demand nothing. Offer friendship and the company of silence and one day you may turn around and find someone beside you on the bench. A shape, a face, or simply a presence: a space where a character is" (MacLellan 2004, 370). Faeries are a more tangible expression of an enchanted world, but wonder and enchantment come in many forms. As MacLellan demonstrates in his discussion of faeries, individuals need to cultivate an approach to the other that makes no demands and is open to every possibility. Enchantment is not merely pictures of winged faeries in a garden and the magic in Harry Potter stories; it is the experience of a passive but engaged relationship with the world as a whole.

Nature as Energy

During our interview in a tarot reading room in downtown Winnipeg, Andrea (a practitioner of ten years) provided an insightful description of how energy is important to an urban Pagan understanding of nature. "I think nature is in everything. I think nature is

not only about grass and trees and rocks and hills; I think that nature can be very much a part of stone buildings. Nature can be a part of living in a house or living in an apartment, or living anywhere you want. I think that it depends on how you approach nature. Everything has a spirit... And I think that if you approach nature from an energy sense instead of from a leafy-green sense, you see nature in everything" (2003). Similarly, Shadowsinger concludes that "if everything has a spirit, then you can't say that something that is 'natural' is any more or less sacred than anything that isn't" (2003). From a Pagan perspective, the essence of nature is the basic life force or energies of all things on earth, which are interconnected in a holistic worldview. If the sacred is immanent in all of creation (as Pagans believe), then it follows that these things share a universal essence. Starhawk names this universal essence Goddess. She states: "Goddess is the living body of a living cosmos, the awareness that infuses matter and the energy that produces change" (1999, 244). Vivianne Crowley refers to it as Lifeforce and also considers it to be the Divine: "To our pagan ancestors, the Divine existed both within and outside manifest creation. It was the eternal ever-becoming life force immanent or in-dwelling in human beings and in Nature. It also pre-existed the material world and created it" (1996, 171; cf. Cunningham 1999a, 20). It is this common life force that Pagans implicitly refer to when they speak of nature being inclusive of all that exists.

Holism

The holism inherent in the Pagan worldview is often described by Pagans as a web that epitomizes the interconnectedness of all things. An example often cited by

Pagans is Gaia theory, wherein the whole biosphere of Earth is considered to be (or functions as) a living organism. James Lovelock is credited with the formulation of this theory and its popularization.[18] However, other theorists had conceived of such holistic relationships independently; Lewis Thomas' single-cell theory of the earth and Johannes Kepler's single-organism theory are two prominent examples. Oberon (also known as Tim or Otter) Zell, the Pagan founder of the Church of All Worlds, had also conceived his own Gaia theory in 1970. While Lovelock's theory is based in a biochemical study of the atmosphere (and the biosphere below) as a self-regulating system, Zell derived his theory from the single-cell hypothesis. According to Zell, a single cell is the ancestor of all life on Earth, and just as many cells work together in an organism, all the cells on Earth function as one; everything on Earth is considered to be part of Gaea's (the name given by Zell for the Earth as a personified goddess) body.

In Gaian and other holistic theories, all that exists is interconnected as each part affects every other in the system. Starhawk states: "Interconnection is the understanding that all being is interrelated, that we are all linked with all the cosmos as parts of one living organism" (1999, 22). As participants in a holistic world, Pagans feel connected to the earth and all its parts. Tamarra James of the Wiccan Church of Canada provides an earthy example of this sensed relationship: "[The essence of Paganism is] the realization that the air we breathe has been here from the beginning. That the water we drink is a part of the primordial water, it's been blood, it's been rain, it's been waterfalls and snow and juice and sap… It's knowing that your body has been plants and animals and that somehow there isn't a real distinction, we are all part of this Mother Earth" (Hopman and

Bond 2002, 60).

As I have illustrated in my previous discussion of relationships between the city and nature, nature is frequently understood by urban Pagans to exist everywhere, in all things. Pagan discussions of these urban-nature relationships stem from a holistic worldview in which all things are interconnected. Every city is a part of the whole in so far as it participates in, and is affected by, nature. Just as cities encroach upon nature as urban sprawl spreads across the land and natural resources are sucked into the black hole of capitalist consumerism, so too does nature encroach upon the controlled environments of the city in forms as diverse as weeds, floods, and cockroaches. There remains a dynamic relationship between cities and nature, and although it may not be mutually beneficial, it is nevertheless vital. It is for this reason that cities are a part of nature and part of the holistic world envisioned by Pagans.

Pan(en)theism

In contemporary Pagan theology, Deity, in the form of the Goddess or god(s) and goddess(es), is immanent in the world. Feminist witch Zsuzsanna Budapest declares: "the Goddess is mother Nature. Nature is the only reality of the universe… Nature has no beginning and no end" (1991,17). According to Budapest and many other Pagans, nature is everything that exists. The nature that Pagans honour as nature-based religionists is the summation of everything interconnected as a whole. The contemporary Pagan appreciation of holism is amplified by a theological connection between Divinity and Nature. Ivakhiv similarly notes that among bio-centric earth spiritualists, the Earth is

the embodiment of divinity (2001, 8). Expressed as a form of holism, within Paganism the whole *is* God/dess. As Starhawk states: "The most important [underlying concept in Witchcraft] is the understanding of the Goddess, the divine, as immanent in the world, manifest in nature, in human beings, in human community. The All-That-Is-One is not now and never has been separate from this existing physical world" (1999, 226). In her seminal study of nature-religions, Catherine Albanese observes that the Goddess is the central concept that embodies the contemporary Pagan worldview. As the ambiguous symbolic representation of Earth, the Goddess reflects how Pagans relate to Nature. "Pushed one way she celebrates the reality, the concreteness, of matter… Pushed another way, though, she tells us that matter is only a form of energy, that it can be shifted and changed by spirit" (Albanese 1990, 179-180).

The immanent perception of Goddess/the Divine is expressed in forms of both pantheism and panentheism. Pantheism is the theological assertion that all (*pan*) is god (*theos*). Pagans and scholars frequently refer to Paganism as pantheistic because it professes that the Divine is both immanent within all things and identical with creation (Carpenter 1996, 51). In Pagan discourses pantheism is most often expressed through direct use of the term to describe their beliefs or by elaborating upon the immanence of the Divine. For example, Cunnigham states: "The Goddess and God are both within ourselves and manifest in all nature. This is the universality: there is nothing that isn't of the Gods" (1999a, 4). However, Pagan descriptions of Deity being immanent are often (but not always) later qualified by statements that describe the God/dess as also existing apart from the physical world. As such, many Pagans may better be described as

panentheists.

Panentheism is the belief that all (*pan*) is in (*en*) god (*theos*). The concept was first developed by Karl C.F. Krause in 1828 and has been propagated by theologians such as Alfred North Whitehead, Charles Hawthrone, and Matthew Fox. The basic premise of panentheism is that God/the Divine and the world are interdependent, but the Divine is not identical with the world. All that exists is part of Divine reality, but God/dess is more than the sum of its parts. All of creation might thus be described as independent cells within a body (God/dess). The Divine is thus "a Unity in Multiplicity" (D.D. Runes quoted in Carpenter 1996, 51). Pagan discourses indicate that this is a prevalent (but infrequently elaborated) theological concept for many Pagans. V. Crowley describes a panentheistic Goddess when she states: "The Goddess in Wicca is seen as Gaia, the Earth itself, and is immanent or in-dwelling in creation. The Goddess also pre-exists her [creation] and transcends it" (1996, 137). Starhawk reflects the concept of "Unity in Multiplicity" in *The Spiral Dance* when she writes: "The Goddess is the living body of a living cosmos, the awareness that infuses matter and the energy that produces change… *The Goddess* as the whole [is] the underlying unity of which all things are aspects" (Starhawk 1999, 244). As the Creator, Deity is not necessarily dependant upon its creation and although deity interpenetrates everything, individual creations maintain an autonomous existence (Carpenter 1996, 51). Hence, for example, most Pagans are not fatalists and are able to employ magic to effect change in the world.

As the chant quoted in the title of this chapter states, "She changes everything She touches; everything She touches changes." Pagan recognition of the Goddess/Divine

being immanent within all things has enabled Her to revitalize the urban world as a potential space for experiencing the Divine. The application of a theology of immanence to the daily urban world of most Pagans necessarily changes Pagan perceptions of, and relationships with, cities. What was once mundane is re-evaluated as inherently sacred because of the presence of the Divine. An additional verse in this chant states: "we are changers, everything we touch can change" and reflects the active role Pagans play in these transformations. In addition, this verse alludes to the immanence of the Divine within humans; Pagans frequently greet one another by declaring "Thou art God/dess." As facilitators in change, humans and God/dess are co-creators of the world.

Animism

In the holistic Pagan worldview that attributes equal value to all things, the entirety of creation is thought to be animated, that is, all things have an innate spirit or soul. The animistic perspective is a key aspect of Pagan holism because all things are considered to be imbued with the Goddess, the Divine, or some form of universal Life Force or vitality. The contemporary Pagan animated worldview is, again, intimately connected with concepts of an immanent, holistic divinity. "To witches, as to other peoples who live close to nature, all things – plants, animals, stones, and stars – are alive, are on some level conscious beings. All things are divine, are manifestations of the Goddess" (Starhawk 1999, 53). Gus diZerega, a Pagan political scientist, further outlines the positive implications of applying animistic principles to the modern world in an article published by the Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans (CUUPS).

> Without exception, the nature religions [including Paganism] emphasize that the most appropriate task for human beings is to live in respectful harmony with forces of the natural world, forces which also manifest the presence of Spirit in all things. From the perspective of the nature religions, our spiritual task is to be a good member within the wider sacred community encompassing all that surrounds us. This community helps us to live in harmony with and [foster] respect for all things, and for the Spirit within all. (2000, 2)

The approach to spirituality diZerega is advocating for is reflected in the self-described shamanic practices of contemporary Pagans. Harvey J. Wallis describes "Neo-Shamanism" as "a spiritual path among Westerners that utilises aspects of indigenous shamanism and representations of shamanism in the past, for personal and communal empowerment" (2003, 402). Wallis observes that core Wiccan texts explicitly draw upon shamanism and some Wiccan traditions self-identify as "Shamanic" in character. "Practices such as inducing trance, working magic, divination, interacting with spirits and animal familiars, and healing via supernatural means, are certainly reminiscent of many shamanistic practices" (2003, 404). Shamanism is commonly employed as a set of techniques or a methodology for accessing altered states of consciousness and facilitating experiences in other-worlds.

As an applied spiritual practice, contemporary shamanism recognizes that a spiritworld overlaps the human world, which it both influences and is influenced by. Gordon MacLellan asserts that "The key to a shaman's reality is quite simply: 'all that exists lives'" (2003, 366). Shamans are portrayed as travellers of both worlds and pathfinders for the beings within them (ibid., 366). They communicate the needs of humans as well as other-than-human persons across the worlds. From a contemporary Pagan perspective, shamans are persons who develop and guide others in fostering

respect for all that exists in their role as "patterners" (see Adler 1986, MacLellan 2003, Harvey 1997, Orion 1995, Telesco 2000, Wallis 2003, for further discussion of the place of shamanism within contemporary Paganism). Pagan author Telesco portrays contemporary urban shamans as embracing an "earth-friendly, socially responsible and spiritually fulfilling" lifestyle no matter where they are located (2000, introduction). Her description of contemporary shamanism applies to the practices of many eclectic Pagans.

Re-animation as re-enchantment

A re-animated worldview is an example of contemporary responses to the disenchantment of a modern world detached from the sacred. Margot Adler theorizes that "at some level Neo-Paganism is an attempt to re-animate the world of nature; or, perhaps more accurately, Neo-Pagan religions allow their participants to re-enter the primeval world view, to participate in nature in a way that is not possible for most Westerners after childhood. The pagan revival seems to be a survival response to the common urban and suburban experience of our culture as 'impersonal,' 'neutral,' or 'dead'" (1986, 25). Ivakhiv describes this situation when he states:

> as a [Euro-American] culture, we have lost the sense of sacredness in our relationship with the world about us. The world we live in is a disenchanted one, made up of discrete, disconnected (or at least not *meaningfully* connected) objects… The solution we seek is a paradoxical one: on the one hand, to maintain our self-consciousness, our critical distance; on the other, to regain our intimate involvement with the world, our participatory relatedness, wonder, and innocence in the midst of the world. (1996, 242)

Pagans conceptualize all that exists to be animate entities, rather than inanimate objects, which accordingly deserve respect and honour. "Personification [of the

nonhuman other] allows subjectivity, intentionality, and passionate identification back into the world – a world that can then become a 'polytheistically' ensouled, animated community once again" (Ivakhiv 1996, 253). Respectful acknowledgement of the inherent worth/sacrality of all of creation is not limited to contemporary Paganism. This attitude has demonstrated an increasing influence in modern western society's attempt to re-enchant and re-embrace the world following disillusionment with secularist modernity. Philosophical historian Kocku von Stuckrad has observed: "the animistic attitude… is part of a larger flow of the sacralization of nature – *Naturfrömmigkeit* – which spread from North America to Europe during the last two decades" (2002, 780). Ivakhiv argues that the magical religion's "worldview of environmental and psychic relatedness" has fashioned "a re-enchanted cosmology of meaningful correspondences that would offer itself as a response to what is sometimes called the crisis of modernity" (1996, 237). It is this same modern crisis that Pagans face as they attempt to merge their spiritual practices with their mundane, modern lives.

In *Claiming Sacred Ground*, Ivakhiv draws a further analysis of the modern crisis Pagans are confronted with and their reaction, along with many other persons, to this problem.

> One of the defining narratives of Western culture has been a story of power and knowledge: that science and technology… have established humanity as the reigning power on this Earth…
>
> It seems paradoxical that some of those more privileged within this economy of power… betray doubt about this techno-humanist project… Many of these people consider themselves part of an emerging New Age of spiritual and ecological awareness. They share a desire to communicate with a numinous, extrahuman Other – a realm of power, meaning and intelligence found somewhere beyond the boundaries of the ego, and beyond the confines of a

> rationalist modern worldview. This desire is felt to be a part of a broader societal imperative – a refusal of the disenchanting consequences of secular, scientific-industrial modernity, and an attempt to develop a culture of reenchantment, a new planetary culture that would dwell in harmony with the spirit of the Earth. (2001, 3-4)

Pagans are clearly among these persons. One factor in the Pagan process of re-enchantment is the dissolution of boundaries between the sacred and mundane. Adler notes: "One of the foremost characteristics of Neo-Paganism is the return to the ancient idea that there is no distinction between spiritual and material, sacred and secular. We generally think of spiritual concerns as apart from mundane concerns. This is entirely opposed to the Pagan perception" (1986, 12).

Unfortunately, the theoretical concept that there is nothing profane, is easier to grasp than the lived experience. As persons raised in a dualistic culture I do not expect Pagans can easily disentangle from these categories.

Degrees of Sacred

The re-enchantment process in contemporary Paganism is hindered by the lack of an adequate language to describe the experience of universal sacredness, and specifically to describe the sacrality of urban spaces. The indigenous Dakota peoples of North America similarly understand all things in this world to be sacred. Their language is able to describe this sacredness in subtle degrees. Thus, for example, the site of a Sundance ceremony is made more sacred during the three-day ritual, but the geographic area is considered to be sacred year round and would be a sacred area even if the Sundance was never conducted in that space.[19]

Contemporary Pagans also view the entire world as sacred, but have yet to develop a discourse that allows for degrees of the sacred. Current discussions among Pagans reveal an awkwardness in distinguishing between the crafted sacred space of a ritual or home altar; the sacred space of the natural world, untouched by humans (or with minimal interference); ancient monumental sacred spaces; and the sacred space experienced daily in the urban world – space that was previously considered mundane/ profane. Despite Pagan teachings to the contrary, the sacred-mundane dichotomy remains as Pagans try to describe what spaces are sacred and to what degree. This dichotomy is an ingrained worldview established by the prominent dualistic beliefs of popular religion and the Judeo-Christian roots of ceremonial magic that has influenced modern Paganism. Even prominent Pagan elders (at least those with published works) seem unable to adequately discuss how different spaces are sacred. Michael York observes that "Pantheism has always had difficulties with the mundane, and modern Western paganism is no exception. The ordinary both is and is not sacred. The deciding point is attitudinal and depends on whether or not the perceiver is in an ecstatic state. Although in principle, everything may be holy, it does not always feel that way" (2003, 63). This is the essence of the problem. Despite the lack of discourse, the reality of how Pagans perceive the world and the place of the Sacred within it requires a language that allows some things to be more sacred if only temporarily and even if the perceiver understands that this heightened-sacredness is subjective, constructed, or conditional.

Chas Clifton, a scholar and practitioner of Paganism, advocates for Pagans to re-evaluate the definition of nature and perceptions of nature. In "Nature Religion for Real"

he declares:

> Rather than trying to be revived ancient Somebodies-or-Other, rather than trying to adapt or adopt Native spirituality… I would rather see my fellow Pagans focus on becoming rooted. I am not proposing some agrarian fantasy of instant peasant-hood here, nor am I ruling out people's needs or desires to move around occasionally. But when we are in a place, let's be in. Let us truly learn from it and learn about it. Let us feel its tides and changes in our lives…
> This knowledge is not limited to persons living in rural areas, but is equally important for city-dwellers who seek to "connect with the Earth." (1998, n.p.)

Starhawk advocates for the same rootedness in an individual's home environment in *The Earth Path* (2004). Such knowledge, as a familiarization with the physical world, aids in the re-enchantment of that world as Pagans come to accept nature for what it is rather than its utilitarian function in an economist, consumerist, materialistic modern world.

Creation is sacred

Just as Pagans are expected (through communally shared beliefs) to accept the intrinsic value of nature, they are also encouraged to acknowledge the intrinsic sacrality of those things that are otherwise considered opposed to nature, namely man-made objects or artifacts. As a part of the physical world, crafted objects participate in Paganism's animated, holistic worldview that encompasses all of existence. Artifacts are human creations and, in accordance with a Pagan worldview, are thus an expression of the Sacred made manifest in the world. Anthropoligist Loretta Orion observes that among Pagans, the creative process is a sacred art (1995, 59, 75-6). This is most evident among artisans and crafts persons who are often perceived as human mediums or tools for sacred creation, as Sabina Magliocco illustrates in her folklore study *Neo-Pagan Sacred*

Art and Altars: Making Things Whole (2001). Crafted objects are imbued with sacrality insofar as they are often created with a specific intent. Andrea stated: "I think we create man-made objects not only as tools, but [because] it's also paying homage to the ideas and to the energies and spirits that we have within us." Pagan ritual tools such as athames (ritual knife) and wands are examples of commonly used items that are crafted. Athames can easily be purchased in occult or metaphysical stores as well as on-line and have been specifically crafted or marketed for ritual use. Alternatively, a kitchen knife or a decorative knife could also be purchased and consecrated as a ritual tool. As a third option, an athame can be hand-crafted by a practitioner. Raymond Buckland gives simple instructions for this process in his *Complete Book of Witchcraft* (1993, 29-30). Similarly, elaborate wands can be bought at occult stores, or can be made at home. City Raven, a middle-aged practitioner and resident of Halifax, used the wand as an example in her response to a question regarding the relationship between man-made objects and nature: "Well, I would say we take a lot of things from nature and refine them. So, there's a fine line. I mean, for example, a wand: you can take a tree branch or you can take that tree branch and you can carve it and you can polish it and you can paint on it and you can add things to it and it's still a natural thing, it's just been changed and refined."

In response to my inquiry regarding commercialized clay pottery, Erin, a Pagan potter in Halifax replied "Yes, it's still made of clay, but it's not made with any respect at all for the processes of the materials." Hand-crafted items are usually felt to be more sacred because much care and personal energy has been invested in their creation (cf. Magliocco 2001, 23), whereas manufactured items, while designed with a purpose, are

not imbued with the care and effort given by a craftsperson. As commonly used objects, artifacts are implicated in the dialogue concerning degrees of sacred and nature.

Although they are not "natural," manufactured objects have a prominent place in Pagan rituals and daily life. For example, ritual tools such as athames, chalices, and candles, are basic elements of Pagan practice and although many Pagans declare that they do not *need* these tools to work effective rituals (because the energy required resides within the practitioner not tools), they nevertheless frequently choose to use them to focus magical energies and create an atmosphere for ritual. Ritual tools are often consecrated artifacts. Ideally they are hand-made by the user or inherited, but they can also be bought at occult and metaphysical shops, during festivals, and online. Alternately, ritual tools need not be specific items set aside for ritual use. Kitchen witches and eclectic Pagans make use of whatever tools are at hand. Orion observes that, "the more Americanized witches (and other Neopagans) take pleasure in using simple kitchen tools as ceremonial ones" (1995, 118). Pagan author Christopher Penczak promotes the use of common tools as creative alternatives to standardized ritual artifacts: "Urban magick often necessitates change from tradition... Necessity is the mother of invention, and urban altars, shrines and offering should reflect these creative changes. ... As a modern practitioner, use the tools available to you in the city" (2001, 107). These tools may be household items made ritually sacred through their use. They can also be items picked up off of the street, as is the case in "junkyard magic" using discarded items (Raven and Schwartzstein 2002, 83). Magliocco comments on the process by which mundane objects become ritual tools when she states: "Pagans may also convert ordinary commercial items into magical tools,

subverting the item's original meaning and function, or layering new, esoteric meanings onto everyday objects" (2001, 23).

Complex consecration rituals are not necessary every time a Pagan wants to use her kitchen knife as an athame or her crock pot as a cauldron. The assumed inherent sacrality of all of creation is a central factor in the appropriation of mundane objects for sacred tools. Orion remarks that "common paring knives are the best tools for the witch who truly believes in immanence: the goddess (divinity) is in all things (even kitchen tools) and all acts, including peeling a potato, may be sacred acts depending on one's focus" (1995, 118).

Not all Pagans are comfortable using common household items as ritual tools because they have been taught that special artifacts must be bought or made, consecrated, and set aside for ritual use. These artifacts have been adopted from occult traditions or recreated from modern Pagan interpretations of ancient Celtic, Norse, or Egyptian religion. A re-created ancient ritual relic is perceived to be more sacred because it is symbolically connected with ancient pagan religion. But, as many eclectic Pagans hasten to note in defence of common household tools, the traditional tools of Pagan ritual were the daily tools of the ancient world; cauldrons, brooms, swords, knives, and chalices all have practical functions (cf. Maglioco 2001, 23). These artifacts are all manufactured items, created with technologies current at the time.

Manufactured objects are an integrated part of modern life for Pagans and non-Pagans alike. As urban Pagans attempt to bridge the gap between the Old Religion and modern life, some have chosen to embrace modern conveniences and approporiate

mundane tools for sacred work. For example, in her book *Everyday Magic: Spells and Rituals for Modern Living*, Dorothy Morrison encourages Pagans to take advantage of the modern conveniences of the technological age in their daily lives and magical practices.

> Magic equals creativity. Creativity equals life. This means that life – how we live it and what we do with it – is the rawest form of magic. The technological resources created by humankind have a magic all their own, and incorporating them into personal magic brings an increase of power to every spell performed. Denying that source of magic is tantamount to refusing magical assistance and a hindrance to all efforts of enchantment. It all boils down to one thing. If it works, use it to your best advantage and be glad for the help. (2002, 55)

Morrison's declaration "if it works use it" is common among contemporary Pagans. Common man-made items are instrumental to everyday life and to developing a relationship with the complex web of all existence. As Link notes in an online article:

> Ordinary things are sacred too and being ordinary makes them no less special. That same Earth essence living in the lush green forest also lives in all the simple objects we see and touch every day…
> Earth worshippers often hold special reverence for natural settings, the woods, the beach, the mountains. But are things made by humans any less Earthly? We too are a part of the Earth, not something separate. We are linked to it, part of the same whole, and therefore so are the things we build. We make things because it is our nature to do so, like a forest makes trees and like trees make leaves. So, while you may discover the mysteries of nature by watching a river flow, you can also find a few lessons by watching a railroad. Can the hot and cold knobs of our faucet help you understand balance between opposites? Can pondering your electrical outlets give you new sources of energy? Can the telephone help you feel how all things link together? (n.d.)

The effectiveness of artifacts can be measured by the degree to which they enable Pagans to re-connect with the divine, holistic world.

These mundane forms of magic are recognized and embraced by many modern Pagans but, conversely, they are rejected by those Pagans who disdain the use of modern tools, especially modern technologies, in ritual events. However, even this latter group

inevitably utilizes modern conveniences in some form, whether or not they consider the tools to be magical. For example, among a group of academically minded and long-practising Pagans I met, the majority of them preferred to not use computers beyond the basic functions of a word processor and academic e-mail. On the other hand, they did not seem to mind using their modern oven and stainless-steel pots when making jam as part of their weekly magical-work day. This group of Pagans is an example of urban Pagans who qualify as such by default of their working environment not conscious choice. They have not purposefully sought out urban forms of practice, such as are advocated by Morrison, Penczak, Kaldera, and Schwartzstein, but neither do they reject the urban world. They are simply living a Pagan lifestyle as best they can in a modern world. As a tool used in the process of preparing home-made jam, the oven is an example of a mundane, modern convenience given a sacred or magical purpose.

We must keep in mind that in the Pagan worldview things are sacred not because of their utilitarian function but because they are a part of the whole that is nature or creation and are inherently sacred. This was evident in Orion's observation that a potato peeler and the act of peeling potatoes are both sacred. Starhawk concurs that "The Goddess is manifest in the food we eat, the people we love, the work we do, the homes in which we live… It is through the material world that we open ourselves to the Goddess" (Starhawk 1999, 108). Paganism is a this-worldly religion that embraces the world in all its manifestations and seeks to know the divine through the world, not apart from it. Insofar as modern conveniences and cities are a part of the world, they are also a part of the Pagan world and the subject of re-enchantments.

CHAPTER 4

"GODDESS IS ALIVE; MAGICK IS AFOOT"
RE-POPULATING THE CITY

Cities are habitations created by and for humans. However, as urban geographers and planners acknowledge, cities are not the dwelling place of humans alone. Between and within the human structures are found an entire ecostystem, including plants, animal and insects. Contrary to visions of a barren concrete jungle cut off from the natural world and its diverse ecosystems, the city engenders an urban ecology rich with life. Urban Pagans embrace urban ecolgies as they cultiuvate their gardens, stroll through city parks, and rescues stray animals. In addition to honouring the earthly creatures of the city, Pagans are actively repopulating their urban world with magical beings through their teachings and creative endeavours. The fertile imagination of the Pagan community appears to know no boundaries as it conjures up urban power animals, urban deities, urban faeries, and other urban spirits (all of whom are other-than-human persons with unique characteristics and independent lives) that transform the mundane population of the city into an enchanted realm of super-natural possibilities and encounters.

Spirit Beings

The first among these spiritual beings are totem animals. Many introductory guides to Paganism teach practitioners about the role of totem or power animals as spirit

helpers and teachers. This concept was made popular in the Western world by Michael Harner's 1980 publication *The Way of the Shaman* and the subsequent influence of Core Shamanism. These animals are frequently identified with totem animalss of Celtic and North American spiritual traditions, such as Owl, Bear, Wolf, Turtle, Boar, and Salmon. There are multiple approaches to working with power animals (or guardian spirit animals) from a spiritual perspective: they may be considered the essence of a species with which an individual feels a spiritual kinship, they may appear in a dream to teach a lesson, they may be a physical or spiritual companion animal, or they may offer some other relationship with a spirit-animal. Individual Pagans often relate to the traditionally established characteristics of one or more animal species. For example, an individual might encounter a wolf and interpret this as a meaningful sign to be interpreted. But the chances of crossing a live wolf in the city are slim. Some traditional spirit animals are common in cities, such as crows, cats and dogs, but the lessons to be learned from power animals are limited if only some animals can be physically encountered within a city. One solution suggested by a Pagan teacher I interviewed was that a likeness of a power animal could act as the vehicle through which the animal communicates a lesson (Ravenharte 2004). Pagans will often decorate their homes with statues and pictures of their power animal.[20] Similarly, if a picture of a wolf draws the attention of the woman in the above example, she may interpret that occasion as Wolf (the spirit animal) wanting to teach her a lesson. Acknowledging likenesses of power animals is a significant innovation that enables urban Pagans to encounter animal spirit helpers from within the city on a regular basis.

Penczak, Kaldera, and Schwartztein explore specifically urban totem animals in their books. In addition to traditional animals such as Cat, Crow and Hound, these authors encourage urban Pagans to explore totemic relationships with animals native to cities, such as Ants, Cockroaches, Raccoons, Pigeon, and Squirrels. As creatures of urban ecologies they are recommended as spirit guides to the city. Penczak tells his readers "Any animal surviving and thriving in a city is a testament to the powers of adaptability. You need adaptability as well in order to survive and prosper in the urban jungle" (2001, 47). Many lists of power or totem animals and their associated characteristics that are available in books and online also include animals such as insects and common urban-dwelling animals in addition to more traditional totem animals and a wealth of other animals. With photographs and other likenesses, urban Pagans have ready access to all of these power animals as potential spirit guides.

Faery

A second form of spiritual beings popularly discussed by Pagans are faeries. The term faery encompasses a broad range of spiritual beings and its definition is dependent upon its use by believers. It is variously used to refer to the sidhe nobility of fairy tales and fantasy fiction, the trickster "good neighbours" of folklore, spiritual essences of nature, and spirit entities who function as healers and helpers of many types (akin to popular notions of angels). Faeries are typically associated with the natural world of trees and flowers. Descriptions of faeries are gleaned from specific books on faeries, classic folk-tale and fairy-tale collections, art, and fantasy literature. The presence of faeries in

Pagan discourses is vague; they seem to linger at the borders of discourse. There is little explicit discussion of faery, but there are frequent references. In my conversations and interviews with Pagans I discovered that faeries are rarely spoken of directly, but they do appear implicitly in discussions, rarely with explicit explanations regarding their presence. Faeries are often referenced in Pagan introductory books with an assumption that the reader knows what the author is speaking of. Books dedicated to discussions of Faery can be found in the New Age or Occult bookshelves of most stores, in addition to fairy tales (found in the children's or mythology section) and art books. Faeries also manifest during rituals. In some traditions they are invoked with the cardinal directions during the casting (creation) of a ritual circle. In one ritual I attended, the giggling behaviour of two participants in an otherwise quiet and meditative ritual was attributed to faeries who were sighted dancing around the edge of the circle behind the giggling ladies and also displayed on the altar as a decorative figurine placed there by a participant. Where each of the participants gleaned their knowledge about faeries I cannot say, but there was an assumed understanding of what faeries are, what they do, and a belief in their presence that was implicit in the brief ensuing discussion. As creatures that linger on the edge of imagination (just as they are thought to exist at the border of our world), faeries are a rich source for a re-enchantment of the world.

Faery Literature

Literature, especially the fantasy genre, is a well-acknowledged source for beliefs of Paganism.[21] Many Pagans creatively draw from and interact with the ideas presented in

fantasy-fiction as they develop their personal worldviews. J.R.R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* trilogy, Marion Zimmer Bradley's *Mists of Avalon,* and Terry Pratchett's Discworld series are commonly cited examples. Canadian author Charles DeLint is another popular writer who deserves to be referenced as a source for urban Pagans, because many of his stories are situated in a modern urban setting.[22] DeLint's novels are peopled with urban dwellers who see faery, travel through faery, are faery, and generally cross paths with faery in their ordinary lives. The following two samples of deLint's writing illustrate his vision of faery as it intersects with the urban world and simultaneously serve as an example of how an enchanted urban world may be perceived by an animist, as deLint describes himself.[23] The first selection is from *The Onion Girl*:

> I've always been aware of the otherworld, of spirits that exist in that twilight place that lies in the corner of our eyes, of faerie and stranger things still that we spy only when we're not really paying attention to them, whispers and flickering shadows, here one moment, gone the instant we turn our head for a closer look. But I couldn't always find them. And when I did, for a long time I thought they were only this excess of imagination that I carry around inside me, that somehow it was leaking out of me into the world.
>
> In terms of what Professor Dapple calls consensual reality – that the world is as it is because that's how we've all agreed it is – I seem to carry this magical bubble world around with me, inside and hidden from the world we all inhabit. A strange and wonderful world where the implausible becomes not only possible, but probable…
>
> I see things from the corner of my eye that shouldn't be there, but are, if only for a brief, flickering moment. At a flea market, an old black teapot turns into a badger and scurries away…
>
> Oh, and the gargoyles…sitting high up on their perches, pretending to be stone while having long conversations with pigeons and crows. I've caught them twitching, moving from one position to another, the sly look that freezes mid-wink when they realize I'm watching. (2001, 14-15)

The next illustration, from *Spirits in the Wire*, takes place inside Woodforest Plaza, "a two-storied glass and concrete shopping centre," at night when the faeries are hosting a

dance.

> Considering the dancers she would have expected [the music] to be far more exotic: some sort of outlandish elfin creature creating the music live, rather than having it come from a simple recording. But the dancers made up for the mundane source of the music.
>
> There were little people half Dick's [a hob] size that seemed to be made of twigs and moss and grass, although here and there she spied a few similar creatures that looked to be made of wiring, with sparkplug noses and circuit board torsos.
>
> There were tall men and women with pointed ears, dressed in stately gowns and Victorian waistcoats and suits. Others the same size in rough fabrics with vests and cloaks that were as much leaves and moss and feathers as they were cloth. Others still in skateboarders' baggy cargo pants and T-shirts. (2003, 353-4)

In *The Paganism Reader,* edited by Chas Clifton and Graham Harvey, Charles deLint is cited as a significant source for contemporary Pagans (2004, 1) and is referenced by Gordon MacLellan in his discussion of modern relationships with Faerie within the anthology (2004, 371). DeLint's books are recommended by Francesca de Grandis, founder of The 3rd Road Tradition of Faerie Shamanism, as an excellent source for learning about Faery.[24] According to an advertisement for Paganpalooza 1997, deLint is considered by many to be a "favourite Pagan author." These examples indicating deLint's influence are complimented by the testimonies of Pagan informants.

Several of my interview participants were avid fans of deLint's works as were their Pagan friends, and many Pagan websites and online discussion groups attest to his popularity within the Pagan community. Pagan readers identify with the enchanted and magical urban worlds he creates. Andrea reported: "I can't think of anyone other than someone who is Pagan, living in a city, who would read Charles deLint. It gives you everything that we feel is there" (2003). Willa echoed Andrea's sentiments when she

declared: "I love his stuff, it seems so true to my experience. I feel as if he knew and saw the same things I do" (2003). For many Pagans, deLint's books seem more real than fantastic because he deftly integrates the folk beliefs and worldviews of different cultures from North American aboriginals to gypsies with old-world faery-lore and modern Pagan or animist concepts. These worldviews are contextualized within an urban setting full of ordinary people who are caught up in extra-ordinary events when the world of Faery crosses their paths. For a community of people seeking a re-enchantment of the mundane, secularized urban world, urban fantasy by authors such as deLint offers a glimpse into the possibilities of magic in back-alleys, trees that are fed by stories, hobs living in a used book-shop, ancestor spirit-animals living on the street, and pixies infesting computers faster than a hacker's virus. "If there really was a Fae doorway in an urban place, I think it would work very much like [Charles deLint] describes it… In a romanticized way he does touch on a lot of the issues at the heart of urban paganism, in the sense of connecting both to the city and what lies beneath it, and fitting that connection to the sacred into a day to day life that doesn't always necessarily really make room for it" (Shadowsinger 2003). Erin reiterated what other Pagans had already affectionately stated: "I love Charles deLint!… I love how he integrates the urban world into the spirit world. I think that's fabulous. I love the idea that there's faeries hanging out in the alleyway. It kind of gives me hope that there's something going on in the city. [laughs]. Something – that it's not spiritually dead. …That nature's fighting back; the spirit realm can exist in this place."

The intertwining of the spiritual, the world of nature, and an enchanting world of

faeries and magical beings within an urban landscape ripened by hardships is what makes deLint's books so poignant to Pagan readers. As Erin states, these fantasy stories offer hope to Pagans that the modern, secularized city is secretly filled with magic and Spirit and otherworldly beings. Urban fantasy literature also provides insight into how Pagans might conceive of faeries and other spirit beings in a city environment.

Although deLint is not explicitly trying to influence how Pagans perceive an urban world, his publications have nevertheless had an impact on his Pagan (and non-Pagan) readers as they are presented with a new, exciting, and enchanting vision of the city. Newford is the "every-city" that readers can identify with and compare to their own urban world. An informal on-line poll of a Yahoo! discussion group for deLint fans revealed that half of the respondents practice a nature-based religion (n=42). Although I can not draw any decisive conclusions from this small, select sample, my observation, supported by the testimonies of interviewees and members of the Yahoo! fan group, is that Pagans who read deLint's works are attracted to the seemingly Pagan elements of his stories and have employed his creative visions in their own re-visioning of urban landscapes.

Faery Art

Other artists have also offered glimpses into an enchanted urban world that is home to faery folk, though few so descriptively as Charles deLint. Brian Froud, an artist renowned for his faery art and his fantastical creativity, has painted and written extensively on faeries. His two most popular books on the topic are *Faeries* (1978) and

Good Faeries /Bad Faeries (1998). The former is a classic study of faeries as denizens of the United Kingdom's history. The latter publication offers greater insight into the spirit world of faery existing on the borders of this world. The book inspired an oracle deck featuring Froud's faeries.

"*Good Faeries / Bad Faeries* is about the magic in our lives today; it links faeries of the past with faeries of the present and future" (Froud 1998, n.p.). This grand collection of faery art includes descriptions of many contemporary faeries both "good" and "bad".[25] Among these are Bright Shadow who "fights the street shadows of drugs and menacing violence, illuminating dark alleyways with the light of her compassion," and a Disruptive Bogle whose "mischief causes e-mails to be sent to the wrong addresses, faxes to arrive garbled or half printed, and mobile phones to go down" (ibid.). Other urban tricksters include the Street Corner Lurker, the Buttered Toast Faery, the Pen Stealer, and Computer Glitch – all of whose characteristics are explicit in their name. Most of the faeries that Froud describes are playful beings and his descriptions of them are equally light-hearted and creative. This is reflective of how most Pagans I interviewed relate to faeries in their everyday lives. Many of these modern faeries are derived from the antics of faeries found in old fairy-tales and elaborated upon – such as the tangled knots made by the Bad Hair Day Faery – while other modern faeries have found a niche that was unknown to their fairy-tale ancestors, such as the credit card.

The artwork accompanying Froud's descriptions is much less evocative of an urban element; the faeries are depicted either among other wild-looking faeries and toadstools or against a dark back ground. An extensive internet search for urban faery art

reveals that there is little of it available online,[26] and my extensive personal collection of faery art and story books confirms that the vast majority of depictions are confined to nature settings. Faery artist Amy Brown has a couple of pieces that incorporate household elements, and a few other artists offer pictures of punk-like faeries in fishnet stockings and striped socks sitting in a concrete alleyway,[27] but by and large the majority of faery (and fairy) art continues to focus on wild pan-like figures, Victorian associations with nature (epitomized by the artwork of Cicely Mary Barker), or spiritual entities pictured as ethereal light forms (as many of Froud's more recent paintings portray). Artists and Pagans continue to primarily associate faery with the natural world of flowers, trees, woodland creatures, and the four elements of earth, air, fire and water. During my interviews I found this to be the dominant perception of faery. Some informants acknowledged that faeries could live in a city, where they would most likely be found in a garden or house plant.

Faery Insights

Gordon MacLellan's contribution to *The Paganism Reader* entitled "Entertaining faeries" provides a compelling re-visioning of faery specifically written for an audience of Pagans. MacLellan encourages readers to look to their local landscape for faeries, rather than travelling to wild places anticipating encounters with majestic beings. He reminds readers that the original stories of faery were simple tales of "living with the Good Neighbours down the road" (2004, 368). These were the faeries of farmyards, hedgerows and homes, which can easily be translated to the urban and suburban neighbourhoods of

parks, gardens, and houses. "The World is changing and both ourselves and the people of Faerie with it. We who are Pagan seek a different relationship with the world than our recent ancestors and can share a different set of friendships with Faerie" (ibid., 368). Several informants spoke of the tricks faeries have played with them in their homes. None spoke of leaving traditional food or drink offerings out for the faeries, as Starhawk recommends for modern families (1998, 193-4). However, MacLellan's proposal has implications beyond acknowledging houseplant faeries who hide car keys.

Graham Harvey's introduction to MacLellan's article elucidates the possible results of applying his perception of faerie to the urban world as a way to bridge the perceived gulf between nature and the city: "[MacLellan] suggests that our homes too are, or could be, part of the sacred ecology, the diversity of which Paganism attempts to enhance and celebrate. It suggests that while we might encounter much that is strange 'out there' in the woods and wilderness, we might also attempt to make space in our busy lives to attend to those who live alongside us" (Clifton and Harvey 2004, 365-6).

It is less-easy to conceive of faeries in a sky-rise apartment building or hiding in alleyways. Urban faeries are rarely dealt with explicitly in Pagan discourses. However, they are not foreign to urban realms. In *A Witch's Guide to Faery Folk*, Edain McCoy states: "Whether you are in a magick circle or in a city apartment, or wandering through a secluded wood, your best chance to see faeries is to shift your consciousness to enable you to peer into the astral world where these beings live" (ibid., 38). She also admits that "because of the deep archetypal associations of faeries and nature, many witches new at faery contact find that a natural setting better facilitates faery sightings and contact"

(1994, 41), however, this is in spite of the fact that faeries can be located anywhere, including within cities. In the companion book to Froud's *Faeries' Oracle* (a popular divinatory deck among Pagans I have met), Jessica Macbeth describes the relationship between human and faery worlds: "To interact with Faery it helps to realize that the otherworld is everywhere. It overlays our mundane world, enhancing it with magic and faery glamour when we open our eyes to see. The Faery counterpart of your own living room might be a garden, a meadow, a forest, … or anything else – and the energy of that influences you, whether you are conscious of it or not. So wherever you are, the faeries are there too – or can be in the blink of an eye. You don't have to go anywhere special; where you already are *is* special" (Macbeth 2000, 24-5).

The ubiquitous presence of faery is central to an understanding of the possible urban Pagan relationships with faery, despite the prominent associations between faeries and wild, pristine nature. Publications such as deLint's, Froud's, Macbeth's, McCoy's, and MacLellan's play an important role in re-defining what has become the traditional visions of faeries in order to re-imagine the possible relationships between humans (especially urban-dwellers) and faery. Of the Pagans I interviewed who believe in faery, the majority of them spoke of the presence of faeries in their home or backyard. Though few admitted to having any tangible relationships with faery, those who did spoke positively of their relationship with these enchanted, otherworldly beings. Household and urban faeries offer a glimpse into possible Pagan relationships with the other, enchanted world that is *more than* a mundane world seemingly void of spirituality. For those Pagans who believe in faery (and not all Pagans do), developing a reciprocal relationship

with faerie brings the mundane world into contact with the other-world and subsequently re-enchants mundania as a dynamic world that allows for encounters with the spiritual world and its inhabitants in everyday events, not just in sacred places and times. As Pagans seek to develop such a spiritual and enchanted vision of their daily world, they generally rely upon their own experiences but they are also influenced (explicitly or implicitly) by the books they read. Authors such as deLint, Froud, Macbeth, and MacLellan play an important role in exploring the realm of faery as it overlaps with the modern urban world. These authors specifically seek to shift Pagan understandings of faery away from the trivialized visions of Victorian flower-fairies to a more dynamic vision of faery as otherworldly beings of folklore both ancient and new.

Urban Spirits

As has already been noted, Pagans primarily associate faeries with realms beyond the city rather than with urban environments. This does not preclude that they do not believe in spirits of an urban world as well – but many Pagans choose to not label these spirits as "faeries." Urban spirits and faeries are not synonymous; the former are generally allied with material things, whereas the latter are associated with ideas and behaviours. Penczak provides an example of urban spirits in the following description:

> Strong mechanical spirits live in the city, taking the form of trains, subways, cars, planes and streetlights… Working with mechanical spirits is an exciting frontier in modern magick… Some magical seekers prefer traditional techniques and paradigms. Others fail to resonate with them, since they are not living in an ancient culture. Modern viewpoints, like mechanical spirits, give modern practitioners a chance to find what [vehicle for communicating with spirit helpers] is comfortable for them. (2001, 62-3)

Spirits and other super-natural entities are perhaps easier to conceive of as existing in an urban environment because they do not have specific associations with the natural world. Skyscrapers and the mechanical cranes that build them enthral one Pagan I spoke with in Halifax. Amanita identifies skyscrapers as having individual characters and provided me with some of her art illustrating these tall beings. She is not alone in personifying sky-scrapers – she is part of an online community that discusses these entities. As physical buildings, sky-scrapers are usually home to many large corporations and are centres of finance that enclose thousands of people. According to Amanita, sky-scraper entities can see all that happens inside their glass and concrete walls as well as all that happens outside in the city streets far and wide giving them great wisdom concerning events in the modern urban world. In a short story, Amanita describes the creation of these entities through the fictional words of one Tower: "I gestated in the minds of my architects, was conceived on their drawing boards and computers, and finally brought into physical being by a great many hard-hatted workers and their machines."[28] The creation of a sky-scraper and its otherworldly embodiment are intrinsically connected to humans.

A common trait of many urban spirits or entities is their connection to the physical structures of the urban world, not merely because it is their home but because both are created through human construction. In regards to the creation of mechanical spirits, Penczak explains that "Regardless of the method of creation, the great creator spirit works through all acts of creation and imbues them with spirit energy. We are creators too, and we give our creations the same powers" (2001, 62). This theory was reiterated

by several of the urban Pagans I interviewed and parallels the assumption that hand-crafted objects are more natural than mass-produced, machine-made objects because they have been imbued with human spirit and energy.

Urban Deities

Contemporary Paganism frequently includes polytheism among its defining characteristics. In some instances, polytheistic deities are anthropomorphic gods and goddesses such as the Norse Aesir who inhabit the realm of Asgard. In other cases, polytheistic deities are personifications of those things deemed important enough by humans to have a patron deity. In either case, polytheistic deities have well-defined characteristics suited to their imagined roles. Frequently cited examples of polytheistic pantheons include Greek, Roman, Celtic, and Norse gods, which have been adopted by contemporary Pagans.

In the re-enchanted urban world, the gods of ancient pagan traditions have a new-found home. Many of the ancient gods and goddesses were patron-gods of a city or central to the religious life of a city-state (Atherton 1986; Cole 1994; Eck 1986). These deities are being re-imagined by contemporary Pagans to accommodate modern urban life. For example, as a goddess of wisdom and learning, Athena might be considered a patron goddess of universities, colleges and libraries; Zeus and Odin (law-giving deities) may be found in city hall or parliament buildings; Hestia (Goddess of the hearth) might be associated with a furnace; and Hermes or Mercury (gods of travelers) might be invoked at a bus station or airport (Kaldera and Schwartzstein 2002, 48-54). A Pagan in an online forum stated: "One of my patrons is Bridget. Among her aspects is smithcraft. I consider smiths to be the engineers of the 'ancient world,' so I have no trouble picturing my Bridget as a modern civil engineer building bridges and skyscrapers out of steel."

Ancient deities are frequently adapted to the modern world by Pagans, as is evidenced by many introductory Pagan books and online discussions found in public bulletin boards.

In her retelling of a Pagan ritual, Loretta Orion recalls a notable example of secular and sacred symbols blended together.

> In Peter's ritual, for instance, the goddess and god were represented in multiple facets, many of which related to the contemporary world. One of the Amazon goddesses wore horn-rimmed glasses and a business suit. For American witches, a godlike personality in the world must be achieved within the parameters of that world, not the idealized world of the mythic past. The charge of the new moon goddess ("Ain't no mountain high enough") gained considerable power because it was strikingly contemporary and secular. (1995, 154)

The veneration of ancient deities in a modern context, blending meaningful secular symbols with sacred symbols, lies at the heart of much of contemporary Paganism.

In addition to traditional pantheons of many different cultures, some contemporary Pagans have created entirely new gods and goddesses. These deities are specifically correlated with the modern world and its conveniences; they are inspired by mundane life and are said to be "found" by the Pagans who name them. These new deities "fill a modern need that our ancestors would not have dealt with in daily life" says Shayleah Greenwitch, author of the online *Kitchen Witches' Book of Shadows* (2003). In the pantheistic worldview of Paganism, deity exists within all of creation. Found deities are the identified embodiments of modern innovations and are patron deities over aspects of modern life, especially those aspects of concern to Pagans as a community and as individuals. They embody characteristics of modern life and become a focal point for magic, that is, the focused attention of an individual's will to make change in the modern world. Many lists of new deities, written by Pagans from many paths, can be found

online. Some of these lists include a playful deification of famous personages who are clearly identified with modern spheres of knowledge. For example: Albert Einstein, god of physics; Betty Crocker, goddess of the kitchen; and Bill Gates, god of technology. This form of god/dess naming reflects and comments upon North American cultural preoccupations with personages more than it does the creation of new deities. To the best of my knowledge, no Pagan would expect to encounter Bill Gates as a god-figure in a spiritual context. However, many Pagans do interact with other forms of found gods and goddesses.

Two prominent books have been published on this topic. The first book, *Found Goddesses: Asphalta to Viscera* (1988) by Morgan Grey and Julia Penelope, is considered a primary source for this wide-spread phenomenon of creatively naming new goddesses and gods. More recently, Barbara Ardinger has published *Finding New Goddesses: Reclaiming Playfulness in our Spiritual Lives* (2003). The existence of found goddesses predates the publication of these books, as I learned during an interview. Willa, a Pagan in her late fourties, made reference to Squat, a Goddess of Parking Lots. I initially assumed she had read Kaldera and Schwartzstein's recent book (2002) that describes Squat as one aspect of a triple urban goddess. However, upon further inquiry she revealed that she had first heard of this goddess from a friend in 1987 and had been invoking her ever since (as have her children) when she needs a parking spot. The true origins of found goddesses likely lies in the folkloric sharing of ideas among Pagans. Whatever their origins, Pagan publications have certainly brought the idea of found goddesses to a wider audience.

In conversations with Pagans (many of whom have never encountered a book on found goddesses) I have heard frequent reference to Asphalte, a goddess named in *Found Goddesses*. Asphalta, the "goddess of all roads, streets, and highways, and guardian of those who travel on them, is best known for Her miraculous powers of finding parking places" (Grey and Penelope 1988). Computer deities are also very popular among the found deities. Grey and Penelope list Digitalis as their Goddess of Computers;[29] Ardinger lists several names for this Goddess, each embodying a different aspect, including Nerdix, Compuquia, and Cyberia, as well as a wide variety of consorts, Good Neighbours, and a mouse totem animal (2003).

Pagans are conscious that newly found gods and goddesses do not have the same historical credibility as the traditional pagan pantheons. This is not a concern for contemporary Pagans because many of the new deities are explicitly named with playful intent, as the subtitle of Ardinger's book suggests. An example of one such goddess, known by many names to the Pagans and non-Pagans alike who worship her daily, is Caffeina – the goddess of coffee. An enchanting artistic portrayal of her is Amy K. Brown's Java Goddess rising like a steamy genie from a mug of glowing coffee. Brown describes her artistic creation as being "inspired by a really great cup of Crème Brulee coffee, … this morning muse is my vision of the Goddess of Caffeine in all her radiant glory. She whose steamy caresses bring renewed vitality to weary minds and a smile to the lips of her devotees. Long may she reign!"[30]

Pagans are aware that the idea of a goddess of coffee is created through their own veneration of the ubiquitous source of caffeine in North America. The goddess of coffee

is not a solemn deity who requires regular sacrifice[31] nor does she demand attention from devotees. Worship of her, that is, the act of drinking her "sacred brew," is done to satisfy the individual's needs or desires, not those of the goddess. Nevertheless, as the embodiment of a beloved drink, which many persons partake of on a daily basis, she is a real and important deity playfully invoked or blamed, as the situation requires. This same conceptualization of deity applies to all found gods and goddesses. They are real insofar as they are a personification of some element of creation, with whom Pagans may then communicate. They are playful deities because the act of creating or finding them is a joyful act for Pagans as they recognize and celebrate how the sacred can be perceived in every-day life.

Gods of the City

So far I have discussed the development of distinctly modern images of polytheistic Pagan deities as they are associated with existing technologies and contemporary experiences. In addition, new deities are associated with the summation of contemporary urban life: the city itself as a phenomenon. One Pagan, in an attempt to elicit discussion of urban gods from a public online discussion board called "The Cauldron," wrote:

> As much as I revere the Wild, there is an amazingly rich 'spirit' found in the city – the vibrant pulse and rich architecture. At times this Soul is even more powerful than that of the Wild… Have any out there (especially those Urbanites on the list) come across the urban analog to the Green Man… I have taken to calling it the Grey Man but wondered if anyone has something more concrete (I almost missed the unintended pun). I am seeking not so much urban gods but rather *a god of all that is Urban.*

> I was hoping for an urban analog to my woodsy patron. Secondly, the feeling I was getting seemed very similar in role and power to the Green Man. Lastly, … the two beings seem to be in direct competition and therefore appear to be rather nicely similar. If I like anything more than the Wild, it is symmetry. [Italics mine]

The questioner received few responses within the subsequent thread of discussion, and those who did respond referred to ancient deities that they thought were also applicable to the modern world in a specific fashion. Nobody confirmed an experience with of a single embodiment of the city. Nevertheless, the creative explorations of this individual illustrates the extent to which some Pagans are seeking to re-envision Paganism as an urban religion.

The identification of urban deities can be understood through an analysis of two aspects of Pagan theology. Pagan theologies generally fall within two categories. Most contemporary Pagans are polythesists and/or duotheists and/or monists, but are ambiguous about their understanding of the nature of the Divine. As duotheists Pagans, particularly Wiccans, believe that that which is ultimately unknowable is nevertheless approachable through an understanding of complimentary god and goddess figures; the masculine and feminine aspects of the Divine. Because these figures exist in a divine unity, Paganism is monistic; they acknowledge that there is one ultimate source for all of creation. Oftentimes the ultimate source is called the Goddess (to contrast the Pagan understanding of the divine with the perceived monotheism of the Abrahamic religions) or else remains unnamed. Still, Pagans generally prefer to acknowledge many diverse aspects of the Divine in the form of multiple gods and goddesses. Polytheism is favoured because of its pluralism and its ability to encompass and celebrate all of life's multiple

and diverse experiences.

The predominance of pluralistic polytheism is perhaps one reason why Pagans are hesitant to conceive of one universalized urban deity (a "Grey Man" to contrast with the Green Man) in a socially diverse world. Although they share much in common as urban worlds, cities are distinctive in their character. Cities are often attributed with unique identities, especially by those persons who know them intimately as familiar places. Just as ancient Greek and Sumerian civilizations assigned patron gods to individual cities, one might expect that contemporary Pagans would associate particular gods with each city that reflect its character and the needs of its citizens. This does not seem to be the case among the majority of Pagans. During my fieldwork I discovered that most Pagans do not acknowledge any specific city gods or goddesses such as Athena (Goddess of Athens), although after I posed a direct question regarding this during our interview, several informants were intrigued by the concept of a patron deity for their city.

Particular aspects of urban and modern life have deities associated with them, as discussed above, but the city as the organized home of people and buildings does not have the same form of anthropomorphized deity associated with it. For some contemporary Pagans, city deities might manifest as amorphous spirits arising out of the city itself as a unique phenomenon. Such entities are not only dependent upon, but birthed from, modern urban centers.

Spirit of the City

Contemporary Pagans entertain an ambiguous understanding of what constitutes

deity and divine beings. "Spirit" is one term that implies an otherworldly entity with whom Pagans can communicate and interact. One of my standard interview questions probed for a belief in some form of city spirit or pervasive energy unique to a given city. Most informants were quick to confirm that their city (as well as cities in general) has a distinct energy to it that culminates in a unique, identifiable city Spirit – an urban *Genius Loci* or spirit of a place. Two Pagan publications, *The Urban Primitive* (Kaldera and Schwartzstein 2002) and *City Magick* (Penczak 2001), also explore these concepts and provided my initial insight into a belief in city Spirits.

Kaldera and Schwartzstein write that "each city has its own guardian spirit, one whose character is shaped by the souls of its living and dead. The specific spirit of each city has a personality all its own; this internal nature may change over time… as various groups and cultures of people may enter or flee. It will reflect the major attitudes and opinions of the population" (2002, 3). In this passage, the authors anthropomorphize city spirits as social creatures who wish to be acknowledged (that is, to have offerings of some form made to them) and who interact with humans. These "guardian spirits" are also described as possessive creatures who desire to maintain a certain population. Unlike ancient anthropomorphic patron deities, these city spirits do not have an identity apart from their city.

Penczak alternatively describes city spirits as "devas," which he defines as "energies, or spirit forms, who create the patterns of reality on higher levels of existence. The word is originally from Hindu myth, meaning something akin to angel, but the New Age had adopted it to mean creators, or angels, of nature" (2001, 66). He also outlines a

hierarchical schema that allows for multiple, polytheistic devas or spirits operating in a city: "All cities have a devic spirit in control of them. In many ways, this is the spirit of the city itself. The overlighting deva of the city organizes the other spirits. The deva of New York City works with the deva of the Empire State Building, the deva of the Statue of Liberty, the deva of Central Park, and the devas of the East and West Villages" (ibid., 67). As varieties of *genius loci,* Penczak's specializing devas attend to and represent the needs of particular communities.

The descriptions of anthropomorphic and independent city spirits/devas presented by Kaldera, Schwartstein, and Penczak were not commonly shared by the Pagans I spoke with or whose writings I accessed online and in print. This does not mean that other Pagans do not share this understanding of city spirits (especially those who may have been influenced by these books), but it does not seem to be the dominant language or concepts used to describe an encompassing entity for the city.

Danny, a 24-years old Pagan from Newfoundland, had trouble expressing what he felt to be a vague "presence" in his city (St. John's) and how that might relate to his love of "the Rock."[32] Like many Pagans, he has had little opportunity to discuss and share these ideas with other Pagans and may have never previously put words to his experiential knowledge. In his attempt to describe his relationship with the city, Danny related the following:

> St. John's has a spirit. I wouldn't necessarily call it a deity…The same way I have a connection with the island and I could easily say that Newfoundland itself is a deity – not necessarily. I don't know if you'd call him land or what you would call it. But I do recognize; it's almost kinda like the city of St. Johns is a spirit within the deity of Newfoundland…

> [T]his city definitely has a spirit. It's a compilation of everybody who's lived here since the beginning and everything that's happened here. It's like, when I'm walking down the street in the middle of the night; I feel that spirit – it's something – I feel a part of it; it's a part of me.

Danny's connection to his island home is very strong. He grew up in a small community where the ocean was his front yard, but living in the city of St. John's has not altered his connection to the land. He is comfortable in the urban environment of his downtown home close to the harbour. For Danny, the city of St. John's is rich with a spirit that can be accessed from anywhere within the urban environment (including the dance clubs he frequents). A connection between contemporary Pagan Newfoundlanders and their island landscape was observed by Marion Bowman during her fieldwork in Newfoundland in 1995. According to her informants, they sought to relate their rituals to "our fish, our seas, our icebergs, and our trees" (Bowman 2000). Although this is not true of all Pagans in Newfoundland, it is nevertheless an insightful example of how Pagans may create and enact relationships with their geographic locations and it provides a context for understanding Danny's heart-felt connection to the geographic, cultural, and social characteristics of his urban home.

Danny's explicit discussion of the relationship between his city, his geographical island home, and himself was unique among my interviews, but his assertion that the city's spirit is a compilation of people and history is echoed in the responses of other Pagans from across North America. Phoenix confirmed: "all cities have a type of spirit, it's put together by the people who live in it, its architecture, and layout. You feel different in a city than in the wilderness. You feel the energies of so many compact[ed]

people put together." Kat Morgan, from Portland, also emphasized the role of human energies: "Theoretically, I believe all cities have some sort of underlying energy collection that feeds off the people and the people feed off of in turn. I don't know that this could rightly be called a spirit." Although she does not endorse the term "city spirit," her description of a relationship between inhabitants of a city and a unique urban energy is the same as that offered by other Pagans. It may be that she is unwilling to personify this energy, although she does liken the energy of her city with "a unicorn: noble and untamed, but approachable for the pure in spirit." Whatever its metaphysical designation, the essence of a city is felt to be unique and to participate in a reciprocal relationship with its citizens. In response to my question: "Might you be able to identify a 'city spirit' in your area? (An underlying/encompassing energy/entity)" 19-years old Mike, who is currently serving with the U.S. military in Korea and is a native of Chicago practicing Paganism for four years, replied:

> Spirits in general tend to hang around cities I have found. I'm not sure why this is, it's something I'm studying. As for the "spirit of the city," yes, it's like the collective emotions of all the people of the city all at once. It's very interesting, I sort of feel sorry for people that never visit the city to experience this. I mean, think about it: How did the city get there? Many people pouring their Harte [sic] and soul, using their hands and heads to make something to last forever, to stand as a beacon in the night to everything that human kind has accomplished. How can that not have a spirit?

Some Pagans interviewed had difficulty conceiving of one spirit that encompassed an entire city, though they felt such entities existed within smaller units of communities and neighbourhoods. Informants Erin, Andrea, and David each preferred to discuss localized city spirits that reflect a community rather than a broader city spirit. "I'm not

sure there is an all encompassing spirit of the city," said David, and 18-years old practitioner of five years. "There are so many places and each place has its own spirit to it, so it is hard to identify one single city spirit." The difference between city and neighbourhood spirits seems to lie in the degree to which an individual Pagan is experientially able to relate to different levels of communal organization from the localized to the cosmopolitan city. Penczak combines these two levels in his discussion of devas of specific places interacting with an administrative city deva. Andrea also perceives relationships between the smaller localized city entities through an analogy that equates areas of a city with body organs – all of which have an important role to play in the healthy functioning of the city.

As the embodiment of the elements of a city – its civilians, buildings, landscapes and history – the conceptualization of city spirits is a re-enchantment of the urban world. Reverent acknowledgment of city spirits, deities, or devas also serves to re-vitalize cities as inherently sacred places for contemporary Pagans. In an online article titled "Finding Center," Faolan writes: "Gods and goddesses of ancient religion were extensions of the natural world… Our deities, too, are extensions of the earth itself, and this demands that we come to understand the immanence of deity where we live, the spirituality of all nature, including the weeds growing in the cracks of the sidewalk and insects eating garbage in the alley. All of these living creatures are part of the nature we revere" (n.d.). A re-enchantment of the urban world includes the recognition of animate extra-human and metaphysical entities within the urban environment as well as the recognition that cities are inherently sacred.

CHAPTER 5

"WE ARE A CIRCLE WITHIN A CIRCLE" SACRED SPACES, PLACES, AND CITIES

As the site of urban Paganism, modern cities are a contested space. They are locations of both the sacred and mundane. As the home of many diverse religious traditions, cities have been studied by scholars who acknowledge the importance of interactions between religious communities (especially minority communities) and distinct urban places (see Orsi 1999). I seek to join this dialogue by studying the connections contemporary Pagans, as a minority religious group, create with the cities they inhabit. In the cosmology of urban Paganism, cities are conceived as sacred locations; they are animated, imbued with immanent deity, and the home of many forms of extrahuman and metaphysical entities. In addition to these re-enchantments, which I have already discussed, I shall examine the physical characteristics of the city that are seemingly mundane but ultimately sanctified through contemporary Pagan practices.

Sacred Space

Sacred space has traditionally been defined by scholars of religion according to one of two dominant paradigms. In the first paradigm, Mircea Eliade has advocated for sacred space to be understood as inherent within a place. On the other end of the spectrum, sociologists and anthropologists have promoted the position that sacred space

is the sociological construction of a given religious group. In the second paradigm, sacred space is ordinary space ritually made sacred or designated as sacred by a community. Adrian Ivakhiv, a professor of both environmental studies and religious studies, presents a multi-faceted discernment of sacred space that is reminiscent of how many contemporary Pagans conceive of sacred space. According to Ivakhiv,

> sacred space [is] shaped through interaction, over time, between humans and specific extrahuman environments. As people live in particular places, their activities, including their attempts to 'anchor' their own views of the world in the landscape, 'orchestrate' those places in particular ways. But the orchestration includes players with very different agendas – among them, nonhuman inhabitants and environmental 'forces' or 'actants.' Agency, in other words, is complex and multiple, and it is always shaped and influenced by larger social, institutional, and historical structures and processes. (2001, 45-6)

Ivakhiv applies his concept of sacred spaces to rural geographical places (particularly Glastonbury and Sedona) held sacred by specific communities, but the theory of relational, interactive sacred space is applicable to urban centres and the experiences of urban Pagans.

Sacred Space and Place

"Space" and "place" are often used as synonyms, especially when discussing sacred areas. However, Anthony Giddens and Yi-Fu Tuan clearly differentiate them as distinct and polar concepts. Place is an immediate experiential concept whereas space is often theoretical and "out there." Place is local, the setting of social activities, and has a physical presence while space can be dislocated from a place, can be spoken of as an absent thing, and may be a locale empty of meaning (Giddens 1990, 18-9). As they are

experienced, place is an enclosed and humanized space: secure, familiar, well defined with a "geometric personality," and imbued with value (Tuan 1977, 17). Space, on the other hand, is undifferentiated and abstract; it offers freedom and movement (away from stable place), but is also exposed and vulnerable (ibid., ch.5). For Tuan, cities fall within the definition of 'place' as centres of meaning. As the abode of most Pagans, cities are experienced as familiar and secure homes. In contrast, rural and uninhabited (by humans) locations are characterized by open, less defined space that seemingly offers more freedom. Such a dichotomy illuminates the allure of wild as well as rural locales for Pagans as well as for many modern urban dwellers.

On the other hand, cities might be experienced as offering an alluring form of social freedom. In his description of the antebellum cities of North America, Robert Orsi interprets the chaos and jungle of social outcasts as an opportunity for city dwellers to re-create "the urban landscape as an object of fascination and a fantasized space of freedom from social constraint" (1999, 6). This remains a popular description of the city by minority groups, especially eccentric minorities. Pagans often emphasize the ease with which they can be Pagan in the city without fear of being ostracized because city-dwellers are permitted (through social apathy) to be eccentric; Pagans are thus able to hide in the crowd if they want to avoid notice. This is also facilitated by the "alienness of the city" (Orsi 1999, 7) that, despite distancing inhabitants from the world, is of benefit to Pagans because it enables safety in the shadows and crowds of nameless persons. In addition, because of the population density of cities and their purported attraction for eccentricities, Pagans are easily able to find other persons with similar beliefs in order to build a

community of mutual support that can perpetuate the development of urban Paganism.

In *Landscapes of the Sacred*, theologian Belden Lane states:

> The application of the concept of sacred space to modern, technological society may at first seem anomalous. We tend to associate the sacralization of place with 'primitive culture' or at least with pre-industrial societies… If we imagine sacred places within the heart of great cities, we usually think only of grand cathedrals or sculpted city parks. Yet the axiom that sacred place is often very common place ritually made extraordinary would insist that manufactured as well as natural places can function in this way. (1998, 24)

Although he is not specifically referring to a Pagan re-visioning of urban space, Lane's observations nevertheless reflect the possibilities of applying a Pagan worldview, which recognizes the sacred in all things, to modern cities. He continues: "Sacred place is not at all necessarily pastoral and rural in character – something to be sharply distinguished from the fabricated spaces of an urban landscape. It is, after all, a function of the religious imagination, not a quality inherent in the locale as such" (Lane 1998, 25). From an emic perspective, Pagans might disagree with Lane's assertion that locales are not inherently sacred because they believe that the divine is immanent in all things. However, they would agree that sacred space is created and established through religious imagination during ritual and that they therefore have the ability to re-cognicize urban spaces as sacred places even when they are not consistently able to experience it as such in their mundane life.

Creating Sacred Space

Graham Harvey observes that "In the circles in which rituals take place, even though they may be cast in someone's living room, time and space are experienced

differently. In them Pagans step 'between the worlds' and into the Greenwood" (1997, 164). Lynne Hume's anthropological study of Wiccan ritual creation of sacred space likewise observes that all Pagans "believe that the whole earth is sacred and that sacred space can be constructed anywhere" (1998, 312). Sacred circles are ritually constructed, not because the location is not inherently sacred, but because ritual is a tool that "serves as a theatre of action which provides a bridge between the physical and metaphysical, the known and unknown worlds" (Hume 1998, 312).

Shadowsinger, a thirty-years old Pagan resident of Winnipeg, notes the dual nature of sacred space as it is conceived and constructed by Pagans: "If I am sacred, then sacred space is anywhere that I am. And if everything is sacred, then it is also everywhere that I am not." She also, however, qualifies that there are some places where she feels more connected to the sacred or divine, such as a local contemporary Pagan temple. An immediate sense of connection with the sacred is dependant upon multiple factors and differs between individuals. Notably, Shadowsinger's sacred place is a space set aside for sacred ritual and community events and is envisioned and constructed as a permanent sacred space. However, in most cases, Pagan sacred spaces are temporary spaces established at a certain location for the purpose of conducting a ritual.

These spaces created explicitly for ritual use are distinct from sacred sites that are recognized by large numbers of Pagans as permanent sacred places. As Jenny Butler aptly notes in her study of Irish Neo-Pagan sacred sites, even though "the totality of the earth is considered to be sacred" there remain special locations, sacred sites, that have an increased importance to practitioners (2003, 30; cf. Harvey 2000, 163). Butler

specifically addresses natural landscapes, but her observations of how sacred spaces are constructed can also be applied to the urban environment. Sacred sites may be recognized by the presence of supernatural entities, often associated with natural phenomenon; an emotional connection with a place; the presence of prehistoric structures; and the construction of explicit ritual centres (Butler 2003). Although prehistoric structures are less common in urban centres, the remaining categories are applicable to urban spaces. Alexi Kondrateiv, in his interview excerpted previously (p.39), described the individual and collective process of constructing a public space as sacred through a shared recognition of some innate presence.

Alternately, I hypothesize that urban sacred places could be established in accordance with Ivakhiv's theory of sacred place as the culmination of complex dialogues between a place's history and its use. If a group of Pagans were to celebrate the seasons in the same urban space for many years so that they become intimately familiar with the place and build a communal history there, then the temporary sacred space would likely be acknowledged (by the regular attendees) as a permanent sacred place that could be visited between holidays and still maintain its liminal status between the worlds. This place could be in a public park, a metaphysical bookstore, or a priestess' basement. The liminal and sacred quality of this previously mundane space might be attributed by Pagans to the energy repeatedly raised or the continuous presence of the Goddess through frequent invocations. Shadowsinger's description of her local temple located in a downtown retail space implies that something similar to what I have hypothesized above has occurred there. Many studies of coven development imply this process, but I have not

found any research on this phenomenon. Studies of Pagan sacred space almost exclusively focus on the role of creating a temporary circle for ritual or else on the privileging of ancient pagan ritual sites such as Stonehenge. An examination of permanent created sites would be of benefit in understanding the role of sacred space for a movement that is placing roots, as contemporary Paganism is doing.

The creation of sacred space aids Pagans in situating themselves with respect to the world(s) outside of a prescribed sacred space. Although Pagan sacred spaces do not specifically draw a physical demarcation between the sacred area and chaos that exists beyond as other religions do, sacred space is nevertheless a bounded and relational place as it exists between worlds and provides a focal point for understanding relationships with those worlds. "Whatever the dimensions of the space with which he is familiar and in which he regards himself as situated – his country, his city, his village, his house – religious man feels the need always to exist in a total and organized world, in a cosmos" (Eliade 1959, 44). Contemporary urban Pagans situate themselves in cities and within the totality of the planet Earth. For Pagan men and women, the entire world is an holistic, ordered cosmos (which is simultaneously chaotic) that humans can influence through microcosmic actions in the form of magic. Being a human creation, the city is theoretically the aspect of the universe that humans have control over, but even the city is beyond any person's control because there are multiple agendas applied to urban spaces as well as diverse groups seeking to order their fraction of the city in accordance with their needs and worldview. As Orsi observes, urban religious topographies overlap with a multitude of "cultural cartographies – variant mappings reflecting complex histories,

ideologies, spiritualities, and personal experiences and needs" (1999, 52). According to Orsi, the features of an urban landscape

> are not simply the setting for religious experience and expression, but become the very materials for such expressions and experience. City folk do not live *in* the environments; they live *through* them… Religion is always, among other things, a matter of necessary places, sites where the humans and their deities, ancestors or spirits may most intimately communicate; religious practice in the city and countryside alike engages the vicissitudes of the environments that humans find themselves thrown into and makes meaningful places out of contingent spaces…
>
> City people have acted on and with the spaces of the city to make religious meanings in many different ways. They have appropriated public spaces for themselves and transformed them into venues for shaping, displaying, and celebrating their inherited and emergent ways of life and understanding of the world. They have remapped the city, super-imposing their own coordinates of meaning on official cartographies. (1999, 44, 47)

Pagans identify the city as a part of the holistic world in which all things are animate and imbued with an immanent divinity. On individual and communal levels they designate what places are the spiritual heart of the city and in what places they have experienced the greatest connection with the divine or other city spirits. Over the last few decades Pagans have slowly begun to come out of the so-called broom closet as a whole, and out of their private spaces into the public sphere. Pagan Pride Day, an annual international event, is one example of how this coming-out has manifested itself. In Pagan Pride Day events across North America, contemporary Pagans of all traditions gather in a public park to celebrate the autumn equinox, meet other Pagans, and interact with curious non-Pagans from their city as they attempt to raise awareness of Paganism. One of the required mandates dictated by the Pagan Pride Project (www.paganpride.org) is that local coordinators of these events gather as much media attention as possible and host the event, which includes a public ritual, in an easily-accessible urban location so

that everything is visible to the city's community. Pagan Pride Day is a public presentation that subsequently reclaims public and urban space for Pagans.

Common Sacred Space

In addition to the popularly cited sacred places found outdoors "in nature," there are many common sacred places located indoors, within urban spaces. Primary among these are the permanent altars located in Pagan homes (cf. Magliocco 2001, 8). Home altars are indoor sacred spaces that have been ritually established by individual Pagans (or a family). Altars are the sacred spaces that are maintained daily and serve as a focal point for religious actions within the home. These may be ancestor-veneration altars, working altars for ritual use, or a collection of objects sacred to its creator. Household altars are illustrative of the ubiquity of sacred spaces in the daily lives of Pagans. The Spring 2004 issue of *Circle Magazine* was devoted to articles submitted by readers about the role of altars in their daily religious lives. Among the twenty-two submissions were titles such as "The Altar as the Heart of the Home," "My Ever-Evolving Altar," and "Broom Closet Altars." All of the articles advocate for personalized permanent spaces to act as focal points or reminders of Paganism as integral to daily life at home or work. Magliocco has also observed the prominent placement of altars. She states:

> Most Pagans keep standing altars in their homes, where they perform rituals on a regular basis and engage in meditation and other forms of worship. Altars may also be constructed for a particular purpose: to honor a specific deity or to serve as a focal point for magical work towards a specific goal. … Since Pagans believe deity is immanent, an altar can be made anywhere – on the ground in a natural place, at the base of a tree, even in an office or hotel room. (2001, 8-9)

In addition to small altars, the home itself is considered a sacred building and place. Andrea states: "I think that everything's sacred... People build buildings as not only dwellings, places to live, but also as something that is meaningful to them, so I find that very sacred." As human creations, buildings are believed, by many Pagans, to take on the energies of their architects and builders – energy that was either physically or creatively exerted. Homes in particular play a special role in contemporary Pagans practices.

In view of the fact that there are few Pagan churches or permanent community temples, homes provide a stable temple of worship. As an urban and lived-religion, Paganism is often enacted in the home or backyard – somewhere with relative privacy. Nosey neighbours peeping on rituals and subsequently ostracizing the participants (or worse) is a common concern among urban Pagans; but behind closed doors, in the privacy of their own home or fenced yard, Pagans feel free to worship as they please. Reporting on findings from a survey distributed among Witches, Pagans and Goddess worshippers, Marilyn Gottschall states:

> Ritual performance is integral to spiritual practice and it is conducted both individually in home-based practice and in collective ritual. The primary site of religious devotion for this sample [of 50 participants] is the home (96 percent); 86 percent reported that the have home altars, and a majority of those said that turning their homes into sacred space, using icons, altars, candles, incense, etc., was an important part of spiritual expression. Domestic devotional paths for almost all respondents include reading and studying, often on a weekly basis, prayer and meditation, spellcasting, candle magic, and divination. (2000, 63)

In my interviews with urban Pagans I did not specifically inquire about their familiar home-based practices, however, several informants made reference to regular rituals conducted in their home or backyard and described decorating their homes to

deliberately create sacred space. My experiences visiting Pagan homes also confirm the prominence of altars and sacred images.

Homes function as more than temples for enacting ritual; they are also sanctuaries. In *The Magical Household,* Scott Cunningham relates how homes can be re-embraced as centres of magic.

> The structures that housed and protected these early [pre-modern] peoples were more than brick, reeds or logs. Houses were psychic centers, pools of protective energy in which families lived to guard themselves against the dangers of everyday life.
>
> The house was also a shrine to the deity of life itself. Its roof and walls served as a shield from the effects of the elements (both physical and magical) and held in the home's luck, spirit or energy, while its doors guarded against unwanted intrusions. The house sustained life; it was sacred and powerful.
>
> Today, however, we've lost our mystic reverence for our home. Even those of us called toward the forgotten ways of magic often fail to see its powers and influences at work in our everyday lives…
>
> Creating a secure, magical environment in our homes means fashioning an escape from the all-too-physical reality of a world that has turned its back on the spiritual side of life. The home can be transformed into a meditative cocoon of positive energy that provides refuge from the stormy atmosphere of our world.
>
> But the magical home isn't just a fortress. It is one in which the magic of life is recognized and celebrated through timeless rites and spells. Even if we don't live in a seventeenth-century English cottage, a reed hut perched on the banks of the Euphrates or a hollow tree in the New Forest, we can create a place in which both physical and spiritual realities are acknowledged and explored, filling our lives with wonder and excitement. (Cunningham and Harrington 2003, xiv-xvi)

Homes can become a world apart from the congestion of the urban world. They can be made as tranquil or energetic as the inhabitants desire. As sacred places, homes can be personalized with interior designing and personal affects. Sacred space does not need to be ritually constructed or filled with arcane symbols. In response to my question "what is (the) Sacrted and where do you find it?" Devi, a 17-years old eclectic witch from Pittsburgh, replied "In my bedroom. It's crawling with plants and herbs and animals. I

bless everything that grows and it continues to grow and change. That is what is Sacred." For Devi, the Sacred is intimately connected to his personal home space.

Sacred space is where Pagans connect with the divine – and they can do so from any location. Decorations and altars in the home can facilitate this connection through the use of sacred symbols and mnemonic devices that remind practitioners of the immanent omnipresence of the Divine. Homes are an intimate place set apart from the rest of the world by walls and doors, but they are also situated within cities and the entirety of nature and a part of both. Home have neighbours and roads that lead to them from multiple directions, as well as modern technologies connecting them to millions of other homes worldwide. Pagan homes may also become part of a network of sacred spaces when practitioners share their homes with other Pagans in group rituals.

Cities as Sacred Space

Despite the negative associations cities have gathered among Pagans as alienating, claustrophobic, chaotic, noisy, and distracting,[33] cities nevertheless seem to hold a certain appeal. Easy access to modern conveniences is the most commonly expressed benefit of life in an urban centre, but the city is also felt by many to have its own charms and beauty. According to Robert Orsi, even in the mid-nineteenth century, "Some observers found in the Pandemonium, the human density, and even the squalor of cities a distinctly modern expression of the romantic sublime, evocative of the same emotions of mystery and the uncanny that others found in nature or ancient ruins" (1999, 14). Respectively, contemporary Pagans are able to make personal connections with uniquely urban

environments. *The Urban Primitive* and *City Magick* are testaments to these possibilities, and many other individual Pagans have made similar declarations during interviews and in on-line bulletin boards. "Once a person in the city awakens to nature, they might even start seeing all the richness of life around them. It's not just people, garbage trucks, and traffic lights" (from Usenet 1998). Cu Morrigan, a 35-years old eclectic Pagan in Brooklyn, envisions cities as unique places of nature when he defines nature as "Woods, Mountains, anything that is a habitat for Life forms and allows energy to flow. In a lot of ways some people would consider a City to be just as 'Natural' as the deep woods. … I've always found the city to have its own ebb and flow. It has its own History and causes for things that happen. It grows, it breathes and has its own life energy."

Cities are communal spaces created by and for humans. They are composed of multiple, diverse, and dynamic communities of people that can enrich the lives of individuals. "Cities are not only vast sources of power and spirit energy. They are, first and foremost, homes. People do make their livings there, but what they really create is life... Each city has its own personality. Each has a distinct energy, as unique as its people" (Penczak 2000, 273). Given the contemporary Pagan worldview that all things are interconnected, community is a vital part of Paganism, even among solitary practitioners. In her introduction to tenth anniversary edition of *The Spiral Dance*, Starhawk reiterates:

> The three core principles of Goddess religion are immanence, interconnection, and community… Immanence calls us to live our spirituality here in the world, to take action to preserve the earth, to live with integrity and responsibility.
> Interconnection is the understanding that all being is interrelated…
> And Goddess religion is lived in community. Its primary focus is not individual

> salvation of enlightenment or enrichment but the growth and transformation that comes through intimate interactions and common struggles... Community is personal – one's closest friends, relatives, and lovers, those to whom we are accountable. But in a time of global communications, catastrophes, and potential violence, community must also be seen as reaching out to include all the earth. (1999, 22)

Cities bring people together and are often the home of humanitarian and social movements, just as they have been the home of contemporary Paganism. It should be noted that not all Pagans embrace the social and humanitarian ills that Starhawk and the Reclaiming Tradition she co-founded actively endeavour to remedy, but many Pagans are involved with similar issues on a smaller scale of family and local communities concerns.

Degrees of Urban

Not all cities are made alike. Cities come in a variety of sizes and population densities. Some have more green spaces than others. Some have more skyscrapers and apartment complexes. Even within a given city there are degrees of urban life; downtown core business and consumer areas are inherently more urban as congested, fast-paced, concrete jungles than the sub-urban realm of houses and parks at the edge of the city. This degree system is inversely proportionate to the amount of 'nature' visibly present in an area. Suburbs are popular residential area because they bridge the gap between rural and urban life (Tuan 1974, 225) and offer the best of both worlds in their access to nature (in the form of large open spaces) and modern conveniences. Some suburban Pagans have expressed that they would have a difficult time living in downtown areas because it is too fast-paced and lacks large areas of private space and backyards, while other Pagans

enjoy the hectic-pace and find nature wherever it manifests itself. From an environmentalist perspective, high-rise apartments are more earth-friendly than urban sprawl because they accommodate more people in a smaller area. In their desire for more space, suburban Pagans are impinging upon the very nature they profess to protect. I do not mean to criticize these choices, only to point out that those Pagans who live in apartment complexes are not necessarily any less connected to the Earth, and those who live in large suburban homes are not necessarily more embedded in nature or environmentalism. With or without the presence of green nature, from a Pagan worldview cities are inherently sacred spaces inhabited by sacred persons in human and non-human forms.

CHAPTER 6

"WINDING, BINDING THE SEEDS WE'VE SOWN, WEAVING THE TRUTHS WE'VE KNOWN AND DRAWING THEM HOME AGAIN": LIVING AS AN URBAN PAGAN

Having examined the multiple relationships between Paganism and the urban world, I return to the beginning to conclude that urban forms of Paganism are a genuine expression of Pagan relationships with the world as a multi-faceted, fully-integrated whole. In one form, urban Paganism, as it is touted by authors such as Penczak, Telesco, Kaldera, and Schwartzstein, is a self-conscious expression of Pagan relationships with the modern urban world, but urban Paganism also manifests unconsciously in the lived experiences of city dwelling Pagans who inevitably incorporate their daily experiences in their religious practices and worldviews.

Paganism as a lived religion

A central aspiration of urban Paganism is to integrate religion and spirituality with the daily, lived experiences of Pagans. This is considered a necessity, not an option, because Pagan religions are conceived as a celebration of life. In traditional contemporary Pagan discourses the life celebrated is one of seasonal and life cycles. In modern practice, as Pagans have become more comfortable in their religion (most Pagans

are first generation converts), they are uniting their spirituality with their mundane life. In its essence, Paganism is a locally-based form of religion that arises out of experiences with, and observations of, the immediate world. It is thus appropriate that modern Pagans have creatively formed an urban expression of Paganism that is both geographically and spiritually rooted in their daily urban world. As Phoneix, who has practiced as an urban Pagan for four years in both Toronto and Montreal, explained, "My life is in a city, therefore my spiritual one is too."

In order to integrate their spirituality and daily life, contemporary Pagans have first needed to reject the modern dichotomy between the sacred and mundane and the secularized separation of private from public realms and religion from routine daily life. "Urban religion is what comes from the dynamic engagement of religious traditions... with specific features of the industrial and post-industrial cityscapes and with the social conditions of city life. The results are distinctly and specifically urban forms of religious practice, experience, and understanding" (Orsi 1999, 43). Contemporary Paganism must increasingly be ranked among the urban religions as it struggles to establish itself as a viable lived religion relevant to the modern urban world experienced by Pagans. Paganism is a religion that is enacted in every aspect of a practitioner's life. The following Pagan chant aptly illustrates that every action participates in a religious enactment of Paganism:

> Let it begin with each step we take
> And let it begin with each change we make
> And let it begin with each chain we break
> And let it begin every time we awake.

As Orion has noted in her anthropological study of Pagans, they seek to make their lives "a work of art by integrating what in mainstream culture is now divided into separate domains of activity: work, leisure, and religion" (1995, 70). Every aspect of life is incorporated into Pagan spirituality.

Finding ways to relate

Graham Harvey attributes the successful integration of these previously polarized worlds to the influence of shamanic traditions and practices within contemporary Paganism. It is the Pagan forms of shamanism, as opposed to the influences of ceremonial magic, that foster intimate relationships between Paganism, urban environments, regional ecosystems, and the earth's biosphere. Shamanism positions Pagans within their relationships with multiple environments and ecosystems, all of which affect one another. Harvey notes: "The real shamans in the West are engaged in the difficult task of environmental education, they enable people to find ways of relating respectfully to nature. This rarely involves taking people out to the woods and playing drums, but it recognizes that cities are not separate from Nature and that they are part of the environment, affecting and being affected by weather, air, earth, water, animals, plants and 'all our relatives'" (1997, 120). For many Pagans, life in an urban environment is not considered separate from life within the earth's biosphere. Living in the modern urban world serves to make Pagans more aware of the connection they must purposefully seek to rekindle with nature and of the obstacles that humankind has created to living in harmony with that same nature.

Still, the urban world is often treated as an encumbrance. Silver Ravenwolf, a popular Pagan author who is adored by some and highly criticized by others in the Pagan community, approaches urban realities as something that can be addressed by witchcraft.

> I live in the real world that has such neat items as rent, phone bills, electric bills, family upsets, car problems, and bank snafus. Not to mention the biggies, like war, crime, and sometimes uncooperative neighbors.
>
> My point is that I can take this real world and superimpose upon it the world of illusion (which isn't really), in order to either fix or prevent many of life's difficulties – or even better, create happiness and well-being for both myself and others. (2000, xvi)

It is promises like this that boost Pagan book sales among North Americans seeking to improve their lives with quick and magical fixes. Many persons who come to Paganism through such books are seeking a solution to some problem in their life. Many "Wicca 101" texts present a superficial non-reciprocal relationship between Paganism and the urban world wherein Paganism, Witchcraft or magic is offered as a solution for escaping or transcending the modern world, though there are notable exceptions such as Jennifer Hunter's *21st Century Wicca*.

Re-visioning relationships

Contrary to a perception of cities as bothersome obstacles to a spiritual life, many urban Pagans choose to re-vision their spaces as potential sites of contacting the Divine, rather than walls that distance them. In his online article "Finding Centre" published on his own web page, Faolan reveals:

> The days when Pagans dreamt of going to far off mystical groves to talk with their gods are not gone. These dreams are very much with us, and I think that anyone who claimed not to have these fantasies would be lying. It is a dream, an

> ideal, however, not our daily reality. Ancient pagans developed a religion with holidays that reflected their personal life and experience. As modern Pagans we have the duty to learn the very same lessons and shape our earth-centred religion to the place on Earth where we live. In the end, the only way to have a truly Earth-centred religion is to go out and experience it ourselves on a daily basis. Through that first-hand knowledge we can find a spiritual connection to where we live, be it dense city or pristine wilderness. The Earth underlies it all, and is always with us. We have only to find it. (n.d.)

Faolan astutely acknowledges the awkward tension between fantasizing about a magical rendezvous with the Horned One in a secret forest glade and the realities of daily life and urban encounters with deities and the sacred inherent in the world. Another Pagan made a similar but more forceful declaration to an online bulletin board:

> The gods of hunt and harvest are removed from us by layers of abstraction… By worshipping these gods we remove ourselves from the gods of the city, of the workplace, of our ways of governing. Of course our cities are alienating monstrous creations that hide suffering, corruption and unspeakable evil, their spirits are lonely, for we have closed our ears to the spirits of the concrete that carry thousands of people to their destinations. The old gods are in everything, not only in the base materials of nature. Look at the towering skyscrapers thrusting their way into heaven! How can we not pay homage to them as containing the power of the horned god? The network of roads, railroads, electrical currents, [and] telephone lines [are] all rivers that bring life and knowledge to the people. But the cries of their spirits remain unheard. For we have no care for the mundane world which we inhabit, having been seduced [by] mirages depicting a world which we hope will be more real, more vivid and most importantly away from here. Many speak of the pagan faiths concerned with nature, but this is not the truth, the pagan faiths dealt directly with the experience of worshipper. The pagan gods watched over and gave meaning to all aspects of existence. (Usenet 2000)

Faolan and his fellow Pagan offer a practical solution based on the same mytho-historical description of early pagans that fosters a yearning to return to nature. Rather than maintaining that ancient pagans worshipped nature, they observe that pagans created spiritual relationships with the world in which they lived. According to this narrative,

prior to the building of metropolises, most humans lived in a dynamic relationship with nature from rural areas out of necessity. Contemporary urban Pagans have chosen to re-establish those relationships, but they are no longer limited to rural or dependent relationships with nature; they are encouraged to develop dynamic and reciprocal relationships with the world in which they live, just as their ancestors did (cf. Starhawk 2004).

Penczak reiterates that the "elements are all around us, always. You just need to know where to look for them. By recognizing this, you can reconnect with the elements and honor the sacred in all your life. The more we connect to the sacred, them more we will simplify our lives and create more balance with our world" (2001, 101). Correspondingly, as an advocate for redefining urban-nature relationships, Starhawk writes: "Most witches, like most people in general, live in cities. The elements are no less real in an urban setting, and the ecological issues concerning them are even more vital. My hope is that the lessons we can learn from rooting our spirituality in the land can also revitalize our cities" (1999, 265). Witchcraft and Paganism profess a religion of ecology, thus one can not talk about cultivating a healthy relationship with the land or nature without also addressing the unhealthy relationships in existence. Relationships exist between Pagans and their cities and between cities and the ecosystems in which they were constructed. These relationships are at the heart of urban Paganism – for it is through an understanding of these interactions that Pagans come to understand the intimate connections between everything that exists.

Graham Harvey describes such relationships between Pagans, Nature and the

spiritworld through his discussion of the Greenwood. He is quick to qualify the term "Greenwood," so that the reader will not think that Pagans are seeking a relationship with some otherworld beyond their daily experiences. "Although 'Greenwood' is a mythopoetic word, its purpose is not primarily to entice people away to a fantasy, never-never land. It invites people not only to playfully re-enchant the world, but also to engage with the political, social and economic realities which are destroying life, species by species, and those far from abstract or anonymous forces which are restricting people's access to, and encounter with, the diversity of both 'natural' and socio-political life" (Harvey 1997, 164). This is possible because "The Greenwood is a place where we are visitors and can encounter Life in all its many dimensions, with all its relationships and in all its profligate abundance" (Harvey 1997, 164). The Greenwood mirrors this world in its multiplicity and diverse experiences, but it provides an opportunity to imagine and establish new relationships with the world as a Pagan.

Infusing the urban with the spiritual

Modern life has generated new occasions deserving of ritual acknowledgement, new relationships and new rites of passage. These include graduations, retirement, change in employment, travel abroad, and divorce (Telesco 2000, 69; cf. Starhawk 1987, 296)). Pagans have been creatively celebrating these moments since the beginning of the movement under the influence of Goddess spirituality and feminist re-embracings of daily experiences. The traditional associations established by Gardner and ceremonial magic are also being challenged as Pagans re-imagine their relationships with their immediate

space and environment. Telesco coaches her readers to re-orient themselves to their lived environments. If a fireplace is located in the north and the closest body of water is to the south, it may be more appropriate for a practitioner to associate fire with the north (rather than the south) and water with the south (not west) when conducting rituals at home (Telesco 2000, 69). Such innovative ideas liberate Pagans from what might otherwise become stagnant and meaningless traditions.

Jennifer Hunter reminds readers that they are witches not just in the ritual circle but also in the everyday mundane world. She encourages Wiccans to practice "magical maintenance" by imbuing magical intent in their daily, routine actions (1997, ch.10). She encourages practitioners to make their world spiritually fulfilling and to continually remind themselves of their "witch-nature" by carrying a small mnemonic reminder of their beliefs with them. This includes experiences at home and in the workplace.

Budapest's book *The Goddess in the Office* (1993) seeks to revitalize the workplace as a potential site of Pagan spirituality and practice by reminding readers of the astrological associations between the mundane days of the week and their spirituality and encouraging them to act upon the positive aspects each day offers and live a spirit-enriched life at work. Penczak also speaks of offices as an appropriate site for urban magic. "The kitchen was the home base of many witches. Now the office is home base for many practitioners. Magick is the little things you do in life to effect change. These acts can all be disguised as mundane work" (2001, 146). Several informants described altars and sacred spaces they had established at their workplace, often times unconsciously. Office altars can be as simple as a few stones, plants, water and pictures

organized on a desk corner. They serve as reminders of an animate Pagan world and the divine immanent in all things (cf. Penczak 2001, 232).

Cyber-space is another realm where Pagans are actively involved in recreating a Pagan community and re-establishing sacrality in the common experiences of Pagans. As a site of open communication, the internet fosters discussions that encourage more urban Pagans to embrace their experiences in the city. As an alternate world apart from the physical urban world, cyber-space provides a location for Pagans to gather while still seated in the comfort of their own home. Cyber-Paganism is re-visioning new ways of understanding connections between everything that exists. It is an expanding realm of possibilities for Pagans which I have explored elsewhere (Furney 2003, cf. Klassen 2002).

Urban Paganism is mundane

So far much of my discussion of urban Paganism as a conscious phenomenon has drawn upon published examples, which do not necessarily reflect the beliefs of all Pagans. Books that promote the notion of urban Paganism and attempt to define its manifestations are limited to the views of the authors and are also relatively new to Pagan dialogues of urban expressions of Paganism. Many Pagans have not spent much time pondering or developing a personal vision of Urban Paganism. However, I would classify all city-dwelling Pagans as urban Pagans as an imposed sociological description. I have noted many Pagans who use "city" or "urban" as adjectives to describe their Pagan selves, which indicates to me that there is a growing awareness within the Pagan community that

many contemporary Pagan practices are expressions of modern, urban life. Whether or not they self-identify as "urban Pagans," urban-dwelling practitioners employ individualized and urbanized expressions of Pagan practices and beliefs in their daily religious practices.

Most urban Pagan practices are mundane insofar as they are the every-day applications of religion that may even be considered routine. For Pagans, acknowledging the presence of nature and the elements in daily life does not require formal rituals – it is simply what they do. Honouring the God and/or Goddess manifested in the world does not require extra effort in the urban world, despite the assumption that it is easier to feel a connection with the divine (in the form of nature) in secluded and pristine rural areas. When asked *where* they communicate with deity or the Sacred, informants unanimously responded that they can do so anywhere and everywhere and only mentioned nature locations (if at all) as a secondary thought. There were many specific and unique personal places mentioned by informants ranging from a workplace parking lot to the shower. The following examples illustrate the mundane locations and regularity of applying Paganism to daily life: "I communicate with the deity right here in my apartment mostly, though I believe that She's with me no matter where I go. It's not unusual for me to cast a spell when I'm out doing something and feel the need for it at the moment" (Andrea). Willow adds: "I communicate with Deity wherever I am… there is no set physical space for me. Often times it's as I head off to sleep at night. If I am working with a group then it will be within the circle we cast. But mostly for me it will be during meditation, and that can happen just about anywhere… at work, on a bus,

wherever I am…" (2003). Ravenharte, a 35-years old Pagan of eleven years, speaks as a busy priestess and mother who incorporates Paganism into her daily routine as a normal practice when she declares that she communicates with deity "[a]nywhere, anytime. I have a personal altar of course, I have a Goddess garden, I have a consecrated ritual room… any of these places work fine. But so does driving in my car to the kids school in the a.m., sitting at my dinner table, or just lying in bed."

Although the majority of Pagan discussions disregard the role and influence of the modern urban world in their beliefs, practices, and rituals (preferring to highlight ancient, authentic sources or personal, inspired creativity), there are occasions when the urban world is acknowledged. During a summer solstice ritual in 2003 I was intrigued to hear the Priestess describe the city awakening around us as we gathered in a public park, hidden from the urban world, to watch the sun rise. Although these were the only words spoken about the city, they were influential in how participants were encouraged to locate themselves in relation to their outdoor surroundings. The ritual language drew positive attention to the background noises that might otherwise have been distracting to participants in the ritual. Gerald Gardner was no stranger to urban practices in his London flat. In his seminal book *Witchcraft Today* (first published in 1954) he describes the practices of witches creating circles that include markings on the carpet and require moving furniture – as if indoor rituals in an individual's home are the norm (1999, 26). Janet and Stewart Farrar, in *Eight Sabbats,* also presume that rituals are conducted indoors in their descriptions (1996a, 36-7). Raymond Buckland acknowledges that "although many Witches meet, and work, outdoors – perhaps in the corner of a field or in

a clearing in the woods – it is not always possible for everyone to do that. Many live in cities and towns and are unable to get out into direct contact with the earth. This does not mean they cannot function. Your temple can be an outdoor one or an indoor one" (1993, 19). Silver Ravenwolf classifies "two types of physical sanctuaries – inside an enclosed area, or outside in the world of nature" (2000, 76) without giving preference to either in her description. Vivianne Crowley and Scott Cunningham also admit that indoor rituals are often more practical and realistic (Crowley 1996, 41; Cunningham 1999a, 57). Starhawk does not directly address the issue, but she does make references to indoor and urban rituals that she has participated in and uses urban analogies (1999). Most of these prominent Pagan figures encourage outdoor rituals whenever possible, but they are not strangers to the urban realities of Pagan practices. I have included these examples precisely because they are prominent figures in the Pagan community past and present who inevitably influence, to some degree, how other Pagans construct their own beliefs and practices.

But as Pagan magazines also demonstrate, common Pagans[34] also have an understanding of Paganism that does not exclude the urban world. A special section on altars in *The Beltane Papers: A Journal of Women's Mysteries* (Summer 2003) embraces the practicality of both home altars and cyber altars as indoor sacred spaces. In *Pan Gaia: A Pagan Journal for Thinking People* a debate of whether or not Pagans should create their own religion made reference to the specific needs of modern urban Pagans who shape their religion to the modern urban world by necessity (Summer 2003, 18). An article about "Sacred Creatures" in the Fall 2001 issue of *Circle Magazine* does not avoid

urban realities in its description of "plant and animal teachers" (5) and an earlier issue of the magazine (when it was called *Circle Network News*) features a special section on "Nature Magic" (Summer 1988) that includes testimonies of urban relationships with nature. I had specifically ordered this issue to read the section on Nature Magic and was delighted to find expressions that supported my thesis that Pagans embrace the urban world without specifically dwelling on it. In one of these articles a disabled and bed-ridden woman describes the tree outside her bedroom window, her only visible connection to green nature, and the lessons it teaches her (12) while in another article the author describes how her family first discovered "nature spirits" while working in a garden and has since found them "inside, outside, where we live now, in the suburbs, and in the cities" (15).

These examples serve as an indication that urban expressions of Paganism do exist under the surface of a religion that often seems more concerned with inner spiritual transformation and pristine outdoor realms of nature than with the immediate state of urban and indoor life. Even without addressing the popularized (and trivialized) application of spells to the urban world epitomized in mass-marketed renditions of "a witch's spell book," it is clear that urban forms of practice have always existed in Paganism and are growing in a self-conscious recognition that, as a lived religion, Paganism must address the realities of daily, modern, urban life.

Conclusion

To conclude, Paganism is a lively new religious movement and an enthusiastic

spirituality seeking to re-claim the urban world in which it exists as a place of diverse possibilities and relationships. Pagans are re-imagining cities (both purposefully and instinctively) and applying their concepts of an animated, interconnected Nature, in which the divine is fully immanent and accessible, to the secular urban world. In her appraisal of nature religions (including Paganism) Albanese states that "while it is an easy path in nature to the wilderness that avoids the human community, the tangled road back to the city and society has more often been taken… The presence of nature religion in America is one more sign that, in a secular society, the search for the sacred refuses to go away" (1990, 201). It would be potentially easier for Pagans to dismiss the urban world, pack up their belongings and spiritual beliefs, and head out to the great outdoors to live harmoniously with nature. Although they would be faced with new problems, mostly those produced by their beloved Nature, at least they would not have to deal with the noise and fast-pace of society or be implicated in the ongoing destruction of the Earth and her resources. The reality is that the majority of Pagans are not leaving the cities. They are using their experiences in the urban environments to re-imagine possible relationships with the Earth and with all that exists in the world. For Starhawk, living as a Witch or Pagan means "choosing to take this living world, the people and creatures on it, as the ultimate meaning and purpose of life, to see the world, the earth, and our lives as sacred" (1982, 11). Such a philosophy of life is as important in the city (if not more so) as it is in an idealized rural existence.

I have argued that Paganism is negotiating its relationship with the urban world. I would like to reiterate that this is an ongoing process and is conducted both actively by

those who have realized the necessity of re-imagining their urban relationships, and unconsciously by those who have not yet come to terms with being an urban Pagan but nevertheless continue to live as one. In some ways urban life has changed Pagan practices by forcing open doors to new and innovative possibilities, but in many others ways it is the Pagan worldview that has changed how the city is perceived. There is an ongoing dialogue between the cities and the Pagans who live there – one that shares a love of diversity and multiplicity and embraces creativity.

NOTES

[1] The newsgroups targeted included Yahoo and MSN groups for Pagans in general, Pagans in specific geographical areas (mainly Winnipeg, St. John's and Halifax), and for Pagans who self-identify as urban practitioners.

[2] The reduced importance of location is frequently referenced as one of the benefits of internet mediated research. See Bampton and Cowton 2002, Clarke 2000, and Dawson 2000, Hewson *et al.* 2003.

[3] Both the ARIS 2001 and the NSRI 1990 were conducted by the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. The ARIS consisted of a random digit-dialed telephone survey of 50,281 continental American households, which asked the simple question: What is your religion, if any? (and also inquired about the religion of the spouse). http://www.gc.cuny.edu/studies/aris.pdf.

[4] Statistic reports represent exclusive groups. When looking at the statistical numbers for Pagans, for example, one must wonder where the Asatruar, Discordians and other Witches and Pagans not specifically named in the survey are grouped and counted. The 2001 Australian Census addressed this issue by providing more categories and thus a more inclusive and detailed estimate of the Pagan population. According to a report on Nature Religions in Australia by the Christian Research Association, based on the numbers from the 2001 Australian Census there are 10,632 Pagans, 8,756 Wiccans/Witches, 1,085 Pantheists, 696 Druids, 763 Animists and 2,225 persons who identified with some "other" nature religion (for a total of 24,156). In total there was a 247.7% increase in persons identifying with nature religions since the previous census in 1996 (Christian Research Association, 2003). Statistics also suffer from the "broom closet" syndrome (a term that is popularly applied to Pagans who for personal or social reasons do not readily reveal their religious beliefs) as many Witches and Pagans do not publicly self-identify their religion as Paganism. For example, they may choose to identify as Unitarian Universalists because they may have a joint membership with that group, or they may select some other more publicly accepted category such as their religion of birth; Christian Pagans may simply identify as Christian. In the Canadian census, respondents had to check a box signifying that they adhere to a religion other than the traditional world religions listed and then fill in a blank line. In addition, a spouse completing the survey may not be aware of, or choose to not acknowledge, that their partner or children are Pagan practitioners. These issues are less likely to affect the statistics of mainstream and publicly accepted religions.

[5] The term 'pagan' has variously been used to delineate any or all of the following: persons not of the Christian faith, or traditions developed in opposition to Christianity or Christian esoteric traditions as Susan Greenwood defines modern Paganism (Greenwood 2000), persons not of the Abrahamic religions, Goddess Worshippers, Witches, Wiccans, Druids, the Church of All Worlds, Asatruar and Odinists, Reconstructionists of pre-Christian religions and cultures, Ceremonial Magicians, Discordians, Satanists, practitioners of Vodoun and Santeria, Buddhists, Hindus, Native American traditions, and Atheists and Agnostics (to name only some of the contemporary groups).

[6] The Church of All Worlds is a prime example of the simultaneous explicit and broad use of the term Neopagan, for it was the founder Tim (aka Oberon or Otter) Zell who is credited with first coining the term "Neopagan" for popular use in the contemporary Pagan community in order to distinguish Goddess worshippers in general from the more specific traditions of Wicca and Witchcraft (Melton 1992, 325; Adler 1986, 293-5). Members of the Church of All Worlds consider themselves to be Pagans, but do not claim to be the quintessential example.

[7] The concept of "nature-based religion" was first introduced by Catherine Albanese (1990), but it has been critiqued as too broad of a category to adequately delineate contemporary Paganism (Pearson 2000).

[8] Not all Pagan groups are focused on nature. Some Pagans concentrate on recreating ancient cultural traditions - such as some reconstructionists, while others are primarily concerned with more abstract rituals and celestial beings and occurrences - such as ceremonial magicians.

[9] Gerald Gardner established his first coven in Britain in 1953, one year before publishing *Witchcraft Today*. In North America, Fereferia was founded by Fred Adams in 1957 (then called the Fellowship of Hesperdes) and the Church of All Worlds was incorporated by Tim Zell in 1967. These groups provided the foundations and precedence for the Pagan movement in North America.

[10] I use the term "man-made" rather than manufactured or artifact because this was the term most commonly used in Pagan texts and subsequently was the term I used in interview questions.

[11] The preliminary results of this research were presented to the Pagan Studies Conference held in conjunction with the American Academy of Religion's annual meeting in November, 2003 (for which I was not in attendance). However, further correspondence with Griffin has revealed that she is not yet willing to release her findings until she has completed a further analysis of the surveys she collected (Personal Communication, Dec 2003).

[12] For a further examination of Weber's "disenchantment" in relationship with Pagan worldviews see Kocku von Stuckrad's "Reenchanting Nature: Modern Western Shamanism and Nineteenth-Century Thought" (2002).

[13] On 16 November 1995 Selena Fox and Dennis Carpeneter spoke at the Philadelphia Pagan Meeting on "urban paganism: bringing Earth religions into the city." On 9 March 2003 the ADF hosted a discussion at a local occult shop in the San Fernando Valley on urban paganism. On 12 Cotober 2002, at the 4th annual meeting of the Pagan Federation in Portugal the firt speaker's topic was urban paganism. Several Pagan Pride Day workshops over the past several years have also addressed this topic. (The sources for these events are old online newsletters cached by Google.)

[14] This is confirmed in the Pagan Census distributed by Helen Berger and Andras Corban Arthen, according to which "the majority (58.4 percent) of respondents states [sic] that they did [not] attend a festival in the previous year. Only 38.1 percent state that they did attend at least one festival in the previous year. The rest of our respondents do not answer this question." (Berger et al. 2003, 207. There is a typographical error in the text where "not" was edited from the end of a line. Read in context, I must assume that the authors meant to state that 58.4% did *not* attend a festival.)

[15] H. Berger does note that festival attendees are more politically active (2003, 211, 215), however, this does not seem to be the kind of devotion and activity that Jorgensen and Russell allude to and says nothing directly about their participation in the Pagan movement.

[16] According to the Pagan Census, of those "who attended a festival in the previous year, 43.9 percent went to only one, and 24.7 percent attended two. Only 7.4 percent of those who attended festivals participated in five or more festivals" (Berger et al. 2003, 208).

[17] Adrian Ivakhiv develops a useful discourse of nature in his 1999 article "Whose 'Nature'? Reflection in the Transcendental Signified of an Emerging Field."

[18] Lovelock's first book on the subject was published in 1979, although he had previously published papers in scientific journals (Hutton 1999, 352).

[19] I must thank Dr. Mark Ruml for bringing this to my attention in his paper presented to the Canadian Society for the Study of Religion, titled "Birds Hill Park, the Dakota Sundance and the Sweatlodge: Establishing a Sacred Site in a Provincial Park," on 31 May 2004.

[20] In most cases, the individual is 'chosen' by the totem animal to be part of that totem-clan. However, the individual must first recognize that he or she has been chosen. In some cases, an individual may choose his or her own animal out of a desire to adopt the associated attributes of that animal, but will usually also acknowledge that another totem has chosen him/her as well.

[21] For examples see Graham Harvey's (2000) "Fantasy in the study of religions: Paganism as observed and inhanced by Terry Pratchett" in the online journal *Diskus* and his more recent article (2004) "Discworld and Otherworld: the re-enchantment of nature is Paganisms" in Lynne Hume and Kathleen McPhillips' (eds) *Popular Spiritualities: The Politics of Contemporary Enchantment.* Also see Carol Fry's (1990) "'What God Doth the Wizard Pray To': Neo-Pagan Witchcraft and fantasy fiction" (Extrapolation 31(4): 333-346).

[22] Early stories unfolded in Ottawa, but the majority of his recent works are situated in a fictional city called Newford, which could be any North American city, and feature a memorable cast of characters who reappear in stories.

[23] According to his online FAQ many fans have inquired if deLint is a Pagan. In his response he states that he is not Pagan, but does hold animist beliefs (www.sfsite.com/charlesdelint/).

[24] deGrandis' list of recommended resources can be found online at http://www.well.com/user/zthirdrd/WiccanMiscellany.html.

[25] In Froud's descriptions, "good" faeries tend to be bright spiritual healers, while "bad" faeries tend to be darker, gloomy beings or pranksters.

[26] For some examples see http://www.picturevisions.com/ViewSelected.cfm?ID=119, http://www.fluffhuse.org.uk/ixwin/urbanfairies.htm, and http://twilighttimes.com/s_kaskins6a.html.

[27] These 'street-tough' faeries are generally drawn in a japanimation-style and are the most easily found images of urban faeries.

[28] Amanita kindly provided me with several pieces of her writing, including a short-story draft with this insightful passage.

[29] Unfortunately I was not able to find a copy of Grey and Penelope's book and have had to rely on discussions of it in other sources. Excerpts were found at http://madstop.org/moonhaus/cave.html.

[30] Brown's painting and comment can be found online at http://www.heatherwind/com/images/SF_JavaGoddess.html.

[31] Few contemporary Pagans believe that their gods require sacrifices. The offerings presented by Pagans are joyful gifts that honour and thank the deities rather than a tool of exchange to allay the wrath of gods.

[32] "The Rock" is an aptly descriptive nickname for the island of Newfoundland.

[33] Several informants described negative attributes of cities, which they have overcome in order to practice their religion.

[34] Every Pagan or Women's Spirituality magazine that I have read invites general readers to submit articles for publication and the majority of the magazine is comprised of these articles.

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