INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each original is also photographed in one exposure and is included in reduced form at the back of the book.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6” x 9” black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.
AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF NEO-PAGAN FOLKLIFE: 
FESTIVALS AND THE CREATION OF NEO-PAGAN IDENTITIES AND 
CULTURES IN THE UNITED STATES

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for 
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate 
School of The Ohio State University

By

Tracy Leigh Little, B.S., M.A.

The Ohio State University 
1995

Dissertation Committee:
E. Ojo Arewa
Patrick Mullen
Amy Zaharlick

Approved by

Advisor

Department of Anthropology
In Memory of my Grandmother, Beulah Grace Dixon, who passed from this world during the completion of this work. She always took great pride in my academic endeavors, to her I owe my drive, ambition, and love of life.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I express my deepest thanks to Dr. Ojo Arewa whose guidance and support have seen me through the completion of this project and my graduate career. My appreciation goes out to him for always believing in my work, and giving me the initiative to conduct it. My greatest appreciation and thanks also goes out to the other members of my committee, Dr. Patrick Mullen and Dr. Amy Zaharlick for their guidance, patience, and keen insights. I would also like to express my thanks to Dr. Robert Baum and Dr. Rob Reed for their comments and suggestions. My gratitude goes out to Psyche Torok, Tess Walker, Melanie Jones, Rick Pinkerton, Lonnie Henshaw, Amy Helton, Pam Cooper, Amy Weisberger, Judi Miller, Diane Sturm, Nancy Baker, Gillian Harper, and Tim Pugh for their insights and continued support. I also cannot express the debt of gratitude I owe to my parents, Charlene and Baxter Little. Without their help the completion of this document would have never been possible. To my partner, Adam Hoyt, I give my deepest felt thanks and love. Your unwavering faith, support, guidance and insights throughout this project have meant more to me than words can express. And to the many members of the Neo-Pagan community whose comments, suggestions and creative insights made this work possible, I owe my thanks.
VITA

August 26, 1968 ......................... Born - Flintstone, Georgia

1990 .............................................. B.S., University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, Chattanooga, Tennessee

1990-1993 ................................. Graduate Teaching Associate, Department of Anthropology Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio

1992 .............................................. M.A., Department of Anthropology, Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio

1993-1995 ...................................... Course Instructor, Department of Anthropology, Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio

PUBLICATIONS


FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: Anthropology

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

**DEDICATION** ................................................................. ii

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS** .................................................. iii

**VITA** ................................................................................ iv

**LIST OF TABLES** .......................................................... viii

**LIST OF FIGURES** ........................................................ ix

**INTRODUCTION** .......................................................... 1

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. PAGANISM: AN OVERVIEW</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beliefs, Philosophy, and Practice</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demographics</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization and Traditions</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paganism as “Culture”</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. HISTORY OF THE PAGAN REVIVAL</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. LITERATURE REVIEW</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. METHODOLOGY</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. THE CULTURAL DYNAMICS OF PAGAN FESTIVALS</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Festival Process</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating Community and Culture</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Orion 1995 - Pagan Demographic Survey Results</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Circle 1992 - Pagan Demographic Survey Results</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TABLE</td>
<td>PAGE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Festival registration site</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Group banner</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Merchant booth</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Pagan wares depicting ancient “goddesses”</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Morning meeting</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Workshop</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Facilities at a Pagan festival site</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Ritual circle site on Pagan land</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Festival drumming</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Handfasting</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Participant at festival costume ball</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Community alter</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Druid’s area on festival land site</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

Colorful ribbons flutter in the breeze, strung atop the newly erected Maypole. Garlands of flowers adorn the gateway to the ritual circle. In the distance the sounds of drums and soft melodies can be heard. Laughing children rush ahead of the procession, eager to dance. The procession, lead by the newly crowned King and Queen of May approaches the top of the hill. One by one they pass through the gateway each wearing a freshly cut sprig of green. Taking the ribbons in hand, the horn sounds and the dance begins. Over and under, intricate patterns are woven about the pole, as the regenerative force in nature is celebrated. As the dancers tire, a new set steps in to continue the rite. Wishes of fertility for the coming Spring and Summer are called out. Festivities continue until late in the evening. Ceremonial bonfires are lit as darkness approaches to ensure fertility and an abundance harvest.

The scene is timeless: is it a scene from pre-Christian Europe; the revival of romanticized nationalistic May Day customs in nineteenth century England; is it a folk-festival; a contemporary Neo-Pagan Beltane ritual? Without actually being there, one could interpret the above scene in a number of ways.
Upon closer examination however the timelessness of the scene begins to fade as witnessed in the background one sees the flash of a camera, a young child with wearing jeans and tennis shoes, a woman carrying a soda can. . . The description is that of a Beltane (May Day) celebration held at a contemporary Neo-Pagan festival in May of 1995 in the Midwestern United States. The images portrayed at Neo-Pagan festivals are a curious mix of those of an idealized Pagan past and envisioned utopian communities. The actualization of which involves attempts by participants to recapture the spirit and heritage of their ancient, predominantly European, pre-Christian ancestors through the reenactment of accounts of early Pagan rituals and customs. The validity of such reconstruction is beside the point as participants struggle to define their newly emergent Neo-Pagan culture in a way which both captures the spirit of the Paleo-Pagan past, yet still encourages the individualism and creativity many feel is so vital to their religious practice.

The following is an ethnographic study of contemporary Pagan folklife as it is displayed in the context of contemporary Pagan festivals and through the folklore generated at such events. Areas of emphasis involved the assessment of how traditions are created, employed and recreated, how folklore, text and ritual interact and how folklore is selectively manipulated by Neo-Pagans within the festival context. Pagan festivals are conceived of in the following study as stages for the folkloric performance of Neo-Pagan identity. Attention was paid to how different
varieties of Neo-Paganism are performed within the all-Pagan festival context, as well as how festivals constitute the primary sites of culture emergence within the Neo-Pagan movement. The extent to which Neo-Pagan folklife can be included in the matrix of invented traditions as defined by Hobsbawn and Ranger (1983) was also assessed. Finally the following study attempts to illuminate the dynamic processes involved in the cyclic transmission of folklore between academics and culture/religion, but pointing out how anthropological and folklore studies have influenced and even facilitated the production and reproduction of Neo-Pagan religions.

Neo-Pagan religions are among the fastest growing religious groups in the United States, but as yet these religions have received little serious scholarly attention. Most academic studies of Neo-Paganism have been basically descriptive of the movement as a whole and have often been biased towards descriptions of Wicca or Witchcraft - a specific type of Neo-Paganism. At this point there have not been any studies which have taken an in-depth look at Neo-Pagan folklife and the creation of culture and identity within the Neo-Pagan movement. The following study is an attempt to rectify this situation, involving the ethnographic study of twenty-one Neo-Pagan festivals within the United States.

The history of anthropological and folkloric studies is fraught with a search for the "exotic", the "unusual". While such a search is no longer the dominant driving force behind either of
these two disciplines, and to characterize contemporary anthropological and folklore research as such would be a disservice, the following study in an ironic way is a return to that search as Pagans have been characterized as the "exotic other" in America. The culture of contemporary Pagans in the United States is one which a romanticized pre-Christian past is cultivated, where "non-Western" lifestyles and religions are looked to for guidance in matters of spiritual knowledge, and where alternative lifestyles are encouraged. It is a culture in which new forms of Neo-tribal morality are emerging and along with this emergence is carried the new oral traditions and folklife of a movement.

The first two chapters provide an overview of the Pagan movement. Chapter One, "Paganism: an Overview", provides a general description of Neo-Pagan beliefs, philosophy, practice, organization, and traditions, as well as providing some general demographic information. Chapter Two, "History of the Pagan Revival", reviews the major factors in the establishment of contemporary Neo-Pagan religions, including an overview of the establishment of Wicca or Witchcraft, the revival of ancient Egyptian religion through the Church of the Eternal Source, the relationship between the Golden Dawn and Aleister Crowley, the revival of Norse and Celtic religions in the form of Asatru and Druidism, respectively, the renewed interest in African based religions in the United States, and the establishment of the Church of All Worlds, and Discordian Paganism. In Chapter Three,
"Literature Review", the academic scholarship from the 1950's to the present conducted on contemporary Pagan religions is reviewed. Chapter Four, "Methodology", describes the format structure and scope of this project including a description of how the ethnographic method was conceived of and applied in the following study. Chapter Five, "The Cultural Dynamics of Pagan Festivals", constitutes an ethnographic description of what happens at a Pagan festival. The chapter begins with a brief overview on the conception of festivals in general, within the social science literature, and then moves on to discuss how such theory will be applied in the following project. After this theoretical overview, an ethnographic description of the festival process is provided followed by a discussion of how Pagan identity, community and culture are formed within the festival context. Chapter five is concluded with an assessment of how certain aspects of Pagan festivals and consequently, Pagan folklife, may correspond to the idea of "invented traditions". Chapter Six, "Pagan Folklore: The Emergence of a New Oral Tradition", looks at the oral traditions generated at Pagan festivals in the form of stories, chants, humor, and ritual, assessing ways in which such forms add to the creation of identity within the Pagan community. In the concluding chapter, Chapter Seven, the relationship between the academic disciplines of folklore and anthropology and Neo-Paganism is explored. Specifically of interest is how these interact, and how such academic specialties help to provide the "substance" or Neo-
Pagan religion and lore. Finally, Paganism is conceived of in the context of a postmodern world, as it is discussed how Paganism can only be characterized within the fuzzy boundaries of the dynamic, ever-changing, constantly reconstructed world of the late twentieth century.
CHAPTER I
PAGANISM: AN OVERVIEW

According to *Webster's New World Dictionary* (1984), the word Pagan is defined as: 1) a person who is not a Christian, Moslem or Jew; heathen: formerly sometimes applied specifically to a non-Christian by Christians. 2) a person who has no religion. In describing contemporary Pagans in the United States, the first part of the above definition holds true for the most part, with the exception that contemporary Pagans have chosen to label themselves as "Pagan" rather than such a label being applied from the outside. The second part of the definition could not be further from the truth, as contemporary Pagans are part of a large and rapidly growing religious movement; the religion - Paganism. The term "Pagan" originated from the Roman term *pagani*, which translates as "country dweller". Roman soldiers used the term to refer to non-soldiers, and later the term was adopted by Christians to refer to rural country dwellers in Europe who had not yet converted to Christianity and still practiced their indigenous, polytheistic religions (Farrar, Farrar and Bone 1995). Today in North America, Europe and many parts of the world,
"Paganism" constitutes a large umbrella term used to denote a group of religions which are primarily polytheistic, nature-oriented and often represent the recreation of pre-Christian, predominantly European indigenous religious practices and beliefs.

Pagans as a whole tend to view themselves as part of the same religious movement and as such rally under its banner. For example participants attend "Pagan festivals" and join "Pagan organizations". Yet, at once, Pagans often view themselves as being a member of a much more specific "type" of Paganism such as Witchcraft or Wicca, Asatru or Druidism, analogous to a person who is Baptist or Catholic and participates in a type of Christian religion. That is about as far as the previous analogy goes however, as the division between different types of Paganism is much less pronounced than it is in many institutionalized religions such as Christianity, and as such a blurring of religious boundaries under the general rubric of Paganism is accepted and often times encouraged among participants. This "blurring" can be seen in the widespread sharing of ideas, mythology, folklore and ritual ideas between various types of Pagan religions as well as in the behavior of participants who may see themselves as belonging to more than one Pagan tradition at any one time. As such, many Pagans could be viewed as "polyreligious". Pagans also exist who choose an even more "generic" Pagan path - labeling themselves as just "Pagan" and thus drawing their own beliefs and practices from a
variety of Pagan traditions coupled with personal insight and creativity. Others choose one particular Pagan tradition and stay within its boundaries. Whatever the case, such multilayered participation seems to indicate a further refining of one's identity as Pagan, representing an intensification of what it means to be "Pagan" and how one as an individual in a highly individualistic religious movement will go about navigating the terrain to fine his or her place among like-minded others who have chosen a similarly refined identity.

There is a great number of different types of Paganism, a number which seems to be growing all the time. These types will be discussed shortly, however, it is important at this point to make as clear as possible what is meant by the terms "Pagan" and "Paganism", and "Neo-Pagan" and "Neo-Paganism" in this study. First let me explain the term "Neo-Pagan". Neo-Paganism is a term used primarily for its descriptive capability through purveying what Paganism is to non-Pagans than it is used by participants. As such, it is widely used as a descriptive term in the social science literature on the topic. In general, "Neo-Paganism" is a term meant to delineate the religion of contemporary Pagans from the religious of ancient Pagans. The term Paganism is more widely used by participants within the movement. In this study the two terms, Neo-Pagan and Pagan, will be used interchangeable. Paganism refers to a group of religions, or to some as a religion in its own right, which seek to re-create, re-establish, or revitalize the nature-oriented religions
of the pre-Christian past. It can further be described as a new religious movement, as the history of Paganism as it exists today only dates back about fifty years

The degree to which contemporary Pagans attempt to emulate their pre-Christian ancestors varies. Some participants follow the information known about these early Pagans as closely as possible in the reconstruction of their religion. Others pick and choose from the information, blending such information with what is known of the beliefs and practices of living indigenous peoples and religions from around the world. Others add insights from popular psychology, environmentalist concerns and personal creativity. The pre-Christian religions that contemporary Pagans seek to re-establish are primarily European, however, there is also a growing interest in other indigenous religions such as those of Africa, the Americas, Japan, Indian. Following such interests, participants may also engage in practices derived from the religions of Voodoo, Santeria, the Yoruba, Shintoism, Hinduism or various Native American groups. To even further complicate the picture, some Pagan religions do not seek to recreate the past at all, but instead strive to create religion for the future, as is the case with the Church of All Worlds, a form of Neo-Paganism which originally developed out of a vision of spirituality based on the science-fiction novel, A Stranger in a Strange Land, by Robert Heinlien

Despite the diversity of origins both in terms of historical origins and origins of beliefs, goals, etc., there is little confusion
within the Pagan community itself as to who and what is Pagan,
and in general have little trouble dealing with each other in this
multifaceted and diverse setting. This is not the case, however,
for individuals outside the movement, as attempts to capture the
dynamics of this diversity and explain it to non-Pagans often fall
short of their goals, as is clear in the statement made by one
writer on the subject of Paganism, "My effort to present a clear
image of the Neo-Pagans is compromised somewhat by their
hypertrophied individualism and resistance to any semblance of
uniformity" (Orion 1995: 7).

Beliefs, Philosophy and Practice

Philosophy and Beliefs Paganism is a continually growing
and diverse movement, with fuzzy boundaries between groups
and types of Paganism as well as the beliefs they share. Any
attempt to isolate even the most fundamental of beliefs among
Pagans carries with it the potential for enormous controversy.
As can be concluded from the above description, it is difficult to
make any unifying statements about Pagan philosophy as a
whole. What seems to stand out most is that nothing stands out,
or rather as Margot Adler put it in her 1986 work Drawing Down
the Moon:

Eclectic, individualist, and often fiercely autonomous,
they do not share those characteristics that the media
attribute to religious cults. They are often self-created and homemade, they seldom have "gurus" or "masters", they have few temples and hold their meetings in woods, parks, apartments, and houses. . . . money seldom passes from hand to hand and operations of high finance are non-existent and entry into these groups comes through a process that could rarely be called conversion (3).

Thus most Pagan religions remain decentralized and dogma-free, yet they still recognize one another as being part of the same religious movement, sharing a similar set of values and beliefs. Above all, these values would include, a recognition that religion should remain personal, creative and spontaneous, that one should be skeptical of those who claim to know all the answers or force their beliefs on you and that worship is something to be enjoyed and participated in, not something which should be observed or is condemning to its followers.

Most Pagan religions are polytheistic, pantheistic, or animistic, or a combination of any of the above. The idea of an all knowing, monotheistic, patriarchal God is unsettling to most Pagans who tend to regard such notions as sexist, bigoted, and limiting. Following, the feminine aspect of spirituality is usually highly regarded and is generally treated with equal importance as the male aspect and in some cases is even given precedence. Pagans worship aspects of a "God" and "Goddess" in a multitude of forms from what could be described as a "generic God and Goddess" (i.e. the embodiment of the divine male and female), to entire pantheons of Gods and Goddesses derived from ancient
mythologies. Many Pagans believe that the divine manifests in many different times and cultures and thus fluid connections are often made between deities with similar characteristics during worship and ritual. To the uninformed, such "deity switching" may seem confusing and random, but most Pagans recognize such practices as part and parcel of the movement, and may even view the incorporation of a number of deities in any one rite as a "politically correct" way to involve participants from many Pagan traditions at once.

Most Pagans feel that there is a spiritual aspect to nature and thus revere nature, stressing a need to live in balance with its cycles and following, embrace environmental ethics and activism as not only a philosophy but a religious "duty", as is evidenced by the following quote:

Paganism is the most environmentally conscious and active religion in the Western world. This is not to say that individual members and groups of other religions are not equally conscious and active on Mother Earth's behalf; but environmentalism is not a declared part of any other Western religion (Farrar, Farrar and Bone 1995: 92).

Two final beliefs central to the religion of many Pagans include a belief in reincarnation and a belief in magic. Although these are widespread beliefs within the Pagan community, they tend to be highly controversial, with discussion of the specifics of reincarnation and magic sparking heated debates between participants. Reincarnation is the idea that after an individual
dies their soul lives on and will be born again into a new life on earth successively. Some Pagans follow the idea of reincarnation as it is delineated in some Eastern religions such as Hinduism, where the soul can be potentially reincarnated in any living form including animals, with the reincarnation being dependant on the inherent "goodness" of the previous life. Others believe that humans can only be reincarnated as humans and that certain souls reincarnate over and over together. Other participants don't hold to the concept of reincarnation at all but choose to prescribe to the possibility of an afterlife as postulated by the particular type and Paganism and mythological afterlife that type may subscribe to such as the mythical "Summerland" or "Valhalla".

Magic is not necessarily practiced by all Pagans, but most Pagans do concede to its existence, or at least the possibility of its existence. Many, however, do incorporate the practice of magic into their religious worship. There are numerous definitions of magic within the Pagan community. I have heard it defined as "the creation of change in accordance with the will" and as "probability enhancement". The particular understanding of magic within the Pagan community is little understood by the general public, who see images of rabbits being pulled out of hats, and people being sawed in half when the word is mentioned. Magic in Pagan terms can be viewed as being a process of transformation. Thus one may perform magic, in order to "transform" their state of mind, get rid of negative habits, improve concentration, etc. Magic is regarded as a natural process which involves a directing
of the energies present within nature and the person or group performing the magic itself. Subsequently magic is regarded as having little to do with the supernatural as it is commonly conceived. The practice of magic may involve such things as visualization, meditation, and the making of plans - many of the same type things carried out in everyday life, however these may be carried out in a highly focused, instructive way. Many also stress magic as providing a link from the mental to the physical world, something that is only now being realized in modern medical practice. Orion sees magic in the Pagan context as part of the creative process involving both artistic insight and a desire to change or create the condition of one's life. Magic, as such, often involves individual subjective transformation and thus must be interpreted by the magician, as Orion states:

This phenomenon [magic] can be construed as a secular reality (scientific fact) or a miracle, depending on the attitude or position of the individual contemplating it. Nothing is added, subtracted, or superimposed. The subjective experience of the phenomenon may be transformed by "changing the mind" of the perceiver (1995:118).

The above, is of course only a gross generalization of Pagan philosophy, and beliefs, and following in its dogma-free tradition, these generalizations may not apply to all who identify themselves as Pagan. In fact, I would expect to get fierce disagreement on the matter from some; however, I feel they do capture the general essence of the movement in terms of the
majority of participants. Paganism as a religion embodies diversity, and as a researcher, I could never claim to speak for all participants. The movement being vast, I can only account for that which I have encountered and do my best to portray that in the best way possible. The dynamics of diversity present within the movement, could never be portrayed in written format, and being true to the movement's philosophy itself, it is one that must be experienced and lived to be fully understood. As an anthropologist, I feel that such a statement could be made about all cultures, and yet I and others will continue to do our feeble best at presenting the information we have gained through our ethnography to the academic community and the world at large.

Pagan religions have also been identified as virtually convert free, that is, they do not actively go out and attempt to convert followers (Ault 1989, Adler 1986). This too seems to be part of the general philosophy of Paganism; the general notion being that those who are interested in pursuing a Pagan religion will seek it out for themselves, or will recreate one for themselves the best they can. It is in fact the case, that despite the increasingly publicized beliefs of Pagans, Pagan groups are generally hard to find, and one wishing to become a member must usually undertake a diligent search; quite the opposite of conversion. The general philosophy behind the Pagan movement also seems to discourage attempts at conversion in favor of personal exploration, as the following quotes shows, "Because Pagans believe that all sincere religions are different paths to the
same truth and that what suits one person's wavelenght may not suit another's they do not proselytize" (Farrar, Farrar and Bone 1995: 183). In the spirit of non-proselytizing, Pagans view their religion as being of an "organic" nature, arising on its own accord, untainted by the need to constantly seek converts, and constituting a religion growing from the hearts of those who have chosen to participate on their own terms, without being asked to compromise their beliefs. Even in the absence of any efforts of conversion, Paganism continues as a constantly growing religious movement, and has been described as one of the fastest growing religions in the United States (Orion 1995), a growth spurred on through an increasingly availability of books on Paganism geared toward those exploring alternative religion, as well as the appearance of Pagan topics on computer internets and in the media.

Paganism intersects with many groups and philosophies: "New Agers", feminism, environmentalism, animal rights, political liberalism, occultism, etc. Paganism, however, somehow manages to incorporate all of these and yet remains something distinct. Here I should make some comments about the relationship of Paganism to the New Age movement, as the two, in the views of non-participants are often connected. It is the case that there is, as just mentioned, a degree of intersection between these two, despite the often vehement denial of that intersection on the part of participants in Pagan religions. According to Orion the New Age movement, "is comprised of a collection of cultural
radicalisms of a mystical sort and takes its name from the idea that a new astrological age is imminent, an age in which 'global culture' is expected to be transformed into a more humane and nature oriented one" (1995:42). Participants in the New Age movement incorporate numerous self-help techniques intended to improve personal, spiritual, mental, and planetary health. As such the New Age movement does not seem to constitute a religion or a religious movement in its own right, as Paganism does. The intersections between the two come in the form of similar techniques used between the two, and consequently a shared language on healing. The disdain Pagans have for the New Age movement seems to be primarily of an economical nature, with Pagans viewing New Agers as exploitative in terms of their commodification of such self-help techniques, and the proposed spiritual guidance. I have heard it mentioned by Pagans that the difference between the New Age movement and Paganism is one decimal point. Pagans also have problems with the presence of "gurus" or those claiming to be spiritual leaders within the New Age movement, as most Pagans are highly individualistic and distrustful of such claims to authority in religion. Thus the presence of such gurus, coupled with commodification leads many Pagans to question the sincerity of the New Age movement as a whole.

**Practice: Holidays** The practice of Pagan religions tends to center around a seasonal calendar. This calender varies in accordance with which type of Paganism one adheres to. In such
cases participants may follow the seasonal holidays reported to have been celebrated by the pre-Christian ancestors of their tradition. That being said, many Pagans tend to follow a general seasonal calendar, in addition (or possibly accordance) with any other calendars they may follow. These are the holidays which are the most widely celebrated and it is this calendar around which the majority of Pagan festivals and gatherings occur. This general calendar is based on a solar cycle coupled with the agricultural cycles of planting and harvesting. This calendar has eight principle holidays which are as follows:

1) October 31st (sometimes celebrated between October 13th and November 18th - This holiday is referred to as Samhain (pronounced sow-en) in Celtic based traditions including Witchcraft, and Wintertide in Norse/Germanic traditions. It is a holiday which celebrates the final end of the harvest season, the beginning of winter and a time when the spirit world of the dead and the human world are closer together.

2) December 21st - This is the holiday of the Winter Solstice, and is often referred to as Yule, recognizing the longest night and shortest day of the year.

3) February 2nd - Often referred to as Candlemas or Bridget's Day (Celtic) or Disting (Norse), and represents the celebration of the first stirring of plant life beneath the earth and the return of the light of the sun.
4) March 21st - The Spring Equinox, often referred to as Ostara (Germanic) is the celebration of the balance between night and day, winter and spring. It is also a fertility holiday representing the return of the fertility of the earth.

5) May 1st - May Day, or Beltane, recognized as a fertility holiday, a time when the God and Goddess come together to fertilize the earth.

6) June 21st - The holiday of the Summer Solstice, celebrating the longest day and the shortest night of the year, representing the height of the fertile earth.

7) August 1st or 2nd - The first of the Pagan harvest festivals, representing a time of first fruits. Referred to as Lammas or Lughnasadh (Celtic)

8) September 21st - The Autumn Equinox, the second of the harvest festivals, often referred to as the "Pagan Thanksgiving". It is also a recognition of the balance between night and day, and the encroaching winter.

**Practice: Ritual** Pagans worship and celebrate the divine in many different ways, however the most overt form of worship is ritual. Again depending on one's particular type of Paganism, ritual may take many forms, however most Pagan rituals tend to follow a standard format consisting of a recognized beginning, middle and end, typical of the Van Gennep and Victor Turner course of ritual of separation, transformation and incorporation. Typically Pagan rituals begin with some form of delineation of
sacred space, often in a circle form which represents the division between the sacred and profane worlds. Following there is often a recognition or "calling" of the four directions North, East, South and West and an invitation to the divine in the form of whatever Gods and Goddesses or spirits are appropriate to enter the sacred space. The primary purpose/working of the ritual typically occurs next. The main purpose may be for celebration of the seasons, giving thanks or honor to the divine, the working of magic, or the celebration of some rite of passage such as a wedding, often referred to as a "handfasting", or a child blessing. The main part of the ritual is often followed by a sharing of food and drink by participants, or the so-called "ritual feast". The ritual is often ended by doing in reverse what was done to set the sacred space. Thus the divine is thanked for being present, the directions are "dismissed" and the circle is ceremonially opened to return the participants to normal time and space.

**Demographics**

Like most religions, participants in Paganism come from all walks of life, and are of all ages and backgrounds. Based on readership of Pagan periodicals, attendance at festivals, the sell of books on Pagan subjects, and publication of Pagan newsletters, Orion (1995) reports that conservative estimates may suggest a Pagan population size of at least a few hundred thousand in the United States, with the greatest concentrations in the Northeast,
followed by the Midwest, Southeast and West Coast. The Plains states having the smallest concentrations. Orion (1995) further reports that at least fifty-one percent of these are located in urban areas. It is the case, however, that since Paganism exists primarily as a new religious movement, gaining popularity and the majority of its participants only within the past fifty years, the majority of participants were not "raised" as Pagan, but instead made the choice to become Pagan in adulthood. This of course, has effected the demographics of the Pagan population where one finds a greater than expected number of younger participants, that is participants between the ages of 20 and 50 (This is of course changing as the movement ages). Reasons for one's choice to participate in some form of Pagan religion are diverse. However, some of the most cited reasons include a feeling of disdain for or dissatisfaction with organized religion or the religion of one's upbringing, a need to participate in a religion where individual insight is foregrounded and dogma is absent or where feminist and environmental views are advocated, or an interest in ancient cultures or mythologies.

Demographic data on Pagans is difficult to isolate. This difficulty is due primarily to the fact that Paganism remains decentralized, thus there are no central registries, or listings of members. It is also the case that many Pagans practice their religion in solitude and feel no need to join specific groups or organizations, thus no counts of such individuals exist. Others, feeling they cannot risk the attention, simply do not want to be
counted for fear of discrimination or undue media exposure. The best attempts to obtain general demographic data on Pagans is in the form of records of festival attendance, membership in large Pagan organizations, and subscriptions to Pagan periodicals. Despite all the difficulties, one organization, the Earth Spirit Community, is currently undertaking a Pagan census project in the hopes of obtaining more reliable numbers. This census is being conducted primarily at a grassroots level with participants being encouraged to photocopy and distribute the copies to as many fellow Pagans as possible. The census forms have also been printed in several widely read Pagan magazines. Unfortunately the results of this census are not available at the time of this writing.

That being said, there are a few general observations that can be made about Pagan demographics. Pagans as a whole are noted to be well-educated and regard education with great respect (Orion 1995). Such a trend may be reflective of the scholarly bent among Pagans who often seek to reestablish their religion from existing academic information on ancient Pagan religions. This trend will be dealt with in more detail in later chapters. Pagans as a group also tend to be highly independent and individualistic, as is evidenced by the fact that the participants choose to seek out and participate in what many would view as an alternative religion. Political views among Pagans are varied but Pagans typically express sympathies with feminists and environmentalist politics, as these are both areas
often incorporated into the religious practices and beliefs in general. Finally, the majority of participants are of European descent, reflective of the fact that the Pagan movement still centers around the recreation of pre-Christian European religions, and many participants get involved, in part, as a means to explore their ancestral ethnic heritage and religion. It should be kept in mind, however, that these are only the broadest of generalizations, and there are many exceptions, typical of the diversity of the movement.

While I did collect general demographic information from the participants I interviewed and who participated in my survey, and I did obtain attendance counts at the festivals I attended, a widespread demographic profile of Paganism in the United States was beyond the scope of this project. Good representative samples on Pagan demographics, however, have been taken by several researchers. I will briefly present the findings of two researchers in this area to provide the reader with at least some rudimentary information on Pagan demographics, as well as, providing some insight into the scope of the Pagan movement. Loretta Orion received 189 responses from Pagans to her survey asking for demographic data and information on Paganism and healing. The second survey, I will present information on, was conducted by Circle Sanctuary, a Pagan networking organization and nature preserve at a large festival sponsored by them in 1992. This survey received 320
responses. The results of these surveys are presented in Tables 1 and 2.
Table 1. Orion 1995 - Pagan Demographic Survey Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total respondents:</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Affiliation:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republican</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progressive</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal, Independent, Anarchist,</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libertarian, Socialist, Green</td>
<td>Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Androgynous</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Preference:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heterosexual</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homosexual</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bisexual</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-50 years Majority</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion of Birth:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judaism</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unitarian</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;My own Path&quot;</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ph.D.</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.D.</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters Degree</td>
<td>22.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor's Degree</td>
<td>31.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate's Degree</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade/Technical School Degree</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Diploma</td>
<td>23.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not High School Graduate</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupation:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Care/Social Work</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts/Entertainment</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer related</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office work</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacture/Trade/Industry</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired/Unemployed</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Practitioner</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occult Retail</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-7,000 (per year)</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-15,000</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-25,000</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-35,000</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-45,000</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45,000 +</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(48 participants did not respond</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to &quot;income question&quot;)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2. Circle 1992 - Pagan Demographic Survey Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Respondents</th>
<th>320</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How long have you identified yourself as Pagan? (n=291)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.3% 1 year or less</td>
<td>41.6% 2-5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.9% 6-10 years</td>
<td>12.0% 11-15 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.1% 16 years or more</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pagan affiliations (check all that apply n=492):</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31.3% solitary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.2% small informal group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.6% coven/organized small group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.0% church/large group/community</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.9% network (other than Circle)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.8% other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age (n=296):</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.1% 10-19</td>
<td>30.7% 20-29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35.8% 30-39</td>
<td>19.9% 40-49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4% 50-59</td>
<td>0.0% 60 or older</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender (n=316):</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52.2% Female</td>
<td>46.5% Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3% Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Preference (n=320)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71.7% Heterosexual</td>
<td>17.7% Bisexual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3% Gay Male</td>
<td>2.2% Lesbian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2% Celibate</td>
<td>2.8% Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship Status (n=290)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40.7% Single</td>
<td>27.9% Monogamous Marriage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.5% Living Together</td>
<td>7.9% Open Marriage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.9% Divorced/Single</td>
<td>1.7% Group Marriage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4% Widowed/Single</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic Ancestry (check all that apply n=334)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35.0% Celtic</td>
<td>25.7% Germanic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.5% Scandinavian</td>
<td>5.7% Slavic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.5% Native American</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.7% Jewish</td>
<td>2.1% Gypsy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5% Afro-American</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.6% Hispanic</td>
<td>5.7% Other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2. (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Home Environment (n=319)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40.3% Urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.9% Suburban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.0% Rural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.7% Small Town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5% Wanderer/on the road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.3% Homeless/on the streets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.3% Other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment (n=319)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>59.2% Full-time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.3% Part-Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.7% Unemployed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.8% Other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annual Income (n=270):</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.6% None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.0% 1-9,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.9% 10,000-19,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.7% 20,000-29,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.0% 30,000-39,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.1% 40,000-49,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.7% 50,000-59,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.0% 60,000-69,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1% 70,000-79,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.0% 80,000 or more</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Background (n=313):</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.8% Less than High School Graduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.0% High School Graduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37.4% Some College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.6% Technical College Graduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.0% Bachelor's Degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.5% Some Graduate School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.3% Master's Degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5% Doctoral Degree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Organization and Traditions

As is characteristic of the Pagan movement, Pagan organizations are diverse and multifaceted. The primary purpose of some Pagan organizations is religious, while for others the purpose may be networking, service, or political. Others may be any combination of these. Some are legally recognized churches, others are small informal groups; some are nationwide, some are local. In general Pagan organizations are groups which provide services of some sort to the Pagan community, be it in the form of religious backing, political support, legal support, or community support. Other services provided may come in the form of newsletters, magazines, networking links, internet connections, information, sponsorship of festivals, speakers, conferences, legal advice, information on Paganism for non-Pagans, legal recognition and training of clergy, or legal church status. Such organizations may cater to Paganism as a whole, or to one specific type of Paganism. They differ from Pagan traditions or the specific type of Pagan religion one may follow, in that anyone may join, and there is usually a fee for services, such as a subscription price or membership rate, although this is not always the case. These organizations do not necessarily advocate any one particular Pagan tradition, although some do. It is also the case that all Pagan religions or traditions do not have the backing of an "official" organization, while some organizations can be considered both a Pagan religion and a formal organization. The Circle Guide
lists 278 Pagan groups from 39 states and around the world, 45 Pagan churches from 20 states and one from Canada, 113 Pagan networks from 30 states and nine countries, including Canada, Belgium, Germany, Ireland, Denmark, Italy, Guatemala, Finland and England, and 27 Pagan centers from 16 states and one from Germany (Carpenter, Ordaz, Whitaker 1994). Pagan groups are defined in the *Circle Guide* as having:

Some type of Pagan orientation and are comprised of at least three people who meet face-to-face at least four times a year and take part in spiritual activities. Groups vary widely according to size, structure, purpose, spiritual orientation, membership requirements and frequency of meetings. Included are covens, circles, study groups, groves, communities, and other groups (1994: 1)

The Pagan churches section listed in the guide includes legally recognized churches and organizations. The Pagan network section includes associations "who connect with each other through the mail, via computer bulletin board, by phone and/or face-to-face to share information and/or work for a common goal" (1994:27). The *Circle Guide* describes Pagan centers as "contact points for groups in the area and sometimes elsewhere, as well" (1994: 37), and includes listings of Pagan nature preserves, libraries, healing places, retreats, and resource centers. To provide clearer examples, I will present an overview of several of the better known of these Pagan organizations. It should be
noted that although a number of various organizations which could equally demonstrate my point could be presented here, I have chosen to select the following organizations for their potential in providing the widest overview.

**Ar nDraiocht Fein: A Druid Fellowship, Inc. (ADF)**

ADF was founded in 1983 by Isaac Bonewits in New York. It is currently comprised of an organizing group which includes a "Mother Grove" and which sponsors local "groves" around the country. This organization is thus comprised of smaller groups, and constitutes both a legally recognized church and Pagan network. It described in the words of its leaders as a, "Pan-Indo-European, non-racist, non-sexist, reconstructionist tradition of Neo-Pagan Druidism. Polytheology and liturgy. . . polytheistic, structured and rooted in both scholarship and vision. . . Provides exoteric and esoteric services, college-level training, encourages ecological activism, and advocates excellence in scholarship, liturgy, and the arts. The majority of ADF activities are open and inclusionary. ADF has multiple special interests groups and guilds and members are active on several computer nets." (Carpenter, Ordaz, Whitaker 1994:14).

**Church of All Worlds (CAW)**

CAW is both a legally recognized church and a networking organization. CAW has published one of the most widely read Pagan magazines, *Green Egg.*
for over twenty-five years. CAW sponsors local groups referred to as "nests" and provides the following services: public rituals, discussion groups, sponsorship of festivals, classes on Pagan and occult related topics, aiding Pagan prisoners, and training for ordination into the CAW priesthood.

**Circle** Circle obtained legal church status on the state scale in 1978 and on the federal scale in 1980. Circle publishes *Circle Network News*, and is located on the Circle Nature Preserve. Circle provides various services such as sponsorship of festivals, information on networking, education, priestess training programs, and sponsors the "Lady Liberty League" an information exchange network for religious freedom activism.

**Elf Lore Family (ELF)** ELF was founded in 1983 to promote alternative lifestyles and religions, and environmental ethics. ELF directs a nature preserve, and sponsors festivals, and provides information on Pagan lifestyles, networking, crafts, environmentalism, ecological farming, folklore, and survival skills.

**Gay and Lesbian Pagan Coalition (GLPC)** GLPC provides networking resources for gay and lesbian Pagans, and publishes a newsletter.
Ring of Troth  An organization founded in 1987 as a legally recognized church of the Asatru (Germanic/Norse Paganism) tradition. The Ring of Troth publishes *Idunna: A Journal of Northern Tradition*, and provides training and licensing for "Elders", and sponsors local groups known as "Hofs".

Regional Organizations  These represent networking organizations in a specific area. There are a number of these which function in a similar capacity. Services provided by such groups may include: providing information on Paganism, sponsoring workshops, speakers, public rituals and festivals, and publishing newsletters which inform the local community of Pagan related events. Such groups do not generally adhere to any one Pagan philosophy or tradition and do not generally have legal church status. Some examples would include: the Bay Area Pagan Assembly (BAPA), the Pagan Community Council of Ohio (PCCO), and the Midwest Pagan Council (MPC).

The various Pagan traditions can be seen as constituting the actual "religion" of participants, as it is within these traditions where the actual beliefs, pantheons, and practices are located and constructed. Here I will attempt to present a brief overview of as many of these traditions as possible. It should be kept in mind that the following list is by no means exhaustive of all the
possible Pagan traditions and probably never will be. The reason is that Pagan traditions are constantly growing, constantly being created and recreated, and since Paganism remains decentralized, individualistic, shunning dogmatic claims and authority, anyone has the potential to start their own "branch" or group. Even within the midst of all this diversity and potential for constant growth, each individual, and each group also has a tendency to develop their own way of practicing their religion which is specific not only to their tradition but to their own principles or group dynamics. Some may develop their own personal "mysteries" or brand of "initiation" which is not shared with anyone outside of that particular group.

Asatru/The Northern Tradition - A collection of traditions derived from the ancient Germanic tribes of Northern Europe, including the Norse, Icelandic, Germanic, Teutonic, Anglo-Saxon peoples. The term, "Asatru" is of Scandinavian origin and translates as, "belief in the Gods" (Farrar, Farrar, and Bone 1995). The principle deities of this tradition include, Frey, Freya, Thor, Odin, Frigga, and Tyr. This tradition is sometimes referred to as Odinism, however, Odinism would rather constitute one particular sub-type of this tradition, in which an individual devotes his to her religious observances to Odin in particular. The term "Odinism" is often used as synonymous with Asatru, because Odin is viewed as the "chief" of the Gods.
Individuals may practice solitary, but the primary type of organization in this tradition is referred to as a "kindred", "hearth", or "hof". Kindreds, hearths, and hofs meet regularly to conduct rituals and honor the Gods and Goddesses in two principle rites known as the "blot", which constitutes a ceremonial offering of food and drink to the Gods and Goddesses and the "sumble", a sacred ritual feasts in which boasts/toasts are drank to the Gods and Goddesses, heros, ancestors, or to propose and seal oaths (Thorsson 1992).

Ceremonial Magic - A branch of Neo-Paganism with a focus on magic in a ceremonial context in which specific sets of rules and regulations must be followed explicitly, and involving specific types and colors of robes, tools, decorations and verbal incantations. A large part of ritual in this context is derived from the rituals of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, an occult organization founded in Britain in 1887 which incorporated elements of Freemasonry and material collected from medieval grimoires such as The Key of Solomon (Farrar, Farrar and Bone 1995). Famous members of the Golden Dawn included W.B. Yeats, Aleister Crowley and S. L. MacGregor Mathers. The original Golden Dawn is now defunct, however, the rituals developed by its members are still widely used among ceremonial magicians. Ceremonial magicians particularly owe a debt to the late
Aleister Crowley, for many of their practices involve "Thelemic" magic, a branch of ritual magic developed by him. The rites of the *Ordo Templi Orientis* (OTO), (which still exists) are also practiced in this context. The OTO constitutes a magical ritual order of which Crowley was made head in 1925.

The Church of All Worlds - A branch of Neo-Paganism, which has at its center of belief and practice a focus on environmental ethics and which was established as a religion for the hope of the future. Originally based on the philosophical principles as set out in the science fiction novel *A Stranger in A Strange Land* by Robert Heinlein, in which all humans are conceptualized as representing a little "piece" of divinity. Organizers describe the mission of the Church of All Worlds as, "to evolve a network of information, mythology and experience that provides a context and stimulus for reawakening Gaia, and reuniting her children through tribal community dedicated to responsible stewardship and evolving consciousness (Zell 1994: 1).

Classical Mystery - A phrase used by Farrar, Farrar and Bone (1995) to denote those groups involved in the reconstruction of the pre-Christian mystery religions of Egypt, Greece and Rome. Through written records,
mythology and archaeological remains, a vast amount of information exists on the religious practices of the ancient Egyptians, Greeks and Romans, and participants put that information to use in ritual and belief.

Discordian Paganism  Neo- Pagan religious groups which are paradoxical in their very nature, or began as humorous parody to modern religion, and example of which would be the *Church of Eris-* which honors Eris, Goddess of Chaos, who teaches that it doesn't matter what you believe since Chaos always triumphs in the end. Discordians often act as "trickster figures" within the context of Pagan religions, throwing kinks into the works, so to speak. While many "discordian" groups exist such as the Sacred Order of Bill the Cat" and the “Coven of Jim Morrison”, Discordianism can be seen to constitute a tradition in its own right, being founded in the late 1960's by Kerry Thornley and Gregory Hill, claiming they had been touched by the Goddess Eris in a bowling alley. Although Discordianism began as a joke, some follow it as a serious spiritual path, holding that such paradox is needed in religion to provide perspective and guard against dogma, and those who take their beliefs too seriously (Farrar, Farrar, and Bone1995).

Druidism A type of Paganism involving the revival of the clerical practices of the Celtic peoples of the British Isles
before the Roman invasion. The primary deities of Druidism are Celtic in origin such as Lugh, Bridgit, or Cerridwen. Rituals and beliefs are often drawn from surviving Celtic folklore and descriptions of Druidic practices by the Romans, as the ancient Druids left no written records, all of their training being oral. The Druidic revival predates the contemporary revival of other types of Paganism by about fifty years, having its origin in the late1800's with a revival of Celtic romanticism in the British Isles. Druids traditionally meet in wooded groves, and the primary organization of Druids is known as a "grove". Contrary to popular imagination Druids do not worship "trees", but they do recognize and celebrate the divine in nature. Druids can still be seen in Britain during the Summer Solstice at Stonehenge, and various groups practice throughout the United States, such as Ar nDraiocht Fein and Henge of Keltria.

Goddess Worship - A form of Neo-Paganism especially devoted to the feminine aspect of deity. Almost constituting "generic" label, Goddess worshippers revere the female divine in many forms and from many cultures, particularly popular, however, are "Goddess" images from Paleolithic Europe, such as the "Venus" of Willendorf and the Lasscaux Cave figure. Participants often feel that these images
represent fertility, the earth mother, and the "original"
divine feminine.

**Huna** A form of Paganism and/or magic based on ancient
Polynesian traditions.

**Hinduism** While Hinduism as a whole does not necessarily
warrant the label of "Neo-Pagan" sufficient numbers of Neo-
Pagans draw from Hindu practices, mythology and divine
images to warrant its inclusion here. It is also the case that,
Hinduism as it is practiced today in Indian and in many
parts of the world, would constitute a "Pagan" religion. A
particularly popular Hindu deity called on for protection by
women is Kali.

**Jewitch** A term increasingly used to denote the incorporation of
one's Jewish heritage into their Pagan practice. The person
may or may not consider themselves a "Witch". Such
practices often involve the exploration of the "pre-
patriarchal" spiritual roots of the Hebrews, Assyrians, and
Babylonians.

**Radical Fairy** - A type of Paganism devoted to the exploration
of gay male spirituality, not to be confused with the Faery
tradition in Wicca.
Shamanic Paganism  A type of Paganism based on the practice of shamanic traditions in extant cultures. The "Neo-Shamanic" revival was fostered primarily by anthropologist Michael Harner, who wrote *The Way of the Shaman*, as well as teaching classes and giving workshops on shamanic healing practices in the United States. Harner based his work primarily on the shamanic practices of indigenous South Americas. The writings of Mircea Eliade, who wrote *Shamanism: Techniques of Ecstasy* are also heavily drawn from. It should be noted that the term, "shaman" is often used in a slightly different context by participants in the Pagan movement than it is in the anthropological one. The primary difference being, that often Pagans choosing to label themselves "shaman" or claiming to engage in "shamanic practices" are not necessarily adopting the culture and religion of the people from which they are taking their ideas but are instead choosing to engage in a collection of practices which have been labeled by researchers as being definitive of shamanism. Such practices may include, trance journeys, the adoption of a spirit animal or guide, drumming, and dancing, the ingestion of hallucinogens, and other practices, with the primary goal being to induce an altered state of consciousness through which spiritual insights can be gained or healing can take place. Shamanism is regarded by many Pagans as the
earliest form of religion, and thus the ancestor of all later Pagan religions. Thus many Pagans involved in many branches of Paganism are exploring the shamanic roots of their particular path, for example "Celtic shamanism" is currently on the rise as several books of that title, or dealing with Celtic shamanism have recently appeared in bookstores. Native American shamanic models are also commonly drawn from within the Pagan community.

Unitarian Universalist Pagans A branch of Neo-Paganism as established through the Unitarian Universalist Church which in its ideology holds that all depictions of Gods and Goddesses are essentially referring to different interpretations of the same divine force - otherwise referred to as The Covenant of Unitarian Universalists Pagans or CUUPS.

Voodoo, Santeria, and African Reconstructionists While Voodoo and Santeria are not necessarily "Pagan" as they incorporate elements of Catholicism, beliefs and practices derived from such religions of West African origin are gaining adherents in the Pagan community. Participants in such traditions call up on the Orishas, or Loas (Deities) in rites of possession, as well as giving them honor and sacrifices.
Witchcraft or Wicca A form of Paganism purported to have its roots in Neolithic shamanism (Orion 1995, Campanelli 1993), Witchcraft or Wicca, as it is often called, is one of the largest branches of Neo-Paganism. The revival of Witchcraft in the 1950's was the primary spark for the Neo-Pagan movement as a whole. While some hold that Witchcraft as it exists today in the Pagan context is primarily a twentieth century phenomenon, many feel that the practices of contemporary Witchcraft are derived from Neo-lithic European religious practices which overtime blended with the religions of various Indo-European peoples, such as the Celtic and Germanic peoples who later moved into the area. According to some participants, Witchcraft survived the persecution of the Christian Church during the Middle Ages by moving underground and existing up until the 1950's when it was exposed by Gerald Gardner as a type of secret society. The history of Witchcraft and its origins are controversial, and for more information please refer to the chapter on the history of the Pagan movement. Adherents of Wicca worship a Goddess, and a God, revere the cycles of nature and the moon, perform magic, and adhere to an ethical prescript known as the Wiccan Rede which states, "An it harm none, Do what ye will" (Ault 1990; Adler 1986). The primary organization of Witchcraft is referred to as a coven, although many solitary practitioners exist as well. The
varieties of Wicca are immense, the most traditional being what is referred to today as Gardnerian Wicca, based on the writings of Gerald Gardner. Other forms include, Alexandrian Wicca, established by Alex Saunders, Faery Wicca established by Victor Anderson, Seax Wicca, founded by Raymond Buckland, and Dianic Wicca, a form of Wiccan based primarily in feminist theology and which only allows females into their covens. Many groups also exist which practice a particular "regional" type of Wicca, such as Celtic Wicca, Norse Wicca, or Strega (Italian for Witch). Others referring to themselves as "Hereditary Witches" or "Family Traditional Witches" claim to practice a form of Witchcraft passed down to them from their biological relatives for generations, where it has been kept secret within the family for fear of persecution. The terms "Witch" and "Witchcraft" are often the cause of great controversy both inside and outside the Pagan community. The controversy arises over the negative connotation such terms carry with them outside the Pagan community, as well as in the anthropological literature. Contemporary Witches, hold that the terms "Witch" and "Witchcraft" were originally terms used in pre-Christian Europe to denote the religious and healing practices of the pre-Christian population. As Christianity started gaining a hold in Europe, it is held, that the indigenous religious practices were suppressed by the Christian church, with the church labeling such religious
practices as "evil". Thus, contemporary Witches hold, the meaning of such terms were manipulated by the Christian Church from their original form. Contemporary Witches seek empowerment through the "reclaiming" of such terminology.

Paganism as "Culture"

With all of the diversity and decentralization within the Pagan movement, is it reasonable to assume that Paganism constitutes a what could be called a "culture" or a "religious movement"? Afterall, anthropologists do study "cultures" and I feel that it is necessary that I examine how Paganism fits into such a model, before I continue.

Many researchers such as Orion (1995) have preferred to avoid this question, getting around it by labeling Paganism a sub-culture. While this is a valid description as participants in general do participate in a larger culture, such as that of North American, why should Paganism as a group of religions be singled out from other religions as a "sub-culture", when others are referred to simply as "cultures". This debate, of course, is partially one of semantics, however, establishing Paganism as a "culture" in its own right is an important step in defining what Paganism is all about.

According to most introductory texts on cultural anthropology, culture is "learned", it is "transmitted", it is "symbolic" and it is "adaptive" (Schultz and Lavenda 1995;
Bohannan 1992). Schultz and Lavenda hold that, "cultures are different traditions of learned behavior. . . Humans use culture to adapt and transform the world they live in" (1995:5). If one follows such definitions Paganism would then have to be defined as a culture, for it is all of these things. That being said, most anthropologists would agree that the term "culture" is an elusive one, used more as a tool to place boundaries on human behavior, making it more manageable, more accessible, and allowing for description. With this in mind, I have chosen, in this study to identify Paganism, as a "culture". The binding is my own for the boundaries surrounding Paganism are fuzzy, as Paganism is not restricted by geographical location, or language, but religion and ideology. However, I am not the sole suspect in this categorization, as participants themselves can be strongly implicated. Participants make frequent reference to "the Pagan culture", "the Pagan movement", "the Pagan community". There is even a Pagan periodical, at the time of this writing, putting together an issue on the subject of "Pagan culture". Such references make it clear that participants themselves see their religion as constituting some sort of coherent whole. This recognition on the part of the participants, is a far more important one than my own, for such a recognition in and of itself says a lot about how Paganism is viewed from the insiders perspective. Recognition of Paganism's status as a cultural movement on the part of the participants may also do a lot to foster the momentum of the movement as a whole, as the
following quote by Mary Jo Neitz indicates, "I might even say that a social movement occurs when people are conscious that a movement is occurring. . . The awareness of change is itself a second step in the production of change" (1990:5). Pagans through such a recognition are in part creating their own cultural realities and defining the boundaries of their culture themselves. It is also the case that Pagans recognize themselves as a culture in opposition to other religious cultures and to the dominant ideology which surround and contrasts with their beliefs and practices. Such opposition and the accompanying potential for discrimination against Pagans as participants in an alternative religion further fosters the recognition on the part of Pagans that they are part of a "culture", part of a larger whole. As Ulf Hannerz notes, "Whenever some group of people have a bit of common life with a modicum of isolation from other people, a common cause in society, common problems and perhaps a couple of common enemies, there culture grows" (1992:22). Paganism can be seen as a culture with common goals, common problems, and in general common beliefs and practices. Through this culture many individuals define their identities and direct their lives.

Pagan culture can also be viewed as a process, as it creates itself through the ongoing structuring of identity and community through festivals, folklore and ritual. Here, the dynamics of cultural construction becomes readily apparent. It is this
dynamic model of culture which proves to be most effective in describing Paganism as a whole.
CHAPTER II
HISTORY OF THE PAGAN REVIVAL

Now, I am an anthropologist, and it is agreed that an anthropologist’s job is to investigate what people do and believe, and not what other people say they should do and believe. It is also part of the his task to read as many writings as possible on the matter he is investigating though not accepting such writings uncritically, especially when in conflict with the evidence as he finds it. Anthropologists may draw their own conclusions and advance any theories of their own, but they must make it clear that these are their own conclusions and their own theories and not proven facts; and this is the method which I propose to adopt. In dealing with native races one records their folklore, the stories and religious rites, on which they base their beliefs and actions. So why not do the same for the English witches?

Gerald Gardner 1954

Prefaced by the above statement Gerald Gardner begins his discussion of the surviving practice of Witchcraft in twentieth century England. Gardner’s work *Witchcraft Today* was published in 1954 following the repeal of the Witchcraft Acts of England in 1951, making the practice of Witchcraft no longer punishable by law. Gardner’s writings have been linked to the
contemporary revival of Witchcraft in the British Isles, mainland Europe, the United States, Canada, and Australia. Some even give Gardner the credit of making up the whole of the movement, including its rites, beliefs, and organization (Kelly 1990). A number of covens were founded as offshoots of the original coven with which Gardner studied and was a member. Subsequently, an entire branch of Witchcraft has, since the time of Gardner's writings, been referred to as Gardnerian Wicca or Witchcraft. It seems to me to be quite ironic that an individual who, quite explicitly at the onset of his writing, identifies himself as an anthropologist has been credited with the founding of, or at least playing a major role in the development of, a new.revitalistic religion.

The history of the Neo-Pagan movement is, of course, not limited to the specifics of Witchcraft, however the history of Witchcraft does constitute a major chapter in the history of the Neo-Pagan movement. The history of Neo-Paganism like everything else associated with it, is complex. In looking at its history, one realizes that one could potentially follow any number of trajectories, each associated with the specific establishment and development of any separate group, organization or subgroup which identifies itself with the Neo-Pagan movement as a whole. Witchcraft or Wicca, in all its various forms, however, has been at the forefront of the Neo-Pagan movement, and is perhaps the most widespread and prominent of Neo-Pagan religions. Due to its prominence and especially colorful history, I will first review
the history of the development of Witchcraft as it exists as a contemporary revitalistic religious movement.

Although Gerald Gardner is often credited with ushering in the renaissance of Witchcraft in the late twentieth century, he was preceded by a number of other writers, which in some form or another directly or indirectly contributed to the Witchcraft movement. It has been also been theorized that Gardner's claim to have found surviving secret Witch covens was in fact a fabrication of the evidence and that instead his work represented a composite of two earlier scholars, the folklorist Charles Godfrey Leland, and Egyptologist/anthropologist Margaret Murray (Jencson 1989). Whether or not Gardner’s evidence was fabricated has yet to be proven, however, either way both Leland and Murray have proven to be influential in the development of and popularization of Witchcraft as a religion. It is furthermore of an interesting note that the history of the Witchcraft movement had been one primarily associated with a scholarly and literary tradition, that is, most important dates, especially early on in its inception can be linked to a subsequent publication, rather than the establishment of any specific political or religious organizations.

Leland, a folklorist, linguist and founder of Britain's Gypsy Lore Society conducted fieldwork among the Gypsies or Romani of Tuscany, England, and throughout various parts of Eastern Europe. He was best known in his own time for a collection of comic poems in German-American dialect, entitled, *Hans*
Breitmanns Ballads (Clifton 1993). In addition, he wrote on Algonquin Indian legends, the Romany language, and edited various collections of folksongs and folktales. Leland's major contribution to the Witchcraft movement came in the form of a work he published in 1890 entitled, *Aradia, Gospel of the Witches*. Leland reported to have obtained this information from a northern Italian woman named Maddalena, who sent it to him in her own handwriting after Leland had inquired about a certain legend having to do with the development of Witchcraft and which was reported to be circulating among the fortunetellers of Tuscany. Leland was unsure as to whether or not Maddalena had obtained the information from oral or written sources, but seemed quite certain as to its antiquity. Maddalena, Leland's informant, refers to *Aradia: Gospel of the Witches* as a story about "la vecchial religione" - the old religion (Leland 1890).

The narrative itself, tells the story of the Goddess Diana and her daughter Aradia. In the story Diana is described as, "Mother of fairies, Queen of the serpents, and giver of the gifts of language and witchcraft" (Leland 1890). It tells the tale of the first witch, Aradia, daughter of Diana, Goddess of the Moon, and Lucifer (meaning God of light and splendor, or Sun God as Maddalena described), who was instructed by her mother to go to earth and teach the people the art of magic, witchcraft, and resistance so that they may be free from their oppressors - the rich aristocracy. It is a book filled with revolutionary/reactionary overtones on the part of the Italian peasants allied with the
Goddess Diana and her daughter against, a more powerful ruling Christian aristocracy. Leland saw this writing as the last vestige of the Roman and Eleusian Mystery cults and claims, "I have done what little I could to dissenter something from the dead volcano of Italian sorcery" (1890: 5). The following year, 1891, Leland published another work entitled *Gypsy Sorcery and Fortune Telling*, and is alleged to have gained much of his information for this work through the trading of magical secrets, charms, and amulets which he had in turned gained from other informants (Jencson 1989).

Thirty years later Margaret Murray in her 1921 work, *The Witch-Cult of Western Europe*, put forth the idea that a pagan religion, had survived well into Medieval times and possibly even into much more recent periods in history. Murray, an anthropologist and Egyptologist advised by anthropologist Charles Seligman and working through University College in London, became interested in pursuing this idea after she was forced back to England from Egypt during the first World War. In order to prove her hypothesis Murray sorted through historical records of the witch trials in England, in hopes of uncovering vestiges of a persecuted but surviving pagan past. Murray concluded from this search that the "witch-cult" as persecuted by the early Church and throughout the Inquisition was actually a survival of a pre-Christian fertility religion in Western Europe, and not, as the Church held, evidence of dissenting Christians wooed by the "devil" to participate in Satanic rites (Murray 1921). Murray
further concluded that the religion was most likely the vestige of a Celtic past, as she reviewed the names of persons tried by the Church for practicing witchcraft and found not a single Anglo-Saxon surname among them. Murray further distinguishes between what she calls "Operative Witchcraft" or that involving with the working of spells, charms, etc., which can be done by anyone, Christian or otherwise, and "Ritual Witchcraft", or that involving the religious beliefs and practices of an early "Dianic" cult. She concludes that what was on trial was not the working of magic or sorcery since even the clergy themselves participated in such acts but the participation in a pre-Christian religion involving the worship of a male horned deity, which was often celebrated as incarnate in a man, a woman or an animal, and some aspect of the feminine deity Diana, or Mother Goddess figure. To back up such claims Murray references one of the earliest proclamations against Witchcraft, a document published by the Church in 906 A.D. by the Council of Ancyra, which held that "certain wicked women deluded by Satan, believe that on certain nights they ride through the sky with Diana, the goddess of pagans, whom they worship" (Murray 1921: 44).

Murray thus holds that her idea was not a novel one, but one fully realized and accepted by the Church who often lamented the peasants return to old "heathen" ways. She also referenced certain contemporary practices such as the Maypole dance as evidenced of "survivals" from Europe's pagan past. In her later book, God of the Witches (1933) Murray traces images
of horned shamans, and gods as they appeared in Paleolithic caves, Egyptian hieroglyphics, and Medieval architecture, concluding that such images represent a continuous survival of the "Horned God" worshipped by ancient pagan peoples.

About the same time Murray was doing her research into the evidence of a surviving pagan religion in Europe, another figure was gaining fame in the occult world, the now infamous, magician, poet, scholar, and thespian, Aleister Crowley. Aleister Crowley has had an ambiguous reputation among the magical, Pagan, and occult world. He has been characterized as an arch-demon and satanist, an astute ceremonial magician, a humorous charismatic figure, and a heroin addict with a taste for the flamboyant and shocking (Ellwood and Partin 1988). Because of his reputation many Neo-Pagans and Witches today do not want to admit to having any connection with the infamous Mr. Crowley. Nevertheless, Crowley played a large role in the popularization of the occult movement and stirred renewed interest in topics such as magic and witchcraft, creating an atmosphere ripe for the acceptance of such writers as Gerald Gardner. It has also been noted that many of Gardner's rituals bear a striking resemblance to those written by Aleister Crowley, and some have even hypothesized that Gardner commissioned Crowley to write part of his work (Valiente 1989 - note that Valiente herself adamantly denies such a charge on behalf of Gardner, but reports it as a rumor).
Crowley was actually a member, along with other now well known figures as William Butler Yeats and S.L. MacGregor Mathers, of a Masonic group founded in 1888, known as The Order of the Golden Dawn (Ellwood and Partin 1988). The Order of the Golden Dawn focused primarily on ceremonial magic, recreations of Egyptian ritual, and astrology. The group gained particular influence among the occult world at the time, though it came to an end shortly after the first World War. Aleister Crowley also founded another secret society known as Argentinum Astrium in 1912, which had short lived fame, and finally, he went on to head the English branch of a German secret society known as Ordo Templasum Orientalis, which focused on the bringing together of "Eastern" and "Western" mystery traditions, such as yoga, alchemy, the kabbalistic tradition and ceremonial magic (Ellwood and Partin 1988; Melton and Poggi 1992). Crowley went on to publish over fifty works encompassing both magic, religion, yoga, philosophy, and fiction, as well as, part of his own personal memoirs. Today many of the Crowley's magical groups have been revitalized, and functioning units of The Order of the Golden Dawn and Ordo Templasum Orientalis now exist in the United States and Europe. His rediscovered writings have also sparked renewed interest in ceremonial magic, the kabbala, alchemy and yoga.

The Order of the Golden Dawn, also spawned another writer who widely contributed to the revitalization of Neo-Paganism in the twentieth century through her fictional works. This writer
was Violet Firth who wrote under the pen-name, Dione Fortune. Firth founded her own group in 1927 known as *The Fraternity of the Inner Light*, which is still in existence under the name of *The Society of the Inner Light*. Firth's group focused on magic and reported that it was in touch with the "group soul" of the British nation. Firth, however, is most famous for her novels *The Sea Priestess* and *Moon Magic*. Firth published *The Sea Priestess* in 1939 of her own accord, because she could not find a publisher who would publish an occult novel (Valiente 1989). The novel itself was the story of Morgan le Fay, a pagan priestess who participated in the working of magic. *Moon Magic* was published in 1956. Both of these books are still widely read in the Pagan community today.

Robert Graves, another folklorist, writer and scholar, published *The White Goddess* in 1948, a work which followed in the traditions established by Leland, James Frazer, and Murray. *The White Goddess* was as Graves described, "a historical grammar of poetic myth" (1948:1). Graves maintains that this language of poetic myth had a continuance in the religious ceremonies of the European and Mediterranean peoples, which was later suppressed by the Christian Church but continued long after in the folklore of Europe, the poetic colleges of Wales and Ireland and in the witch-cults of Western Europe. Graves further suggests that the original deity of Europe was a goddess figure and the original poetic theme was constituted by a story of birth, life, death, and rebirth, with the god of Spring, represented by the
sun contending with his brother, the darkness, for the love of the
goddess of nature, who was in turn both mother and bride. Such
a theme is suggested today in the celebration of the seasonal
festivals of contemporary Witches.

Gerald Gardner, probably the best known figure in the
history of the contemporary Witchcraft movement, only actually
came to be acquainted with Witchcraft quite late in his career. As
a child Gardner suffered from asthma, and his well-to-do family
thus sent him to travel in the more tropical climates with his
nanny. Spending a great deal of time in the Caribbean and
Southeast Asia as a child, Gardner became fascinated by these
cultures and returned to England to pursue an education in
politics and anthropology. During his working years Gardner was
a customs official in Indonesia, where he continued to pursue
anthropological fieldwork, publishing articles on the Malay kris
knife, and attending several anthropological and folklore
conferences (Melton and Poggi 1992; Jencson 1989; Martello
1975). The details of Gardner's education are quite sketchy and
ambiguous. He was reported to have obtained a Ph.D. from the
University of Singapore, however, Doreen Valiente in researching
his life and education, reports that she had trouble obtaining the
details about such a degree (Valiente 1989). Whatever the case
Gardner was a member of the British Ethnological Society and the
Folklore Society, and kept in contact with the scholars of his day.
Gardner retired from his customs position in 1936 and returned
to England permanently, where he became more involved with
the various occult and magical groups of the day, including Crowley's, *Ordo Templasum Orientalis*. It was reportedly through Crowley and other members of the English occult community that Gardner was able to contact a supposedly surviving group of Witches in the New Forest area in England (Valiente 1989). As a side note, Crowley himself had reportedly been asked to join the group to which Gardner was later initiated, but refused because, "He didn't want to be bossed around by women" (Valiente 1989: 45). Gardner reports that he was initiated into an existing coven of Witches in the year 1939 by a woman by the name of Dorothy Clutterbuck (Gardner 1954), and in 1949 he published a novel by the title of *High Magick's Aid*, which detailed the workings of a fictional sixteenth century group of Witches, but which was supposedly modeled after the New Forest group of which he was a member. Gardner's introduction and participation in Witchcraft was colored by another now legendary (among Pagans) event in 1940 in which Gardner's New Forest coven supposedly participated in an attempt to magically repel Hitler's army from the shores of England. This tale has been popularized in the Disney movie *Bedknobs and Broomsticks*. Gardner himself had joined a make-shift army of civilians who were preparing to defend themselves in the event of a Nazi invasion, subsequently it has been hypothesized that much of Gardner's writings geared towards the organization of groups were bias towards having to organize in "secret cells" against a hostile enemy (Martello 1975).
In the year 1951, Britain repealed the last of the Witchcraft Acts, due to lobbying efforts by practicing spiritualists and mediums, who felt that such laws were discriminating against their talents and profession. The last "witch-trial" in England was actually held in the year 1944. The accused was spirit medium Helen Duncan who was subsequently charged and found guilty under the Witchcraft Act of 1735. Duncan's crime, however was less one of the practicing of mediumship as it was of opposing the British Parliament and Navy. Duncan was arrested for practicing "witchcraft" after she supposedly reported that a British naval ship had sunk, against the claims of the British Navy. It was later found that indeed the ship, along with all of its crew was missing. The Witchcraft Acts were eventually replaced by the Fraudulent Mediums Act in 1951, making it legal to practice witchcraft, and mediumship, provided you were not a fraud (Valiente 1989). The year 1951 also brought the publication of Aleister Crowley's commissioned biography, by John Symonds, entitled, The Great Beast, and the opening of the Witchcraft Museum on the Isle of Man. Gardner performed the opening ceremony and later purchased the Witchcraft Museum, adding to it his own collection (Valiente 1989).

Once such laws were revoked, practicing Witches were free to come out into the open - something no one actually expected to happen. In 1954 Gardner published Witchcraft Today, in which he reports to have discovered and been initiated into a
surviving Witch coven in New Forest. In this book Gardner echoes Murray's earlier assumptions that the Witch-Cult had survived from a pre-Christian Paleolithic past, intact and fully functioning up to the present. Gardner refers to Witchcraft as a mystery religion, due to the necessity of taking an oath of secrecy, and reports that this practice came about during the Middle Ages when Witches were forced to go underground to avoid persecution. Gardner furthermore outlines the festivals as celebrated by Witches, and their links to earlier pre-Christian pagan celebrations. Gardner also makes connections between the Greek, Roman and Egyptian mystery religions, as well as African religions, with the contemporary form of Witchcraft which he had supposedly discovered. Gardner later went on to expand this work in *The Meaning of Witchcraft* published in 1959.

Much speculation has gone on in the academic as well as the Neo-Pagan community, as to whether or not Gardner was telling the entire truth about his work. Many claim that his work represents the culmination of the writings of Leland, Murray, and Crowley, and that his supposed "Witch coven" in New Forest was merely fictional, or was at least established by Gardner himself (Adler 1986). Others such as Valiente (1989) who took it upon herself to verify or dispute such claims, claims to have found evidence that others had been in contact with Gardner's group prior to his involvement and that the group was in fact a surviving coven of witches. Whatever the case, Gardner more than anyone else with the publication of his two books, gained the
attention of the public, and was flooded by letters of individuals either claiming to also be surviving Witches, or individuals interested in joining. Gardner was himself astounded by the response, and went on to initiate many others into his tradition, which since has become known as *Gardnerian* (Buckland 1991).

Doreen Valiente and Raymond and Rosemary Buckland were among the many initiates into Gerald Gardner's New Forest coven. Valiente meet Gardner during the late 1950's after writing to him through his publisher. She eventually became Gardner's *High Priestess*, and helped him add to many of his writings and rituals which became the basis of Gardnerian witchcraft. Valiente's and Gardner's coven eventually split, and Valiente went on to publish many works on her own, including a history of the revitalization of Witchcraft in England and Gardner's involvement (Valiente 1989). Raymond and Rosemary Buckland eventually moved to the United States in the early 1960's bringing the Gardnerian tradition with them. The Buckland's were in fact instrumental in the spread of Wicca throughout the United States, as almost all existing Gardnerian covens in the United States trace their roots back to the Bucklands (Adler 1986). Raymond and Rosemary eventually divorced and Raymond Buckland went on to start another popular tradition in Wicca, known as Seax or Saxon Witchcraft (Buckland 1991). A third important figure coming out of the tradition of Gerald Gardner includes, Alex Saunders. Alex Saunders was initiated into a Gardnerian coven in 1963 (Adler 1986), but went
on to found his own tradition claiming that he had come from a family of Witches, and was initiated by his grandmother as a boy. Saunders claims have been heavily disputed as many claim that his tradition, called Alexandrian, is nothing more than the rituals of Gardner with an increased emphasis on ceremonial magic. Saunders did, however, become a popular figure with the British media, as he brought the concept of witchcraft as a religion into the households of those less acquainted with occult literature and subsequently became known as "King of the Witches" (Adler 1986).

The 1970's saw a proliferation of writings on the Witchcraft movement, as well as increased organization and diversification. The Witches International Craft Association and The Witches Anti-Defamation League were formed by Leo Louis Martello in 1969. Following Martello's group won the first civil rights battle for Wiccan's when they filed suit against the New York Parks Department, when they were refused a permit to hold a "Witch-In" on October 31, 1970 in New York City's Central Park (Martello 1975). In Salem, Massachusetts, the Council of Isis Community was formed in 1972 by Laurie Cabot, who has earned the title, mostly for tourist purposes, of the "official witch of Salem" (Adler 1986). In April of 1974 Llewellyn Press sponsored the first meeting of The Council of American Witches in Minneapolis. Represented at this meeting were 73 individuals from different traditions. This council made it a goal to hammer out a general set of principles to inform the public about their religion, and
Principles of Wiccan Belief
The Council of American Witches finds it necessary to define modern witchcraft in terms of the American experience and needs. We are not bound by traditions from other times and other cultures, and own no allegiance to any person or power greater than the Divinity manifest through our own being. As American Witches we welcome and respect all Life Affirming teachings and traditions, and seek to learn from all and to share our learning within our council. It is in the spirit of welcome and cooperation that we adopt these few principles of Wiccan belief. In seeking to be inclusive, we do not wish to open ourselves to the destruction of our group by those self-serving power trips and philosophies and practices contrary to those principles. In seeking to exclude those whose ways are contradictory to ours, we do not want to deny participation with us to any who are sincerely interested in our knowledge and beliefs, regardless of race, color, sex, age, national or cultural origins, or sexual preference (Adler 1986: 101-102).

The principles go on to state such things as 1)a recognition and celebration for the cycles of nature, 2)a respect for and attempt to live in balance with nature, 3)a belief in the power of magic, 4)a recognition of both male and female aspects of deity, 5)an appreciation for the creative power of sexual activity, 6)a desire to not recognize any authoritarian hierarchy, 7) an acknowledgement that obtainment of "degrees" or "titles" does not make one a Witch, but is a religious choice, 8) a statement that the only animosity the council feels toward Christianity or any other religion, is their claim to being "the only way", 9) a
statement affirming that Witches do not "worship Satan", nor have a concept of "absolute evil", 10) an affirmation of life and the spiritual and physical evolution of the Universe, 11) an attempt to seek in nature, things which are beneficial to health and well-being 12) a statement verifying that various traditions are recognized as part of the "Craft", and that as American Witches, there is no perceived threat as to the debates on the history of Witchcraft, and following there is a focus on the present and future and 13) a desire not to neglect the physical for the spiritual world or vice versa (Ravenwolf 1993; Adler 1986).

These principles remain, however the Council itself was eventually disbanded because of the continued surfacing of differences. What this council was coming up against was the characteristic decentralism of Witchcraft, since each group, and sometimes single individuals all function autonomously throughout the major portions of the year. The second attempt to form a broader organization in the United States was more successful, resulting in the first legally recognized, tax-exempt Wiccan "church" as established in 1975 under the name Covenant of the Goddess (Adler 1986). One of the principle organizers of this organization, Aiden Kelley suggested that the Covenant of the Goddess should be based on the bylaws and charter of the Congregational Churches in the United States, so that it would be able to function as a religious body governed by autonomous congregations (covens) and not by any single ruling figurehead as in the Catholic Church. This suggestion seemed to work and COG
has continued to grow ever since (Adler 1986). *Circle*, a Pagan organization and sanctuary was established in 1974, by Selena Fox and Jim Alan, mostly in the hopes of uniting "shamanistic earth religions" and "Wicca". Circle has expanded to encompass a wider Pagan audience and today publishes one of the most widely read Neo-Pagan publications, *Circle Network News*. Circle also sponsors the yearly week-long International Pagan Spirit Gathering in Wisconsin, which draws 600-700 participants, and is now in its nineteenth year (Adler 1986).

Feminist or Dianic Wicca also grew out of the 1970's expansion of the Witchcraft movement. These groups, comprised of all women usually chose to focus on the female aspect of deity exclusively, and many times incorporate feminist politics into their networking. The most well known of these groups was begun in 1971 by Zsusanna Budapest. Budapest's Los Angeles group adopted the name the "Susan B. Anthony coven", which later spawned a whole new group of covens, including the "Ameila Earhart coven" in New York, and the "Elizabeth Gould Davis" in Florida (Adler 1986). Two important books associated with feminist Wicca saw their publication in the year 1979; these include Budapest's *The Holy Book of Women's Mysteries*, and Starhawk's, *The Spiral Dance*. These books being were subsequently widely circulated in feminist bookstores and brought the Wiccan movement to an even larger audience. The year 1979 also saw the publication the most comprehensive study on Witchcraft and Neo-Paganism in the United States to this
date. This work was Margot Adler's (daughter of psychologist Alfred Adler) *Drawing Down the Moon*. Adler's and Starhawk's books have perhaps become the most widely read and most widely recommended reading on Witchcraft available, and are considered almost "required" reading for anyone interested in the movement itself.

The 1990's have seen yet another flourishing of Wiccan literature, encompassing many traditions, and subjects, however a primary focus has been on bringing the beliefs and practices of Witchcraft to the solitary individual. Scott Cunningham's 1990 book entitled, *Wicca: A Guide for the Solitary Practitioner*, openly declared that it was possible to worship alone and still call oneself a "Witch", that is one did not have to be initiated into a coven to be "legitimate". Following Cunningham's publication, a number of books have been published geared exclusively toward those individuals who either cannot find a group to work with or prefer to practice their religion alone, such as Marion Green's *A Witch Alone* (1992), and Silver Ravenwolf's, *To Ride a Silver Broomstick: New Generation Witchcraft* (1993). The 1990's have also seen an increase in the number of Wiccan/Pagan festivals, as well as festival goers. Today known covens exist in a variety of places, from the British Isles, the United States, Canada, France, Holland, Germany, Belgium, Italy, Russia, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, Iceland, to Japan (Buckland 1991).

Outside of the various Witchcraft traditions, the most prominent forms of Neo-Paganism includes groups that, like the
Witches, attempt to re-create ancient pre-Christian religions. In the United States the earliest recognized reconstructionist Neo-Pagan organization was the *Church of Aphrodite*, established in West Hempstead, Long Island in 1938. The Church of Aphrodite was founded by Russian immigrant and novelist Gleb Botkin. Many of Botkin's novels, such as *The Woman Who Rose Again*, *Immortal Woman* and *The God who Didn't Laugh*, although concerned with the Russian revolution, have a prevalent theme of goddess worship (Adler 1986). After moving to the United States Botkin founded the Church of Aphrodite, which focused on goddess worship within a traditional framework which included a clergy, liturgy, and permanent meeting place.

*Feraferia*, derived from the Latin meaning "wilderness festival", is a group originally founded by Frederick Adams in 1967. Adams decided to found such a group while doing graduate work in anthropology at the Los Angeles State College. The idea reportedly just popped into his head while he was walking across campus one day, and after reading Robert Grave's *The White Goddess*, and *Watch the North Wind Rise*, as well as, works by religious scholar Mircea Eliade and cultural theorist Henry Baily Stevens (Alder 1986; Ellwod and Partin 1988). Adam's combined these works with his training in anthropology to construct a new utopian religion, based on a return to "paradisial primate origins" (Adler 1986). Graves' novel *Watch the North Sun Rise* is about a fictional utopian society called New Crete which had evolved following a nuclear holocaust. In the
book, an Israeli philosopher concerned with the survival of humanity recommends the creation of a series of "anthropological enclaves", each being based on anthropological data about the various "stages" of "civilized" development. Each of these are to be sealed off to evolve on their own. One "bronz-age" group is successful in developing a peaceful earth-goddess oriented religion and is settled on the Isle of Crete (Graves 1949; Adler 1986). Following, Adams envisioned a peaceful horticulturally based, vegetarian society devoted to the worship of the Goddess, and in which there was an emphasis on artistic endeavors and creativity.

_The Sabaean Religious Order_, a religious order inspired by ancient Basque, Yoruban, Sumerian and Babylonian sources was the vision of Frederic M. de Arechaga. Sabeaanism was originally part of an effort to preserve certain antediluvian philosophies by means of superimposing hieroglyphics on the illusion of astrological patterns (Adler 1986). Frederic M. de Archaga combined such teachings with his training as an initiate into the mysteries of the god Obatala, and founded the Sabaean Religious Order in Chicago during the 1970's. The order still maintains a temple in the Chicago area and has various followers across the country. As de Arechaga told Adler in an interview about the order, "We are constantly busy. We build. We teach. We do research. We write mystery plays. We choreograph. We teach dancers. We are a source" (Adler 1986:259).
Reconstructions of ancient Egyptian religions have been popular in the Neo-Pagan movement. Most of these reconstructions have grown out of the Church of the Eternal Source founded in 1970, by a group of scholars devoted to the study of the religion of ancient Egypt. The idea to form the group originally grew out of a series of Egyptian costume parties held by a student organization in the Northeastern United States, known as the Chesly Donovan Science and Fantasy Foundation (Adler 1986). The original founders include Harold Moss, Don Harrison, Jim Kimble, and Elaine Amiro, each of whom branched off to form specific groups each associated with a devotion to a specific Egyptian deity; Moss devoted to Horus, Harris forming a group devoted to Thoth, Kimble forming a group devoted to the worship of Orisis, and Amiro forming a group devoted to the worship of the goddess Neith. Other groups have since developed out of these, yet most maintain an affiliation with the Church of the Eternal Source as a basis for organization. The Church of the Eternal Source considers itself to be the refounded religion of ancient Egypt, as an early pamphlet describing their group reads:

The Church of the Eternal Source is the refounded church of Ancient Egypt. We worship the original gods of mankind in their original names in the original manner as closely as possible. This religion produced in Ancient Egypt a golden age of peace, happiness, tranquility and accomplishment unmatched since. . . (Adler 1986: 267).
Following, the Church of the Eternal source is adamantly polytheistic, yet encourages students to continue any previous religious activity which they might have found meaningful in the past. The Church of the Eternal Source also offers a series of correspondence courses to the student interested in ancient Egyptian religion or culture (Melton and Poggi 1992; Adler 1986).

Another trend among Neo-Pagans has been the reconstruction of ancient (and not so ancient) Celtic and Norse religions. Although having close association with the Wiccan movement because of a shared Western European background, both of these groups deny that they are Witches and usually prefer to call themselves Druids in the case of the Celtic reconstructionists, Odinists or Asatru (loosely translated as "belief in the Gods" or "true to the Gods") in the case of the Norse groups. Tadhg MacCrossan, current head of Druidiactos, claims that the reconstruction of Druidism and ancient Celtic religions (not Wicca) began in the 1700's following the Christian eradication of the last Druidic schools in the British Isles during the 1600's. This 18th century renaissance was based on the erroneous notion that the Druids were the builders of Stonehenge and other megalithic temples scattered throughout Europe. This renaissance carried over into the 19th century coupled with a "romantic idealism" as propagated by writers such as William Butler Yeats, Alexander Carmichael and Douglas Hyde (MacCrossan 1993). In the 20th century, many of the romantic ideals of the 19th century were abandoned in favor of
reconstructing Druidic practices and teachings from archaeological and historical Roman records. The largest of these groups now include *Druidiactos* in the United States, Britain and France founded in the late 1960's and *Keltria* founded in the 1970's, in the United States (MacCrosson 1993; Melton and Poggi 1992). MacCrossan refers to his group as a "Postmodern Celtic renaissance movement", and claims that they follow the ancient philosophies of the Celtic peoples as closely as possible (minus the human sacrifice) (1992).

Norse reconstructionism also found its spark in 18th and 19th century Romanticsim and nationalism, as was evidenced by the "Gothic Movement" in Sweden. This movement founded in the late 17th and early 18th centuries strove to explore the indigenous religion, culture and history of Scandinavia. The modern roots of Asatru, however can be located in the 1973 founding of the Asatru Free Assembly in America by Stephen MacNallen and the Asatrumenn in Iceland by Sveinbjorn Beinteinson (Gundarsson 1993). While the Asatru Free Assembly has since broken up similar groups have since arisen in America, such as the 1980 founding of the Rune Guild by Edred Thorsson, the 1987 founding of the Ring of Troth, also founded by Thorsson and the 1988 founding of the Asatru Alliance. The Rune Guild is dedicated to the study of the runes the sacred magical writing of the pre-Christian Germanic peoples. The Ring of Troth is dedicated to overseeing the spiritual development of the Norse/Germanic Pagan movement and is now a legally recognized
religious organization governed by Troth elders. The Ring of Troth provides guidelines as to the forming of Norse/Germanic Pagan groups, referred to as kindreds, hearths, hofs, or garths, the training of Troth elders, as well as providing for the ritual ordination and licensing of these elders (Thorsson, 1992). Most of Norse/Germanic Pagan groups do tend to be more "conservative" than many individuals involved in the Neo-Pagan movement, as their beliefs focus on family structure, courage and "warrior ethics" (Gundarsson 1990; Adler 1986). Most people are drawn to these groups through a search for their own Germanic/Norse family roots (Gundarsson 1990).

The reconstruction of African religion and culture has also been gaining popularity in the Neo-Pagan movement. These reconstructions are often a source of contention in the Neo-Pagan community, for many associate such religions with Mainland U.S. and Caribbean, Voodoo or Voudon and Santeria, and Brazilian Candomble, all of which claim Christian as well as African heritage. While it is the case that individuals involved in such reconstructions often borrow from these traditions, and use them as a source, most claim to have abandoned the Christian affiliation. One specific example of this is Oyotunji Village, a village in Beaufort County, South Carolina founded in 1973 by a group from New York wishing to reconstruct a religion and culture based on Yoruban ethics and practices (Melton and Poggi 1992). As is the case for the Native American religions, there are still those practicing indigenous forms of Yoruban religions, and
following, talking about these groups as reconstructionists can often create further confusion. The founder of this village was a man who chose the name King Efuntala. Efuntala first studied Santeria in Cuba, and later traveled to Nigeria to learn Yoruban teachings firsthand. Religion in Oyotunji Village still resembles Santeria quite closely, however, reference to all Christian saints and deities has been abandoned (Melton and Poggi 1992).

While reconstructions of ancient Pagan religions have predominated the Neo-Pagan movement, it is also the case that religions capitalizing on science fiction, humor, politics, sexual orientation and ironic situations have arisen to the occasion and filled a role as Pagan futurists and bringers of chaos. Out of these one of the most difficult groups to characterized is the Church of All Worlds. This group grew out of a small group of college students in the 1960's interested in the writings of Ayn Rand, Robert Heinlein and psychologist Abraham Maslow. Science fiction writer Robert Heinlein's work *A Stranger in a Strange Land*, has been perhaps the most influential in the organization and structure of the Church of All Worlds, and is in fact where the organization got its name. Heinlein's novel is about an earthling raised on Mars who later returns to earth only to feel misplaced and alone. Eventually, Michael the human-Martian starts a new religion called the Church of All Worlds, which involves the notion that every individual is the embodiment of god and in which the primary religious rite involves the "sharing of water" and sexual contact. The Church of All Worlds, originally grew out a group
known as Atlans, founded by Lance Christi and Tim Zell. The Church of all Worlds is organized into groups known as nests, and today CAW nests exist all over the United States, Europe and Australia (Melton and Poggi 1992; Adler 1986). The primary focus of CAW has expanded to encompass principles associated with goddess worship and deep ecology and publishes perhaps the most professionally produced and widely read Neo-Pagan magazine today. The name of the magazine is Green Egg and is subtitled, A Journal of the Neo-Pagan Renaissance.

In addition to the Druidic reconstructionists which grew out of 18th and 19th century romantic idealism, another group referring to themselves as Druids also exists as part of the Neo-Pagan movement. These Druids however, grew out of circumstances much less concerned, at least originally, with the accurate reconstruction of an early Celtic pre-Christian religions. This organization has adopted the title, The Reformed Druids of North American, and grew out of an attempt by students at Carlton College in Minnesota, to subvert the requirement of having to attend weekly a religious meeting of choice. In 1963, as a protest to the college's requirement, a group of students founded the Reformed Druids of North America, and claimed to meet weekly to worship as the ancient Druids. Due to this protest the following year, school officials lifted the requirement of attending weekly religious services, however, many of the students decided that they were getting more out of these weekly Druid meetings than they had originally intended and continued
to practice, eventually adopting a more serious stance towards the religion of the Druids and ancient Celtic peoples (Ellwood and Partin 1988; Adler 1986).

The *Radical Faeries* movement has also come to be associated closely with Neo-Paganism. This movement began in 1979 at a Spiritual Conference for gay men held in Tucson, Arizona. At this conference the work of Arthur Evans who published a book entitled, *Witchcraft and the Gay Counterculture* (1978) was examined. Evans proposes that homosexuality was an integral part of the early pre-Christian cultures of Europe and goes on to contend that many of the individuals killed during the witch-trials of Europe were actually homosexual men and women. Evans further holds that the gay counterculture needed an influx of spirituality and thus should readopt some of these old Pagan beliefs, as well as creating new Pagan beliefs for the future. At this conference several impromptu Pagan rituals were held and growing out of these, the annual Faery Gathering for gay pagan male spirituality was developed (Adler 1986).

As Margot Adler writes in *Drawing Down the Moon*, "There have always been spoofs on religion. But religions that combine humor, play and seriousness are a rare species. A rather special quality of Neo-Pagan groups is that many of them have a humorous history" (1986:319). Paradoxical beginnings in the Pagan Movement, as is evident with the history of the Reformed Druids of North American, starting out as a protest against a college requirement, and the Church of the Eternal source,
beginning with a series of costume parties, are not unusual. Groups often associated with more serious Neo-Pagan groups have been known to spring up at festivals and often to take hold and get continuously more serious and more organized. While there is not a lot written about these groups because, of their impromptu and often short-lived quality there do exist a number of these which have persisted and grown in membership. I was personally initiated into two of these at festivals I attended (i.e. the Bill the Cat Discordian Group and The Jim Morrison Coven). These, which started out as a joke, have been maintained now, to my knowledge, for at least four years, and one of these, the Jim Morrison Coven, now has a bi-annual newsletter. Other more prominent groups also exists such as the group Eris, devoted to the worship of Eris, the goddess of Chaos. Other groups calling themselves Discordians or Erisians often hold rituals at major Pagan festivals, in which Wicca or Druidism is parodied and things are done backwards or exaggerated, or there are invocations to such humorous deities as Caffeina, the goddess of coffee. Several journals are now currently in print from a Discordian point of view and members, although recognizing the humorous aspect to such endeavors, also often report that they have gained profound spiritual insights from such experiences (Adler 1986).

Individual participants within the Neo-Pagan community conceive of the origins of the movement in various ways. Few participants actually grew up within the movement itself,
although this situation is changing over time, thus discussions about the history of the movement are often heated and controversial, since each group and even each individual seem to have their own interpretation, mostly of information which has come to them through reading or through second-hand sources. Those groups based on ideals gained from science fiction sources, of course have less to debate about, and generally fully acknowledge the constructed nature of their religion. Reconstructionists and Wiccans, however, often call upon historical sources, folklore and anthropology as providing evidence to legitimate their contemporary existence. There are those individuals in the Wiccan movement who coming from a Gardnerian perspective fully accept Gardner's claims to have discovered and worked with a surviving underground coven of Witches, one which had survived from pre-Christian times up until the present (Buckland 1991). Others do not accept the proposition that there is an unbroken line of Wiccan tradition from the pre-Christian era to the present, however, there is often an acceptance that Witchcraft did exist as a legitimate pre-Christian religion, possibly with roots reaching back to Paleolithic times, and thus, see the current revitalization as a rightful re-claiming of a lost pagan heritage, as the following statement suggests:

As the twentieth century (and perhaps the entire Picsean Age) draws to a close, more and more people are finding their way back to the Old Religion, the aboriginal faiths of
the people of our earth, long before our experiment with patriarchy and its attendant rules of obedience and conformity (McCoy 1993:9)

Still others insist that the history of the movement does not matter as long as the present day participants experience it as legitimate and are able to gain some spiritual reality from participating in it. Those involved in goddess worship and feminist spirituality, often acknowledge the reconstructed nature of their religion, but appeal to past ages when there were images of strong women, and powerful female deities, drawing from these as a therapeutic source for "healing themselves from patriarchy" (Lefkowitz 1992). Other writers as Aiden Kelly see the contemporary debate over origins as irrelevant to the validity of Wicca as a religion as he says:

The question of whether there was any historical or organizational reality behind Gardner's claims would be less controversial if the Gardnerian Witches understood that all religions begin as new religions at some time and place, and that almost all of them proceed to claim a great antiquity for themselves as part of their foundational myth (1990:1).

Whatever the case, history real or imagined does serve to provide a sense of direction, meaning and authenticity. It allows for a basis of group identity, and is especially legitimating when as is often the case in Neo-Pagan religions that history, continuous or not, claims to represent the primary order of things. For these reasons, the debate over whether or not Witchcraft is a religion
with unbroken ties to a Paleolithic past, or whether or not goddess worship was the original form of religious observance will most likely continue in the Pagan, as well as, in the academic community.
CHAPTER III
LITERATURE REVIEW

The relationship of academia to the Neo-Pagan movement has been especially complex. Often, academic writing has been adopted by participants in the Neo-Pagan movement as a basis for the legitimation of practices or beliefs, and/or has been used, in part, as a basis for the establishment of new Pagan religions. This is especially evident in the early history of the Wiccan movement, when participants drew from the writings of folklorist Charles Godfrey Leland, anthropologist Margaret Murray, and ultimately from the writings of Gerald Gardner, who also claimed to write as an anthropologist. Such a trend has continued even into more recent times with the publication of Margot Adler’s *Drawing Down the Moon* (1979), a work whose intended audience was originally those outside of the Neo-Pagan community, but which subsequently became one of the most widely read books within the various Neo-Pagan traditions. Adler’s work also inspired renewed interest in Neo-Paganism and sparked a large influx of participants into the Neo-Pagan community. Following, while it is the case that Leland’s and Murray’s writings have been
instrumental in the establishment of contemporary Neo-Paganism, I will focus primarily on the academic literature which has some direct claim to the study of extant Neo-Pagan groups (unlike Leland and Murray whose writings reflect the idea that they had discovered "survivals" in a Tylorian sense of some ancient now defunct pre-Christian religion). It is also the case that a huge body of academic work dealing with the Neo-Pagan movement does not exist, and what does exist tends to focus primarily on Witchcraft, Wiccans, being the most numerous and predominant of Neo-Pagan groups. It is also important to note that prior to Leland’s, Murray’s and Gardner’s publications, most writings on the subjects of Witchcraft and other Pagan traditions were primarily situated within a Christian perspective, mostly written by members of the Christian clergy. These had a tendency to characterize Witchcraft and other Pagan traditions as evidence of "devil worship", or "superstitions" which needed to be eradicated. Scholarly works during this time period had a tendency to focus on the historical aspects of the "Witch-trials" in Europe and Salem. Anthropological writing, both before and after these publications, has, in the interests of finding "universal" phenomena in human cultures, employed the term 'witchcraft' to refer to any sort of diabolical or magical act in human cultures. This convention, coupled with the limited academic literature on Neo-Pagan Witchcraft available, has the potential of being a source of confusion, particularly when looking at the history of scholarly writing on this subject. Following, while a discussion of
the anthropological characterization of witchcraft at this point would prove useful, I will limit my discussion here to those writings which claim to deal with Witchcraft as it exists in the contemporary Neo-Pagan movement.

While the validity of Gerald Gardner's claims to have found and studied a surviving group of Witches in New Forest, England, has been highly scrutinized, Gardner can still be seen as one of the earliest writers to approach this phenomenon from an anthropologically minded perspective. Gardner (1954) does begin his work *Witchcraft Today*, with the assertion that he intends on approaching Witchcraft from an anthropological perspective, and although, Gardner does in fact, later acknowledge that he, himself was a coven member and explicitly contributes to the formulation of Wiccan beliefs and practices as an insider, in this particular work, he does approach the data from a somewhat detached (if it can be said that such a possibility ever existed in anthropology) position. Gardner's study is mainly descriptive and highly speculative. His approach echoes the earlier work of James Frazer, E.B. Tylor and Margaret Murray (Murray wrote the preface to this particular book), in that he frequently makes use of the concept of "survivals", and cultural evolution, and pulls from a wide range of ethnographic data to back up his assumptions or to make cultural analogies (all rhetorical strategies which by the time of Gardner's writing had fallen under intense criticism, however their use persisted well into the period in which Gardner was writing).
In *Witchcraft Today*, Gardner describes the rituals, holidays, and beliefs of the existing group of Witches which he claims to have studied, and he does point out that as an anthropologists, he is concerned with dispelling the claims that Witchcraft as it existed in England involved any sort of "devil worship" or evil "satanic" practices. Gardner further concludes, that there have been Witches present in all times and all places; Witches which have roots extending as far back as the Paleolithic in Europe. He also contends that the presence of Witches is evidenced in the folkloric images of the "little people" or "elves" and "fairies" of Europe. This connection was probably taken from Murray's earlier work, as she comes to the same conclusion, holding that tales of a small stunted magical race, are most-likely references to the indigenous pre-Celtic peoples of Europe, as seen in the Lapps today, and following that these individuals were probably the original "Witches". Gardner also makes analogies between extant Witchcraft in England and the mystery religions of Egypt, Greece and Rome, holding that Witchcraft may have been related to such traditions, and could be characterized as a mystery religion based on the requirement, at the time of his writing, of an oath of secrecy which initiates must take.

Gardner's work, from an academic perspective, putting aside the charge that his work may have been fraudulent altogether, can be criticized on the basis of its lack of clarity. This criticism is based on Gardner's style of writing and presentation of the material, in which he frequently jumps between
discussions of the extant group which he claimed to have studied, referrals to evidence of pre-Christian religions in folklore, analogies between living Witchcraft and other ancient religions, and discussions of other "non-western" cultures around the world which also engage in ritual and magic. At times it is difficult to discern whether or not Gardner is discussing his present situation or speculating on religions past. One cannot be too harsh here however, since Gardner is writing from a Frazerian theoretical stance, in which theoretical interpretations and historical and ethnographic data were interspersed without distinction. Gardner also does not distinguish, as did his predecessor Murray (1921) between magical practices and religion. Murray distinguishes between "Operative Witchcraft", that which employs magic, and is done in many traditions, including the Christian one, and "Ritual Witchcraft" or that involved with the worship of ancient Pagan deities, and holds that what she is referring to mainly involved the later (1921). Gardner, however prefers to lump these two together, and as such, focuses more on the magical practices and ritual structure involved in Witchcraft, at the expense of discussing the more "religious" side, or that part which involves the worship of male and female deities.

While Gardner's work may have been a catalyst for a renaissance of Neo-Pagan religions, it certainly did not inspire any proliferation of academic scholarship on the subject. Following, it is not until the 1970's that serious attention is again given to the study of Witchcraft and other Neo-Pagan traditions.
Marcello Truzzi’s 1972 article entitled, "The Occult Revival as Popular Culture: Some Observations on the Old and the Nouveau Witch", was one of the earliest of these. In this article Truzzi proposes that a rise in interest in the occult corresponds to a rise in social conflict. Following, he predicts that the current rise in occult activity/interest is little more than a passing fad, and does not reflect a serious religious commitment on the part of most Americans involved. Truzzi identifies two main trends in the contemporary occult movement, that associated with astrology, and that associated with Witchcraft. Truzzi goes on to distinguish two main kinds of Witchcraft, the first he identifies as "Satanists" and the second he identifies as "White Witches". While Truzzi does make a surface distinction between these two, holding that they have essentially different belief systems, he goes on to discuss them together.

Truzzi further holds that Witches, can be divided into two main types, the first being those who have inherited the practice of Witchcraft from a family member, and the second being those who have "self designated" themselves as Witches, and who belong to no organized group and remain "uninitiated". Truzzi concludes that the vast majority belong to the second group, and claims that the typical portrait of someone in the "self-designated" category is a high school or college age female who so declares herself to her peer group. Truzzi estimates that only approximately 150 covens exist in the United States and Britain at the time of his writing. Truzzi follows up on his earlier study
in a 1974 article entitled, "Towards a Sociology of the Occult: Notes on Modern Witchcraft". In this article Truzzi provides a general description of Witchcraft, distinguishing between "white witches" which he traces back to the writings of Margaret Murray, and "black witches" who he associates with Satanism, taking greater care to distinguish between the two than in his earlier article. Truzzi further divides the "white witches" into four main groups which include, "Gardnerian Witches", or those Witches associated with the traditions of Gerald Gardner, "Alexandrian Witches" or those associated with groups informed by Alex Saunders writings and practice, "Continental Witches", which include Witches who base their religion on non-British Isle sources from continental Europe, and "Eclectic Revival Witches", or witches who draw from a wide variety of practices and beliefs to constitute their religion. Truzzi further focuses on the secret nature of Witchcraft and the system of "degrees" an initiate has to go through to obtain the status of "Priest" or "Priestess".

Two articles dealing with "Urban Witchcraft" also appear in the 1970's. The first of these is by John Fritscher which appeared in 1972 entitled, "Straight from the Witches Mouth". In this article Fritscher characterizes Witchcraft as an Urban phenomenon associated exclusively with "Satanism". The body of the article consists of an interview with Anton Szandor LaVey, High Priest and Founder of The Church of Satan in San Francisco. Edward J. Moody's 1977 article entitled, "Urban Witchcraft" is the second of these. Moody, like Fritscher, characterizes Witchcraft as
a form of "Satanism", and although he does briefly mention a type of Witchcraft known as "Wicca", he does little in the way of distinguishing between these two. Moody, following Truzzi's earlier conclusion, refers to Witchcraft as, "a social problem whose activity increases in times of social stress" (1977:231).

Charles Hoyt's Witchcraft (1980) although concerned primarily with the historical depiction of Witchcraft by the Christian clergy, does include a chapter on contemporary Witchcraft. In this brief overview, Hoyt provides a description of an initiation rite, and denies the association of contemporary Witches with any form of "devil worship". He concludes, however, that modern Witchcraft is called into being due to the "oppression of reality" (1980:139), and that those involved endure a desperate need for the "unknowable, the inexplicable and the strange" (1980:139).

Jeffrey Russell in his book A History of Witchcraft: Sorcerers, Heretics, and Pagans (1980), is one of the first academic writers to draw a distinction between "Paganism" and "Witchcraft". Russell identifies Witchcraft as a subgroup of Paganism, which is differentiated by the practice of magic. He sees the common element between the two, Paganism and Witchcraft, as being a veneration of nature.

The 1981 article by Stephen Flowers is among the first of the academic articles to address a form of Neo-Paganism other than Witchcraft. Flowers' article entitled, "Revival of Germanic Religion in Contemporary Anglo-American Culture" reviews the
religious and historical underpinnings of the growing revival of Asatru, Odinism, or Norse/Germanic Reconstructionism. Flowers reviews ways in which spiritual, mythological, and ritual authority are established by members, holding that unlike other Neo-Pagan religions, Germanic Paganism, does not necessarily lay claim to an unbroken line of religious tradition reaching into the distant Paleolithic pre-Christian past, but is instead a religion involved in reconstructing its roots from primary and secondary historical sources. The primary sources referred to would include the Prose Edda, a collection of Icelandic/Norse mythology recorded by Snorri Sturluson in 1220, and the Poetic Edda, a collection of previously oral poems recorded from 1250 to 1300 and various Icelandic sagas written in the middle ages between the dates of 1200 and 1450. Secondary sources would be more recent historical sources such as Jacob Grim's Teutonic Mythology, published in 1844 and the recordings of the Roman historian Tacitus in his history entitled, Germania, written in 98 C.E. (Gundarsson, 1993). Flowers further points out that the three primary sources of authority in Asatru include a reliance on historical and mythological materials, environmental observation, and personal experience of members. Evaluation of this material, Flowers notes, takes place on three levels which include the rational/scholarly level, the psychological level, and the mystical level.

Some attention has been paid in the feminist social science literature on the phenomenon of "goddess worship". Carol Christ's
1986 article, entitled, "Why Women Need the Goddess" is an example of one such article. Christ looks at the phenomenon of "goddess worship" from the perspective of how it can benefit the feminist movement. In doing so she examines the psychological and political implications that living in a social context of patriarchal religion can have on women. She concludes that women are increasingly seeking the "goddess" because such images provide a source for the legitimation of female power and independence, are affirming to women's biological cycles, provide women with spiritual, personal, and political agency, and provide an opportunity for women to bond with one another; all things which Christ sees as being suppressed in the shadow of patriarchal religion. Christ concludes that due to the positive influences images of the "goddess" can have on women, that the "goddess movement" has the potential to be a potent political and personal force against sexism.

Kirkpatrick, Rainey and Ruby (1986) attempt a quantitative analysis of Wicca in their article entitled, "An Empirical Study of Wiccan Religion in Post-Industrial Society". Kirkpatrick et al., conducted a survey of 144 Pagans through mailed questionnaires. Participants were located by mailing questionnaires to editors of Pagan journals, Pagan groups, covens, and churches listed in a "Craft" directory. While the researches claim that their study is of Wiccans, specifically, they report that only 53% of their respondents actually identify themselves as Wiccan. After providing a general demographic overview of their participants,
Kirkpatrick et al., go on to test a number of hypotheses associated with the Wiccan belief system against a number of psychological measures. They predict that Wiccans would score high on a test measuring "normlessness" because they expect that many Wiccans had opted to take up Wicca as an attempt to provide order to a chaotic environment. This prediction is based on typical characteristics of religious movements as defined by the researchers. They conclude that the data they collected, however, did not support such a hypothesis. The second hypothesis tested had to do with an "authoritativeness" measure, with the researchers predicting that Wiccans would score low on such a measure, due to the decentralized nature of the religion. The data did not support this hypothesis. Kirkpatrick et al., also predicted that Wiccans would score low on a scale measuring "powerlessness", due to the magical nature of the religion. The data did not support this hypothesis. It was predicted that participants would score high on a scale judging the importance of religion, low on a scale judging the importance of a "traditional" family, and low on a scale judging for a standard of "conservatism". The research supported all three of these hypotheses. The researchers were surprised to find that the majority of their participants reported an opposition to the use of drugs for religious or recreational purposes. Kirkpatrick et al., also attempt to provide a general overview of the practices of Wiccans focusing on the use of magic in ritual, how Wicca may "improve" the quality of life for participants, the secrecy
surrounding Wicca as a religion, and the use of sex in ritual noting that a sexual practice called the "Great Rite" is a frequent occurrence in Wiccan ritual. Kirkpatrick et al., conclude that "Pagans" are a subgroup of "Wiccans", and note that, "Pagan Witches are under-rewarded status discontents who care little for money and much for knowledge and the balance of nature" (1986: 37).

Margot Adler's work, *Drawing Down the Moon: Witches, Druids, Goddess-Worshippers, and Other Pagans in America Today*, first published in 1979, but extensively updated in the 1986 edition, is perhaps the most comprehensive descriptive study of Neo-Pagan groups in the United States to date. Adler's work is the result of a four year study in which she traveled around the United States accumulating descriptive data on Neo-Pagan groups. Her study is primarily descriptive, and Adler takes a primarily "journalistic" perspective as opposed to a social science one. For the purposes of an overview of the social science literature on Neo-Paganism, perhaps the most important contribution Adler makes is her chapter entitled, "Scholars, Writers, Journalists, and the Occult", in which she discusses the relationship between participants in the Neo-Pagan movement and those who write about it. Adler contends that Paganism is often distorted through the media, and that despite continuous attempts by participants to dispel myths associated with their religion, Neo-Paganism often inspires "fear" and "suspicion"
amongst the general public. Adler also briefly reviews the "classic" theories employed by social scientists to explain involvement in the "occult" or Neo-Pagan religions. Adler identifies three theoretical trajectories:

1. Theories that see this growth as evidence of regression, escape, or retreat.
2. Theories that see this growth as a positive reaction to, or rebellion against, the limitations of Western thought or the excesses of modern technology, that generally view occult ideas as energizing and innovative.
3. Theories that do not easily fit either of these categories (1986:355).

In the third group of theories Adler includes ideas such as, Eliade's (1976) suggestion that increased interest in the occult is an indicator of "profound malaise among the intellectuals" (Adler 1986:363), and suggestions such as Truzzi's as mentioned earlier, that increased interest in the occult is an indicator of increased social stress and conflict.

Amanda Porterfield's 1987 article, "Feminist Theology as a Revitalization Movement", supports Christ's conclusion that "goddess" oriented spirituality is empowering for women. Porterfield's main concern, however, is looking at feminist theology in the context of Anthony Wallace's (1956) classic study on revitalization movements. Porterfield identifies two main components in feminist theology, that associated with goddess worship and that associated with Judeo-Christainity. Following Wallace's model, which defines one of the chief characteristics of
revitalization movements as having a charismatic leader or
prophet, Porterfield identifies Mary Daly, as a prophet for the
revitalization of goddess worship and Ruth Ruether as the
prophet/leader guiding the feminist Judeo-Christian movement.

Ellwood's and Partin's (1988) comprehensive study entitled,
*Religious and Spiritual Groups in Modern America*, provides a
brief overview of Neo-Paganism in their chapter, "The Edenic
Bower: Neo-Paganism". Ellwood's and Partin's study is primarily
descriptive, along with the inclusion of several readings written
by participants in the Neo-Pagan movement. Ellwood and Partin
begin their discussion of Neo-Paganism with a description of a
ritual conducted by members of The Church of the Eternal Source.
The authors go on to discuss the diversity within the Neo-Pagan
movement providing descriptions of a Wiccan group, Feraferia, a
Ceremonial Magic group, a group based on Native American
spirituality, and a Satanist group. Following, Ellwood and Partin
break Neo-Pagan groups into two broad categories, including
those which focus on magic, and those which focus on nature
spirituality, placing Wicca intermediately between the two.

Ellwood and Partin conclude that the roots of Neo-Paganism
lie in romanticism, that most Neo-Pagan groups focus on
"Western" traditions to the exclusion of "Eastern", that most
people involved in the movement tend to move within the same
"religious underground" and subsequently all know each other,
(including Satanists), and that teaching/philosophy in the Neo-
Pagan movement "pales" in comparison to the rites. The final
conclusion, the authors point out is based on their methodology of approaching the movement from the point of view of "cultures and ritual", one of the three Wachian forms of expression, which they see as most important in the case of Neo-Paganism.

Amber Ault's 1989 thesis, *Witches, Wicca and Revitalization: Reconsiderations*, provides an ethnographic account of several Wiccans and Wiccan groups within the Ohio area. Her main thesis, however, is to reevaluate Porterfield's application of Wallace's revitalization model to the Wiccan movement. Ault calls for a need to distinguish between historical accounts of "witchcraft" and the contemporary Witchcraft movement, holding that the continued failure to make such a distinction on the part of social scientists has resulted in much confusion and misrepresentation in the ethnographic literature. Ault concludes that Porterfield's analysis attempted to fit the data to the theory, rather than vice versa, and that Wiccan does not necessarily completely fit the characteristics of a revitalization movement as defined by Wallace. Following, Ault acknowledges that Wicca does fit some revitalistic characteristics such as, engaging in attempts to "bring back the goddess" and recreate earlier "more harmonious" times, however, Ault holds that Wicca does not fit Wallace's requirement of having a charismatic leader or prophet, as Wiccan groups are generally decentralized, share group leadership, and have no acknowledged "head". Ault further proposes that the Wiccan movement was not conceived during
some hallucinatory or prophetic vision, as Wallace's model contends.

Ault concludes that the adoption of Bourguignon's (1974) model, which distinguishes between leader oriented and group oriented movements, would prove more useful since it is less limiting than Wallace's model. Ault further concludes that Wallace's conception of revitalistic movements reflects a "patriarchal" mode of thinking, in that revitalization movement are perceived of in terms of "dominance (especially male dominance), submission (especially female submission), and the need for control over others, and perceptions of 'followers' need for leadership" (1989: 97). Thus applying such a model to a movement with strong feminist ideas may not necessarily provide an adequate descriptive model.

Jencson's 1989 article, "Neopaganism and the Great Mother Goddess: Anthropology as a Midwife to a New Religion", printed in Anthropology Today, has some interesting implications for anthropological research. Jencson, points out as I have earlier, that much of the early writing from which the contemporary Neo-Pagan movement emerged was authored by anthropologists, folklorists, and other academic scholars. Jencson rightly points out that people's reading of anthropology may have significant effects on their own culture, and holds that the Neo-Pagan movement is an excellent example of how this can happen. Following Jencson reviews the major scholarly contributors to the early beginnings of the Neo-Pagan movement, such as Leland, Murray, and
Gardner. Jenscon furthermore points out that participants in the Neo-Pagan movement often make frequent reference to anthropological, archaeological, and folkloric data to legitimate their religion, and back up their claims that pre-Christian European religions did exist as participants say. Jenscon concludes by saying:

The point of all this is that anthropology does not exist in a vacuum. We influence our informants, and we influence those that read our books. These individuals then go on to influence their cultures (or subcultures), making use of information we provide to them in ways often beyond our control, or knowledge. What is more our, informants influence us, and we in turn influence the discipline of anthropology. This dialogue between cultures and anthropology can have significant consequences. It is time we come to this realization and incorporate it into our theory, our methodology, and our self-concept as anthropologists (1989:4).

Luhrman's 1989 study entitled, Persuasions of the Witch's Craft: Ritual Magic in Contemporary England, provides a detailed ethnographic account of the use of magic in English Witchcraft. Luhrman's aim is specific, as she states:

This study looks at ordinary middle-class English people who become immersed in a netherworld of magic and ritual, and asks a classic anthropological question: why do they practise magic when, according to observers, the magic doesn't work? (1989:4).
Lurhman, furthermore contends that she is interested in this phenomenon from an anthropological perspective because of the changing nature of anthropological research, which in the past had focused primarily on the "exotic other", and have characteristically ignored the "exotic" in "Western" culture. Lurhman contends that when people get involved in an activity, they subsequently find ways of interpreting or rationalizing that activity which make it increasingly meaningful, even though the activity may seem irrational from the point of view of those not involved. Lurhman holds that looking at this changing process of rationalization and interpretation can help in the understanding of why "scientifically" educated, English Witches, living in a technological world persist in the use of "magic", as well as how they come to understand such a practice as meaningful. Lurhman notes that it is not the case that the English Witches simply become comfortable living with an irrational belief system, but that instead these individuals, as their involvement deepens, come to see and understand the world in different ways. She holds that such a process is analogous to the process in academic training by which a literary critic may learn to become sensitive to ways of conceptualizing texts that a historian may find meaningless. Lurhman attempts to outline how this process occurs in the case of English magicians. She holds that interpretation involves a complex set of assumptions, biases, conceptual frameworks, knowledge, "attributive tendencies" and heuristics, and following that out of such interpretation three
changes are involved as one comes to adopt the label of Witch/magician:

1. individuals come to see what kind of evidence that the ritual has worked actually counts.
2. individuals come to see new patterns and connections in the world as they learn the knowledge shared by other magicians, and come to apply new linguistic categories to the world.
3. individuals come to adopt new assumptions about the world, as they reexamine categories which have been previously taken for granted.

Lurhmann identifies two ways that this change in interpretation and its associated learning processes may occur. For example participants may engage in the process of learning to use new divination techniques like the tarot or astrology, and through doing so, they may also learn how to make new "magical" connections between things. Other practices employed in "magic" by Witches such as "creative imagining", Lurhmann points out, may provide a way for participants to imagine new realities and thus change their perception in the process.

Lurhmann is also interested in how it is that participants are able to maintain an "ordinary" lifestyle during the day, that is, being employed in "normal" sorts of jobs like civil service, business, sales, etc., and then leave to engage in a magical world of ritual and mystery, without these two worlds coming into conflict with one another. In assessing this phenomenon, Lurhman notes that participants are generally adamant about maintaining a distinction between the "magical" and "mundane"
worlds, but yet still stress the ritualistic, spiritual characteristics even in the most ordinary of activities. She holds that magic, religion, and a quite "ordinary" lifestyle are all able to co-exist in English Witchcraft because the beliefs of the participants do not violate any intellectual tendencies to distrust "religion", since the magical nature of the religion, allows for and even require that participants engage in some degree of self-conscious self-doubt, and following participants are not required to accept wholeheartedly any dogmatic set of beliefs, the attitude about magic, generally being, that it doesn't always work, especially if it is not done "right", and that one does not have to believe in it ahead of time to try it.

Lurhmann in her assessing her attempts to apply anthropological theory to the Witchcraft movement in England, concludes that Witchcraft defy's the typical anthropological assumption that ritual should reflect the social system and the social order. Such an assessment is made based on the participation of the Witches in the larger social matrix of Britain; a social matrix which does not operate, as do the Witches around the principle of magic. Furthermore, Lurhmann, holds that the conventions of interpretive anthropology which call for the assessing of religious symbols and reading culture as a text, could prove to be misleading in the evaluation of such a phenomenon, because of the discrepancies between the ritual structure and the social systems which most of the participants live. Lurhmann also points out that the typical social science approach of focusing
on collectivity in ritual, is too limiting for the study of English Witchcraft since much of the magical work, or which she is describing is often conducted alone rather than in groups, and that participants often learn the techniques through reading rather than through more face to face social contact, and thus the learning and socialization process may differ.

Tracy Luff (1990) assess Wiccan religion from a feminist perspective in her article, "Wicce: Adding a Spiritual Dimension to Feminism". Luff distinguishes between "Wicca" referring to Witchcraft practiced by males and "Wicce" or Witchcraft as practiced by females. She contends that participants in the feminist movement are searching for a spiritual dimension to compliment and give meaning to their political actions. Following Luff notes that feminists often see a direct link between spiritual oppression and political oppression, and that many see Judeo-Christian religion as being fundamentally limiting to women, and have subsequently abandoned it. Wicce, on the other hand, as Luff contends, is a religion which allows for meaningful links to be made between feminist politics and spirituality; spirituality which in and of itself, is self-empowering.

It is also the case that political activism and ritual can be united in Wicce through the dimension of magic, and as Luff, holds, such ritual may further serve to prevent activist "burnout" by providing a positive vision to work towards, and allowing a space in which the feminist vision has been achieved, thus providing hope. Luff views Wicce as being affirming to things
which are important to the lives of women, such as healing, emotion, and passion. Wicce may also, as Luff points out, provide for the affirmation of female sexuality allowing women to regain "control" of their bodies. Luff sees the most important aspect of Wicce as being in its potential to help women overcome internalized oppression. This is important, as Luff contends, since political activism is often more concerned with unmasking the external oppression women face in society, but often pays little attention to the aspects of oppression which individual women may have internalized.

Wendy Lozano's and Tanice Foltz's 1990 article, "Into the Darkness: An Ethnographic Study of Witchcraft and Death" details the funeral rites of a Dianic (feminist) Wiccan coven. While providing ethnographic description of the funeral rite, the authors also review how the religion of radical feminist Witchcraft provides participants with a meaningful framework for interpreting death. Such a meaningful framework, the authors hold, is provided in part through knowledge of ancient mythology and Goddess symbolism, such as the Kore/Persphephone myth, the mythical image of the Crone as portrayed by the third Fury in Greek mythology who cuts the "thread of life" and symbols of death and regeneration such as the mythical cauldron, representing the "cosmic womb" to which all returns, and the serpent representing renewal.

Although not a work exclusively devoted to the academic study of Neo-Paganism or any one specific Neo-Pagan group,
Ronald Grimes 1990 book, *Ritual Criticism*, provides valuable insights into the creative and critical process involved in constructing Wiccan and Neo-shamanic or parashamanic ritual. Grimes holds that both of these movements give precedence to experimentation and experience in the process of ritual construction. Grimes also chronicles the ways in which criticism is involved in the ritual creation process as participants make decisions about what and what not to incorporate into ritual and religious belief structures, and notes that seekers of such religions must be involved in such forms of criticism since they are forging new ground in opposition to mainstream religion and ritual practices.

Mary Lefkowitz in her 1992 article, "The Twilight of the Goddess" points out that Americans even in their spiritual lives, have a tendency to behave like consumers, that is, they mix and match symbols, ideas, philosophies, and beliefs, until they come up with something that is to their liking. As she states, "The Goddess, ubiquitous in time and place, is an excellent occasion for another exciting and unlearned shopping spree in the great mall of the world's traditions"(1992:29). Lefkowitz further contends that the "goddess" movement is motivated more by practical concerns than scholarly or historical ones; the goddess as Lefkowitz puts it "has uses". Thus, Lefkowitz feels that participants are less concerned with the actual historical specifics and more with what they can gain from their involvement, such
as the therapeutic effect of ritual, the opportunity to explore inner emotional concerns, etc.

Lefkowitz draws a connection between Bacofen's 1861 concept of "Mother Right", which held that originally cultures were based upon matriarchal power, and the insistence that contemporary followers of goddess worship make, that original representations of deity in cultures were female. Lefkowitz feels that such claims made by followers of contemporary goddess religions, are based on tenuous not-yet-to-be-proven evidence, although she does point out that all reconstructions of the past involve some element of the present. Lefkowitz concludes, contrary to many previous scholars such as Luff, Christ, and Porterfield, that the practice of "goddess worship" may prove to undermine the feminist concerns of participants, since Lefkowitz views such practices as having the potential of reducing the individual to their sexuality. Lefkowitz further contends that the new interest in "goddess spirituality" places to large an emphasis on female biology at the expense of emphasizing those qualities that females share with the rest of humanity such as creativity, intelligence, and independence, as she states, "If such a definition [women's spirituality] will harm anyone, it will surely harm women, by simplifying and demoting them to creatures of mere sexuality" (1992: 33).

J. Gorden Melton's and Isotta Poggi's 1992 reference bibliography provides an overview of works, both popular and scholarly, on magic, Witchcraft and Paganism in America. While
Melton's and Poggi's work is primarily for reference purposes; they do provide brief overviews of the history of each of the topics, and/or individuals for which they provide bibliographic references. Their work as a guide to the available literature is very comprehensive, providing references to ceremonial magic, historical accounts of witchcraft and the Salem witch trials, Neo-Pagan Witchcraft, popular, scholarly and Christian responses to witchcraft and magic, Hoodoo, Voodoo, Santeria, and other African-influenced religions in America, and a guide to magical, witchcraft, and Pagan periodicals.

In her 1993 article, "Ritual is My Chosen Art Form: The Creation of Ritual as Folk Art Among Contemporary Pagans", Sabina Magliocco states that Pagan "ritual is both religious worship and creative expression"(1). Characterizing Neo-Pagan religions as invented traditions, Magliocco holds that contemporary Pagans are involved in the attempt to construct a more satisfying and meaningful culture which will include the ethical/political values of feminism, enviromentalism, racial equality and cultural diversity. Such cultural construction, the author notes, is in part achieved through ritual, which echoes the creative process in folk traditions. Magliocco points out that contemporary Pagan rituals often follow Van Gennep's prescribed model of separation, testing, and integration, and that in construction such rituals, participants often draw from various available resources which include, living folk traditions, folklore,
popular psychology, mass media, group networking, and personal intuition and imagination.

Dennis Carpenter, in his 1994 dissertation entitled, "Spiritual Experiences, Life Changes, and Ecological Viewpoints of Contemporary Pagans", reports a positive correlation between mystical experiences and ecological Paganism. Following, Carpenter holds that the magical practices engaged in by participants of the Neo-Pagan movement stems from an underlying theme of interconnectedness which in turn reflects the environmentalist ethic (an ethic which also has an underlying theme of the interconnectedness of ecological systems) often cited by such participants as vital to their religious worldview.

In her 1995 work, Never Again the Burning Times: Paganism Revived, Loretta Orion focuses on the practices of healing and magic as they coexist in contemporary Paganism. Orion characterizes Paganism as a subculture, and though extending the results of her research to the Paganism at larger, her research predominantly focuses on the healing and magical practices taking place in Witchcraft. In doing so Orion describes Witchcraft as a magico-religious system. Orion states:

Efforts of individuals or groups to change themselves and the world in which they live through religion can be classified as magic if: 1) the views and desires of individuals vary from those of the larger society and 2) change is invoked by processes that operate on a different order of cause and effect than those normally accepted by the majority of members of mainstream society (1995:5 -6).
One of the primary ways members of Wicca seek to effect change in this manner is by adopting the role of a healer, as Orion points out. Healing in the Witch’s context is seen as a complex interaction between mind, body, and spirit and involves the use of herbal remedies, magical spells, and alternative therapies such as massage, reiki, meditation, acupressure, etc. Such practices are viewed by participants, Orion notes, as attempts to reclaim the lost healing arts of their pre-Christian, pre-Western medicine ancestors and as such also seeks to subvert the dominant paradigm of the "Western-scientific" approach to health care as is exemplified in the present American medical system. Such attempts are further characterized by Orion as revitalistic as they seek to re-establish a former order, with an approach to healing and religion, which is viewed by participants as being more in harmony with the natural world order than the present system. Through this process contemporary Witches, Orion holds, may become more self-sufficient, and independent of costly health care and in doing so epitomize the inverse of mainstream society, and thus fulfill the meaning of their self-assumed title of "Witch". This inversion, however, is not one of "evil" or "harmful" as Witches have been typically characterized in the past, but is evidenced in the Witches refusal to comply to the standards of mainstream society. As Orion notes, " They differ from the more compliant individuals who modify or adapt their opinions to accommodate the values accepted by the majority in society and
from secular radicals who are content to phrase their debates in the language and symbols of the larger society" (1995: 75).

To sum up I feel that a few critical comments on the academic literature surrounding Neo-Paganism are called for. While I think that much of the academic literature surrounding the Neo-Pagan movement provides some important insights into the movement, I do not think that it provides an accurate picture overall. In general, the literature seems to be particularly biased in terms of Wicca, with little to no attention being given to other Neo-Pagan groups. The literature also seems to be biased toward looking at Neo-Pagan religions, Wicca, in particular, merely through an assessment of magic and ritual, with little emphasis being paid to the spiritual, or religious beliefs associated with the movement. Furthermore, the authors who characterize Witchcraft, as a form of Satanism have grossly mischaracterized both groups, both Satanists and Witches, and do a disservice to the academic community for not doing their homework. I also feel that it is problematic when researchers, place these two groups together as part of the same "religious" movement, even if they do make a surface distinction between the two. I find this particularly problematic, because all of the Pagan literature I have read, and all the research I have done, has indicated to me that Neo-Pagans vehemently oppose such an association. The use of the words "white" and "black" witchcraft to distinguish between the two (Satanism and Wicca), is also an imposition of terms, terms which participants do not call themselves. The
imposition of terms by anthropologists, especially the word, "witchcraft", has had a long and controversial history worldwide, and it seems to me high time that such practices are reevaluated.

Kirkpatrick, et. al. (1986) also grossly misrepresent the Wiccan movement, but I feel that they do a wonderful job of pointing out their bias assumptions and lack of prior research into Wicca before publishing an article, in the process. While this may sound like a harsh criticism, in this case I feel that it is deserved. For example Kirkpatrick, et. al. make the assumption that Wiccans would be more likely to use drugs, on nothing more, from what I can tell, than on the basis that Wicca is an alternative religion, and therefore they seem to assume that participants will "automatically" engage in illegal behavior. Such biases in research are inexcusable, and the above is only one of several examples from Kirkpatrick et. al.'s study. While it may be the case that some Wiccans approve of drug use, it is also the case that others do not, and I see no reason to start out with such an assumption.

Porterfield's assessment of Feminist Theology as a revitalization movement, I think poses some interesting points, however, she tends to engage in the mistake of forcing the data to fit the theory. I also believe that characterizing Mary Daly and Ruth Ruether as "prophets" is an incorrect assessment, for it seems to me that most participants in the Neo-Pagan movement, as well as, in various other forms of feminist spiritual, do not regard these women as such. And while it may be the case that
these women are looked up to as leaders, and as role models, I think characterizing them as "prophets" could give readers the wrong impression.

I also question Lefkowitz assessment of the "Goddess Movement" as posing a subversive threat to feminism by placing an inordinate amount of attention on female biology and thus not focusing enough on independence, strength, etc. The reason I question such an assessment, is because it seems that Lefkowitz makes such an assessment solely on the basis of the literature, and only a select few books at that, and does not mention any kind of fieldwork and/or observation. From my own fieldwork, I would not make the same kind of assessment, and I would argue that Lefkowitz is making such an assessment on the basis of a limited portion of the Goddess Movement literature.
CHAPTER IV
METHODOLOGY

The impetus for the following study began about five years ago, when I was given the opportunity to conduct a preliminary study on Pagan folklore at a Pagan festival as part of the requirements for an independent research study course. That study took place in 1991 and served as an introduction to the research questions I have investigated in this project. Following that preliminary study, I continued my research into Neo-Paganism, spending the next three years collecting research articles on Paganism, reading Pagan periodicals and books written by Pagans on Paganism, and attending Pagan festivals, workshops and rituals. I also conducted several smaller research projects on the subject of Paganism which include, a study on Pagan personal history narratives, which outlined how several participants got involved in the Pagan community and came to identify themselves as Pagan, a comparative study of Pagan and lesbian "coming out" stories, an analysis of a Wiccan "new moon" ritual, and a study of Pagan terminology, which, using the methods of cognitive anthropology, looked at what terminology Pagans use to identify themselves and and how such terms are conceived of.
within the Pagan community. These studies established a firm basis for the research I conducted for the purposes of this dissertation.

The following study was conducted over a fifteen month period in which I attended a total of twenty-one festivals in the continental United States, as well as, participating in a summer-intern program at a legally recognized Pagan church, nature preserve and networking center. Added to the festivals attended in the preliminary research period, I have attended a total of 42 festivals. In the spirit of cognitive anthropology, I allowed my research subjects to define the boundaries of a Pagan "festival" for me. Thus if an event was advertised as a "Pagan festival", or a "Pagan gathering" by its organizers, then such an event could potentially come under the terms of my research project. Pagan festivals are diverse and there is quite a continuum along which Pagans may define an event as a "festival" however, Pagan festivals are generally events which are sponsored by a particular Pagan group, organization, or a number of organizations working in conjunction with one another and which other Pagans from around the country in terms of national festivals or around the more immediate geographical region in terms of more local, less advertised festivals are invited to attend. These festivals usually last anywhere from a day of activities to a week or more.

Pagan festivals are usually more than just a ritual, a group meeting, a workshop, or a social event, however, Pagan festivals incorporate all of these activities at any one time. I will describe
Pagan festivals in more detail in the following chapters. In selecting festivals to attend, I attempted to choose from a variety of both smaller local and larger national gatherings. My choice, however, was also opportunistic, as location played a primary role; festivals happening in succession of one another and in close proximity to one another were ideal, since travel time could be minimized. Timing was another large factor, since many festivals take place around the time of the primary Pagan holidays, only one of these could be attended at any one given time. Being located in Ohio at the time of this research proved to be ideal as, a number of local Pagan festivals take place in the state of Ohio year round, and Ohio is in driving distance of many of the larger Pagan festivals in the United States. I also tried to attend festivals taking place in as many regions of the United States as possible. Festivals were attended in the Midwest, Northeast, Southeast, and Westcoast areas, providing a strong representation of the various geographic regions of the United States. Margot Adler in her book *Drawing Down the Moon* (1986) lists sixty-five Pagan festivals held across the country, and the *Circle Guide to Pagan Groups* (1994), which is revised yearly, lists a total of sixty-one festivals. While an ideal study on Pagan festivals would encompass all of these, it would take years to attend them all, since many of them, as noted before, take place at the same time.

The primary mode of investigation was through the ethnographic method. The ethnographic method is the principle approach used in anthropological and folkloric studies to gain
original data. Ethnography encompasses both theory and method and by definition involves participant observation and the ethnographic interview. David Fetterman defines ethnography as, "the art and science of describing a group or culture" (1989:1). In my case the doing of ethnographic research involved the observation of, and participation in Pagan festivals, as well as, the recording of folkloric events within the festival context. An ethnography can also be seen as an end product. In this case the end product is this dissertation, which necessitated the analysis of and writing down of my findings. Ethnography involves conducting research in the "native environment" of the people under study, observing their real-life problems, their daily routines, and the processes through which they interact with one another (Fetterman 1989). In this case, my "native environment" was that of the Pagan festival, as it is one of the few places solely devoted to Pagan culture, since Pagans as a whole have no specific geographic location devoted to themselves, but exist with a larger cultural matrix of the "Western" world, and in the case of the Pagans I studied, the United States. Pagan festivals can further be viewed as "native environments" as they are events sponsored by Pagans for Pagans, and thus are self-contained. Such festivals are in general not public events, or displays put on for a non-Pagan audience, and thus can be seen as constituting all Pagan environments. Ethnography is defined in part by the method of "participant-observation", which as Fetterman holds, involves, "immersion in a culture" (1989:45). The following
study involved immersion in Pagan culture, through the immersion in Pagan festivals. As a result, I set out to observe all aspects of such festivals - the organizing, planning and construction stage, the festival proper, and the "after-festival" or clean-up stage. Such participant-observation thus involved attending not only the festivals, but often, if possible, the planning meetings, or "pre-festival" work festivals, as well as, staying around to lend a hand in the clean-up stage. This allowed for greater contact with the festival organizers, as well as providing for a more complete picture of the festival process itself.

Ethnography originally developed as a means to collect the cultural "details" of societies, mainly "non-Western" indigenous societies, which were perceived as being in danger of disappearing, or at best being overtaken by the "Western" technological world, losing their cultural heritage in the process. Thus early ethnography involved the collection of all aspects of a culture, from mythology to food preparation in the hopes that some aspects of the culture good be "preserved" for study. Ethnography was frequently conducted in cultures that the "Western" academic world knew little about, and thus most the data was original and primarily descriptive, providing a starting point, so to speak. While such grandiose ethnographies are rare today in anthropology, and many of the assumptions made by early ethnographers have not played out as predicted, in a sense, for the purposes of this project, I am forced to return to
some of these early methods, at least in spirit. This return is due primarily to the lack of data in existence within the academic community on Paganism in general, and specifically the almost absence of data on Pagan folklore and festivals. Thus, this study echoes the research of many early ethnographers in that it is primarily descriptive and involved mostly collection of original data.

The following is also a pioneering study in ethnography, as the Pagans I studied were particularly unique in terms of their cultural makeup and the study itself takes place within the context of a larger culture, that of the United States, of which I am a part. As a researcher, I did not, stand out as particularly different from any of my subjects, as did, perhaps the early ethnographers. We shared a common cultural background of living in the United States, and following, as a researcher I did not have to contend with the difficulties of learning a foreign language, or sounding or appearing any different than any of the participants. This can be seen as an advantage in some cases, as my presence was rarely questioned, however, it is also a stumbling block because, it involved the constant need on my part of be overt about my purposes when it came to conducting research and having to constantly state and restate my position, least my participants forget that I am indeed conducting research. My position as a researcher, of course, could not be stated to everyone individual I came in contact with at Pagan festivals, and often collection of data was opportunistic. To get around this, I
did inform festival organizers of my presence and gained permission to do my research, leaving the decision of whether or not to inform the participants of my research to the administrators. Paganism, in comparison to the assumptions made by early ethnographers, is in no danger of dying out, but has proven to be a fast growing religion, one in which folklore and culture are presently being generated, created, refined and redefined at phenomenal rates.

The best way, I felt, to remedy the situation in which there is a lack of research data on, and such poor understanding of Pagan culture in general, is the ethnographic method. However, I had to find my own way of interacting and collecting data, constantly refining and changing my approach. Doing research at festivals can be particularly exhausting, as there is so much happening at any one time, and it is difficult to convince participants who came to the festival to have fun, celebrate and worship to sit down and talk with an anthropologist for any given amount of time, much less convincing organizers whose nerves are frazzled from festival preparation and making sure that everything is running smoothly, to sit down and talk about what they are doing. My ethnography, thus, had to be one I created, one which worked for me, in my particular situation, one in which, I frequently had to abandon the best of research and interview schedules and simply, "go with the flow". I often found myself, having to simply, observe and participate, writing notes, later, with no time to run back to my tent for a note pad,
or a tape recorder. Over time, this method, for festival research proved to be the most productive, since, complex interactions, and opportune moments, did not have to be interrupted.

While the practice of ethnography may seem unsystematic or haphazard to those used to conducting research with surveys, or in laboratories, it actually involves a complex process of learning a culture, and then attempting to step outside that culture in order to analyze it and describe it to others. In the beginning, ethnography involves gaining entry into a culture, and learning the basics one needs to survive as a participant in that culture, such as language, etiquette, terminology, dress, folklore, history, etc. After such basics are learned and one can function to some degree as a participant, or with luck, being accepted as a member, then comes the process of formulating questions, making more directed inquires to answer such questions, and uncovering the micro-levels and processes of the culture itself. At this point, many choose to focus on one particular question or aspect of a culture, such as, folklife, or folklore, religion, politics, economics etc., although some ethnographies attempt to encompass all of these. Once such details are obtained, then comes the long process of the analysis and writing of the ethnography itself, with a relating of such details to the information gained as a participant in the larger culture, and how they fit into the larger cultural picture.

The ethnographer, of course, comes prepared with the knowledge of ethnographic techniques and various theoretical
paths he or she wishes to explore, but as anyone who has ever done ethnography will tell, you, each situation is different, and even with the best of training and experience, the ethnographer when encountering a new culture, has to forge their own way, find their own method of learning the culture, and obtaining data that best works within that particular's culture's setting, one which may intersect with the ways in which learning and information getting which normally take place within that culture. That being said, it should be recognized that ethnography as a method of investigation is both systematic and opportunistic. Events happen in the field that no amount of preparation or experience can predict, and often the ethnographer is simply in the right place at the right time to witness such an event. Because of such randomness and such opportunism, ethnography is an ongoing process, a continuous dialogue between researcher and subject; one in which positions have to be constantly negotiated, and conclusions have to be constantly refined and re-evaluated. This description adequately fits the ethnographic process of the following study, which involved a process of learning a culture, coming to identify particular questions and areas of interest and the systematic and opportunistic investigation of those areas of interest. I had to learn how and where to find information on Pagan festivals, what was involved in merely attending a Pagan festival, learn the language and terminology employed in the Pagan community, and learn the etiquette of participating in festivals large Pagan rituals.
The preliminary studies I undertook generated many research questions and opened up many routes for investigation. Paganism, as a research area, was generally a wide open field. As an anthropologist and folklorist, I was quickly enthralled by the dynamic production of culture and folklore within the festival context, and subsequently, I had to devise ways to get at and study such dynamics. This writing is the end result of that process.

Data was collected at the festivals through a number of channels, which included, participant-observation, attending rituals, workshops, and other events, informal personal interviews, formal structured interviews, tape recordings of workshops, storytellers, musical performances, and other events, and the distribution of a "festival survey". The survey was added after it proved difficult to obtain as many formal interviews as I had hoped. This difficulty was due, as stated earlier, to the dynamics of the festival situation itself. Many events are often happening at once, and festival organizers are often overcome with their own workload, leaving little time for organizers or attendees to sit down in for an extended period of time for a formal interview.

In order to help supplement my interviews, I decided to turn, my more formal interview questions, into a formal survey, which participants could take home and complete and mail back to me at their leisure, without the distractions of the festival. The results of these formal interviews and surveys are
incorporated into later chapters. The interview/survey questions were developed prior to my dissertation fieldwork and were designed to target the specifics about Pagan festivals and folklife of which I was interested. The questions made inquires into why the participant attended festivals, their opinions and observations on Pagan festivals, how they viewed Pagan folklore, and the Pagan "community". General demographic information was also obtained. Questions were directed at several groups which included: first time Pagan festival attendees, festival organizers, workshop organizers, storytellers, and attendees in general. While such questions could be interpreted as biased within the context of ethnography as they target specific bits of information and are thus leading questions in that they are asking for information which the participants may not have necessarily considered important, such interviews and questions did prove to be an important step beyond participant-observation, allowing for specific types of information to be made overt. This cut down, on the possibility of assuming attitudes on my part, and provided participants with a greater voice in my study. As Fetterman notes, "judgmental sampling techniques are useful in learning more about how a group thinks about the system under study", thus while allowing participants to direct my interviews may have proven interesting, it may also have ensured that the folkloric information I was interested in was never approached. The interviews thus, even within such a controlled and directed setting, allowed for greater exchange between myself and
participants. I also left room on the surveys, for participants, to add to the questions, and present information they felt was important to be recognized and discussed in such a survey, in order to induce greater exchange. My objective was to facilitate a dialogue between myself and participants, allowing for a mutual exchange, and to provide a place where the voice of the "other" could be heard. Formal interviews were guided by the interview questions. Informal interviews also took place, as I inquired about specific topics, and asked for input from participants.

Fifteen formal interviews were conducted. Ninety surveys were handed out at festivals, or left out on information or registration tables for participants to pick up and fill out. I received a total of 36 of these surveys back, and when added with the interviews there is a total of 51 participants in the survey/interview portion of the study. No incentives were provided for participation in such interviews or surveys and thus the choice to participate was purely the decision of the subject.

Pagan festivals are multi-layered events with multiple performances being generated at any one time and at any one place. Such multi-layered performances create a special challenge for the anthropologist attempting to describe such an event, without losing the performative and creative dynamics involved. In order to incorporate such dynamics, in the following project, festivals were conceived of as folkloric events, in and of themselves. Festivals have often been the focus of folklore and anthropological research as they have the potential to
symbolically represent in ritual format the beliefs of a culture, and are primary sites for the generation and display of a culture's folklife. The approach to public performances as "cultural texts" is often the prevailing mode of anthropology analysis of festivals. Such analyses are drawn from Geertz's (1973) conceptualization of culture as an ensemble of texts. Following anthropologists often engage in attempts at identifying the textual qualities of festivals, their formality, their replicability, intentionality, temporal and spatial boundaries and organization to subsequently produce an interpretation of the festival text (Handelman 1990). Located in terms of "reading the festival text" or "deciphering the meaning of the festival script" (Lavenda 1983), festivals are discussed as performances dramatizing the social order of a community or as reflecting metacommentaries of a community's beliefs and values. Such an underlying theoretical premise was taken into account in the following study and analysis of Pagan festivals, paying attention to how Pagan festivals involve the performance and creation of Neo-Pagan culture and identity, how different varieties of Paganism are performed in an all Pagan setting, how Pagans construct representations about themselves for each other in the festival context, how differences are performed, what kinds of folkloric communication takes place at Pagan festivals, and how folklore is selectively manipulated by Pagans within the festival context.

I also evaluated what would be considered the more "traditional" definition of folklore in anthropology, or rather
Bascom's ideal of "verbal art". This portion of the study entailed looking at the chants, stories, personal history narratives, jokes, ritual and verbal performances which occur during festivals. These are all especially common in Pagan festivals, as various chants are often employed during rituals, or during drumming and bonfire dancing, and storytelling performances with Neo-Pagan emphasis often take place as scheduled events for both adults and children, as well as in more informal settings with participants sitting together and sharing personal stories, histories, etc.

I should note that I feel that it is really impossible in many ways to separate such oral performances from the larger context of the festivals and/or rituals of which they are a part, thus I also looked at the corresponding contextual information in such cases, thus adopting the predominant methodology in folklore studies of the performance-centered approach. The performance centered approach emphasizes that folklore should not be considered as an item to be collected, but as a dynamic communicative process which involves not only the text, but all the associated context. Ben-Amos (1972) notes that past definitions of folklore stress a dichotomy between processes and things, and following feels that a definition of folklore which takes into account performance will more accurately represent what folklorists are trying to describe. Under the aegis of the performance approach, folklore does not exist apart from a structure or group, it occurs as an event rather than as an item, and creativity becomes paramount (Ben-Amos
Taking into account such things as the "keys" to performance or textual markers which let people know when a folkloric event is about to occur, become important for research, as does noting a performer's alteration of any specific text, audience reactions, opinions, and what the performer is trying to convey.

I also looked at the content these stories, chants, jokes, rituals, etc., in order to obtain more in-depth cultural information about the Neo-Pagan movement as a whole, through showing what kinds of motifs or themes are important, and how participants go about inventing and reinventing their own oral traditions. Particularly of interest, in the following study was to look at how folklore, text, and ritual interact, and how Pagans go about constructing their identities through the stories they tell themselves about themselves.

Rituals, like the larger festival context in which they occur, were also looked at as folkloric events. Rituals, in anthropological analysis are often also read as "texts" however the prevailing mode of interpretation of rituals often lies in their "functionality". Thus rituals are often interpreted as they provide some kind of communal and individual transition in response to some crisis, be it in the ritual marking of a life-transition, or in terms of a community crisis. Rituals in Turner's (1969) terms thus create a "liminal" state in which the boundaries of space and time collapse and through which the reincorporation of the individual into the community or the resolution of a crisis can
take place. Thus, I have tried to assess to what extent rituals at Pagan festivals echo such a model. What could be labeled "ritual drama" is also an area I looked at in my study of Pagan folklife. In this instance I am defining ritual drama as the theatrical performances often employed in Pagan ritual to act out a particular mythical, legendary, or even historical event. In such instances verbal art and performance theater are collapsed. The intended outcome being to ritually create/reenact the myth, expanding the boundaries of time and space, placing participants in a liminal state in which they become entranced by the drama.

As is suggested by the literature on the subject, Paganism follows the models of: invented traditions, revitalization movements, and emergent folk cultures, with its basis located in academic anthropological and folklore studies. In the following study, I investigated such suggestions, assessing if such models accurately describe the Pagan movement as it is played out in the context of Pagan festivals. Conceptualizations of tradition in folklore are altered as it is recognized that what is defined as "tradition" has the potential to change during the performance process. Bauman labels this dynamic process as "emergent culture", an idea borrowed from Raymond Williams (1975). Following, Bauman holds, "the emergent quality of performance resides in the interplay between communicative resources, individual competence, and the goals of the participants within the context of particular situations" (1975: 38). Keeping this in mind, in the following study I assessed to what extent Neo-Pagan
festivals may fit Hobsbawn's and Ranger's (1983) idea of invented traditions. Invented traditions being defined as:

A set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behavior by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past. In fact, where possible, they normally attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historic past (Hobsbawn and Ranger 1983:1).

Also of concern to me in my study was how this process of inventing traditions in the Pagan festival context involves the reference to and incorporation of anthropological and folkloric data. Thus I was interested in the folkloric aspect of Pagan festivals as they, "illuminate our subject as well as tell us something about the demonopolization and dehierarchization of the practice of second level folklore as an academic, elite, cultural activity" (Warshaver 1991:225). Here Warshaver is referring to second level folklore as that folklore which becomes reified in academic disciplines, first level being the actual performance, and third level, or "postmodern" folklore, constituting its subsequent commodification and reincorporation into "first" level folklore. Warshaver believes such a configuration of "folklore" will allow for folklorists to assess how it is that their "objects of knowledge leave their traces on the products of postmodernity" (1991: 227) and provide a means to understand "the facticity of its own transformation" (1991:227). Following, I observed, how it is that
Neo-Pagans engage in the process of transforming academic data from anthropology, folklore studies, religious studies, and psychology into their own rituals, festivals and folklore, reclaiming such information as their own. Thus in the final portion of the following study, I set out to assess the relationship between Paganism and the academic world.

As is the case with all ethnographers, my position in this research has been fraught with subjectivity, subjectivity wrought from the theories to which I have been exposed and have chosen to accept or reject for the purposes of this study, subjectivity from the particular individuals I encountered and who carried with them their own opinions and subject positions, subjectivity from the training I have had as a graduate student and as an individual growing up in the United States, the list could go on and on. My point is that this study, no matter how "objective" I attempted to be, or how much I attempted to keep my own personal judgements and opinions from creeping into the study, it is still my study, laden with my interpretations and my selection of what is important as an ethnographer to convey to the reader.

The participants, in my study have also conveyed to me at many points their own subject positions, judgements and opinions. The interaction of these subject positions, my own, and my subjects, have combined to make this study unique. Another ethnographer studying the Pagan movement, or Pagan folklore may come to similar conclusions, may present similar data, but the studies will never be the same, due to such ever present subjectivity.
The Pagan movement is a vast terrain to navigate, and I can only account for the small territory through which I traveled during this study. Another undertaking a similar study could encounter very different terrain, and very different individuals. While the measure of a good ethnography is the extent to which it rings true to the subjects you are writing about (Fetterman 1989), I expect to find many Pagans who do not agree fully with all of my findings, as the Pagan movement is diverse and eclectic in nature. I can only hope that I have represented the voices, and the opinions of those that I have encountered as fairly and as accurately as possible, so that the multiple voices, and the vast amount of creativity within the Pagan movement comes through within this text. I owe a great deal to those who provided me with the ethnographic data for this study, the least of which is confidentiality. Many of my subjects expressed that they did not wish to be identified in print, festival organizers also expressed wishes not to have the location or times of their festivals printed in a context where it could be obtained easily by non-Pagan readers. Thus, it was my ethnical responsibility to maintain the confidentiality of my subjects, and in doing so have chosen to use pseudonyms in the place of the names of my subjects where appropriate, or in many cases to leave out the names altogether, and opting for a general description instead (i.e. "20 year old woman from the Midwest holds. . . "). The same confidentiality was maintained for the festivals, and their organizers, rather than providing names or location and times of festivals, I have chosen
to provide a general geographic location and time of year to identify the festival.
 CHAPTER V
THE CULTURAL DYNAMICS OF PAGAN FESTIVALS

Festivals are cultural performances par excellence. Their boundaries discernable in time and space, they are particularly amenable to encapsulation.
Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1993

Festivals have long been the target of ethnographic research. Having defined boundaries within space and time, they provide the ethnographer with cultural blocks, in which worlds can be isolated, photographed, captured and reproduced. They speak a story of cultural dynamics tethered by the social responsibilities and social boundaries of the festival environment. In the tourist industry, attendance of local festivals are scheduled frequently, the idea being that if you want to learn about a culture - attend their festivals (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1993). Such is an easy solution for tourists who either cannot or do not wish to invest the time to learn about a culture, but still want to feel like they have experienced the "real" thing.

The etymology of the term "festival" comes from the root word "feast", implying a time of celebration and abundance. Festivals are periodic events of celebration, a time when people
and communities come together. They are a time for merrymaking, feasting, and socializing, yet for many, festivals are also times for serious business and may entail economic ventures, religion, politics, and rites of passage. Festivals are multi-layered events characterized by a multiplicity of performances and codes, all of which may occur simultaneously. The atmosphere at a festival is typically one of sensory saturation, where one is bombarded from all directions by performances, information, food, goods, music, all demanding the attendee's attention (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1993). Kirshenblatt-Gimblett holds that such an environment requires either, "selective disattention" or "highly disciplined attention in an environment of sensory riot" (1993:416). Thus within the festival context, one is forced to construct his or her world differently, to refuse compartmentalization, and instead embrace the collage. Festivals are atmospheres where one must acclimate to varying sensory stimulation often to a degree that contrasts greatly with the social world normally inhabited.

Festivals can be viewed as the extroverted expression of a culture's folklife. Involving the performance of the vision of what that folklife should be, creating its form by acting it out within the festival boundaries. Following, festivals cannot be viewed as self-contained events isolated from other forms of folklife, but as providing an ideal arena where folklife and folklore can be played out, defined and redefined. They are a place where an individual's need to identify with the folk, can be lived out. The
festival embodies the best, the wished-for ideal folklife of a people, a place where nostalgia and creativity intersect.

Due to the definable boundaries of festivals, festivals are often analyzed in terms of the "textual" qualities they may exemplify. Thus ethnographers may attempt to produce an interpretive reading of the festival "text", identifying the purpose, its goals, its principle characters, and its organization. One may try to determine the "high-point", "climax", or "turning-point" of the festival, or ask whether or not the festival accomplished its goals. Inquires may lead to determining the intended audience, or questions of satisfactory outcomes. The use of the model of the text in the interpretation of social action can be seen in the work of Ricouer, who delineated four criteria for constructing texts: "its fixing of meaning, its disassociation from the mental intention of the author, the display of nonostensive references and the universal range of its addresses" (Bell 1992:50). Thus the examination of the festival "text" may entail reading the intentions of its authors - the organizers, discerning the messages the authors are attempting to display, examining the "life" of the festival and the possible courses such a "life" may take independent of its coordinators, its hidden subtext, and its range of appeal.

Another way to view festivals is in terms of performance. Such an approach parallels the interpretive "textual" mode of analysis, but focuses more on the process of constructing and constituting meaning, rather than the fixing of that meaning. In
such a context the ethnographer may look for the performance of identity, meaning, ideology, power or politics. How representations are being played out and what the motivations are for such representations, may also become a focus. One may ask, whether or not the representations are fluid, or if they seek to encapsulate, to fix, or "museumify" their object. As Frank Manning notes in *The Celebration of Society*:

> What constitutes celebration? First celebration is performance, it is, or entails, the dramatic presentation of cultural symbols. Second celebration is entertainment, is is done for enjoyment - for the fun of it - however, much it is tinctured, consciously or unconsciously, with ideological significance or pragmatic intent. Third celebration is public. Celebration socializes personal meanings enacting them on the street, on the stage, in the stadium. Forth celebration is participatory. . . Celebration actively involves its constituency, it is not simply a show put on for disengaged spectators (1983:4).

In this sense, celebration and following - festivals which represent the epitome of celebration, exist as a running commentary on the state of cultural norms. Here one finds the best of politics, theater, and consumerism. Festivals are displays, couched in terms of celebration, the goal not being the display of the "real, the "true", but its reproduction and in the process as Baudrillard (1988) so succinctly points out, everyone becomes a tourist, and representation through performance is prioritized. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett notes, "People themselves are the medium of ethnographic representation when they perform themselves,
whether at home, to tourists, at world's fairs, or folklife festivals, when they become living signs of themselves" (1993:423). Thus the festival becomes the stage for culture as it "ought" to be. Festivals, "re-enact, re-present, re-create activities and settings in a discreet performance designed for specular (and aural) commerce" (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1993:423). Festivals are metacommentaries on a community's beliefs, values and social order.

Festivals and celebrations, however, while representing a culture often carry in their inherent makeup the permission to violate or reverse that culture's ordinary reality and social mores and customs. Through such a reversal, the culture and its norms and values become doubly represented by the dramatization of what it is not. Festivals, despite their periodic occurrence, are liminal events, existing outside the boundaries of ordinary time, of ordinary work, of ordinary reality. They exist to subvert the mundane reality, to stretch the boundaries, or to abandon those boundaries altogether, albeit, within the "safe" environment of the festival itself. Here participants are given permission to let go of their socially induced inhibitions, which in theory should provide an outlet for pressure, allowing participants upon the festival's conclusion, to return to ordinary reality and be productive. Such reversals provide prospective. They become sites to violate social taboos, to reverse social norms. Typical examples of such reversals can be found in the historical Saddie Hawkins dances where females were to invite the males
rather than the usual obverse, or in the historical Cherokee Booger dance, where sexual mores were violated as male Booger dancers donned sexually explicit masks and names and chased the females imitating what was interpreted as the inappropriate sexual conduct of European settlers (Hudson 1989), or in the revelries of Mardi Gras, where overindulgence and the breaking of boundaries is the goal. In this context, festivals are both creative and subversive, contained and out-of-control, making a space to allow for toleration of the mores, norms, and values of the society.

Despite being places where tourists are encouraged to go to learn about other cultures, festivals may fall short of that goal, because as mentioned earlier festivals are not only representations of culture but are "ideal" representations. What Geertz recognized about ritual can easily be applied to the situation of festivals, "In ritual [and festivals], the world as lived and the world as imagined fused under the agency of a single set of symbolic forms, turns out to be the same world" (1973:112). This imagined world of the festival is a place where beliefs and values are represented and affirmed, it is a place where judgment is suspended and the wished-for-world can be dramatized. Such ideals often encompass the element of nostalgia, of a "make believe" or idealized past; festivals often becoming the sites of the reproduction of that idealized past, a time less complicated, happier, easier. A place where forgotten traditions can be relocated, recreated, reintroduced, and subsequently become the
site for the invented traditions of Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) as mentioned earlier. Festivals can then become the site for cultural revivals, and as Georgina Boyes notes, "The prospect the revival offers is not simply a world as it had been but a world as it could be again (1993:4). Here revival in the sense of invented traditions is both conservative, preserving what is interpreted as the best of the past, and revolutionary - remaking that past in a romanticized ideal image of a utopian world. Festivals become a strategic place to begin the process of "traditionalizing" and infuse new meaning into old customs. Tradition, through festivals is thus culturally constructed and as Geertz notes that in such a context, "truth is contingent, the real is as imagined as the imaginary" (1973:123). Once the process is begun and effectively legitimized through the appropriate cultural, historical, ethnic, or religious channels, the invented traditions somehow lose their invented nature, making the traditions, "timeless", as if the traditions, the festivals, become transformed into just "what has always been done". In this way cultures are recreated. Ethnic identities and nationalities are made out of what did not exist before via an infusion of new and old values, meanings, goals, and purposes. Festivals are particularly amenable to this process as they are controlled sites for experimentation, where the ideal can be played out without disrupting the mundane activities of everyday life. They are sites of play and as Camille Bacon-Smith notes, "The narrative properties of imagination, play and creative playfulness lend
themselves to the world of constituting new culture models or
reconstructing models that have been lost (1992:290).

Festivals are not only the site for periodic Pagan
celebrations, but are the primary site for constituting Pagan
culture. Pagans as a whole do not exist within a specific
geographic boundary, except within the spatial and temporal
boundaries of the Pagan festival. Thus the ideal propagated by
the tourist agent, that if one wants to learn about a culture - go to
a festival, in the Neo-Pagan context, rings true. Pagan festivals in
the United States equal Pagan culture. The specifics of the
constitution of Pagan festivals through the medium of festivals
will be discussed shortly, but first the process of the Pagan
festival should be looked at.

The non-Pagan image of Pagan festivals may be one of
drunken orgies and unconstrained explicit sexual liaisons, but
unlike such possible images, created in popular imagination
through fear or ignorance7, Pagan festivals are highly structured
folkloric events requiring meticulous planning, and which contain
their own rules, norms, and social mores. Pagan festivals, also
referred to as Pagan gatherings, take many forms and represent
many things to many people. Such festivals may be advertised or
conceived of by participants as religious retreats, conferences,
fairs, jamborees, council meetings, all-things8, family reunions or
tribal villages. They vary in terms of their format, purpose and
structure, with each festival having its own specific atmosphere
and traditions. The format of a Pagan festival would encompass
such things as, its size, of the number of participants, its length, its frequency (i.e. annual, quarterly, etc.), and its scale (i.e. local, regional, national). Festivals may have one specific purpose or multiple purposes (usually its the latter) with the most common purposes including such things as, seasonal celebrations, service events, religious retreats, fairs (i.e. crafts, music, art), intensive training sessions or camps (i.e. training for clergy, drumming, dancing, etc.), healing or spiritual growth sessions, conferences, the establishment of community or networking groups, raising funds, the experience of "tribal" living, sharing of ideas, rituals, or music, and problem solving events (i.e. looking at ways to support religious freedom, helping Pagan community members, environmental awareness, etc.) The structure of Pagan festivals encompasses such organizational concerns as geographical location and physical space for the event (i.e. private property, campground, hotel, etc.), facilities available at the site (i.e. showers, swimming areas, flush toilets, etc.), admittance (i.e. closed or open event), registration, festival support (i.e. provision of meals, emergency medical care, security, etc.) rules (i.e. pets allowed, clothing optional), and events and scheduling (i.e. entertainment, workshops, rituals, meetings, etc.). Each of these, format, purpose and structure, was considered in the following overview of Pagan festivals.
The Festival Process

During the research period, twenty-one festivals were attended. Fourteen of these were in the Midwest in the states of Indiana, Ohio, and Wisconsin, two were in the Southeast in the states of Georgia and Tennessee, three were in the Northeast/East Coast area, in the states of Massachusetts, Virginia, and New York, and two were on the West Coast, both of which were in the state of California. The festivals were attended year-round, one in the month of January, one in February, two in May, six in the month of June, three in July, four in August, two in September and two in October. The majority of these fell in the summer months, which are considered the "festival season" among Pagans. Fifteen of these events were camping events, two were events held in areas where cabins could be rented, one was held in a campground lodge, one was held at a hotel/conference center and two were held on church property in which the churches rented the property out to the Pagan groups for the events. Out of the camping events, eight were held on private Pagan owned property. Such property was either individually owned, or communally owned by a Pagan group. In four cases the property consisted of a nature preserve and/or religious community center, in one case the property was described as a "folklore center" and in one case the property was a privately owned tree farm. Ten of the festivals were held on campgrounds, four of which were campgrounds rented out by scouting or church
organizations, and six of which were privately owned campgrounds. In three of the camping events, camping was primarily "primitive" camping (i.e. no showers, flush toilets or running water) and twelve had modern facilities. The length of the festivals in ten cases lasted from five to ten days, in four cases the festivals were held over "long weekends" from Thursday to Sunday, and seven of the events were weekend events lasting from Friday to Sunday. Two of the weekend events were not overnight events. Nineteen of the festivals were annual events, one of which moved yearly to a new location, one of the events was a quarterly event, and one was out of a series of events held at every Pagan holiday. The number of participants at the festivals ranged from 1500 to under 50, four of which had under fifty participants (two of these were service oriented festivals held in preparation for a larger festival which was held the following week), three had from 100 to fifty participants, three had from 200 to 101 participants, three had 300 to 201 participants, four had from 400 to 301 participants, one had 500 to 401 participants, two had 700 to 750 participants, and 1 had approximately 1500 participants. Registration to the festivals in fourteen cases was open to Pagans only. In four cases registration was by invitation only, and in three cases the festivals were open to the public, however advertisement of the three open to the public was primarily circulated in the Pagan community. All of the festivals attended had multiple purposes for being held, however, primary purposes can be identified. Two
of the festivals attended were service festivals, held in order to prepare for a larger festival, as well as care taking for a Pagan owned nature sanctuary. Eleven of the festivals were held during or around the time of one of the eight principle Pagan holidays, and thus the primary purpose, in these, cases can be identified seasonal celebrations. One of the festivals was the annual meeting of an international Pagan organization, The Covenant of the Goddess, one was a “fair” held primarily as a fund raising activity for the Pagan Community Council of Ohio, and in five cases the purposes were primarily celebratory, or the establishment of community. In terms of scale, six of the festivals were local events (i.e. participants coming primarily from within a single city or state), five were regional events (participants coming primarily from a geographical area such as the Midwest), ten were national events (i.e. participants attending from all over the United States).

Planning for festivals takes place months in advance. Decisions are made about location, timing, and scheduling of performers and speakers. Festivals, once started, often return to the same location year after year, and take place at the same time every year in the case of annual events. As the festival approaches, usually about two to three months ahead of time, informational brochures and flyers are sent out to individuals on mailing lists, and advertisements are placed in Pagan newsletters and periodicals, and left in Pagan bookstores and Pagan friendly businesses. Organizers may only provide limited information in
such advertisements, providing directions only to those who pre-register to ensure that non-paid participants, non-Pagans, or stray individuals are not wandering around on the site during the period of the festival. Organizers must also decide who will coordinate certain activities during the festival, such as the information table, or medical facilities, and recruit individuals or groups to coordinate rituals and workshops. Often participants submit proposals for workshops and ritual leaving the festival organizers to decide between them. Decisions have to be made as to the registration costs. Such decisions are usually based on such things as the cost of property rental, supplies needed, insurance, rental of port-a-toilets, or tents, etc. Several weeks before the festival, if the festival is a camping event, site preparation begins. Volunteers may show up to clear brush, cut firewood, or clean facilities. Other preparations such as taking inventory of equipment left from previous years or purchasing new equipment such as tents, tarps, coolers, and medical supplies may also take place at this time. Often participants donate extra equipment to organizers to aid in the festival's organization. Special work or service gatherings take place at some festivals in order to handle the final preparations. These may occur the week or several weekends prior to the actual event. One festival, which I attended twice, is a week long service organization which incorporates care-taking of a Pagan nature sanctuary and festival preparation along with spiritual and community activities, such as rituals, feasts and a sweatlodge. Programs are put together which
detail the events of the festival, and provide lay-outs of the festival site, indicating the location of events and important areas, such as camping areas, and workshop areas, etc. Descriptions of the various rituals and workshops scheduled during the week also appear in these programs, and sometimes, lists of merchants, attendees, and short biographies of performers. A day or two before the actual event, organizers arrive to set up their various stations such as information booths or tables, tents, workshop areas, medical facilities, etc. If the event is being held at a campground or location separate from where the organizers are located themselves, loading, transport and unloading of supplies may be required. Several festivals allow merchants to arrive a day to several days early to begin setting up for the event.

For the period of the event, Pagan festivals are transformed into self-contained cultures, complete with their own social organization, rules, division of labor, economy, health care, age-groups, mating rites, mythology and lore. In this way Pagan festivals are transformed into "tribal villages", each participant contributing their share to the workload and the festival atmosphere. Yet at the same time, Pagan festivals, are organized in ways which appear familiar to those living in North Atlantic or Western cultures. Pagan festival organization often echoes the typical organization one would expect of a academic or business conference, or a folk festival. For example, participants will encounter (and expect) such things as a medical booth or medical tent for emergency medical care, security to ensure the safety of
the participants, make sure rules are being followed, and to keep out trespassers, food vendors, merchants, schedules, announcements, childcare facilities, bulletin boards to post changes in events, stages for performers, and information tables or booths. One festival I attended even had a radio show broadcasted on a local station to announce ongoing festival activities and changes in events. The organization at some Pagan festivals, especially the larger ones may be quite elaborate. The standard festival support that is encountered at any size festival at the least includes an information and registration table, tent or booth, some form of security, and rudimentary emergency medical supplies. Other types of festival support I have encountered, are facilities for psychological counseling meant to help those having problems dealing with the festival atmosphere, who are mentally "burnt out", or need someone to talk to, etc., areas for Pagans in recovery from alcohol or drug addictions, a "general store", operated by festival organizers and which provided campers with supplies such as batteries, sunblock, ice, and bug repellent, childcare areas, and areas or facilities for the disabled. The festival I attended which had the psychological counseling center, referred to as the "Centering Dome", had a coordinator, a licensed counselor herself, who interviewed participants who wished to volunteer to do a work shift there as to their background in counseling and handling crisis situations. Several of the festivals I attended also had registered nurses or health care professionals coordinating the medical facilities. At
the majority of the festivals, especially those which are camping events, all participants are required to volunteer several hours or their time to aid in the operation of the festival. Such work may involve taking care of recycling, making announcements or "heralding", security, childcare, set-up or clean-up for feasts or ritual events, wood cutting, or working at a specific support area such as the medical area or registration table. Participants are usually asked to sign up for such work upon their arrival as they check in.

Upon arrival at a Pagan festival, participants must check in or register. Checking-in involves showing pre-registration materials, or registering, picking up the festival program and often signing waivers for insurance purposes. Participants are usually provided with some sort of identification which shows they are registered, and which they are instructed to wear at all times. The identification may be a pendant, bracelet, button, or tag of some sort. Participants are expected to follow the rules of the festival. Such rules are generally the kinds of rules one would expect at any public event, such as whether or not pets are allowed, whether alcoholic beverages are allowed on site, no illegal drugs, no firearms, etc. Twelve of the events I attended were clothing optional events, however at these events there were often areas designated as "clothing optional" or "skyclad" and "not clothing optional". Such designations were usually made in order to assure that participants did not wander into areas of a campgroup which may have had non-Pagan visitors. Organizers
often try to select sites where participants can have the option of being nude or at least partially nude for several reasons. Several (but not all) branches of Wicca require that their rites be performed "skyclad" or in the nude, believing that it will facilitate greater connection to the divine as clothing is perceived of, in such cases, as being a hindrance to such a connection. Others within the Pagan community could be considered "naturalists" believing that nudity is a natural human condition and by that engaging in such practices, one may be brought closer to nature and to their divine origins. There is also a general consensus within the Pagan community, that the human body is beautiful
and sacred and that one should not be ashamed of nudity. Such
ideals are often held in contrast to what participants perceive as
the Christian idea that the body is "sinful", and that the body and
its corresponding "sexual" nature should be hidden. It should be
noted, however, that nudity within the Pagan community, is not
about sex per se, but is viewed as a celebration of the human
form. Some participants may choose to go "skyclad" only during
ritual, some may do so for the entire duration of the festival,
many others prefer to not do so at all. All such options are
expected and accepted within the context of the festival. Other
concerns of organizers generally center around confidentiality
and privacy. Most organizers request that picture taking or video
taping not be engaged in without explicit permission from all
involved, as some participants fear discrimination, or do not wish
to have their Pagan affiliation disclosed to coworkers, friends or
relatives. After registration participants must find a place to
camp and set up tents, or locate their cabin or room, if the event
is taking place where cabins are available or in a hotel. Many
participants may decorate their camp site, hang up banners which
identify their Pagan group, or set up personal alters. Often Pagan
groups such as covens or groves attend festivals together and set
up their campsites as a unit. Following set up, participants may
go about the business of finding food and drink, taking advantage
of the site's recreational facilities, shopping, and participating in
the festival's activities. When camping, festival goers are often
expected to provide their own food, and come prepared to cook
using either gas stoves, grills or fires, but several festivals, especially the larger ones, may have food vendors, or meals may be provided by organizers or campground owners. At one festival I attended meals were included in the price of the
festival and were provided by festival organizers. At another the commercial campground owners provided meals, and allowed participants to purchase meal tickets for the week or buy meals separately. Another had a concession stand run by the festival organizers, as well as several food booths, while others just had food booths. Often festivals will have at least one large feast, which may be potluck, or prepared by the organizers. Participants may also be able to take advantage of a number of recreational activities, in addition to the planned activities of the festival itself. For example I have attended festivals where there have been swimming pools, or swimming areas in lakes, hot tubs, hiking trails, cave tours, and horseback riding on the festival site. Merchants selling Pagan oriented wares set up at many festivals. I have attended smaller festivals where only two or three merchants have been present, to events where twenty to forty merchants are present. At the largest festival I attended there were over one hundred merchants. Merchants may sell such things as Pagan oriented books, jewelry, clothing, instruments such as drums and flutes, statuary, ritual tools such as wands or ritual knives often referred to as athames, CD’s, artwork, candles, incense, essential oils, or pottery. Often items are handmade by the vendors themselves, or are items of interest to Pagan consumers which may be hard to locate outside of the Pagan community. There are also merchants who do not provide goods, but instead provide services, such as tattooing, massage,
Figure 3. Merchant booth

Figure 4. Pagan wares depicting ancient "goddesses"
reiki (a form of healing energy movement), or divinatory readings such as tarot card or psychic readings.

Pagan festivals are often framed by ritual. Often the entire festival itself can be perceived of as a long ritual. Fourteen out of the twenty-one festivals I attended held formal opening and closing rituals. Such rituals help to structure the festival atmosphere by allowing participants to enter into the festival framework and provided a safe community environment, as well as providing closure at the end of the event. Such closure is often an important step, as many participants report they have trouble re-adjusting to the "mundane" world. Opening rituals I have attended have incorporated such activities as honoring the land for its use during the period of the festival, inviting the "spirits" of the land to feel welcome, honoring the community of the festival and the festival organizers, weather working (i.e. magical work aimed at the goal of good weather for the duration of the festival), lighting the community fire, and having the security coordinators enter the circle and vow to protect and provide safety to attendees for the duration of the festival. Closing rituals I have attended often constitute the reverse of the opening rituals, and may involve, a ritualistic returning of the land back to its natural and "spirit" inhabitants, a thanking of festival organizers, or the extinguishing of the festival fire. The festival proper contains such activities as community meetings, in which activities are discussed and announcements are made, workshops,
group or conference meetings, performances, nature excursions, such as group hikes or cave tours, or swimming, and rituals.

Several of the festivals I attended held daily morning meetings, referred to as "village meetings" in one case and "town meetings" in another. Such morning meetings served as the time for community news exchange, in which announcements were made concerning the events of the day, lost and found items were reported, requests were made for people to report to workshifts they had signed up for, weather forecasts were discussed, as well as, ritual plans, in which requests were made for such things as ritual drummers, or chants were taught that would be used for rituals later in the evening. Morning meetings constituted the start of the festival day, as participants brought their blankets, chairs and coffee, and discussed the events of the day. Festival organizers generally facilitated such meetings to keep confusion to a minimum.

Afternoons at Pagan festivals are the primary time when workshops take place. Workshops at Pagan festivals are of three major types: discussion groups, presentation or pedagogical, and "hands on" or "how to". The discussion groups generally center around a specific topic such as Pagan ethics, or Pagan parenting and are facilitated by the workshop coordinator to coordinators. These workshops are often begun with a brief discussion of the topic to be discussed and then the topic is handed over to attendees for debate, or the presentation of ideas and suggestions. These discussion groups may constitute both information sharing
Figure 5. Morning meeting

Figure 6. Workshop
and heated debates. Presentation or pedagogical workshops often involve the presentation of a specific topic in lecture format, often followed by a question and answer session by participants. Topics of such workshops may be an overview of a specific type of Paganism such as the Druidic or Norse Path, an look at magic in the Middle Ages, or a review of recent pre-Christian archaeological site excavations in the British Isles. The third type of workshop the "how-to" workshops or "hand-on" workshops is just that, involving participants actually learning how to do a particular thing through the process of instruction and trial and error. The focus of such workshops may include such diverse things as, "how to construct a ritual", or "how to read tarot cards", to the teaching of specific types of arts and crafts, such as how to make soap, incense, a drum, or a ritual mask. These workshops generally focus on the construction of crafts and tools of interest to the Pagan community - tools or supplies which may be used in a Pagan ritual such as incense or drums. Special workshops may be planned for particular age groups such as children or teenagers.

Meetings of particular interest groups or organizations may also take place during the course of a festival, with meetings usually being held during the workshop periods. There may be a meeting for gay, lesbian and bisexual Pagans, or Pagans involved in academic study. Festivals are also a place where meetings of specific national organizations can take place, such as the annual meeting of the Covenant of the Goddess which takes place at the
Merry Meet festival, or the annual meeting of the Pagan Spirit Alliance which takes place at the Pagan Spirit Gathering. Such meetings offer an opportunity for members of these organizations to actually meet in the same physical space rather than networking via the postal service or internet. Business items may be discussed at this time, such as budgets, goals, or upcoming service projects.

Organized excursions designed to make use of the facilities available also take place at festivals. These excursions may include such things as nature hikes or hikes designed at finding and identifying herbs, or organized recreational events such as a children's swimming period, or a tour of the land's facilities.

Figure 7. Facilities at a Pagan festival site
As noted earlier, most workshops, meetings and excursions take place during the day at the festival, however with the setting of the sun a different atmosphere descends on the festival community with the sounds of musical performances and large elaborate ritual theatrics. Within the Pagan community there are a wide variety of musical performers each offering their own "brand" of Pagan music, from acoustic folk music, to eight piece African drumming bands, to rock-n-roll shows, complete with electric amplifiers and stage lights. Usually at least one night of a festival is devoted to such performances, and at larger festivals musical performances make take place almost every night, often proceeding of following the evenings community ritual. Non-
musical performances may also take place, such as a story-telling concert, a theatrical presentation, the showing of a movie, or a comedy show. Some festivals also have a talent show or an "open stage" night in which performers from the festival community get the chance to demonstrate their special talents. During such shows, individuals, may dance, perform "skits", read poetry they have written, sing, etc. "Bardic circles" at Pagan festivals provide another venue for festival goers to share their talents. The term "bard" is in reference to a person in ancient Celtic societies who traveled from place to place relaying news, stories, information and reciting epic poetry and histories. This tradition of storytelling and information exchange has been revived in the "Bardic circle", which constitutes a ritualistic exchange of folklore items. Participants in a Bardic circle may gather around a fire, each taking their turn in the telling of stories, the sharing of songs or poetry, or the passing on of jokes, chants, and news of the day. Bardic circles may happen spontaneously at festivals, or be scheduled as part of the festival events. At one festival I attended, one night was devoted to Bardic circles with several taking place around the campsite, thus allowing for smaller groups to ensure that everyone got their turn, and for more intimate sharing.

Large dramatic rituals are often considered to be the "high-point" of Pagan festivals. Such rituals may occur on a nightly basis for longer events, or their may be one main ritual for shorter weekend events. Rituals typically occur during the
evening hours, but often rituals will also occur during the day, especially those which are being held for a specific purpose which may require sunlight for visibility. A variety of rituals occur at Pagan festivals, however they can be grouped into several main types: rituals which celebrate particular holidays or seasons, rituals to promote community, sex/gender specific rituals such as all-women rituals or all-men rituals, rituals with a specific religious path focus, such as a Druidic ritual, a Wiccan ritual, a Voodoo ritual or a Norse ritual, rituals with a specific magical intent such as healing rituals, or rituals to connect on with one's "inner child", and finally "opening" and "closing" rituals conducted to mark the beginning and end of a festival. While this list does not exhaust all the different ritual types which may occur at Pagan festivals, it at least provides a set of categories under which many types of festival rituals could fit.

In order to provide a clearer picture of what happens at Pagan festivals, I will outline a typical day's schedule from several of the events I attended. Usually schedules of daily events are listed in the festival program guide received by participants upon arrival at a festival. The following outlines are taken from such program guides. The first example outlines a day's activities at a week-long national camping festival held in the Midwest, at the time of the Summer Solstice and in which 750 people were in attendance. Listed are the types of events with the titles of workshops as they appeared in the program and their scheduled times and meeting places:
Tuesday, June 18th

7-9 am Breakfast

9 am Centering Dance Performance at Ritual Circle

9:30-11 am Village Meeting at Ritual Circle

11 -1 pm Lunch and Merchanting and Networking

1-2:30 pm Workshop Period - Workshops scheduled:

- Multi-Cultural Shamanism: Working with Nature Spirits - Ritual Circle (location)
- Tarot: A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words - Crystal Circle
- Organizing a Pagan Church - Hygeia's Grove
- Incense Compounding - Pagan Path
- The Pagan Warrior Path - Crossroads
- Jewish Paganism - Tranceland
- Mask Making - Doe's Place

2:30-3 pm Freetime

3 - 4:30 pm Workshop Period - Workshops scheduled

- Baltic Paganism - Crystal Circle
- Theology: The Bridge from Spirituality to Religion - Hygeia's Grove
- The Olympians Today - Pagan Path
- Sheya System of Transformational Magick - Crossroads
- Storytelling for Children and Youth - Teen Area

4:30-6 pm Potluck Preparation

6 - 6:30 Potluck Feast Set-up

Bring food to share, plus a utensil for serving it. Label your contribution with your name and what it contains.

6:30 - 7:30 Potluck Feast at Ritual Circle

Bring your own cup, plate and eating utensils.
Dine in the area of your astrological Sun sign and meet old and new friends.

8:30 pm Group Rituals: Druidic - Tranceland
- Women's Ritual Circle
- Men's - Crossroads, Sweatlodge - Sweatlodge location
The second example is taken from the program guide of a regional camping festival in the Southeast held near the Samhain holiday in late October. Approximately 250 people were in attendance:

Saturday, October 22nd
7:30 AM Breakfast
9:00 Town Meeting
10:00 Workshops - Our Lady of the Beasts - an indoor show presentation covering the archetypal imagery of Potnia Theron, the Lady of Animals; Living Your Personal Myth
12:30 PM Lunch
2:00 Workshops - Leadership and Exalted Trust; The Last Chants workshop
6:30 Main Samhain Ritual:
8:00 Dinner
9:30 Costume Ball with entertainment by Fortress
11:30 Costume Judging

The third example comes from a large national camping event, held in the Northeast during the month of July. Approximately 1500 people were in attendance:

Saturday, July 22nd
9:30-10:45 AM Workshops - Tai Chi, Living in Community, Gaia Conspiracy, Practical Sigil Magic, Body Painting
11:00-12:15 Workshops - Ritual Dance, Spiritual Midwifery, Ecocatastrophe, Magical and Mystical Ireland, Gay Spirit Symbols, Body Painting
12:30-1:30 PM Concert - Minstrels of Enchantment
1:45-3:00 Workshops - Chaos and Beyond Part I, Roots of Mid-East Conflict, Intro to Frame
Drums, Sound Vibrational Healing, Kung Fu for Drummers, Body Painting

3:15-4:30 Workshops- Chaos and Beyond Part II, Voodoo of New Orleans, Aikido, Polyfidelitous Relationships, Stories from the Womb, Crystal Healing, Body Painting

4:45-6:00 Workshops- Traditional Rhythms of Guinea, Offering to the Earth Mother, Phonehenge, An Encounter with the Goddess, Drum ex-change, Crystal Healing Part II, Body Painting

6:15-7:30 Dinner Break

8:00 Concert

10:00 Bonfire Lighting Ceremony

Midnight Voodoo Temple Ritual

A number of unscheduled or "unofficial" events also occur at Pagan festivals. As mentioned earlier, festivals goers also occupy their days by browsing through merchants row, getting a massage, or a tarot reading, sunbathing, or making use of the site's facilities such as swimming, hiking or soaking in a hottub. Much time is also spent visiting friends at their various campsites, meeting new people and networking. At any time during a festival one may also find groups or individuals making preparations for events and/or rituals, such as rehearsing, or assembling props and costumes. Participants may also be found taking advantage of areas set aside for quiet meditation or contemplation, or utilizing "sacred spaces". For example, several of the festivals I attended that were held on privately owned Pagan land had specific ritual or sacred areas such as a sacred
Druidic grove, or a stone circle re-created from archaeological record or modeled from existing ancient sites. Participants were invited to visit such areas for private meditation or worship, and were expected to show proper reverence for the sacred space. Four of the festivals I attended also had "sweatlodges" set-up. Sweatlodges, are of Native American derivation, and consist of small round lodges covered with blankets or animals skins. After participants in a sweatlodge ritual enter the lodge, hot rocks which have been heated in a fire outside the lodge are brought in. Water is then poured over the rocks to create steam. Sweatlodges are considered to be sacred spaces, within the festival and appropriate reverence is called for when in such a space.

Varios sweatlodge protocols are also in order, and are often explained by the individual coordinating the sweatlodge space or the sweatlodge ritual. Sweatlodge rituals may be scheduled along with the other official events of the festival, but they typically occur throughout the festival at regular intervals, or when a group of individuals get together to conduct one. Relaxed scheduling in such a case, seems to be required as only a limited number of individuals, around fifteen to twenty, can fit in the lodge at any one time.

Individual groups, such as a coven or grove, may also hold their own private rituals within the context of the festival. Such private rituals may be held in order to conduct a specific seasonal rite which would normally be held by the group outside of the festival context, or as a way for the group to reconnect with one
another in the larger matrix of a festival. Private invitations to such rituals may occasionally be extended to non-group members, or to individuals who may wish to join the group. Rituals, meetings or workshops may also turn into impromptu processions which extend beyond their boundaries to incorporate the larger festival community. For example at one festival I attended what could be called a "festival-within-a-festival" in Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's (1991) terms, occurred in which a particular group in this case Jewish Pagans held a feast and then a procession complete with large golden calf-idols, in the cinematic tradition of *The Ten Commandments*, around the campground area or "village" which came in contact with and was subsequently incorporated into the larger ritual that had been going on in honor of the Summer Solstice. As far as I can tell this was not a planned event, and the Jewish procession subsequently left and held several other events on their own. Another similar example involves a procession which took place following an all women's ritual. In this case ritual attendees were so excited following an extremely emotional and lively ritual held in honor of female sexuality and "sex goddesses" that a procession was organized in which participants encircled the camp chanting the chants used in the ritual. The procession eventually ended at the main ritual fire area where processes were incorporated into the larger matrix of drumming and dancing activities taking place there. Individual groups may also sponsor, unofficial parties, bardic circles or feasts during the festival. At one festival I attended,
any night one could stop by the Druid's camp and find lively storytelling and singing taking place in addition to any official scheduled activities. While not officially announced or advertised as an event, it was generally understood that all festival participants were invited to come and "hang out" with the Druids. At other times during my research I was invited to unofficial parties or dinners held at participant's campsites, rooms or cabins.

While rituals may be the official "high-point" of any Pagan festival, the nightly bonfire drumming and dancing is the unofficial "high-point". Festival dancing and drumming takes place almost every night at any outdoor event. Such drumming and dancing usually takes place around a ritual bonfire following the evening's last scheduled events. Both drumming and dancing are generally free-form and take place until the wee hours of the morning. At some festivals, workshops are even conducted on "bonfire drumming" or "bonfire dancing" to help introduce those who are unfamiliar with such an event, or who are a little self-conscious in their drumming or dancing performance. Bonfire drumming and dancing for some is a highly "shamanic" spiritual experience, allowing such individuals an outlet to achieve altered states of consciousness. For others the bonfire is a place to socialize, to meet friends, to play and perhaps meet potential lovers. The more experienced drummers may often keep the pace and lead the inexperienced in simple rhythms. However, more often than not drumming is often free-form and sometimes
chaotic. Chanting may accompanying the drumming and dancing. Dancing is also free-form or "ecstatic" and depending on the pace of the drums, dancers may slowly move about the bonfire, stand in place swaying to the rhythm or skip, hop, run and twirl. Experienced or trained dancers may also incorporate certain dance styles into their movements. Middle Eastern and African dancing and drumming have recently become popular within the Pagan community and often one may observe such dance and drumming styles around the bonfire. Occasionally workshops are also offered during the day on such dance and drumming styles. Impromptu circle dances may also happen around the bonfire with dancers clasping hands and encircling the fire. One particularly popular dance is the "spiral dance" in which one individual breaks from the circle with one hand and while keeping the other hand clasped to the individual on their other side leads the dancers into the center of the ring via a spiral and then turns and spirals back out. The effect being that as the dancers spiral back out they turn around and eventually all dancers pass each other going into or coming out of the spiral. It is more typical however for dancers to dance solo, in free-form movement.

Rites of passage, also typically occur at Pagan festivals. Festivals are excellent opportunities for those who wish to hold their rites of passage within an all-Pagan environment. Rites of passage include such things as weddings, often referred to as "handfastings" within the Pagan community, child blessings,
Figure 9. Festival drumming

Figure 10. Handfasting
"coming-of-age" ceremonies, "cronings", rites which commemorate the start of the menopausal years, or ceremonies to remember those in the community who have died. I even attended a festival where there was a "hand-parting" or divorce ceremony. Such rites may be officially scheduled into the festival's calendar, or they may be held privately within a specific group, or they may be by invitation only. Handfastings, referred to as such, for the practice of binding the hands of the couple together during the ceremony, may or may not be legally recognized by the state government. There are many Pagans who serve as legally ordained ministers within their traditions and can perform such rites. Others Pagans do not feel it necessary to have such government recognition, as long as the rite is meaningful to them. Some Pagan traditions recognize handfastings only for the duration of a year and a day, in which after that time the individuals must decide whether or not to renew the union.

Child blessings, referred to as "Wiccanings" in the tradition of Witchcraft are an arena in which the parents or relatives of the child often bestow their blessings or a name onto the infant. Participants may also be asked to bestow their blessings or gifts. Most Pagans feel that religion is a personal matter to be explored by the individual and not enforced by the parents, and following, it is typical that most child blessings do not involve a vow to raise that child in any one particular religious tradition, but more often involve the making of promises to support the child in his or her spiritual endeavors whatever they may be.
Each festival has its own unique characteristic flavor and events for which it is known. Some festivals are recognized as being "party" festivals for their high energy and lively drumming and dancing, while others are known for their intense ritual theater, others for their musical performances or well-thought-out workshops. Festivals which take place on an annual basis around the time of certain holidays may become known for the specific seasonally based rites which they sponsor, such as the Rites of Spring Festival which takes place in the month of May, and which highlights a ritual Maypole dance, or the Highlands of Tennessee Samhain Gathering, which takes place near Halloween and which sponsors a costume ball and contest. Other festivals have developed their own set of traditions for which they are known. For example the Starwood festival is highlighted by the "lighting of the bonfire ritual". This is the festival's grand finale, as the fire is lit accompanied by choreographed dancers, torch bearers, large theatrical props and fireworks. This event is anxiously anticipated as the bonfire reaching two to three stories in height is gradually built up over the week prior to the ceremony. This particular bonfire lighting tradition has also spread to other festivals which now proudly boast of their own bonfire ceremonies. In one festival's flyer, organizers were happy to share the comments made about their bonfire by police who had come to investigate alleged noise complaints. As one officer put it, according to festival organizers, "That ain't no ordinary fire". Other festivals such as the Pagan Spirit Gathering,
incorporate the fire lighting ceremony into the main ritual and keep it burning throughout the gathering. In this case participants feel that it is their sacred duty to help keep the fire going as is evidenced by participants standing outside in the rain holding up a tarp to shield the fire.

Figure 11. Participant at festival costume ball
The "tea dance" is another festival tradition. It was originated by a group from Massachusetts, hosting a "Boston tea party", in which participants were encouraged to dress in sexually explicit garb, such as lace teddies, corsets, stockings, or to push the gender boundaries through cross-dressing. The "tea party" tradition has since spread to other festivals, and provides an avenue to satirize images of sexually which some may find exploitative in their mainstream context. Such events also constitute "rites of reversal" as they provide a safe space to release sexual inhibitions. Other similar satirical rituals have also spread throughout the festival circuit, such as the "sacred rites of Bill the Cat" in which participants pay "honor" to the Bloom County cartoon character Bill the Cat by yelling his sacred sounds, "Ack, Ack, Ack!!!", or the "Dionysian rites of Jim Morrison" in which participants are indoctrinated into the "Coven of Jim Morrison" through being anointed with his favorite beverage, Yukon Jack.

Creating Community and Culture

Pagan festivals in the United States are synonymous with Pagan culture. Even though festival goers only share the same physical space a few weeks out of the year a spiritual community has been created which transcends geographical boundaries. The Pagan community is thus facilitated as much through festival attendance as through shared religious beliefs, lifestyles and
values. Prior to the introduction of Pagan festivals in the United States the possibility of being "Pagan" as the term is used in this discussion did not exist. Individuals may have existed in a number of groups which could be placed under the general rubric of the term "pagan", but to be just "Pagan" within such a matrix would have left one without any direction or community to identify with. With the growth of Pagan festivals this situation has changed. Festivals have played a primary role in making Pagan culture and community accessible to those who wish to participate as a "Pagan", but do not have access to local working Pagan groups. Festivals, however, have not only spawned the growth of the Pagan movement in the United States by making it more accessible but have created the very thing they give access to - a culture and a nationwide community. Paganism is unique in that its beginnings as a contemporary socio-religious movement was not characterized by violent demonstrations, charismatic leadership or widespread outcry against injustice, but rather revolved around the publication by several key texts as mentioned earlier. These key texts, published in the 1950's were relatively obscure and remain so today. This being the case, the formation of a cohesive functioning Pagan community had a long way to go - from isolated readers and secretive idiosyncratic suspicious groups to a nationwide community network. Festivals have provided the impetus for the rapid transversing of this terrain, taking the boundaries of Paganism from text to a living breathing culture.
Since their inception in the 1970's, festivals, and along with them festival attendees and Pagan culture, have steadily grown. Pagan festivals all over the United States have reported record numbers in attendance, many have been so in demand that they had to close their registration, as they aren't equipped to handle the numbers who wish to attend, or they are forced to move their festival site to an area which can accommodate more people. With this growth festivals in the United States have also become initiators, as more and more people get their first exposure to Pagan culture or even other Pagans besides themselves through attending such festivals. This occurrence may be a uniquely American phenomenon. The seminal texts published in the 1950's by Gerald Gardner were primarily on the subject of
Witchcraft as it existed in the British Isles. Gardner claims, that at the time he was writing the religion of Witchcraft was composed mainly of small covens which remained underground, and from an anthropological perspective would fit the criteria of secret societies. Thus anyone wishing to participate in such a group had to go through an extensive period of study followed by an initiation which often involved a vow of secrecy in order to protect the identity and practices of group members. Two of Gardner's students, Raymond and Rosemary Buckland, moved to the United States and brought with them the teachings of Gerald Gardner. The Bucklands, however, promoted Witchcraft "American Style". Soon Raymond Buckland had published a book entitled *Buckland's Complete Book of Witchcraft* (1975) which claimed to provide the reader with the essential training one would learn as an initiate of a British coven minus the necessity of initiation. Following Buckland's publication a number of books appeared written primarily by American authors and geared toward the solitary American Pagan. Now all one needed to be Pagan was a desire and a book. What had been at one time the teachings of a secret society in Britain now existed for public consumption in the American capitalist market. Severely lacking however was a sense of community among American Pagans. Festivals arose and filled the void. Neo-Pagan festivals comparable to the scale that one finds in the United States are presently non-existent.
Pagan festivals are sites for the ritual production of social organization. Bonds are created among festival goers which extend nationwide. People attend festivals to network, seek out others with common interests, and even to meet potential lovers or mates. The same merchants become regular sights at festivals as they travel across the country following the festival circuit and selling their wares. Participants often eagerly await the arrival of particular merchants which they meet from festival to festival. Pagan merchants are at the core of the festival community, constituting a traveling entourage, they both earn their living within (or at least enough to support their travels to festivals) and actively participate in the creation of Pagan culture. Today festivals are multi-generational, some moving into their 17th and 18th years are witnessing the coming of age of the children of the original festival participants. Discussions abound at festivals concerning the raising of children within the Pagan community and the treatment and care-taking of elderly or physically challenged members. Such concerns reflect the strengthening of social boundaries and social obligations between individuals within the festival community and Pagan culture at large.

Through festivals community is formed at several levels - the local community of organizers, local participants and finally national and international attendees. As individuals return year after year they begin to seek out their place within the festival community. As one participant said, "Every year I work at the Centering Dome [counseling center at a large festival] the night of
the Sacred Animal ritual. That's when they need me to help. It's my job, I've found my niche here". Through such contributions festival participants find a way to give something back to the community and in doing so build for themselves a sense of continuation, stability, and unity within Pagan culture.

Due to the existence of festivals there now also exists a nationwide body of folklore consisting of chants, jokes, stories, and ritual styles. The festival circuit is the conductor of such lore, transmitting the new oral traditions of the Pagan movement. The impact of such folklore will be discussed in the following chapter, however, suffice it to say that festival attendance and the corresponding exposure to such folklore has spurred isolated groups and individuals to break out of old ritualistic molds and become more experimental in ritual, and worship, as well as more inclusive of different Pagan traditions' beliefs, values and mythos. Festival attendance has also exposed participants to Pagan humor and provided an outlet for participants to look back on the movement and laugh at themselves and along with each other about their place in the dominant American paradigm. The result of such exposure and the corresponding eclecticism that it has encouraged is the emergence of a nationwide "generic" Pagan culture. Because of Pagan festivals, no longer are the traditions, practices and beliefs of specific Pagan paths isolated from the the larger Pagan community. Instead such beliefs systems are becoming further enmeshed with one another. Following, we are witnessing the emergence of a "generic" or rather all-inclusive
form of Neo-Paganism that is uniquely American. If ever a religion in the United States truly exemplified the idea of the American "melting-pot" it would be Paganism. This phenomenon has also lead to the emergence of a new branch of Paganism - an eclectic or "generic" one - in which individuals no longer have to identify with any one specific Pagan "path" to be considered "Pagan" by both themselves and others within the Pagan community. In asking Pagans what type of Paganism they subscribe to, I have often gotten a response such as, "I'm just Pagan", or "I pick and choose from many traditions" or "I'm eclectic". Such a response would have been unheard of twenty-years ago before the emergence of the festival community. Festivals, thus, with their emphasis on multiple traditions within the context of Paganism cater to such eclectic individuals and allow them a space to exist. Festivals also function in the capacity of legitimizers, legitimizing the practices and beliefs of those who wish to remain eclectic, as well as those individuals who may subscribe to a particular branch of Paganism but wish to remain solitary in their practice. Such legitimation is important as individuals can attend festivals and witness other Pagans actively participating in their religion and then return home with a sense of no longer being alone, knowing that they are "doing it right" and feeling like they are now a "real" Pagan as they successively participated in religious activities with other Pagans.

A festival is the place one may go to learn how to "be Pagan". At a festival participants may observe and learn typical
festival dress, symbolic codes, markers and language, and ritual styles. Through such observations participants learn how to recognize fellow Pagans in non-Pagan environments, how to employ certain key terms in a manner discernable only to other Pagans, and how to construct rituals in a fashion that other Pagans would recognize and identify with. Typical festival dress is colorful, and romantically inspired, with festival goers dressing in attire that many would consider inappropriate in their "mundane" work worlds. However in the accepting context of the festival participants feel free to explore such dress styles, which in other contexts may be considered radical or "strange". Such dress styles, often consisting of colorful skirts, worn by both men and women, colorful dresses and often ritual robes, also create an atmosphere at Pagan festivals indicating that the festival is a "world-apart" from the normal work-day world of suits and ties that many participate in. Symbolic jewelry that may identify one as Pagan and even what form of Paganism one may subscribe is often sold at and donned at Pagan festivals. Typical examples of such jewelry includes the "pentagram" or five pointed star worn by many Witches or "Thor's hammer", a double-sided hammer, worn by participants of Norse Pagan traditions. Ritual stylistics may also be learned at festivals through both direct instruction in workshops or through observation. While it is possible to learn how to do Pagan rituals through the many books published on the subject, one of the primary ways such information is disseminated remains that of direct participation at festivals. It
is also one of the only ways the solitary Pagan may observe how to do ritual within a larger group context. Individuals also may attend workshops at festivals to learn how to participate in the Pagan community. For example workshops may be held on a particular Pagan path which informs participants on how to go about finding out more information on such a tradition or how to get involved in existing groups, or on a particular skill one may be able to utilize within the Pagan festival community context, such as dancing, chanting or drumming. The presence of such workshops at festivals attests to the constant striving on the part of participants to create a self-reliant Pagan community. Such workshops provide participants with the "tools" needed to "do it themselves", and speak of a grassroots consciousness among Pagan which provides an alternative to dominant paradigm in the United States of conspicuous consumption.

At the same time certain aspects of Pagan festivals also cater to American consumerist ethics through not only the availability of merchandise provided by Pagan merchants, but also through providing an arena where one can go to "shop" for religion. That is, individuals can attend various workshops and rituals sponsored by groups working in particular Pagan traditions and make informed decisions about which may be the "right" path for them. Festivals, thus, provide Pagan "consumers" with a religious smorgasbord from which to sample and if they find something they want to explore further, they then have the proper resources to do so.
Workshops and rituals may also be focused specifically on the building or maintaining of the Pagan community. For example, some festivals hold workshops designed specifically for "new comers" or "first time festival attendees" to help them adjust to the festival environment. Such workshops address questions new comers to festivals may have such as concerns of festival etiquette, what to do if you need medical help, where to shower, and where to camp. I have also attended several festivals where workshops centering on community have been held, and which have focused on such issues as ways to get participants more involved in the festival community, ways to maintain a sense of community following the festival, and looking at defining the boundaries of the Pagan community and the expectations of such a community. One workshop I attended on community and community formation utilized the analogy of "tribalism" versus "community" to emphasis the direction in which the organizer felt that Paganism was moving toward. The analogy begin between "tribalism" as exemplified in pastoral, patriarchal, warring societies and "community" as exemplified in a diffuse context of mutual concern and cooperation in the interests of common beliefs, goals, and knowledge. The organizer in this case noting that Paganism seemed to be moving from a model of "tribalism" with isolated islands of closed groups with inverted loyalties and who are suspicious of other's claim to "truth" to a model of community where diversity exists within a context of mutual respect, where "truth" is contingent and
suspicion is suspended in light of showing a united Pagan front. In this same workshop the idea of community was placed within the context of an ecological metaphor in which community was viewed as a ongoing process of give and take between individuals and groups rather than a static entity. Rituals may also, as mentioned earlier, have as their purpose that of community formation or strengthening. Three of the festivals I attended had this as the specific purpose of their main ritual during the festival. Many other ritual organizers also mentioned "community" creation within the context of a ritual, or devoted a portion of their ritual to such a cause. The rituals varied as to the theme of community was incorporated. In one case the main ritual followed a workshop on community formation and all participants were asked to help contribute to the planning of the main ritual in the spirit of community. In another case participants were asked upon entry into the ritual space what they could contribute to the Pagan community and asked to add to a "communal lemonade" by squeezing of a lemon which all participants had been given earlier. The lemonade was then drank by all participants as a symbol of the shared hopes of the newly affirmed community. In yet another example, participants gave offerings of wood shavings to the ritual bonfire as they yelled out what they would like to see happen in the community over the coming year.

The process of identity and community creation within the Pagan community proceeds much like that of the creation of
Recent studies on ethnicity have looked at the process of ethnic formation as a subjective process, in which ethnic identity is often arbitrary and transient, existing to serve the needs of those who self-identify as "ethnics". From such a perspective, ethnicity must be viewed in a more open sense, in which an ethnic group may be comprised of any group who considers themselves such and go about employing such identity to meet their own ends (Gottlieb 1992). Ethnicity may also be a means employed by particular groups in order to contrast themselves to some postulated other. Exploration of ethnicity in its positive function may serve as a means to connect individuals with an ancestral past from which they feel disconnected. In the case of Neo-Paganism, identity is formed at several levels. It may be formed as a means to contrast one's present Pagan identity with one's former non-Pagan identity. Pagan identity is also often viewed in contrast to that of the Christian majority in the United States, and as such holds a lense up to Christianity, giving precedence to the differences and down-playing any similarities. Coming to terms with one's Pagan identity may also be interpreted as a form of positive ethnocentrism in which individuals take an active part in searching for their Pagan heritage both spiritual and genetic and accord precedence to the results when making decisions on how to worship, what myths or pantheons to pay homage to, and how to interpret their relationship to the earth and its inhabitants. Thus Pagan ethnicities are created within Pagan culture as
various Pagan paths are formed and explored. Participants being most often drawn to those paths which they perceive as being affiliated with the pre-Christian religious practices of their genetic ancestors. For example a person of Irish ancestry may feel the need to further explore the path of Druidism or other forms of Celtic spirituality, whereas a person of Germanic descent may feel drawn to Asatru. Such exploration can be viewed as "positive ethnocentrism" as it does not seek to exclude or discriminate against those who may wish to explore other paths, but only to revere and give precedence to that part of pre-Christian religious practices which modern day Pagans feel they are the rightful inheritors of. The prevailing attitude being that of "unity through diversity". Thus formation of Pagan "ethnic" identity occurs on at least two levels - the larger one involving the recognition of one's Pagan identity as opposed to non-Pagans and the recognition of one's particular Pagan path within Paganism itself. As the majority of individuals involved in Paganism at this time are of European descent\textsuperscript{9}, ethnic formation within such a context could be seen as "ethnicity for white folks". Following, many feel that their original pre-Christian European heritage and the associated traditions which may have survived were somehow lost in the great "homogenization" of American immigrants which has taken place over time. Through the establishment of one's Pagan identity, it is hoped that some of what has been lost, some of what they have been deprived, will be recovered.
Like the nation states of Europe, which had to made through romantic appeals to idealized pasts, Paganism as a culture has to be "made" as the majority of participants did not grown up within a Pagan household. The making of Pagan culture involves the production of Pagan ethnic identity. Such a production involves the creation of or an appeal to historical and prehistorical pasts whether viewed by participants as real or imagined. It also involves performance of such identity of others both inside and outside of the Pagan community. Festivals are the primary sites for the performance of such ethnic identities within an all Pagan context. Here Pagans "perform" their chosen paths for one another through a variety of modes - workshops,
ritual, dress, symbolic jewelry, symbolic language, or association with others of a similar path. Specific groups of a particular Pagan path may camp together creating a space within the larger matrix of the festival in which a specific identity may be located and performed. Within such a space rituals may be held which are specific to a particular path, banners may be hung which identify particular groups, and particular wares may be sold such as books on a specific Pagan path or the characteristic ritual tools which may be needed when working in a tradition, which mark the area as being one dedicated to a particular identity. These markings are an open invitation in the festival context for others to witness and/or take part in the performance.

Pseudo-rivalries and humorous banter may also take place between groups which openly acknowledge and display their Pagan ethnicity. Such occurrences may serve to reinforce and emphasize identity formation through the act of contrast and the development of a running dialogue between differing groups. They are also messages to the larger community of festival goers, letting them know that not only is coexistence between varied Pagan paths possible but that that co-existence may be cultivated through humor and a healthy dialogue. A particularly good example of this process took place at a festival I attended in the Midwest. In this example a humorous game took place between the Druid's camp and a camp known as "Babylonia" or the land of the "Jewitches". A healthy rivalry had been developing between both camps throughout the week of the festival. This rivalry
peaked following a workshop given by a member of the Druid camp which focused on the legendary cattle raids of the ancient Celts. Stuffed toy cows were used during the workshop as props. In the spirit of the cattle raids, however, members of the Babylonia camp took it upon themselves to raid the Druid's "cattle", sneaking into the camp and capturing the toy cows. The toy cows were proudly displayed at the Babylonia camp following the raid and there was much celebration to be found. The Druids realized that in order to "redeem" themselves that they had to steal back their "cattle" and a series of "cattle raids" ensued. The raids continued throughout the week until a "truce" was finally declared at the morning meeting for the rest of the festival community to witness. Within the context of this particular Midwestern festival such raids became legendary, entering into the folklore of the festival itself. The raids even warranted their recording in a semi-fictitious account published in a Pagan periodical, thus adding to a growing body of written Pagan lore recognizable specifically to those who were in attendance at the festival in which the raids took place. The specifics of this written account will be presented in a later chapter.

At festivals participants may play out multiple ethnic identities as they invest in multiple paths which represent multiple ethnic opportunities and investments. In such cases participants are given the opportunity to participate in a wider variety of Pagan traditions, than they may have been exposed to alone or within their local community, through attendance of
workshops and rituals focusing on a particular path or through merely socializing with those identified with a particular path. In doing so participants are able to maximize the number of roles available to them and be more selective in the particular path or paths which they may choose to invest in. The cultivation of such ethnicities is another example of how ethnicity itself is a selective process, and how Pagans may actively engage such selection as they "shop" for their identity. The performance of multiple identities within the context of the festival also provides an opportunity for a dialogue to emerge which helps to mold the community itself. Through such discourse Pagans come to understand and negotiate their own definitions of themselves and their multiple representations within the festival community, producing in effect an indigenous discourse on their own ethnic identities. Pagan festivals, for the most part, are attended by Pagans only, and some limit attendance only to those who identify as such, thus the performances and indigenous dialogues that emerge are not meant to inform the outside world of the nature of Paganism but to allow for the further refinement and negotiation of identity of what it means to be "Pagan" within an all Pagan environment.

Many participants of Pagan festivals also report feelings akin to those reported by various ethnic groups when they interact with mainstream American culture. That is there are reports of feeling like an outsider within the context of mainstream American and following that their true "home" lies
within the Pagan festival community. Festival attendees often describe their feelings upon arrival at a festival as a "homecoming", or describe the festival as their "spiritual homeland" implying that only within the context of an all Pagan culture do they feel entirely at ease or accepted. Along these same lines a common comment among festival goers as they say their goodbyes to one another is to refer to their returning "home" to the non-Pagan world as just a supply run, implying that their true home lies within the Pagan community and that the rest of the year is endured as long as they can return home once again, and that life outside of the Pagan environment is somehow less real, less sincere and less meaningful than their brief experiences during just one week out of the year.

After the festival participants often experience difficulty adjusting to the environment of mainstream American, and claim to have feelings similar to that of homesickness. The difficulty lies in the fact that participants must return to a world in which the utopian vision created at Pagan festivals is imperfectly realized. Following, participants are often unable to reconcile their Pagan identities which could be freely played out in the context of the festival with the larger world in which they must often put a check on their belief systems and practices to avoid prejudice and discrimination. This often leads to a disillusionment with the real world and creates a desire amongst many participants to attempt to extend the vision created at
festivals year round in the form of intentional communities or greater involvement with local Pagan organizations.

Pagan festivals exist in the minds of many participants as safe idealistic places where they can go and perform their "true" Pagan selves, a place as once festival participant noted where one can go and, "be true to your secret self, to be a Witch amongst other Witches". This phenomenon also hints at the infancy of the Pagan movement as Paganism as a culture has yet to deal with long-term problems on the scale of things like subsistence, housing, and education at least to the degree that such institutions are in place within the larger American cultural matrix in which Paganism exists. Thus, as Pagan festivals are the primary sites for Pagan culture, Pagan culture continues to exist in an idealized utopian world in which every day is a holiday and as Kirshenblatt-Gimblett says, "To festivalize culture is to make everyday a holiday" (1992: 420). Such a situation allows the culture of Pagan festivals to remain utopian worlds in which individuals are able to create the conditions of their lives. Simply by attending, participants are giving each other permission to "live the myth". Festivals provide the arena where fantasies of idealized magical egalitarian communities can be brought to life.

But what happens when culture is "festivalized" where every day is a holiday? Such utopian visions enacted at Pagan festivals often set participants up for an even greater disillusionment with the non-Pagan world, for not only must they deal with a lack of acceptance and possible discrimination within
mainstream society, but they must deal with a world in which the values enacted at Pagan festivals, such as environmental awareness, feminist ethics and egalitarianism, are not always attended a high priority. Due to such disillusionment, festival goers often view the existence of festivals as attempts at culture innovation in which the ideals and values transmitted at Pagan festivals are seen not only as essential for the development and maintenance of Pagan culture but for the survival of the planet as a whole. Festival participants are often empowered by the political messages transmitted through festivals to go out and implement such values within the context of their local communities both Pagan and non-Pagan. Festivals become the dress rehearsals for a world Pagans hope to help create, a world in which acceptance of diversity and acceptance of the earth as sacred is the norm. In this sense festivals are viewed by participants as contributions to the "global village", a worldwide movement in which grassroots organization and networking between formerly disempowered groups and individuals provide an undercurrent for change. Participation in festivals can also be viewed as subversive acts of rebellion engaged in right under the noses of those who would wish to see such practices condemned or those who view the ideals promoted at Pagan festivals as attempts to undermine the current American socio-economic system.

The egalitarian, utopian cooperative spirit so often reiterated by festival attendees as part and parcel of Pagan
cultural norms is often, however, imperfectly realized. That is, despite all efforts to divide up the workload and have everyone doing their fair share, no one puts as much time and effort and who suffer more frustration than do festival organizers. For example all participants do not show up to their work-shifts or fulfill their "fair-share" of the workload, leaving organizers and generous volunteers with extra work. Such conflicts bring up questions such as, how to get participants to pull their equal share of the workload without any rewards, monetary or otherwise, and without having to resort to coercive tactics or public humiliation. Conflicts often arise between festival goers, as well, such as ongoing battles between those who wish to sleep and those who wish to stay up all night and drum, chant, and dance, or over the responsibility festival participants have to watch out for other participants children. While such conflicts are common, they are generally not explosive. However, as Pagan festival communities are short lived, such problems do not have time to sufficiently be resolved before the festival's end. It is also the case that while most participants claim to hold individualism in the highest esteem, such individualism is tolerated only within certain parameters. These parameters, while considered by most participants to be the minimum required to show simple human respect and tolerance, are strictly enforced through the means of social acceptance. For example, most festival attendees expect other participants to show respect for the earth, for women, for alternative beliefs systems, and for
life in general, as well as showing an intolerance for prejudice and
discrimination on many levels (i.e. racism, sexism, homophobia,
ageism, etc.). Individuals who violate such implicit boundaries
within the festival environment will soon learn that such
violations are not accepted if not through overt means of social
exclusion through subtle tones of social disapproval. The implicit
boundaries are viewed however, as positive life affirming ones
which in the long run represent greater opportunities for the
community more than they represent limitations on personal
freedom.

Personal conflicts also arise surrounding the placement of
Pagan festival culture into a romantic, ideal, care-free world
where time is relative and responsibility is minimal. For many
there is a clash between the need to fulfill the expectations they
have about how life should proceed on a daily basis, complete
with time schedules, and effective social support systems and
organization and the need to participate in the festival "dream", a
dream which involves a return to a mythical Pagan past where
life and spiritual experiences are not dictated by alarm clocks and
schedules. Jokes abound in the festival community surrounding
what has become referred to as "PST", that is "Pagan Standard
Time", implying that scheduled events rarely start on time and
more loosely referring to the "laid-back" atmosphere of Pagan
festivals as a whole. Such humor, is juxtaposed against those who
view the acceptance of such attitudes about time schedules as a
hindrance to the growth of the Pagan movement, and see their
prevalence as evidence of an underlying irresponsibility and lack of organization. Some view such perceived irresponsibility as an obstacle to the acceptance of Pagan religions into mainstream culture, or as preventing Paganism from "competing" with other more formal, institutionalized religions. At one festival I attended, this issue appeared in the form of a workshop in which arguments were presented both for against "Pagan Standard Time".

The hoped for utopia and the idealized past cultivated at festivals go hand in hand to culminate, from a folkloric perspective into an invented tradition. From the perspective of the Pagan festival, invented traditions can be categorized as such both due to the perceived idealized nature of the past from which Pagan traditions are borrowed and the hoped for utopia which should be created through their reinstatement. The invented nature of such Pagan traditions surround appeals to an idealized prehistoric Pagan past through which links between present and past are "rediscovered" in the name of uncovering the "truth behind the myth". Thus claims are made to the "true Pagan" nature of many known folk traditions still practiced today, and following how such traditions bespeak a hidden but continuous Pagan folklife of which all Pagans are the inheritors and have at one time, unknowingly or not, participated in. Once this hidden "truth" is uncovered in its Pagan context, it now has the potential for serving as a legitimizing agent, providing grounds for the continued practice of folk-traditions in their new Pagan context.
For example great care is taken to point out the lost Pagan origins of such traditions as dancing a May pole, carving jack-o-lanterns on Halloween or decorating a tree during the winter holiday season. Appeals to such origins be they viewed as real or fabricated by participants, allow for a reclaiming of familiar folk traditions on the part of Pagans and their subsequent incorporation into the festival environment. At other times even more overt appeals are made as to the unbroken continuation of Pagan traditions into the present day. The claim that covens of Witches, or traditional family magical practices passed from generation to generation, existed in hidden form from pre-Christian times to the present is such an example.

The invented nature of Pagan traditions echoes what Hobsbawm and Ranger saw as the defining character of invented traditions as a whole as the following quote indicates:

However insofar as there is such reference to a historic past, the peculiarity of invented traditions is that the continuity is largely factitious. In short they are responses to novel situations or which establish their own past by quasi-obligatory repetition. It is the contrast between the constant change and innovation of the modern world and the attempt to structure at least some parts of social life within it as unchanging and invariant, that makes it interesting for historians (1983:2).

Building on the work of Hobsbawn and Ranger, Handler and Linnekin (1984) further argue that all traditions are symbolically constructed with the categories of "traditional" and "new" being
rather filtered through subjective interpretation rather than providing adequate description. This is the case as Handler and Linnekin point out, as all culture is constantly changing any action is thus characteristically "new", however that same action can take on the symbolic categorization of "traditional". Following, all notions of tradition involve a reinterpretation of the past in terms of the present. As Handler and Linnekin note, "It is by now a truism that cultural revivals change the traditions they attempt to revive" (1984: 276). It is however the case that such change often involves the characterization of such change on the part of its inventors as a means of "preservation" or "reclamation" through which identity can be politicized, displayed and performed and thus can "meet the conceptual needs of the present (Handler and Linnekin 1984: 280). Such changes furthermore involve the placement of past cultural phenomenon in a context totally different from its previous setting. As Handler and Linnekin note, "emeshed in new relationships of meaning, they become something new" (1984: 276). Invention of tradition always involves selection from a reinterpreted past, as certain items are chosen over others. Since tradition is characterized in terms of its subjective construction, tradition is characterized more as a process than a static cultural item to be documented and fixed. Following Hobsbawm and Ranger categorize invented traditions into three overlapping types:

a) those establishing or symbolizing social cohesion or the membership of groups, real or artificial communities,
b) those establishing or legitimizing institutions, status or relations of authority, and c) those whose main purpose was socialization, the inculcation of beliefs, value systems and conventions of behavior (1983: 9).

The extent to which the inventedness of contemporary Pagan traditions fit such categories varies, however at some point or another each of the three categories would prove descriptive as Pagans go about the process of the establishment of a culture and selectively employ ancient mythology and folklore as legitimizing agents. For example establishment of social cohesion and group membership is symbolized on various levels which include the employment of pre-historic and historic figures or charms, such as replicas of the Venus of Willendorf statue, the pentagram, or Thor's hammer, to identify oneself as a member of a Pagan group, and the establishment of the authenticity of "traditional" initiation ceremonies into various Pagan groups. Legitimization of institutions takes place as various groups seek to establish themselves as legally recognized churches, individuals work to gain recognition as ordained ministers, or participants fight against discrimination and to be the accorded the same considerations as other legally recognized religions, such as time-off for religious holidays. To help implement such legitimization appeals to tradition are often the chosen course of action. For example, in establishing that various forms of Paganism are legitimate religions, it becomes important to point out the various misconceptions surrounding the different Pagan paths, such as
pointing out that Witchcraft does not have its roots in the practice of malevolent magic against unsuspecting innocent victims, that the Druids were not necessarily blood-thirsty cannibals, that there is more to the practice of Voodoo than the making of "voodoo dolls" and the sacrifice of chickens, or that Asatru is not a form of Neo-Nazi propaganda. Once such misconceptions are cleared up, the process of legitimization may take the form of appeals to the pre-Christian religious practices to which many contemporary Pagan religions are the inheritors of, be the continuation of such practices interpreted by their inheritors as "real" or "invented". Through such appeals contemporary Pagans are able to provide for their potential critics examples which show that they too have a past, and not only a historic past, but a past which reaches further back in time than even that of Judeo-Christian traditions, one which is timeless and thus even more "true" to the human condition. This practice is echoed through a phrase which often appears on buttons and bumper stickers within the Pagan community, the phrase being, "My Goddess gave birth to your God". Finally, tradition is appealed to in the socialization process which occurs at Pagan festivals, as mentioned earlier, through the teaching of ritual traditions, and the sharing of stories which demonstrate for the newcomer, Pagan values and belief systems, and which emphasizing how such values and beliefs systems are enacted within the festival environment.
The invented nature of the traditions to which Pagans appeal, however, are not necessarily forgotten. The degree to which Pagans recognize such inventedness is varied; moreover, the recognition of the invented nature of such traditions is often suspended in order to prove a point to outsiders. Within the Pagan community itself the recognition of the invented nature of such traditions is a heavily debated topic, yet even rumors such as those surrounding the writings of Gerald Gardner, and that in writing about Witchcraft he "made it all up" does not prevent individuals from participating and finding meaning therein. Meaning being, in most Pagan traditions, individualized - guided by tradition, but not subject to it. The act of the recognition of the invented nature of various Pagan traditions and the selective employment of that same recognition points to a sophisticated understanding by participants of their relationship to non-Pagan culture, rather than to naive assumptions that Paganism in its present form has survived from prehistoric times in an unbroken line of continuance. There is also a degree of sophistication on the part of participants as they selectively manipulate which traditions they will employ and which they will disregard, as well as, as the coupling of such "traditions" with the new insights gained from technology and the contemporary world around them. Such selective manipulation involves not only conscious reflection, but critical reflection of what constitutes the "traditions" of contemporary Pagan religions and what can be left unacknowledged. What is interesting from an ethnographic point
of view is that alongside such conscious self-reflection, and deliberate manipulation of tradition, an atmosphere of timelessness continues to be cultivated within and achieved through Pagan festival culture.

Pagan festivals and following, Pagan culture lie at the intersections between play, identity, ethnicity, religion, politics, utopian visions, and nostalgia. To an outsider, a Pagan festival, may on the surface, appear to be a large party where all inhibitions are dispensed with, yet underlying the "festive" atmosphere is a sincere effort being made by participants to define community, create identity, and explore emerging beliefs, morals and value systems. Festivals constitute the ritual dramatization of Pagan beliefs and values; they are metacommentaries on the communities ideals. Within the environment of the festival Pagan culture is created, re-created, criticized, molded and reflected upon. The performances which take place therein serve as reminders to participants of why they are Pagan, and work to reaffirm participants beliefs and values through the production, reproduction, and representation of identity. The mere existence of Pagan festivals in the minds of attendees, represents a challenge to the hegemonic American Judeo-Christian culture through providing an alternative, an alternative which for participants contains within both the best of the idealized past and the greatest hopes for a utopian future.
CHAPTER VI
PAGAN FOLKLORE: THE EMERGENCE OF A NEW ORAL TRADITION

The term "folklore" was originally coined by William Thoms in 1846, in a letter which he wrote to the periodical, *The Athenaeum*. Thoms wrote:

Your pages have so often given evidence of the interest which you take in what we in England designate as Popular Antiquities or Popular literature (though by-the-bye, it is more a Lore than a Literature and would be most aptly described by a good Saxon compound, Folklore - the lore of the people (1846 - reprinted in Dundes 1965:4-5).

Thoms took as his model in this characterization the work of the Grimms, and saw folklore as being designated by materials believed to have survived until the present among the rural peasants (Dundes 1965). The idea of "survivals" became more entrenched in the discipline of folklore (although it was implied in much of the early work and is evident in the terminology of "Popular Antiquities") with the work of anthropologists, Edward B. Tylor. Tylor, in his work *Primitive Culture* (1871)
characterized human culture within an evolutionary framework and held that those seemingly "irrational" beliefs and customs which persist in "modern" culture are actually only survivals from an earlier age which have continued out of habit and which no longer serve any purpose. Following, the whole of folklore came to be characterized in the context of the study of survivals. Ironically, the emphasis on "survivals", survived longer in the literary school of folklore than in anthropology.

This persistence on the part of Tylor's theory was probably due to its legacy which proceeded it in the study of literary scholarship, along with the work of Tylor's contemporary, Francis James Child. Child was a literary scholar who focused the majority of his career on the compilation of English and Scottish ballads. Child, like Tylor, had a "survivalist" orientation towards folklore, as he regarded the collection of folklore as a "salvage operation", preserving what little is left (Zumwalt 1988). Child's focus was on the illiterate peasants, as he felt that the less formal education to which one had been exposed the greater the possibility of possessing "survivals". Despite this viewpoint, Child, was in practice more dependent on written manuscripts for evidence of his ballads. Child also held somewhat of a "deevolutionists" perspective in that he hypothesized that the folklore as found among the peasants had been originated in the "upper" classes or aristocracy and had degenerated, or drizzled its way down, to the lower classes where it still survived (Zumwalt 1988). Child furthermore looked at folklore from a
romantic perspective as he emphasized that the ballad was, "an expression of the mind and heart of the people as an individual" (reprinted in Zumwalt 1988:103), and as such his romantic orientation influenced what Child defined as proper for study, publishing only those values he found "aesthetically pleasing", and excluding those which he interpreted as "vulgar". As Zumwalt (1988) points out, Child cannot be strictly characterized as a "survivalists" because of this romantic tendency, as he saw the "aesthetic" role the ballad played as having some important function in society.

Child's student George Kittridge followed in his footsteps, focusing on the "communal" nature of folklore, holdings that ballads served the interests of the group from which they came. He also supported the strict genre division which Child had inherited in the literary tradition, which classified folklore in terms of different genres, with individual scholars usually specializing in one of these such as the ballad, folktale, or proverb. This eventually lead to an emphasis among the literary scholars on classification, origin and diffusion, as the idea was to collect all existing versions of a ballad, proverb, or whatever particular genre one studied. The methodology adopted in the literary school became associated with the identification of "motifs" and the "Finnish historic-geographic approach" (Zumwalt 1988). The adoption of the Finnish method by American folklorists, as Zumwalt points out, represents the European bias towards scholarship, as well as a focus on origins and written text.
The Finnish method, proposed a way to classify folklore in order to locate its most "original form". This was done through the identification of Ur forms or archetypal characteristics among the narratives, or ballads, etc. and the subsequent comparison between versions to discern its most likely origin (Zumwalt 1988).

The theory of "survivals", however increasingly came in conflict with anthropologically oriented scholars as influenced by Boas. In part, Boas' method of "historical particularism" and emphasis on cultural relativism, was developed out of a reaction to the earlier evolutionary theories of E. B. Tylor, James Frazer, and Lewis Henry Morgan. In anthropology the idea of "survivals" increasingly fell into disfavor as theorists started to note the relevance or function of all parts of culture, and began to emphasize the utility of folklore for throwing light on "culture". Boas noted that folktales could provide, "a picture of their [a culture's] way of thinking and feeling that renders their ideas as free from the bias of the European observer as is possible" (Boas 1935:v). Added to this was Newell's new configuration of folklore as "oral tradition and belief handed down from generation to generation without the use of writing" (reprinted in Oring 1986:8). The restricting of folklore to "oral tradition" posed a problem for those working within the context of Tylor's concept of "survivals" since Tylor emphasized that both oral and non-oral customs could be characterized as survivals. The emphasis for anthropologists became folklore, as it existed orally, in the context
of culture. Boas' views inspired a whole generation of anthropologists, most of which saw the collection of folklore as part of the overall process of ethnography. Ruth Benedict, for example, defined folklore as, "a living and functioning cultural trait", and saw folklore as providing a way to assess the "personality" (Benedict - reprinted in Zumwalt 1988:91) or patterns inherent in a given culture as she did in her book, *Patterns of Culture* (1934). Benedict saw the emphasis on comparison, and diffusion in folklore scholarship as being misguided and held that scholars had missed too many opportunities to examine "living folklore" (Zumwalt 1988).

Literary oriented folklorists, on the other hand, were concerned with defining folklore in much broader terms than did their anthropological colleagues. The emphasis in the literary school was not limited to only "oral" forms of folklore but rather scholars chose to follow the trend among European folklorists who had adopted what has become known as the "folklife" approach, and which emphasized not only orally transmitted folklore but traditional, non-oral, customs like dance, music, crafts, house styles, etc. A "folklife" orientation is evident in Archer Taylor's definition of folklore:

> It may be traditional tools and physical objects like fences or knots, hot cross buns, or Easter eggs; traditional ornamentation like the Walls of Troy; or traditional symbols like the swastika. It may be traditional procedures like throwing salt over one's shoulder or knocking on wood. It may be traditional beliefs like the notion that elder is
good for aliments of the eye. All of these are folklore (1965: 34).

Anthropologists however saw such things as Taylor defines as folklore as belonging rather to the larger part of culture; i.e. data that would be collected as a larger part of ethnography, but would not necessarily go into the chapter on folklore "proper". Anthropologists, thus, in light of the emphasis among their literary colleagues choose to maintain Newell's earlier limitation, defining folklore as purely oral. Herskovitz's definition of folklore as "unwritten literature" provides an example of the anthropological tendency (Zumwalt 1988). Following, while such a definition may have been perceived by anthropologists as more suited to the kind of work they conducted (they probably did not see it as that limiting since ethnographic conventions required that they collect "all" cultural information anyway), it was not without its problems. The major problem being, that if one is working within a culture that does contain a written tradition, as had been characteristic of most anthropological work, then everything is "orally" transmitted.

This realization resulted in one of two views: that in such a culture everything was folklore, or that only a certain kind of orally transmitted behavior was folkloric. B.A. Botkin choose the first view stating that, "in a purely oral culture, everything is folklore" (Leach 1972:398), whereas William Bascom took the opposite stance, defining folklore as "verbal art" (Leach
1972:398), meaning the aesthetic use of the spoken work, but not the whole of language (Oring 1986; Zumwalt 1988). The emphasis on orality also points to the anthropological bias of looking at folklore in the present, as no mention is made to the past, or to obtaining the information in any way other than participant observation. Bascom's viewpoint as Oring (1986) points out also requires no a priori assumptions about the folk, since in terms of aesthetics, everyone has folklore (although anthropologists persisted in looking at non-Western cultures). Bascom's definition also, at least for anthropologists, solved another problem, having to do with the nature of "survivals". If "survivals" evidence in Tylor's terms of an earlier more "primitive" existence, then the cultures that anthropologists had traditionally studied (often defined as primitive) could not conceptually have "survivals" (except in cases of culture contact or assimilation), and thus the oral narratives in such societies were often depicted as "mythology" since they were seen as having some greater significance than survivals (Zumwalt 1988). Thus Bascom, by limiting folklore to "verbal art" the "myth" problem was in part resolved, since then folklore was not a remnant of the past but a product of the present. Following, Bascom saw myth, along with folktale, and legend as a form of prose narrative (folklore) which had certain distinguishable characteristics based on content, timing, etc.(Bascom 1965b).

Dundes in an attempt to simplify the concept of folklore for the introductory student approaches the definition of folklore one
"word" at a time, defining "folk" as "any group of people whatsoever who share at least one common factor" and "lore" with a descriptive list of the types of things folklorists have traditionally been interested in (1965: 2). The list is rather long, so I will not repeat it here, but suffice it to say that Dundes includes Newell's idea of "oral transmission" but does not limit his definition to it.

Francis Lee Utley, a literary scholar on the other hand chooses to simplify the concept of folklore, not for the introductory reader, but for his own purposes. Utley reviews three basic ways of defining folklore: the authoritative, the theoretical and the operational. In looking at "authoritative" forms Utley reviews the twenty-one definitions listed in Leach's Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology and Legend, (1963) concluding that there has been no one standard definition of folklore, of which everyone is in agreement. Theoretical definitions encompass as Utley contends both conceptualizations of both method and subject matter, since the term "folklore" is often used to refer to both. Utley mentions here that anthropologists and folklorists have in theory conceptualized folklore very differently. Utley concludes by reviewing operational definitions of folklore, being those which are most useful to any given individual's needs in the study of folklore. Utley, ironically, chooses to adopt for his operational definition, one which has more typically been considered an anthropological
one, that is a definition of folklore which is restricted to oral transmission. As he states:

For my own operation, I will stand by the very simple statement that folk literature is orally transmitted literature wherever found, among primitive isolates or civilized marginal cultures, urban or rural societies, dominant or subordinate group (Dundes 1965:13).

Utley however does not seemed concerned with his own abandonment of the non-orally transmitted items, which have traditionally in his field been characterized as folklore, since he saw his definition as purely a heuristic device, and felt that everyone need develop their own for their own purposes.

Utley's work, however, does represent a conscious attempt to be more accepting of the various definitions of folklore, without sacrificing one for another, no matter what discipline one is affiliated with. Bascom made a similar attempt to bridge the gap between literary oriented folklorists and anthropologically oriented folklorists in his article entitled, "Folklore and Anthropology" (1965a), in which he called for a dialogue between anthropologists and folklorists. Bascom's conceived of his article as an attempt to foster such a dialogue by making more explicit the anthropological conception of folklore and calling for someone on the literary side of the fence to respond in kind. Bascom in his essay notes that anthropologists because of their focus on non-literate societies have yet to encounter the problems which literary folklorists have faced with the dual handling of literature and folklore (although this has changed drastically since), and
points out that anthropologists view the data of folklore as an opportunity to test theories about culture, as well as, the opportunity to apply theories of culture to folklore in order to increase understanding. Bascom further notes, that anthropologists are concerned with the cultural context in which folklore occurs, and notes that it would be appreciated if literary folklorists would gather such information were possible (1965a). Dan Ben-Amos, who prefers to define folklore as "artistic communication in small groups" (1972:13) identifies three ways in which folklore has been conceptualized: 1) as a body of knowledge, 2) as a mode of thought, and 3) as a kind of art (1972). Following, Ben-Amos notes that these are not mutually exclusively, but have been emphasized to greater or less degrees by scholars interested in folklore. Ben-Amos following, stresses that no matter what definition one adheres, the existence of folklore, depends on a social context, for it does not exist independently.

What Bascom's work anticipated and what Ben-Amos work represents is a trend towards conceptualizing folklore as it exists in its performative context. That is the conceptualization of folklore as a process rather than a static object, and a definition of the folk as comprising, anyone who engages in this performative action, in either small groups as Ben-Amos conceived or informal ones as Barre Toelken preferred. I will not go into the specifics of the way folklore has been defined after this shift in emphasis towards performance, but it should be pointed out that
performance theory in folklore studies has resolved or at least made, less problematic many of the historical differences which have arisen between anthropologists and folklorists in the study of folklore.

So far, with a few exceptions, I have focused primarily on the differences between the anthropological and folkloristic definitions and conceptualizations, however, there are a number of similarities or at least places in which these overlap and interact. Both the anthropologists and literary scholars have focused on the importance of "oral transmission" in the study of folklore. It is also the case, that although anthropologists denied that much of the non-verbal behavior that folklorists studied was folklore, they still studied such things under the larger rubric of culture. It is also the case that both groups defined the folk as "other", that is other than European or American literature societies, be they peasants or members of a "non-Western" culture (today this would no longer apply accurately to either group as both have branched out to focus on folklore in just such a situation - i.e. "Western" academic, technological, etc.). The one thing that anthropologists and folklorists did agree on without question was the study of African-American folklore, this is however where their agreement ended, with the folklorists focusing on the European influence in African-American folklore, and the anthropologists focusing on the African influence (Zumwalt 1988).
My research put me in a unique position to combine the anthropological and literary approaches to the study of folklore. This was the case, in part, because of the nature of the Neo-Pagan culture. For example, anthropologists have been seen as focusing on "non-Westerners" as a locus for their study of folklore, whereas, literary folklorists have been characterized as focusing on rural European peasants as a locus for their study, however, Neo-Paganism does not fit either of these categories completely, as they are neither, "non-Western" or "non-literate" European peasants. Neo-Pagans however do want to be recognized as "folk", and as a result consciously attempt to create their own "folkiness" in the context of Neo-Pagan festivals. Furthermore, Neo-Pagans often engaging in the recreation of pre-Christian European religions, use as their primary resources texts written by literary folklorists and anthropologists. Thus it was important in my research to be familiar with European folklore scholarship which seems to follow a literary paradigm, as well as the anthropological contributions, in order to assess how these are selectively being employed in terms of the construction of Neo-Pagan ritual, identity, and culture.

In adopting Neo-Pagan festivals as a locus for analysis, I have yet another opportunity to combine these two approaches, as festivals have often been a focus of both anthropologists and folklorists. It is also my opinion that the two approaches, with the advent of the performance-centered approach, which used anthropological analysis in part as a guide in its development, and
the "textual" approach to culture, becoming predominant in anthropology, which has in turn borrowed heavily from literary criticism, are becoming more and more alike and much harder to distinguish in terms of methodology and analysis (i.e. I sometimes find it difficult to discern anymore whether folklore type analyses are written by anthropologists, folklorists, or someone else).

While Pagan festivals can be seen as the primary locations of Pagan folklife, and a study of the processes of Pagan festivals alone could constitute as a study of Pagan folklife and/or folklore, this particular chapters focuses on the specific oral expressions which are generated in the context of the Pagan festival. As such, this section focuses on the more "traditional" model of folklore as being constituted in the oral expressions of the "folk". Pagans engage in the construction of folklore in many ways, through festivals, through novels, through Pagan periodicals, and through ritual. Some of these appear in written form and others remain verbal. The folklore that occurs in the context of the festival, however, is primarily oral, as most Pagan festivals remain removed from the context of the computer world and printing presses. Thus the folklore I will be presenting in this chapter was presented, in most cases, through verbal channels within the dynamic festival setting. Many genres of folklore are performed in the festival setting, however, for the purposes of this chapter, I will divide these up for presentation into narratives or stories, chants, jokes and humor, and ritual drama.
The primary focus of folklore in the Pagan community continues to draw from the mythology and lore created by ancient Pagan peoples such as that seen in the Greek, Celtic, or Norse mythos. However, contemporary Pagans are continually creating a mythology of their own which allows them to identify with their present surroundings and the world of the twentieth century. Following, contemporary Pagan storytellers are presently taking up the task of creating and re-creating a repertoire of Pagan folklore and myth relevant to the lives of present day participants. They see this as a fundamental goal in their work, for not only is it being demanded by participants, it is seen as critical in the revitalization of the Pagan movement. As storytellers go about the process of altering and recreating the mythology of former Pagan religions to conform to present lifestyles and needs, new themes are being addressed at the same time that the old are being re-evaluated.

One such storyteller had some very strong opinions and ideas on the matters of the production of a new Pagan lore. Noting that he got involved in the creation of Pagan folklore due to a need that he sensed for a revitalization of folklore which dealt specifically with the needs central to the twentieth century Pagan community, he commented;
For Pagan folklore and myth to be legitimate we must base it where Pagans are living today without having to steal it from the native peoples. We must make it real for ourselves, let's face it, the modern Pagan movement is here today in American; we are no longer living on the Isle of Crete or in Egypt at 2000 B.C.

This view pervades all of the teller's own personal work, and although he many times re-creates or borrows figures and ideas from ancient lore, he still feels the need to mold it into something he and the contemporary Pagan community can identify with in the "here and now". It is his opinion that to ignore the here and now for the past is only an evasion or a denial of reality, and that, he feels, is not what the Neo-Pagan movement should be about. Instead, he feels, it should be about the celebration of life and the ability to get in touch with current feelings and issues of today's world. It should provide an inviting perspective, and yet, as our storyteller points out;

Our myths, if they're doing their job, should always make us a little, if not a lot, uncomfortable. Most of the pseudo-myths that Neo-Pagans have tried to synthesize are just plain too pretty. A myth needs to get to the bottom of your belly and roll around a bit. A deep responsibility of myth is to point beyond itself to reality.

This storyteller creates his myths to do just that, often addressing such topics as, incest, childbirth, menstruation, homosexuality, and religious persecution. However, he also points out that it is
important to look at the reverse of these and allow ourselves to see the humor inherent in such serious topics.

Finally, it is also the storyteller's opinion that, folklore and myth while being a doorway to reality should never be taken literally, nor should one story claim to have all the answers. This is a mistake, he claims, which was made by the monotheistic religions of the world, as he says:

The universe is too big a place for one story to say it all, ever. I sincerely hope we never get to the point where we have only one grand Samhain myth to which we all subscribe. Gods forbid! No single story will ever be big enough to say everything about Samhain. Moreover, it's unfair to expect any story to be that big. That's were the monotheists go wrong. One story is never enough, and no story should ever have to bear the burden of being a "Monomyth". It will buckle under the strain. Taking the myths literally is also the error of fundamentalism. A good myth in my experience usually contains a few inconsistencies. It's these inconsistencies in the story that point to a deep truth; a myth is a myth. It's a story about something else. When you point your finger to show me where the moon is, I'd be a fool to mistake your finger for the moon. A myth is like that; a finger that points to something else.

Other storytellers feel not only the need to identify Pagan folklore and myth with the here and now, but also insist that above all, it should be entertaining. Another storyteller expressed his feelings about Pagan folklore and his own personal entry into it as follows:

I've always been fascinated by the Greek myths and I
treat it as my mission in life to find out what really happened. I do this because I had a teacher in like the sixth or seventh grade, who told me that every myth has some grain of truth behind it, and so that's what started this whole thing off. So, I'm always trying to find out this "truth", searching through dusty libraries, reading old manuscripts, and what I don't find out, I make up. Above all, it is myth, and should be entertaining. This is relevant today more than ever. I can create myths that bring together the reality and the dreams of the past and the present and hope others will find them entertaining and hopefully come back for more.

Others feel that it is essential to the future of the Pagan movement that new stories be created which reflect the experience of modern day participants and which provide alternatives to their counterparts in hegemonic Christian doctrines. As one storyteller and mother noted,

If we don't create new myths, we are passively condoning patriarchal values. Our children need to hear life-affirming, post-patriarchal myths in order to get around this. Paganism needs such myths to survive so that our children will have stories to tell.

Others equate the creation of a new mythology as a continuation of the heritage of the ancient Pagans, who as one participant noted, "also made up stories to explain why they did certain things". Along those same lines, one Druid storyteller noted, that, "We are interested in creating a new folklore because we want stories to address the things that the old Celtic myths don't, like why we celebrate in circles."
Storytelling or mythmaking is also a form of identity creation, both between Pagan groups within the Pagan community and between the larger Pagan community and the outside non-Pagan world. Storytelling becomes a way in which groups within the Pagan community represent themselves to each other. They constitutes performances of "ethnic" identity when performed in an all Pagan setting, with particular stories, overtime becoming associated with particular groups, as will be demonstrated shortly in the examples of the Druid "cattle-raid" stories. As a member of the Druid camp commented to me, "We make up stories about our selves, before others do it for us". When I asked her what she meant by that comment, she replied, "Well there's so many stories out there in the Pagan community about us that aren't, true, we figure we might as well make them up ourselves, at least then we have some control".

Pagan stories also create identity, through contrasting Pagan beliefs, practices and culture that of with non-Pagans. Such a practice serves to create a boundary between Pagans and non-Pagan and thus reinforces the differences at the expense of the similarities. In this way Paganism as a religion is legitimated through narrative - through the stories Pagans tell themselves about themselves. Community spirit and solidarity are consciously cultivated through such narratives, as is evidenced by Pagan storytellers' common usage of the pronoun "we" in reference to an inclusive Pagan community as opposed to that of non-Pagans. Storytelling is also a way for Pagans to engage in the
politics of reclaiming ancient lore for themselves, by putting such 
lore in a context which is uncritical of their beliefs or "Pagan 
friendly". This may be necessary as many Pagans believe that 
ancient Pagan lore was distorted by the Christian Church, and as 
such must be re-examined and reclaimed within an all Pagan 
context.

Storytelling, occurs in many contexts at festivals. The most 
common being the anecdotal stories told late at night in informal 
settings around the campfire. Storytelling, however, may also 
occur in a much more formal setting such as in a "story-concert", 
at a "talent show" or "open stage" or in the context of a "Bardic 
Circle". Story-concerts involve usually one particular storyteller 
or several storytellers taking the stage for a scheduled period of 
time and performing for an audience. At one event I attended, a 
story-concert took place prior to a music concert, and as such, 
constituted the "opening act" for the band. In another example, a 
story-concert occurred, during a potluck feast, with the storyteller 
standing and telling his stories as everyone ate. Storytelling may 
also take place as part of a scheduled "talent show" at festivals, 
where storytellers take their place among the other various 
performers. Bardic Circles, as described in the proceeding 
chapter, also constitute primary sites for the telling of stories, 
where within such a context a certain etiquette must be followed. 
The etiquette of a Bardic Circle can be defined as the "keys to 
performance", as participants must follow certain procedures as 
to which individual has the permission to perform at what
particular time. For example many Bardic Circles, follow the tradition of passing a cup or goblet around. As the cup goes around the circle, whoever is in possession of the cup has the right to speak. If they do choose to speak, they indicate they are about to perform by drinking from the cup. After that point they are obligated to perform. If on the other hand, one chooses not to perform, the cup is simply passed to the next individual. In such cases, this rule is adhered to strictly, with a great deal of jeering taking place if an individual drinks and passes the cup along without performing, or if an individual attempts to speak while not in possession of the cup. In other cases, Bardic Circles, may require that participants sign up ahead of time, and subsequently, the participants are placed on a schedule, which is kept by an individual leading the circle. In order to provide the reader with a clear example of the many ways in which storytelling may occur at a festival site, I will present examples of each of these contexts - that is, I will present a storyconcert in its entirety, as well as examples taken from talent shows, Bardic Circles, and informal campfire gatherings. However, before I present these stories, I would like to point out, that the creators of most of these stories did intend for them to be presented orally, and that despite my efforts to record them as accurately as possible, I suffer from the dilemma that all folklorists who attempt to transfer the oral into the written have had to face at one time or another, as I could never hope to capture the charisma, humor,
voice inflections, and overall vigor that the story tellers delivered them with.

The following seven stories were presented by Steven Wise, an especially well known and loved Pagan storyteller, at a "story-concert" performed on the second night of a festival held during the time of the Summer Solstice. In order to provide a clear picture of what such a concert entails, I have presented the concert in full, however, I have broken up the stories in order to insert my own comments between each. The entertainment value of the stories is undeniable, as is their humorous character and presentation, however, my comments will specifically focus on the components of the stories which point to ways in which the storyteller has brought out or created Pagan identity features meant to be performed for an all Pagan audience. I will also point out the instances in the stories in which "invention of tradition" comes into play, as well as how such stories accomplish the goals which the tellers identified as important in the creation of a new Pagan lore as mentioned in the comments above. The stories presented in the storyconcert were created by Wise himself, drawing upon pre-Christian Pagan lore and Neo-Pagan communal knowledge and values. Recordings of Wise's stories were encouraged.

The following is the story of why the *athame*, the Pagan ritual knife which is used primarily to draw the boundaries of the ritual circle, has a black handle.
Once upon a time, as the Moon took her nightly walk over Minnesota, her footsteps touched the earth, and wherever they touched a beautiful lake was created, and the Moon looked at her reflection in the waters and saw that it was good. (Today if you fly above the lakes of Minnesota, they appear like giant footprints across the land- added by the storyteller) However she sensed that something was missing from the land, as Moons sometimes do, and she said to herself, "I need something to divide this from that". Thus the Moon set out in search of something with which she could divide this from that and on her journey she saw a beautiful oak, and she said to the oak, "Oak, I need something to divide this from that", and the Oak looked up at the Moon and answered with a gift from her bough, a beautiful branch. The Moon thanked the Oak, and went on her way to divide this from that, however, when she tried the limb split in two. Well the Moon wasn't going to give up that easily so she continued her search, and she came upon a mountain, and she said, "Mountain, I need something to divide this from that". The Mountain replied, I can provide you with the sharpest of flint. The Moon again thanked the Mountain, and proceeded to chip the block of flint until she had created a beautiful and sharp blade with which to divide this from that, however once she tried to divide this from that, the blade simply shattered into pieces beneath her strong grip. Well the moon was furious, and trying hard not to lose her temper, she went to the bog, which, by the way, Minnesota is filled with, and she said, "Bog, I need something to divide this from that, can you give me something to divide this from that?" And of course the Bog did, the Bog gave her iron. And she began to forge, this was the first smith craft that there ever was, and the North wind blew the bellows for this, and the fires at the heart of the earth were the fires with which she forged this blade, and a great mountain was the anvil on which she forged it, and she quenched this third knife in Lake Superior, as it waters are cold to this very day, and she took it in her hand and held it, and she made a hilt for it, and she proceeded to divide this from that like a knife going through butter. And she said this one works, I name it *Athame*, and that was the very first
knife that there ever was, at least the first that worked anyways. And if your wondering why the handle is black,(jokingly) its because she was so eager to divide this from that she didn't stop to wash her hands before dividing this from that, she had soot all over her hands so the handle was black!, as it is to this very day.

In the above story, and as is the case for most of the following stories, the invention of a new Pagan tradition and the creation of a contemporary Pagan identity go hand in hand, and as such cannot be separated from each other in their analysis or description. The story is a good example of the ways in which these two - identity and invention of tradition - interact and intersect one another. In the Pagan movement today, as culture is created, it serves the dual role of aiding in the formation of identity on both a personal and social level. Here identity formation, like the invention of tradition, involves a reinterpretation of the individual's past in light of a new present Pagan identity. This identity and the cultural practices that help to constitute it are subsequently viewed by participants as being "truer" to one's often newly identified but "real" Pagan self. After this "real" self has been identified, it becomes necessary to "invent" or put into place the traditions with which such a self can interact with and be reflected by. Several theorist on identity politics have noted that the commonly practised process of searching through one's past to discover clues and/or evidence of one's "true" identity necessarily involves a reconstruction, and/or a reinterpretation of the individual's past (Bravman 1990; Phelan
In the case of Pagan identity, also may involve the reconstruction of a pre-Christian past to suit the present needs of the individual. This reconstruction of the individual's past in alignment with the individual's present Pagan identity, may, involve the creation/invention of a new identity, and a new way of acting in the familiar world. By the telling of stories there is a participation in the creation of a culture, and/or community through the process of identification and reaching out to others. As Bravman puts it, this involves the creation of "a new story to explain the world and our participation in it" (1990: 72). This process of creation of stories either individual or collective, also involves the necessary selection of one past event over another, leaving a bias revision of the past, with some events being dubbed "less important" than others, and thus left out of the revision. In this reinterpretation, there seems to be a need to make a fragmentary and contradictory past conform to the person's present identity and understanding of the world. This revisioning of personal and group history may be necessary to allow for the reformulation of the self, because for many, with the formation of identity there is an accompanying need for it to make sense, to erase the contradictions which threaten to destroy this present fragile and newly emerged state of existence. The creation of contemporary Pagan folklore and identity, in this sense, may be described as a process of learning of how to become and of inventing the meaning of being Neo-Pagan in this historical moment. This process as it takes place at both the
individual and group levels can be demonstrated in the following story in a number of ways:

1) First the story is pedagogical - A specific language is employed which has meaning only within a specific Pagan context with the definition and explanation of the origin of the word "athame" being the specific goal of the teller. Pagans new to the community, through such a story, can learn the meaning of such a term, whereas Pagans familiar with the term through the written medium may learn its pronunciation. Other pedagogical aspects include the description of the "athame" as having a black handle, and the delineation of the use of the ritual knife as being to "divide this from that", or rather define the boundaries of the ritual circle thus separating sacred and profane space.

2) The story contains within it aspects of beliefs and practices common within the Pagan community and through which Pagan identity is formulated such as the personification of nature and the depiction of powerful forces or deities (in the case of the story - the Moon) as female.

3) The creation of a notion of origins and continuation is contained within the story, providing for the Pagan audience a context into which to place meaning for previously "meaningless" practices. That is the story provides a reasoning for a specific "tradition" of the black
handled knife for which none was formerly accepted or at least readily known. Such a reasoning, even in the humorous form of the story, may provide participants with a reference point where none had existed before.

4). The story is uniquely American, as it places the context of the story within the familiar landscape of America and specifically Minnesota, Minnesota being the home state of the storyteller. Thus the story fulfills the need for the teller and the primarily European-American audience to have their spiritual quests placed within their home setting without borrowing from indigenous lore, or importing foreign mythos.

5). Finally, the story serves to strengthen identity through the process of affirmation. That is, audience members familiar with the specific terminology and references used in the story may feel that their knowledge and beliefs are legitimated and affirmed as they are reflected in the storyline and as the same audience members are able to recognize and locate themselves within it. It is furthermore affirmative of Pagan practices as the listeners, who may often feel alienated in a world which does not commonly recognize or legitimate their beliefs through narrative, find a common story to share - one which is theirs alone and through which they feel connected to others who also find mutual recognition in such stories.
This next story Wise presented was a story of a legendary Goddess - Mother Berchte which the teller has adapted for the contemporary Pagan audience. So in the teller's own words:

Well, how many of your have heard of Mother Berchte? Well, one could describe Mother Berchte as a cross between Santa Claus and the wicked Witch of the West. Mother Berchte is the Yule ogress. I came across this story a few years ago, around Yule time when my coven was doing some research, and it seems that sometimes the one who bears the gifts at Yule time, the Winter Solstice, or New Years, or whatever, around the world in various cultures is an old crone. This is very interesting, being a die hard hag worshiper myself, so we invoked one of these crones, and she came in with a vengeance, and she's been here ever since, and her name is Mother Berchte. Berchte is a word meaning bright, she seems to be an old washed out Goddess of sun or moon or something, and she's a very formidable character, and you can say she's a very unsavory character, stealing children and all, but she wasn't always reputed to be a child stealer, however that changed, and I'll tell you the story, I'm glad you asked.

Well it used to be that on what's called "Mother Night", the night which begins the rest of the year, midwinters eve, the longest and darkest night of the year, over the snow you would hear the sounds of bells, and you would know that Mother Berchte was on her way, and in would come old Master Skaggy, her goat, she rides on a giant goat by the way, and I don't know about where you live, but in Minnesota, early on in December, you start seeing these goats made out of straw in the windows, it's an old Scandinavian custom, and that's Master Skaggy, her son (and boyfriend; Gods will be Gods). She would come in all scary, with the beard and all the horns, but everybody loved her, and she would bring out her sack, and she would pull out presents like you've never seen, much nicer than jolly old "what's his name" used to bring, the best you've ever seen, and then she would bring out the food,
an important part of every Pagan holiday, plum pudding, rice, turkey, and then she'd say, "Come 'ere you old goat", and Master Skaggy would trod on up, and she'd take her athame out of its sheath and she'd pull his head back and cut right across his throat, and she'd cut the meat apart and put it into the cauldron, an old Yule custom, goat stew.

As people sat down to eat, she would throw her sack on the ground, and say, "Throw the bones in here, but don't break any". Everybody would eat the stew, and have a good time, and when everybody was finished she'd pick up the sack, and she'd shake it and she would holler, "Come on out, you old goat!", and out would come Master Skaggy just as lively as ever. Well this went on for year and years, but then one year, you know how things go, (I guess there wouldn't be stories, if things didn't go wrong), a little boy did break one bone, to suck out the hot juicy marrow, and when Mother Berchte shook the sack and hollered, "Come on out you old goat!", out hobbled poor old Master Skaggy with a broken leg, looking not at all happy. In all the thousands of years that Mother Berchte had been visiting, no one had ever seen her quite that mad, and she said, "You imbeciles, now I'll have to carry my goat instead of riding him!" (which is where that proverb comes if you've ever heard it). So she grabbed the goat and threw him over one shoulder, and she grabbed the little kid who had broken the bone and shoved him into the sack, and threw it over the other shoulder, and she stormed out into the night, and that's why, to this very day, on the shortest night of the year, when you hear the bells coming over the snow, and Berchte comes riding over the snow, with a face like a blizzard coming out of the west, you never know for sure whether she's going to bring out the toys, or stuff the kids in.

Again this story contains within it a number of identity features present within the Pagan community:

1) There are both overt and implied pedagogical features.

The overt features include the "lessons" that the Santa
Claus figure popular in contemporary America is not the only present wielding character from Europe and that sometimes the figure was female rather than male as is the case with "Mother Berchte", that "Mother Berchte" is derived from the Norse pantheon and was originally a Winter goddess, that the story has a basis in the continuation of Scandinavian-American folk practices as can be seen by the placing of goat figures in windows at Yule, and that the Goddess figure's consort, in this case Master Skaggy, can at once be perceived as lover and son. The implied pedagogical features include references to the importance of the "crone" aspect of Pagan goddesses in Winter, the time when the earth - as represented by the female - is not fertile, and references to the "crone" goddess figure as having a dual aspect of both bringer of death (child stealer) and bestower of hope and life (present bringer).

2) Continuation from the first story presented in the story concert is also provided by the teller, as the word, "athame" is again employed, although here it is employed as if it were a common element of Pagan speech, as opposed to its earlier presentation which involved definition and explanation of origins.

3) Connections are made by the teller to the pantheons of ancient Pagan Europe, in this case, those of Northern Europe. Furthermore, those familiar with the Norse pantheon and its
associated mythos, could find in this story similarities to other Norse myths, such as the story of Thor's journey to Utgard where he too slaughters one of his goats, shares the meat with his hosts and asks them to return the bones without breaking any.

4) The story also involves the reclamation of "Pagan" practices from their usage in contemporary non-Pagan America. That is references are made in the story to the idea that what are perceived today as customs of the Christian majority were once in fact, Pagan customs, which were "borrowed" and reinterpreted by this same majority, such as the Yule-time bringer of presents and holiday recipes. Following, through the affirmation of the original "Pagan" nature of such customs in narrative format, contemporary Pagans are presented with the possibility of reclaiming such customs for themselves- perceived as their "rightful" owners so to speak, from their perceived "commercialized" and "Christianized" versions in the non-Pagan world. Such reclamation may furthermore allow contemporary participants to continue in the use of familiar holiday practices which they enjoy as such "traditions" are given new meaning and brought to bear on their present Pagan identity.

The next story presented by Wise, was a personal story told about an event which happened in his past, and which he wanted
to share with the community. It concerns the Pagan holiday of Samhain, or Halloween, which celebrates the "thinning" of the veil between the worlds, and allows the dead to celebrate with the living. The teller, a gay male, tells the story in order give an example of how he as a gay male feels accepted within the larger Pagan community:

On the 31st of October every year, Samhain, it's been my habit, for fifteen years or so, I fast from sundown to sundown, and at sundown I light candles, set out food, and a glass of wine, to welcome the ancestors in, when you (the ancestors) only eat once a year so you want to have something good. I call in the ancestors, sometimes I break my fast, and sometimes I wait, and I go on out to the big Samhain ritual that night. Well probably seven or eight years ago, I was living in a little "deficiency" apartment down by the city, Minneapolis, in what was kind of the gay area of town, and I lit the candles and blah, blah, blah, and I went on down to the big Samhain ritual, I can't even remember what happened at the ritual that year, and I got home about midnight, and the candles had just about burned out. I was living alone at the time, so I sat down to meditate, and I was thinking about the ancestors and all that, and all of a sudden, the feeling I got was that the room behind me was filled with people, I mean there was nobody else there, but I felt their presence, you didn't have to look to know this. And I didn't feel frightened at all because I knew that all of these people loved me, and I knew that they were my ancestors, and not just that, I knew that these were my gay ancestors, and my lesbian ancestors. I had never even thought about them before. And of course we have them, we all have them, maybe they once lived in some nice Pagan culture, and Pagans have always been very good about this sort of thing. Pagan cultures are pragmatic, and they understand that in every generation there's just a certain number of people who are like this, and that that's O.K. and that that's the way that it should be. And they
were there with me then, and because they existed somehow they validate who I am, and they connect me to our people way back when, as long as we've been on the earth there's been gay human beings, when Neanderthals existed there were gay Neanderthals (jokingly- I've dated a few). We've always been here, and I've said this once years ago, and well you know storytellers, invariably they always end up telling the same story so here we go. Years and years ago I was invited to be part of a gay/lesbian clergy brought together for a panel discussion, and so there was a methodist there and so forth, and I got to represent all of us non-Christians in the world, golly, and there were people from the Catholic church, and they talked, anguished, anguished stories about how difficult it had been to be accepted, of how they had had to struggle and struggle just to be accepted, and to be able to honest and open about themselves. Well, I got up, and I didn't even know what to say, and finally I said, "What I could only wish for you is half the acceptance that I've met in my own religious community". Now I want to thank you for that, for its a wonderful gift, and again I thank you profoundly, and as if anybody needed this, but this is but one more sign of how good we are, and how true all of this is, I really mean this, there's nobody quite like us in the world.

This particular story was met with a long and vigorous round of applause indicating on the part of the audience their reciprocal appreciation and thanks. The features of this story which point toward the formation of contemporary Pagan identity and culture include:

1) The behavior "reinforcing" nature of the story - as the teller commends the Pagan community for their open-minded and progressive nature - both character traits which Pagans both feel the need to identify with and see
themselves as being defined through as opposed to what they perceive as a homophobic tendency among Judeo-
Christians. Thus the story is indicative of as well as reinforcing of shared group values.

2) The creation of Pagan identity through its juxtaposition with other religions.

3) The connection of contemporary Pagans to their ancient Pagan counterparts through the teller's reference to the perceived acceptance that gay males and lesbians held in former Pagan cultures. While there is considerable evidence that such acceptance was accorded to gay men and women in ancient cultures (Evans 1978), the "truth" of the matter for the purposes of this story is beside the point, as by the mere mention that this was the case provides the needed continuation.

4) The implication in the story that Pagans in both the past and in the present were and are more in tune with nature and perceptive of biological "cycles". As the teller stated, "Pagan cultures are pragmatic, and they understand that in every generation there's just a certain number of people who are like this, and that that's O.K. and that that's the way that it should be." Thus, implied here by the teller, is that Pagans, who as a rule incorporate environmentalism into religious practice, unlike other religious groups who may not pay attention to nature and biology are more accepting of homosexual behavior because it is a natural occurrence.
5) The story, as is the case the the earlier stories, is also pedagogical providing information on the Pagan Samhaim practices of communicating with one's ancestors, and possibly leaving out food and/or gifts for such ancestors at this time of the year.

The next story was what the storyteller called his "world premier" for it was a new story he had just created, and which he had never presented before an audience. The title of the story is "Odin meets Mother Berchtle".

They'll tell you that Odin has only one eye, and that he traded the other for wisdom, well that's what they tell you, but of course the real story is...he met Mother Berchtle, what do you think! Odin was younger in those days he had both his eyes still, and he's riding along one day and he sees this thing coming towards him from the end of the road, and its this old hag riding a goat, and Odin says to himself, "Of the two, the goat is the better looking". An of course this was true, six or eight horns, fangs like icicles hanging off her mouth, that's younger in these days, and when he came across her, he said, "Hey grandma, that's a nice beard you got there, that's the best beard I've seen on man, woman or goat". An Berchtle says, (of course, that's who it was, who did you think... Aphrodite) "Odin, I don't think you know who you're talking to, my beard is my own business and if you don't like it, you can just close your eyes, or I can close them for you". Odin, as I said was very young, and he wasn't quite ready to let up yet, so he says, "You know grandma, I wouldn't mind having a nice thick beard like that, so I'll tell you what, I don't suppose you're the gambling type?" Berchtle says, "Nobody calls me grandma and gets away with it, meet me at noon tomorrow at the well under the world tree, if you've got the balls for it". Odin replied, "Hey grandma those are my own business,
but sure I'll meet you tomorrow". Then Berchte got on her goat and rode off. Well the next day, Odin comes riding up to the well under the world tree, and sure enough there's Berchte waiting for him, and Berchte says, "I see you're braver than you are smart Odin, come sit down .... Alright, here's the terms, we'll throw, you win, you get my beard, I win, I get your eyes". Odin says, "Hey grandma, you drive a hard bargain, throw in your tail and we'll make it a deal" and Berchte replied, "You're on sonny". So Odin picks up the dice and he gives them a good shake and he throws those dice, and says "What about best out of three", so Berchte says, "Alright". So he takes the dice again and he throws them, and says, "Let's make it best out of five", Berchte says, "Alright, but that's the last offer, I'm bored already, you'll be a wiser man before the day is through, Odin, tell you what, you can even use your own dice, Odin". Well, Odin had a pair of dice that had been given to him as a naming gift from the Gods, and whatever you wanted these dice to role, they would role, and he had won lots of games with these dice, so he got them out, and he gave her a big grin, and he gave them a good shake, and he threw them down, and much to his surprise, they failed, and Berchte laughed. Then Berchte said, "Alright, hand them over sonny, the games mine, you lost, I want the eyes". Odin hesitated and said, "Well you know, its kind of difficult getting through like this, how about one eye and one testicle?". So Berchte, thought for a moment, and said, "Alright, let's make it a deal". Odin handed them over, and he said, "You know Mother Berchte, you don't look half as bad as you used to", and she replied, "What did I tell you Odin, you're a wiser man already". So the moral of this story, of course, is don't play dice with the gods, and keep an eye out for Mother Berchte.

The story of "Odin Meets Mother Berchte" provides some interesting insights into the process of Pagan identity formation and the creating of a Pagan mythos which meets the needs of the contemporary Pagan community in several ways:
1) The utilization of the "Mother Berchte" character again in the same story concert provides the audience with a sense of continuation and provides a running theme, opening up an area for the storyteller to introduce new stories along the same lines. Such thematic continuation has the potential then to provide the audience with a sense of shared communal knowledge.

2) The storyteller is also assuming a certain knowledge base among his listeners surrounding the Norse myths, especially a familiarity with the god, Odin. Such an assumption has the potential to reinforce knowledge and beliefs through providing a reflection of what the community itself finds familiar and identifies with.

3) The storyteller, in this instance, as well, as in several other stories is cultivating a certain atmosphere of humor which may serve two purposes. First it may serve as a reflection of the community's frequent appeal to humor even in matters of religion, and secondly, it fosters an appreciation for alternatives in the interpretation of myth. That is it provides an area where what may usually be viewed as sacred can be turned around and viewed from the contrary perspective of humor, thus allowing participants more room for personal insights in the interpretation of ancient mythos, as well as, implying that the myths should not necessarily be taken at "face value".
The next story addresses the question of "Why do we have all these mosquitos?", and is again based in Minnesota. Wise, of course, had the answer to this question in a story, which goes as follows:

Well, it's because of a curse. If you think these mosquitos are bad, you should see the mosquitos in Minnesota. Well back, in the bad, ole days, they were called the "vampire" mosquitos, and it was not unusual to walk out of your house one morning to find lying dead on your stoop, the shriveled body of your next door neighbor, who hadn't quite made it to the doorbell before the mosquitos got him. Well they tried, everything, citrinella, insecticides, flamethrowers; nothing worked against these guys. Finally, as usual when nothing else works, when people have no where else to turn, where do they go but ... religion! They prayed to this deity and that deity, one after the other, nothing happened, and finally there was only one deity left. Well during these days it was always summer in Minnesota and of course there were mosquitos all year round, people had never heard of winter, palm tree grew there. Finally, there was only one more thing to do, the people went to this shabby little temple of the goddess Discordia down in south Minneapolis, just off Lake Street - there's still a Pagan shrine there to this day, right between the car wash and the used car lot. They went in, brushed aside the cobwebs, threw themselves to their knees, and begged, "Discordia, goddess of the outer darkness, discord and chaos, we just can't bear it anymore, please do something, anything, to get rid of these mosquitos". They were desperate. Well, everyone prayed, except, of course, the priestess of Discordia, who just sat in the corner and cackled. Well, in less than twenty-four hours things began to change; it started to snow for the first time in the history of Minnesota. Cold, freezing, white stuff fell out of the sky, well they didn't know what to make of it, and they didn't really have shoes, and the had little clothing, and
they wondered, "What is this stuff, maybe the Gods have
dandruff", and it got down to 33 degrees below, and it got
colder and all the palm trees died, and everything they got
their food from died. But, the plants weren't the only things
that died, one by one, the vampire mosquitos fell from the
sky, and believe me when a mosquito the size of a pigeon
falls from the sky, there were a few injuries, but no one was
seriously hurt. Everyone trooped on back through the
snow, back to the temple of Discordia, and they threw
themselves on their knees and said, "Hail Discordia, goddess
of the outer darkness, boy when someone calls on you, you
do a great job, you got rid of the mosquitos, thanks very
much, and now you can get rid of this horrible weather, and
we'll all be happy again". Well more cackling came from the
priestess of Discordia, and she spoke with a voice, that with
dismay, the people of Minnesota realized was the voice of
Discordia. Discordia said, "You just asked to get rid of the
mosquitos, you didn't say anything at all about weather".
And there was more snow, and there was more wind, and it
was terrible, it got colder and colder and people had never
been that cold before in their lives and they burned all
their furniture and they wore all their clothes. They
couldn't do anything to keep warm, does this sound
familiar. Once again the people of Minnesota, trooped to the
temple of Discordia, and they prayed and prayed and made
lots of offerings. The called, "Oh please, please Discordia, this
is terrible, we just can't take it anymore", and they looked
really silly with their butts stuck up in the air. Well, she
finally took away that horrible weather, it took six months,
but she finally took it away. And the people said, "Thank-
you, the weather is nice again, and we'll always have nice
weather now, and the mosquitos are gone". But, they
heard, cackling, cackling, cackling, and the voice of Discordia
said, "You never asked that the mosquitos never come
back again, you just asked that I get rid of them once". "Oh,
Discordia", the people cried, "You are truly a bitch... Have
mercy! have mercy!" And you know she did! Discordia is a
very great goddess, goddess of the outer darkness, though
she may be, and she did have mercy on those silly people
of Minneapolis with their butts stuck up in the air. So she
said, "Alright, I said the mosquitos will be back every year,
and they will be, but they won't be quite as big as they used to, and they'll have even smaller ones in Wisconsin, so that's where you can have PSG, and you can brag about how much bigger your mosquitos are that others, and likewise, winter will be back every year, but I'll cut it down to six months this time and it won't get as cold, and there won't be as much snow, and to show you that I'm not the nasty bitch that you think, I am, I'm going to give you one last gift, and this is the greatest gift of all, it's the gift of forgetfulness". This last gift is of course the reason that the people of Minnesota don't leave a place, where the snow is like this and the mosquitos are like this, which you would think they would do like any sane people would.

The story of "Why do we have all of these mosquitos?" helps to foster Pagan festival community and identity through the deliberate manipulation of time elements and situational references. This is accomplished as:

1) The teller's makes implied references to the present conditions of the festival which include an over-abundance of mosquitos, and cold temperatures, as well as, reference to a goddess, Discordia, who is viewed as especially popular in the contemporary festival environment.

2) While references are made to present conditions, the teller at the same time places the context of the story in a mythic Pagan past, at time in which everyone was Pagan, and in which it was common to have temples to Pagan goddesses on every street corner. These two features, reference to the present and placement of the story into a fictitious mythic past, serves to create a contemporary
Pagan lore which, in the words of Levi Strauss is both, "timely and timeless" (Champagne 1987).

3) In addition, the story helps to create Pagan identity through providing insight into commonly held beliefs on the character of Pagan gods and goddesses, which include the idea that individuals can openly communicate with such deities, as in the above story, and that the ways to do so can include contact through a medium, in the case of the story through the "priestess of Discordia", and through the making of prayers and offerings, and the idea that the deities have human characteristics and can be unpredictable and humorous.

This story involves a tale of the "Great Mother and Her Spindle", and as is expected, follows in the humorous tradition of folklore Wise has chosen to create for the Pagan community.

Once long ago, the Great Mother had the most amazing flock of sheep that you've ever seen. She had sheep with beautiful brown wool, and beautiful black wool, and golden wool, and white, shiny wool, and out of these she spins the lives of every man and woman. So she went up to her favorite place on top of Glastonbury Tower, and she sat down and began to spin, and she spun and she spun, life after life, and while she spun she ate apples. She had a basket of spinning things on one hand, and a basket of apples on the other. These apples came from the Summerland, where there are wonderful apples, they are the apples which they say that between incarnations, we eat and they make us grow young again, and then we
come back. So she was eating these wonderful apples, for there were no apple trees in this world at that time, but the Goddess was a powerful spitter, and as she ate these apples, she would spit the seeds out, which is how apple trees came into this world. However, while she was spinning, she got an apple hull stuck within her teeth, and you know how irritating that is, and she couldn't seem to get it out and nothing seemed to work, so she picked a spine off of Glastonbury, -you know Goddesses do that sort of thing-, but that didn't work either, so she was getting more and more upset, and and then she had a brilliant idea. She took up the wool and she spun the finest and the thinnest thread that she had ever spun, and she wound one end of it around one finger, and the other end around another, and she flossed that son-of-a-bitch right out of there, and she says, "Boy does that feel good, and from here on I declare, as an ever standing law for my Pagan people for all times; number one that, they should all floss daily, -we have stories for everything- the mythic origin of dental floss, can you believe this-, but more importantly, I hereby place a taboo forever upon anyone who should eat apples at the same time as they spin, and that's the end of that story.

This story contains within it several features which again can be interpreted being demonstrative of the way in which identity and community formation can occur through narrative:

1) The story refers to contemporary Pagans as a "collective", with the implied "we", and the goddesses' "people" being the assumed Pagan audience. Thus all festival attendees, regardless of what particular Pagan path they may identify with are placed within the story context as being a part of the Pagan "whole".

2) The story is furthermore pedagogical in that it makes
reference to undelineated Pagan lore, as well as specific ancient myths. For example, the idea that certain goddesses are often associated with spinning, and that spinning involves the "spinning" of the fate of human lives is a popular theme in many contemporary Pagan stories. Thus the teller was able to draw on that assumed knowledge on the part of the audience in order to create the above story. The story also makes an implied reference to another Pagan goddess, Idunna - the Norse goddess whose apples bestow "youth" to the other gods. Following, as noted earlier, such references through their mutual recognition on the part of the audience may serve as a reflection of their present Pagan identity and as a result reinforce that identity.

The final story presented in Wise's story-concert was one taken and adapted from Wiccan lore, and it addresses the question of, "Why it is that we carve jack-o-lanterns on Halloween?"

A long time ago, at least I've been told that the Witches came out of the East, but I've also heard that they came from the Summerland, and that the Northern lights are the bonfires of the Summerland, well whatever, take your pick. Well anyways, the story goes, that we came from the east, and we wandered and wandered and wandered until we found a place that we like, and there on the shore, or where ever it was that we decided to stay, I'm sure it was a very nice place and so we did our rituals and had festivals, and had a good time like we always have, like we still do. At Samhain every year, we would open the long
burial mounds, where people were placed after the "sky burial" where they were put up on a bed and the vultures and ravens would come and they would eat the soft perishable parts, and what would be left would be the permanent bones. The people would then take the skull, and save because in those days people thought there was something especially sacred about the head, that the spirit was particularly resident in the head, our eyes and senses are there, and it makes sense you know, its round, its a circle, its pretty. And so they would save them, and at Samhain, when the veil was parted, it would seem that in those days, the great trend was animal skins, and the burial mound was covered in skins, and at Samhain, they would open them, and they would take torches, candles hadn't been invented yet, and go in procession into the burial mounds, and gather the skulls of the ancestors and they would bring them out and put them all around the house, and then they really would have a feast with the ancestors, because the ancestors were there in the person of their skull. At the end of Samhain, they would go back with the torches, and carry them back into the sacred burial mound, the long house of the Mother, and along with them they would take the skulls of those who died during that year. In part, this is a story based on archaeological reconstruction, because in fact they don't find whole skeletons in these mounds, they find skulls, and long bones, like you see in the skull and cross bones. This went on for years and years and years, but then there came a time when other people rode in, in chariots, with horses, out of the east, and they had swords made out of metal, which our people had never seen before, we had only copper. We were driven from the lands in which we had lived for thousands and thousands of years, where the sacred bones lay, and many people were killed, and many people were enslaved, but a few people managed to escape, and they went up into the mountains, to some place of the world, which nobody else wanted anymore, which is what happens to peoples which are driven away by invaders. They tried to make a new life, they were lead by the old women of the tribe, as they always had been and they tried to get ready for the new season, but Samhain came around and they
were far away from their ancestors remains. This big gloom came over the entire people and they all thought, "How can we welcome in the new year, and celebrate Samhain when our ancestors have been ripped apart from their skulls are miles away, and we can't touch them". They fell into despair, and then the oldest woman of the tribe knew that she had to do something, and she called her daughter in to drum for her. The daughter drummed for her, and the old woman covered her head and she slept the shaman's sleep, and her soul went out of her body in the form of a raven, and it flew to the place where they had lived for so many thousands of years. And she entered into the narrow passage of the long house, into the sacred chamber, where the skulls were kept, and the stones had begun to fall in, and all was in decay, and when she reached the burial chamber, at the end of a narrow passage, symbolic of the birth passage, and there in the womb of the long house of the Mother, she saw darkness against darkness, and she knew she was in the presence of the first Mother, the Mother of the dead. She said, "Mother we've been driven away from this place and our people are in despair, the skulls of the ancestors are here, and we are far away, how can we welcome in Samhain? How can we survive as a people when our roots have been torn away from us, and we have nothing left except what we've made for ourselves?" And the Dark Mother said nothing to her, her face was covered, no one sees the face of the Dark Mother and lives. But she pulled the veil away from her lap, and when the old woman saw what was in the Dark Mother's lap, she knew what she should do and she thanked the Dark Mother. And once again she took the form of the raven and flew back to the place where her body was lying, watched over by her daughter. Her soul entered her body, she got up and went out, and called the people to her and she said, "Go to the fields, find the largest turnip that you can find, the Dark Mother has shown me what we must do, and bring me a lantern of animal fat, and bring me my athame". So they brought these things to her and watched, and she cut the top off the turnip, and she hollowed it out, and she carved eyes, and a nose, and she carved a mouth (they didn't have pumpkins in those days) and she put the
lamp in and she said, "The Dark Mother has shown me, that where ever we go, we bring the ancestors with us, they are always with us and we will always be together, because we can make what we need". These were the very first jack-o-lanterns, and in the old country, they still make them out of turnips sometimes and now we make them out of pumpkins, which are even more wonderful, and this is why we should tell this story to ourselves again and again, so we won't ever forget where we come from, and this is why we should always make jack-o-lanterns on Samhain, and that's the end of that story.

A common occurrence in Neo-Pagan storytelling is one of mixing fact and fiction, history and folklore, Western and non-Western practices and contemporary and ancient culture. Several of the above examples demonstrate this mixing quite well, however the last story is particularly demonstrative of this practice. The story contains a mixture of a number of elements which include:

1) a story line related to known archaeological evidence (borrow mounds, and care and burial of the dead)
2) the modern day continuation of the carving of Jack-o-Lanterns on Halloween (contemporary folkloric practices and American traditions)
3) the mixture of known practices of non-Western shamanistic practices such as trancing, drumming and vision questing
4) a mythological figure referred to in European pre-Christian pantheons (the Dark Mother)
5) the semi-historical account of invasions of the British Isles from the Saxons, Danes, and Romans, which subsequently drove indigenous populations into the highlands.

This evidence can be compared to happenings within the Neo-Pagan community overall, in which folklore, archaeology and history are used to validate the existence of Pre-Christian Pagan European peoples, and to provide a continuity between these peoples and the revitalization of a religions based on such practices and beliefs. It is also the case, that information from other non-Western indigenous peoples is often used to fill the gaps left by archaeology and history. The modern Neo-Pagan movement also allows for the incorporation or rather continuation of modern Western/American/Christian practices into the folklore and practices of the community, allowing for a "safe" way to move away from the "status quo" without totally rejecting all that is comforting and familiar. Or more simply, such practices allow participants to reject the parts of Western culture, which are seen as unfavorable, such as Christian sin and morality, while at the same time retaining that which can somehow be validated and seen as a continuity to a time in which modern Neo-Pagans link to ancient Pagan practices.

The next story which I would like to present, provides an example of a second way that storytelling is incorporated into the festival context. It was told by a Pagan storyteller who wished to
remain anonymous, during a talent show/open stage at a Pagan festival. It is a story based on a Greek myth, which the teller constructed and adapted for the contemporary Pagan audience. It was entitled, "How humanity got fire" or "Why the eagle no longer has to hunt for lunch".

This is a Greek myth that you're all familiar with, maybe, and if you're looking for a happy ending because this is, of course, a Greek myth. Once upon a time, long long ago, later than you think, but sooner than you know, humanity had fire. Life was good, and fire was a wonderful tool. They didn't know how they got it or where they got it from. Nobody really cared. The fact was, they could use it to cook their meals and the smoke kept the mosquitos away, the light kept the wolves out of the village at night, it heated their homes, and it was fun to dance around in the stone ring at the center of the village. Now also in those days, which most people didn't notice, was that the eagle was not the proud, noble, handsome, creature, that we know him to be today. No, indeed, the eagle in those days was a trite, sneaky, conniving, lazy, son-of-a-bitch, and he just didn't like his lot in life. This whole business of riding the air currents, and swooping down on rabbits always made him dizzy and when he'd catch one, he could never get the blood completely out of his claws, and the fur would stick in his beak, and what was he supposed to do with the tail. Well, the eagle thought, "There must be a better way of going about doing it than this", and he looked down from the top of his tree, and saw all the fires in the villages of humanity beneath him and he looked up to Mt. Olympus and saw the gods sitting up there in their splendor, and he began to get an idea. That night the eagle went round to every single village and stirred up great gusts of wind with his wings and blew out every single fire. Now humanity hadn't gotten around to inventing overpopulation yet, so he was able to do this all in one night. Then the eagle just sat back and waited.
Well, after a while the gods began to take notice of this. Time for the Gods runs a little different than it does for us mere mortals, and in fact it was about thirty or forty generations before Zeus noticed that anything was wrong. You see because humanity, while they had actually gotten around to using fire, they hadn't gotten around to making it themselves yet. So in thirty or forty generations, you could say that humanity had been royally screwed. Zeus looked down upon poor humanity, shivering in their hobbles, staring at the sky, wondering why it was so cold, and why the mosquitos were always bugging them and Zeus thought, "This is not very good, humanity should be happy", and so he raised his arms to toss down a mighty lightning bolt which would rekindle every fire in the world, when suddenly the eagle, smugly sitting back until just this moment, said, "Ah Zeus, wait, wait! If you give humanity fire they will eventually get around to inventing other things like the forge, and if they invent the forge they'll invent the sword, and if they invent the sword, they'll invent war, and if they invent war, they'll invent technology and then they'll invent the computer, the telephone, the electric typewriter, and all that sort of thing and then they'll stop worshipping you and they'll forget who you are". Zeus said, "You may be right, thank you very much". "Don't mention it", the Eagle replied. So Zeus issued a divine proclamation which was this, "No god or any other being for that matter was to give humanity the gift of fire, it was to be reserved for the Gods alone!" Well the other gods heard about this and actually, they really didn't care all that much. Athena wondered about the wisdom of it, Aries was rather ticked off, Aphrodite just stared into the mirror, and no one asked her anyways. But there was one god who was actually very sad about all this. It was Prometheus. Prometheus was a new younger god, and you may remember that in another myth Prometheus had a hand in the creation of humanity, so he had kind of a soft spot for the mortals. And he thought all of this was very unfair, and so, at the end of the week, when the Gods took their afternoon nap, except Prometheus, who was waiting for this, Prometheus quickly stole the fire, sneaked down Mt. Olympus and suddenly appeared in a cloud of
smoke in the village below. All the humans in the village bowed down (I don't care who you are or what you do, when someone appears in a cloud of smoke in the center of your village, you drop to your knees). Well, Prometheus said, "O.K. that's all fine, now get up, get up!, I have come" and the people said "Oh yes Prometheus, you have come!", and among themselves they whispered, "Boy, are we in trouble now". Prometheus answered, "No, I've come to bring you a gift" and the humans replied, "Oh a gift, how nice", and they whispered among themselves, "Boy, are we in trouble now, a gift from the gods, you know what that means". Well Prometheus said, "In order to give you this gift, I will need a pile of wood in the center of the village", and in five or ten seconds there was a nice pile of wood. Prometheus then said, "O.K. now watch this", and he opened up his hands and blew the sparks into the wood and immediately a great burst of flames whooshed up into the air, and once again all the people fell to their knees. Prometheus said, "Yes, yes, yes, that's all very fine, now get up. Now look, this is called fire". "Fire", the people said, "How nice", and they whispered among themselves, "What is it? - I don't know". Prometheus replied, "Fire has many uses, you can take a piece of meat, put it on the end of a stick and roast it, and eat it". The people replied, "How nice" as they whispered among themselves, "He's burning it, gross". And Prometheus continued, "The smoke can help keep the mosquitos away", and the people said, "Yes, that's true" as they coughed and rubbed their eyes, and Prometheus continued, "And the flames will keep your homes warm at night", and the people replied, "That's true" as they whispered among themselves, "What are we going to do at night? I usually go to bed". Well, Prometheus realized that his gift wasn't going over very well and he then noticed a hand up in the back, "Yes, someone has a question?" and the person replied, "Does it come in any other colors?" Well, finally, Prometheus did convince the people that fire wasn't all that bad. He showed them how to tan hides, and make soap, and of course, the people of this village made a killing, selling it to everyone else.

As you may have realized, at about this point in the story, Zeus was about to wake up, and of course, another
twenty or thirty generations had gone by. And Zeus looked down and noticed that someone had given humanity the gift of fire. Zeus got himself into a purple rage and jumped down to the village at the foot of Mt. Olympus where Prometheus had visited the first time and all the people fell on their knees once again. Zeus said, "Yes, yes, yes, get up! Now tell me, who gave you fire?", and the people yelled, "Prometheus! Prometheus!, We didn't want it, he gave it to us anyways". Zeus then zapped himself back up to Mt. Olympus and grabbed Prometheus by the throat and yelled, "You! you broke my divine proclamation!" (Well, keep in mind that Zeus had never really had anyone break one of his divine proclamations before and he really didn't know what to do at this point). Zeus continued, "I therefore sentence you to . . . to . . .?" "Hang upside down from the cliff so the eagle can eat out your heart and lungs every day?" the Eagle asked, who was right behind Zeus at the time."Yes, that's it, thank-you" Zeus replied. "Don't mention it" said the eagle. Thus Prometheus was hung upside down and everyday at noon the eagle came by and ripped out his heart and lungs and that's the story of "How humanity got fire" or "Why the eagle no longer has to hunt for lunch."

For those of you who insist on a happy ending - about 500 years later, Heracles came by, killed the eagle, cut down Prometheus, and they all lived happily ever after.

This story, like the stories presented in the story-concert earlier, seems to have entertainment as its primary goal - at least from the point of view of the teller. The story, however, has the potential to go beyond such a goal through the taking of an ancient Pagan myth - the Greek myth of Prometheus - and placing this myth in a context (i.e. humor) which is possibly more familiar to a contemporary Pagan audience. Such a secondary placement may thus allow the listeners to identify more fully with the myth making the ancient story seem somehow more
applicable in their present day lives. The story furthermore makes reference to issues which are of concern to contemporary Pagans such as consumerism, modern technology, and "overpopulation", allowing listeners to make a connection between the ancient myths and their contemporary lives by showing how such myths may, if altered, have the capacity to illuminate such issues.

The following three stories, surround a common occurrence at Pagan festivals where Druids are present. As mentioned earlier, following a workshop on the legendary Celtic cattle raids given by members of the Druid camp at one particular festival, a cattle raid ensued as the toy cattle props used by the Druids in the workshop were stolen from the Druid camp. These contemporary raids, like their ancestral counterparts have inspired the telling of tales and the writing of legends. The next three stories are examples of that. The first of these, I would like to present, comes from a printed source, however the story was oral in its original derivation. I am including here as it is a mythical account of the "cattle raids" which occurred at a Pagan festival I attended, as mentioned earlier. The story provides an excellent example of how events which occur in the festival environment can become integrated into the lore of the Pagan movement as a whole. The story is entitled Adharc Flaithi il, as it appeared in the journal Keltria: Journal of Druidism and Celtic Magick (1995) and was written by Caillean ap Gywnedd. Prefaced by the following sentence, the story begins, "Here is
written a story from the Book of the Valley, a story of the first of the Cymric Treasures and how the Celts bested the Fair Folk at a game of wits and bravery” (1995: 13).

There’s frost in my beard these days, though once it grew as curly and brown as the wild sheep’s wool. I hadn’t the experience that I’m told I do now but even then I could tell a hedge from a shrub. And sure I had eyes to see a wonder and words to tell of it, and if I haven’t before now, well I’m no fonder than the next wight of being called a liar or worse, afool.

Now, scoot a stool closer to the fire and fill up your horn with good spiced mead, you’ll need it fore this tale is done. I’ll tell you of the time the Celts pulled a right fine trick on Them as shouldn’t have been fooled. But don’t go running to the closest ring of mushrooms to laugh at Them for it, for Their memory is much longer than ours and They don’t find the same things funny as we.

It was that hot time of summer when Sun is strongest that all the different tribes would come together and for a while we were one huge Tribe. I remember how well I loved being around all those strangers, except for that one week we were more fostem than foreign one to another. It always made me wonder why, if the plants and tress we revere can stand peaceably alongside the same stone fence, we couldn’t do as well during the rest of the year.

My Clann camped under the Cymric banner and we made a cozy huddle of folks, what with the kindred and the honored guests all friendly and sharing haunch and cup ’round the fire. The years have stolen most of the words from the stories but I can still see the people standing in the Bard’s Place one by one, and the music now seems somehow even prettier than ever it was come flying straight away new from the harps and pipes.

It was close after twilight on one of those golden days when a rider came dusty and quick into our circle of tens. Breathless to tell her tale, the return of her wind took ours from us as we learned that our Celtic banner had been stolen away and not that alone but the small herd of cattle
we'd brought with us as well. Little enough to burr our saddles you might think, but the matter of stolen cattle had caused no little trouble years past, and the taking of the banner made two insults where one alone had been too many.

"Nay" say she, "I was not by the hand of the Mountain Folk that this wretched deed is brought to us, but by no hand at all which our eyes could see" We listened with our chins in the dire as she made the story live for us: how the woven thongs had untied themselves from around the banner pole and the banner itself had flown away like a leatherwing fleeing first light. The cattle we learned, had followed the blow from a horn like none a Celt had ever sounded and thought the dust from their hooves still colored the air, not a bull not calf was to be found from one moment to the next. The horn's call dwindled away and turned into a wicked chuckle before it blended with the breezes of twilight.

Now, wait: I was there, and this is the tale? I've heard all the old stories just as you have, and know that the Fey Folk more likely live between the ink words on sheepskin or in the wind blowing from an old fool like myself. But late on that day as the night rose up on us like a tide pool, we remembered that through is the seed from which the old tales grow, and we all moved a little closer to the fire.

Well, the heads of the Clanns and the Elder all gathered together to decide what should be done. Telling the old tales to scare headstrong children is one thing but meeting the Queen of Faerie and all her Seelie Court outside you kitchen window is quite another thing indeed! The fire flared and burned to coals, and not a one among them could hunt up a sensible way to go. Finally one greybeard spoke up, Says he, Ah Well! Our silence is our wisdom of tis won. Shall we then not wait a bit and see what we see? We've not in any fashion been attacked, else we'd be piled up in the shadow of a woodland mound asleep for the next century of ten. Wait a bit: let them as made the first move make the second if they will".

So wait we did. Rider were sent this way and that to find if any others had played target to the spears of Fairy humor, but we alone had felt the jab. And so the matter
rested for the next several days. Early on a morning we were all jerked awake by the frantic cries of a sentry who when we reached her could do nothing but blabber and point. In the morning mists, not six fields from us stood a towering mound which had certainly not been there the night before. Stones were tossed about its feet and brambles and thorns climbed up its. Crowning its top was a stand of rowan trees as thick as pelt on a winter rabbit, and waving from the highest of these was our banner!

The rest of that day the most of us walked around sideways, always keeping that mound in at least one eye or the other. The rest simply stayed inside and I wonder if they thought that not looking was the same as making go away. The Sun set on us undecided still, and all the while our banner snapped and fluttered in breezes that didn't seem to reach the fields where we camped.

Horns sounded late in the evening and we all hurried the the larger tent where the Clann Chiefs and Elders met to gossip and talk among folks their own age. I arrived late, for I had been at the camp' sedge watching the mound with the same curiosity which has both give me wisdom and landed me in hot broth more often than I like to remember. It was clear a decision had been made as to some action or another, but I wondered to see smiles on many of the faces and most of all the faces of a group of Druids standing to one side.

"What word?" says I, and a voice says, Why the fools have decided to march right up and ask for the banner back!" I turned and saw Tudwal sitting there sharpening his sword on a whetstone, and I thought to myself that if the fairies swept angry down the sides of that mound not a lot would a sword dull-edged or sharp do to stop them. A movement churned the crown just then and I saw the Druids motioning a comely young mother towards them. As she drew near one White Robe turned and handed her the most enormous horn I had ever seen. It would have graced the brow of an auroch had any been alive to wear it and round about its lip was a band of silver wonderfully wrought in the designs which our people love so well. I say her take that horn and hid it under her funa and I knew magic was awake for she didn't look as if she had anything
but a bairn 'neath her belt. A Clannswoman moved forward then, and in her hand was as unlikely a thing as I would have expected next to see: a half empty jug of ale. And then I remembered my own tribal history, and how half-empty jugs of ale and mead had smoothed the waters between our folk as the Asherannach years past. I didn't yet have the knowledge of the Adharc Flaithiuil, for it was that most sacred object the yound mother kept close to her heart, but soon enough we all would have knowledge of it.

Now we were in motion and quick enough a process was formed by every last gaffer and toddler and all the folk in between. At the head of the line walked a Druid, and behind him walked three more. Four walked behind us and along our sides walked torchbearers. All said and done we made a not unrespectable assembly to go knocking on the doors of a Sidhe mound.

We walked through the darkness towards the hill and someone struck up a marching beat with a bodhran. I remember many more owls than normal flying that night and as I looked it seemed their eyes shone with intelligence greater than an owl should have. The mists grew thick and high as our knees so that several of the smaller children looked to be heads bobbing on the surface of a milky-white lake. It was not the night I would have chosen to go looking for legends, but the wood was cut and now we needed to stack it.

As we neared the hill's crown we saw that a small cliff cut through the rowans, and a path ran along its base. Midway yawned an opening and from it spilled a light as if from torches 'though no torches could be seen. Led by our Druids, we arranged ourselves the length of the path. Out stepped the lead White Robe, and down struck his staff three times to announce us, for there was no door in the opening on which to knock. Truth told, I think not even the Druid wished to be nearer than need be to that opening.

No sooner than staff had struck thrice and a furious rustle of owl's wings sounded in the air. And there, where no one had been a moment before, stood a majestic Lady all clothed in greys and greens. Behind here one of them for each of us, stood the most amazing collection of . . . people any of us had ever seen.
It may be the years behind me, or maybe we weren't supposed to remember anyone save her, but I cannot for my life recall those others to describe them to you now. No matter: the vision of that Queen of Faerie would beg the whole life's skill of the highest Bard in Eire.

The Druid who'd lead us now spoke up, and I marveled at his outward calm. Say's he, "By the Three and the Two in the names of Those who went before us and those still to come, according to the Laws of Hospitality which both our peoples, in their fashion, hold most sacred, we claim the "blush price" for a wrong done to us". The folk behind her shifted in their places with a sound like a winter wind through frost-burned leaves, and their hard eyes never left our faces.

Says she, "By the Four and by the One, your claim is fairly stated. Yet it was by no word of Mine that you suffered your loss. How come you to suspicion that My hand it was that acted or that of one of My court?"

Emboldened, the White Robe described our losses just as they had been described to us and that fair and fearsome Lady listened all the while. Then when he had finished, she turned and spoke to her people in a voice that was music and birdsong, water through moss rocks and fire upon the grassy field. A quiet fell upon us all, and smooth as dawn slips over the treetops all the Fey Folk save she and one other turned and faded as they moved toward the opening in the hillside.

Says she, "A curious problem for Celt and Faerie both, for your banner is taken by one who acted according to his will not mine. Yet must I stand by him as you would by one of yours". Her eyes spoke clear challenge and we felt the awful gulf between those of mortal birth and this Queen of the unborn yawn wider.

Certain we'd best be about the business of finding just the right rock under which to hid. I was as amazed to see the Druid relax, and kick me if he didn't let slip of breath of relief! For a challenge is exactly what was hoped for, and that for which the trap was set.

Says he, "Lady no victory for either side were a single Faery or let to come to harm. And if we understand right, no shame to any of our court save the one who stands by
your side. Let us, then, settle this quickly and in such fashion that both loser and winner differ only in the degree to which the one affords honor to the other. And should you decide that we have the better of it, then our banner and cattle will come with us when we leave."

At this She smiles. Says she, "Well enough, 'though you'll be better asking the robin who sings in the tree top where your cattle do graze! we had no hint what That might mean, 'though we found out in proper time. . . but that is mortar to build another wall, and some other time not now.

Says he, "Lady, we do but ask that You honor us as we honor You". On some beckon I missed, a young Celt came forward with a drinking horn in hand, "We propose that we give to you a full horn's draught of good barley ale and that you likewise fill a horn with a draught at least as fine. In this wise can you do no less best us, for the drink of Faerie must be to suit the God's own taste. Yet will we have each honored the other by offering a horn in friendship".

Well, says I to myself, that's it! The cursed Druid has set it up so we can do naught but lose. I would have done better to advise myself to get to the meetings in time to hear all which was said!

The Druid smiled and crooked a finger at the woman who had the ale. She came and poured that ale into the horn and it was easy to see that it was not bonny first press, but the last of the jug to be drunk. The Queen smiled in her turn, so sure was she of victory, and accepted and drank the ale. She then reached her hand to the Faery who had caused all this swarm of bees so he could hand Her some or another drink, and the Druid's smile so widened I expected to hear his teeth crack.

Says he, "Lady, well done. Yet hear the truth I speak! The challenge was to fill a horn with the best you have, but not mention was made that You fill the same horn as we". Then stepped forward the young mother, and she reached for the horn she had hidden all this time. And as the horn came away from her heart, it grew and grew until she had to rest the tip against the earth. For the first magic of the Adharc Flaiithiuil is that it grows to match the thirst of those nearest to it. Nestled close to the woman's unborn babe, it
remained small enough. But in the midst of so many Celts it needs grow to a size to worry the Dagda himself!

Now I fear to describe the emotion which carved expressions on the face of the Queen. Clear it was that she disliked the road being shown her, still to her credit she kept to the bargain. Says she, "Well and good, mortal, but never named the vessel from which I would pour!" she held out her hands and suddenly they held a silver flagon and none among us doubted that it was a special vessel indeed. She tipped the flagon and a golden stream gushed forth, and on and on it poured. The triumph on the face of the Queen vanished as minute passed and the liquid roes no closer to the rim of the great horn. For the second magic of the Adharc Fláithbiúil is that it will not fill until it holds enough drink to satisfy all around it and enough to sate their guests as well. As anyone knows, the capacity of a Celt has yet to be determined, much less a full tribe of them, and we honor all who come to our doors as guests.

It is not a measure of good manners to cheer the defeat of another but when the mound, rowan trees, rocks, and brambles, Queen and Faery and all disappeared in a silent "pop!" of air, we let loose a yell to see our banner waving atop a rude pole thrust into the ground. The procession home was jubilant and the feast we held still jubilant more.

Perhaps it was the Fairy draught still sloshing around in the Adharc Fláithbiúil which everyone drank, but me, or perhaps the Queen considered a forgotten victory no final victory at all. Whatever, when next the Sun rose no one but I could remember a single fact form the last night's adventure. There was quiet a pack of young ones born within the next year's turning and not a one of them was anything but cute. But every front side has a back, and all remarked uneasy that two of every three of 'em seemed to have the second sight.

There's frost in my beard these days, and no one really listens when an old fool spins his words into a story. So drink up you mead and enjoy the fire, and we'll tell the old jokes while the night passes by. But watch how you laugh when the joke's about Faeries for their memory's
much longer than ours and They don't find the same things funny as we.

The above story provides an excellent example of how contemporary Pagan storytellers attempt to create a new Pagan lore which is both "timely and timeless". This is accomplished in the story through:

1) References being made which allude to events that occurred at a contemporary Pagan festival, while at the same time placing those events within a romanticized, mythical context meant to depict the idealized social conditions of an ancient pre-Christian Pagan past.

2) Providing a context in which there is an implied continuum between an ancient Pagan past and the practice of contemporary Pagan festivals (i.e. through the use of narrative devices which speak as if festivals in their present day context had continued unhindered from a Pagan past).

3) The use of language meant to evoke images of times past.

4) Providing an new "origin myth" for a new sacred object, a drinking horn, which serves to evoke associated mythic images when the horn itself is brought out around the campfire.
3) The placing of a contemporary Pagan Druidic/Celtic identity within the larger festival context, while at the same time affirming their place within the community as a whole.

The second "cattle raid" story, is based on actual events that happened during a Midsummer Pagan festival, and is presented in a semi-fictional form. This story was also originally an oral one, but later appeared in written form as an article in *Circle Network News*, (1992:18) by Tim Larson. It is entitled, "The Raid of Eweness".

It was a sunny day before the Summer Solstice in the land of the Druids. The bards sang in a far off land of the glories and traditions of their people. But their glee was not to be long lived. Returning to their homeland, they discovered the country's prize ewe, Eweness, had been stolen. The owner of the beloved beast languished in despair. She rent her garments and cried out to the Lord and Lady for justice, O where was her beloved Eweness?

Rumors and speculation flood in from the four corners of the world. Then at last a Champion appeared. He had attended a Jewitch Shabbat in the far off land of Babylonia and heard a bard there sing that Eweness was hidden somewhere in the land. After the Shabbat was over, the Champion begged his slow leave from Babylonia. Upon his departure he travelled the many miles back to his own land, and from thence hired himself to the neighboring kingdom of the Druids.

He petitioned an audience with the owner of Eweness. Upon entering her audience chamber, he saw her tear stained face brighten with a hopeful look. "What news good sir" she asked. "Where, O where is my beloved Eweness?" He related his story to her. As he told his tale, he saw the water in her eyes dry as it turned to fire. "We shall make war on them if necessary and leave no barn or house
unsearched until my Eweness is reunited with me. Call together all the houses of the kingdom, we must plan our strategy!"

That night they sat ringed around a blazing fire, passing the wine and ale. Tales were told, songs were sung, and boasts were made as the Druids planned their revenge. Suddenly, a cry went up through the camp. The tribes of Babylonia had come to talk peace and the return of Eweness. The best negotiators from both sides met in secret to see if they could forge out an agreement. Parties from both sides waited anxiously to see what the outcome would be. After long debate, both sides emerged from the meeting to announce that an agreement had been reached. Henceforth, there would no longer be cattle raids between Babylonia and the Druids. Eweness was returned to her rightful owner, and a great feast was held to seal the pact.

And that's how the great Dru-Jew or Jew-Dru Alliance was formed.

The third "cattle-raid" story is one which I experienced first hand, although at the time of its occurrence, I was unclear of the implications. The story itself was actually recounted to me, by a member of the Druid's camp, whom I saw at festival following the one in which the events took place. The story cleared up some confusion for me over the particular antics which I witnessed the same night. The story goes as:

Well, you realize that there was only one cattle raid, that whole week which followed the traditional manner of the real Celtic cattle raids. The glory, of course, went to those who could actually pull the best tricks - who could actually fool the other tribes into letting down their guard so the cattle could be taken. Well their was one particular cattle raid that week which was truly worthy of the
ancients, although the story of how we were tricked is pretty funny. I have to give them credit.

That night we were all sitting around the fire, telling our stories as usual, and some people came over talking about some foxfire they had found in the firewood by the johns. Well foxfire is this phosphorescent sort of moss stuff that grows sometimes in old wood. You can sometimes see it if you break the wood apart. It glows in the dark. Well most of us were pretty curious or had never seen foxfire, so they lured us all over to the woodpile. But as it were, it wasn't dark enough outside to get a good look at it, since the moon was out, and people still had their camp lights on. However, it was dark enough they said to see it in the john. You know that big one that was wheelchair accessible, well several people could fit in there at once. So they broke up a bunch, and we all waited around as several of us at a time went in to see it. I was pretty interesting to see, I have to admit. But wouldn't you know that while we were all lured away from camp, looking at the foxfire in the john, one of their group went off and stole our cattle. They really knew what they were doing, and it makes a great story.

I found this story particularly amusing, as that same evening, I was awakened by an urgent need to use the facilities. So I climbed, sleepily out of my tent, and started making my way to the line of port-a-toilets on the other side of camp. The first port-a-toilet I approached was the wheelchair accessible one, and as I walked by, a group of people, who I couldn't fully make out in the dark, grabbed my arm and pulled me inside. They were talking rapidly and laughing about foxfire and cattle and they wanted me to see something. So they closed the door and I realized that the floor seemed to glow in the dark. At the time,
however, I had more urgent things on my mind, and I thanked them kindly for showing me such a wonder and I went on my way, awaking the next morning to wonder if I had dreamed the whole incident. My experience was confirmed several weeks following, as I learned that this was the infamous foxfire in the john that lured the Druid's away from their cattle.

The cattle raid stories as a whole represent examples of how "ethnicity" may be performed within the larger context of the Pagan festival. Thus within an all Pagan setting, members of the Druid camp are able to perform through narrative their uniqueness. This is made possible in such a context due to the fact that in such a setting, the Pagan nature of their Druid identity is already established and thus identity as performed has the opportunity to become more and more specific, with certain traits of Druidic "ethnicity" being implicit rather than explicit in the storylines. Such performances would not be possible outside of an all Pagan context for it would be necessary for the "Paganness" of the Druids to be made explicit and performance would eschew the finer aspect of their specific "ethnic" identity.

The final two stories I would like to present, could be grouped into their own genre, as I have heard many similar versions of such stories within the Pagan community. They come from a group of stories which I have assigned the label, "magic gone awry" stories. Such stories are essentially moralistic stories, which serve to teach the proper use of magic, through the telling of what can happen if the magic is not done right, or if it is used
improperly. The first of these was presented at the talent show of one of the festivals I attended, however, I have heard several versions of this same story, in other contexts, with only the minor details changed.

As you know, Pagans sometimes work magic to acquire material things, and this isn't such a bad thing, as the Gods know who deserves what, and if there is a great need, or a great desire the magic is likely to work. You have to be careful though for magic is a particular thing and often specifications are followed to the minute detail. So you have to be careful about what you ask for, because you just might get it.

I had this friend, who lived in Hawaii, and this friend was a great magician, and his spells usually worked. He was in desperate need of a new car, and he figured, like all good magicians, that he should be as specific as possible when working his car spell. He particularly wanted a red Mercedes. It was the car that he had dreamed about all his life. So he did his spell, visualizing the red Mercedes in his driveway, as he said his incantations, and burned his candles and incense, and all that stuff. Well, after he worked the magic, he tried to put the spell out of his mind, like he had been taught, and go about trying to manifest his visualization in the physical world. So he started drawing out budgets and making calls about cars, etc.

Well, a few days went by and he returned home from work, and he couldn't believe it. There it was the exact car he had visualized was sitting, right as he had pictured it, in his driveway. He thought, to himself, "Wow, that was fast, this is incredible". So he rushed up to the car, only to find, one of his closest friends sitting in the car. The friend said, "I just got this new car, and so I came right over. I couldn't wait for you to see it". The look of surprise on the man's face turned quickly to one of disappointment.

The moral of this story is, to make sure, when you're working magic, to be specific. My friend, did all the right things, except one, to visualize himself as the owner of the
The magic, of course, was only following the directions given. He should at least be proud that the magic worked.

The second "magic gone awry" story, I would like to present was one told at a festival around an evening campfire. The setting was informal, as people were just sitting around sharing anecdotal stories. The story is about the improper use of "love magic".

They say when you work love magic that you should never direct it toward any one particular person, that instead you should work magick to allow the right person to come into your life. They say that magic directed at one particular person is manipulative, and it violates the Witches' law of "Harm None", as you don't know how that magic will specifically effect the person it is directed at.

Even though people who are crazy about someone else often won't admit it at the time, bringing that person into their life as a lover, may be the worst thing they could ever do to themselves. I had this friend once, she was crazy about this guy. She was absolutely positive that he was the right one for her. She decided to work "love magic" to essentially force him into being her lover. She didn't just do some simple love magic to make herself more attractive to him or anything like that, she did a binding spell, which in the words of the spell, would bind him to her eternally.

The spell was a very powerful one, and it worked. They became lovers, and for a little while she was blissfully happy. After a while, however, she started noticing that he had some personality traits that made her a little uneasy, like he was extremely jealous and had a bad and unpredictable temper. The relationship deteriorated, and became abusive, and she decided to leave. By this time the spell was only a distant memory. But he wouldn't let her go. After she left, he called her all the time, would wait for her after work. He stalked her for months and even
threatened her life. She eventually had to get a restraining order against him. Remembering the spell she had created, she decided that she needed extra help, so she started consulting with more experienced Witches to help break the spell, it took several tries before it finally worked and the spell was undone, but she definitely learned her lesson.

"Magic gone awry" stories within the Pagan community are akin to what have been labeled by folklorists in other contexts "urban legends" as they are almost always told second-hand, that is the individual recounting the story is not the individual who experienced the events first hand and the story itself takes place in many different contexts, with usually only the minor details changed. These stories are especially demonstrative of Pagan identity in the contemporary world as they often deal with issues faced by Pagans participating in the dominant American social paradigm. For example these stories primarily deal with issues such as domestic violence, relationships, and financial ventures, issues which are dealt with by the larger American public, however in their Pagan context they incorporate the issue of the ethics of "magic". This combination of magic as it is applied to contemporary social issues is especially telling of Pagan identity as it indicates that Pagan beliefs and practices as conceived of within the Pagan community are not simply contained therein, but extend beyond those boundaries and influence Pagans' dealings with the larger social matrix of which they are a part. It is also indicative of the influence of the issues of that same social
matrix within the Pagan community itself, as such stories provide guidelines of how to deal as a Pagan with such a world.

The role of storytelling in the Pagan community is multifold. However, it offers the possibility of the re-creation and/or invention of community, identity and religion through the redefining of the parameters of history and myth, and allowing something novel to emerge. It provides a continuum between the technological/industrialized world in which most participants live and those pre-Christian religions and cultures which are considered to be the ancestors of the contemporary movement itself. Such stories, may also provide a loose sense of solidarity among diverse and scattered participants. This is accomplished by the creation of folklore recognizable to participants as a reflection of their unique position in American society and their unique identity as part of a religious movement. Thus through such creation participants have access to something which distinguishes them from other religious groups and other time periods, and at the same time promotes a sense of common beliefs and attitudes recognizable to only group members. Such stories, as the one presented earlier may also provide meaning and substance to otherwise meaningless celebrations and holidays, whose previous importance in pre-Christian religions may have been lost over the course of time. Such stories may also serve as a means to make explicit recurrent themes and prominent beliefs in an otherwise diverse individualistically oriented religious movement.
Chants

If any part of Neo-Pagan folklore resembles one of the more "traditional" or at least maybe one of the earliest views of folklore, one which is "superorganic", or seems to move about on its own, cannot be connected to any one specific author, and has many versions of any one specific item, that would be Pagan chants. A chant constitutes a certain meaningful saying put to rhythm and repeated over and over. Chanting plays an important role in Pagan festivals and rituals. Chanting is done to help create an atmosphere of sacred space, to alert participants that a ritual or a meeting is about to happen, and to alter consciousness so that magic or shamanic journeying may be undertaken. The repetitive, rhythmic nature of chants is especially amenable to such ends. Many times several chants will be performed during a single ritual, or there may be only one central chant repeated throughout or during a dance or the "raising of power" to work magic, at other times several chants are "layered" on top of one another for a "round" like effect. Flexibility and creativity are again key features of this form of oral expression, as chants may at times be changed or initiated spontaneously or new ones created for specific ritual events. There seems to be a pool of well known chants which is frequently drawn from by the Pagan community, as well as, chants which have been created for specific rituals and holidays. At times context seems to be very
important when decisions are made as to which chants to use, and frequently these may be rehearsed prior to the ritual to refresh one's memory or to teach those who may be unfamiliar with them. At other times chants seem to organically spring up during a ritual or even an informal assembly.

Following is a presentation of the chants which I had the opportunity to learn during my study, unfortunately I do not have a musical background allowing me to indicate the distinctive rhythm of each, however I did manage to get many of these on tape, which may be translated by someone with musical ability at a later date. I will indicate the type of ritual or context in which the chant was performed, as well as explaining the meaning of unfamiliar terms or sayings when necessary. For simplicity's sake I have arranged the chants into thematic groups which include: God and Goddess chants, nature chants, community chants and seasonal chants. This arrangement is not entirely arbitrary as the chants are often used for specific purposes and would be recognized as fitting into such categories by members of the Pagan community, it is also the case, that at times, there are chants which could fit into two or more of these groups at any one time.

**God and Goddess Chants.** These are chants which have as their central theme a recognition or description of various Gods and Goddesses or possibly a recognition or description of a "generic" God or Goddess often given reverence in many Pagan traditions and which represent the embodiment of the divine
male and female. Some chants are devoted just to the Goddess aspect, while others are devoted just to the God, still others have alternating verses which recognize both.

Favorite chants used at festivals for almost every occasion, for ritual, dancing, or drumming include chants commonly referred to as the "God chant" and the "Goddess chant". Such chants repeat in succession the names of ancient Pagan Goddesses and Gods from around the world. There are several versions of each, and much improvisation often takes place surrounding these chants. Below are three different versions of the God Chant. The first two have the same cadence. The first two God chants also have the same cadence as the Goddess chant and often the God and Goddess chants are interwoven, or chanted simultaneously:

- Odin
- Cernunnos
- Merddyn
- Mannanan
- Helios
- Shiva
- Horned One

- Shamash
- Adonis
- Herocte
- Helios
- Apollo
- Balder
- Nuada

- Pan
- Woten
While the are variations on the Goddess chant, the Goddess chant as a whole seems to be much better known within the Pagan community, and as such is much more stable in its presentation:

Isis,
Astarte,
Diana,
Hecate,
Demeter,
Kali,
Innana

The next chant honors both the God and Goddess. I originally heard this chant performed as part of a God and Goddess invocation during a ritual, that is they were performed in order to welcome the spirit of the God and Goddess into the ritual space.

We all come from the Goddess,
and to her we shall return
Like a drop of rain
flowing to the ocean
We all come from the God
and to him we shall return
like a spark of flame
rising to the heavens

The next chant is one dedicated to the God of the harvest. The Pagan God is often referred to as the "Horned One" in the tradition of the Greek God Pan, or the Celtic Cernunnos, which translates as Horned One. The words are referring to the idea that the God is
embodied in the grain of the fields, and with the harvest the God is "cut down" or dies and will be reborn anew in the Spring with the planting of the crops.

Horned One
Lover, Son
Leaper in the Corn
Deep in the Mother
Die and be reborn

A similar chant goes as follows:

Hoof and Horn (repeat)
All that dies shall be reborn
Corn and Grain (repeat)
All that falls shall rise again

The next chant is one which honors the "Moon Goddess", Aradia. I originally heard it performed as part of a full moon ritual.

Full moon shining bright,
Midnight on the water,
Oh, Aradia, Diana's silver Daughter.

This chant honors the image of the Goddess as the "Ancient Mother" of all. I heard it performed as part of a procession into an all-women's ritual I attended.

Ancient Mother I hear you calling
Ancient Mother I hear your song
Ancient Mother I hear you laughter
Ancient Mother I taste your tears
The next series of chants, I learned at an all-women's ritual. The first of the versions was taught prior to the ritual, however the other two versions were variations on the first. These variations occurred spontaneously during the ritual itself. They were chanted as a "spiral dance" was performed.

The Goddess is alive and
Magic is afoot.

The Witches are alive and
Magic is afoot.

The Women are alive and
Magic is afoot.

Nature Chants. These are chants which honor or recognize nature or natural forces. Many of them are chants which recognize what are seen by Pagans as the four elements in nature: earth, air, fire and water.

This first nature chant was a "call to meeting" chant, as it was taught during the morning meeting at a festival and was often chanted to alert participants that the meeting was about to begin.

Earth my body,
Water my blood,
Air my breath,
And fire my Spirit.

Other elemental chants go as follows:
Air I am,
Fire I am,
Water, Earth and Spirit I am.

The Earth, the air, the fire, the water
Return, return, return, return.

I heard both of the above at various rituals, in the context of honoring the "four directions" of North, East, South and West which correspond in most Pagan ritual settings to earth, air, fire and water, respectively. Such directions are usually "called" or "invoked" at the beginning of a ritual in order to help create sacred space.

Rituals to honor the earth, and participants connection to nature are common at festivals. The following chants were learned at a ritual performed in honor of "Mother Earth". The ritual was performed inside a large cave located on the campground which the festival was being held, with the cave being symbolic of the "womb" of the Earth Mother. A procession was lead through the cave into a large open chamber, as participants chanted:

We are the walking breath,
We are the spirit of the earth,
We are alive and walking,
Where we walk is beautiful.
Other chants performed during this ritual had distinctive ecological themes, as well as incorporating Native American sayings and chants

    The Earth is our Mother,  
    We will take care of her.  
    The Earth is our Mother,  
    We will take care of her  
    Hey yana Ho yana Hey yan yan

And following:

    I can feel your heartbeat,  
    Heartbeat,  
    Mother, mother, earth, earth  
    On jay On jay, On jay.

A final chant performed at this ritual goes as follows:

    Mamma, Mamma Gaia;  
    Mamma Gaia, Can you Hear?  
    Mamma, Mamma Gaia;  
    I'm asking you to draw near,  
    Cause we're gonna sing a song,  
    Dance roun' the fire.  
    Dancing all night long,  
    Raising the energy higher.

The following chants were originally learned at an all-women ritual and have a distinct feminine slant, dealing with such things
as fertility, power, life and the womb, as symbolized by the ocean and water.

The ocean is the beginning of the earth,  
The ocean is the beginning of the earth,  
All life comes from the sea,  
All life comes from the sea.

We are alive like the earth is alive (repeat)  
If we have courage we can be healers,  
Like the sun we shall rise (repeat)

Another version of this second chant goes as follows:

We are alive like the earth is alive  
We have the power to fight for our freedom  
If we have courage we can be healers  
Like the sun we shall rise

Chants may also be performed to honor animals in nature or the connection humans have with other animals. I have included example of such chants within the nature chants section. At one festival I attended a ritual was performed to help participants get in touch with their "power animal", or "totem animal".

Participants in the ritual dressed up as their power animal which they would "dance" during the ritual itself. The chant which was used to initiate the ritual goes as follows:

Fur and feathers and scales and skin,  
Different without, but the same within,  
Many a body but one a soul,  
Through all creatures are the gods made whole.
Another chant which honors winged creatures, was performed as part of a spiral dance. It was chanted in a round format, and goes as:

Wearing my long-wing feathers as I fly (repeat)
I circle around (repeat)
The boundaries of the earth (repeat)

Community Chants. These are chants which are descriptive of the communal spirit of Pagan festivals, or which are deliberately employed by festival organizers or ritual facilitators to create the spirit of community. The first example was performed during the opening ritual of one of the festivals I attended. Chanting began as the procession entered the "circle" as:

We are an old people
We are a new people
We are the same people
Better than before.

A second version of this chant goes as:

We are an old people
We are a new people
We are the same people
Wiser than before

This chant represents the contemporary Pagan's symbolic ties with the pre-Christian Pagans of ancient times. It is also in reference to the fact that Paganism, as a religion(s), has survived
various persecutions and is now once again alive and well in the twentieth century world.

Another example of a community chant was performed during a procession of gay, lesbian and bisexual Pagans after a workshop/luncheon. The procession was lead around the campsite by the workshop organizers in honor of the unique position in the Pagan community which gay, lesbian and bisexual members hold. The procession was accompanied by the chant:

You are my family,
And you are healing me,
We are your people,
Be as one,
Be as one.

Other community oriented chants I heard performed at festivals include:

We are a circle,
Within a circle,
With no beginning,
And never ending

Burn bright, flame within me,
Kindled of eternal fire,
Of the people I do be,
And the people part of me,
All one in many parts,
A single fire of flaming hearts.
The first was chanted as participants entered a ritual circle area as part of an opening ritual of a festival. The second, I first heard during a closing ritual of a festival.

**Seasonal Chants.** Many chants focus around seasonal celebrations, or are written for a particular ritual purpose. The following chants were performed at Summer Solstice ritual at a festival I attended. The particular Solstice ritual celebrated the symbolic wedding of the Goddess to the God, who in this case was represented as the "Greenman" of summer. A chant was begun to entice the "Bride" into the circle which went as follows:

```
Lady of Summer
Queen of Heaven and Earth
Come and join our Solstice Circle
Bring us love and myrth.
```

A similar chant was also performed for the "Greenman":

```
Lord of Summer
Lord of Field and Forest
Come and join our Summer Circle
Greet thy summer queen.
```

In the same ritual, the symbolic "wedding" ceremony was followed by a spiral dance. As the dance began this chant was sounded:

```
Dance children Dance as we sing the songs of summer
Children Dance;
Children Dance.
```
Later in the dance another chant was started which went as:

We come from the spiral,
Living in the spiral,
Go back to the spiral,
Turn the world around.

Another seasonal chant which I heard performed at a Bardic circle during a Samhain (Halloween) festival I attended, and which refers to the turning of the "wheel" of the year, goes as follows:

Where there is fear there is power
Passion is the healer
Desire cracks open the door
When you're ready it take you through
But nothing lasts forever
Time is the destroyer
The Wheel turns again and again
Watch out or it will take you through
But nothing dies forever
Nature is the renewer
The wheel turns again and again
When you're ready it'll take you through.

Chants, from the vantage point of participants are both functional and represent a form of creative art. Chants serve several purposes as was pointed out earlier. They help to delineate ritual space, help to facilitate a shared group-consciousness, and to help focus participants in a common cause. Chants in such a capacity can be both consciousness altering and
empowering. Chants serve to create a ritual atmosphere by setting a pace through rhythm. They may be lively and energetic or slow and somber. Chants are furthermore indicative of the concerns of the Pagan community or the focus of a particular ritual, indicating such concerns through their content, theme and rhythm.

The artfulness of chants is displayed through the creative manipulation of the same contents, themes and rhythms. Chants are viewed as viable is they convey a certain message, if they are easy to learn, remember or sing, if they fulfill their intended role in the ritual and if the can be replicated and sustained for extended periods of time.

**Humor/Jokes**

Although there is a very serious side to Paganism, the humorous side in many ways is one of the things that stands out most. As I said before, Pagans regard their religion as something to be enjoyed fully, and because of this light-hearted attitude, nothing is above being poked fun of; an attitude which was fully expressed in the earlier stories. Humor is of course but another way of using oral expression to convey values and beliefs, many times by making fun of those very same values and beliefs that a
community holds sacred. I encountered humor in even the most serious of rituals I attended over the span of my study. Following are some various examples of Pagan humor which includes not only jokes and puns, but some humorous variations upon Pagan songs and chants.

Jokes. Following are examples of Pagan jokes. Several I heard around Bardic Circles, other's I heard in casual conversations. "Light Bulb" jokes are especially popular.

Why do witch's conversations never make any sense? Answer: Because they always talk in circles.

How many Crowleyites does it take to screw in a lightbulb? They can't, Uncle Aleister didn't leave any instructions.

How many Radical Feminist Witches does it take to screw in a light bulb? Seven, one to do it, two to organize it and four to debate the meaning of the word "screw"

Another variation of this joke is as follows:

How many Radical Feminist Witches does it take to screw in a light bulb? That's not funny!!

The following two jokes are examples of what Pagan's refer to as "born-again Christian" jokes. Their presentation in this paper is in no way meant to offend, belittle or disregard anyone who is a member of such a religion nor their practices and beliefs. They are presented here, however, because they do represent an
accepted form of humor within the Pagan community, and thus
do express a general social attitude important to the context of
this study. Like, I mentioned earlier, Pagans generally find
nothing above the boundary of humor, and most do respect the
religious beliefs and freedoms of others, however in the context
of their own religious beliefs, they many times like to point out
what they feel are absurdities in others. Following are two such
jokes:

How many born-again Christians does it take to
screw in a light bulb?
Answer: None, born-again Christians like to keep
people in the dark.

Three business men, a Hindu, a Jew, and a born-again
Christian, were on their way to a meeting when their
car broke down in a rural farmland area. They got out
to go for help, and not only was it getting darker, but
a terrible storm broke out. They finally made their
way to a small farmhouse, and asked if they could
stay the night to take shelter from the storm. The
owner of the farmhouse agreed, however he only had
room for two of the men inside the house, and said,
"One of you will have to sleep in the barn". The Hindu
replied, "I don't mind, I'll go sleep in the barn", and he
left. A few minutes later there was a knock on the
door. The farmer answered, and it was the Hindu, and
he said, "I'm sorry, I can't sleep in the barn. There is
a cow in the barn, and in my religion the cow is a
sacred animal, it would be like sleeping with my
mother". The Jewish man spoke up and said, "O.K., I'll
go sleep in the barn", and he left. A few minutes later
once again, there was a knock on the door. The
farmer answered, and it was the Jew and he said, "I
can't sleep in the barn either, there is a pig in the
barn, and in my religion, the pig is filthy, unclean
animal. It would disgust me to sleep in the barn". The born-again Christian spoke up and said, "Well, I guess I'll have to sleep in the barn then", and so he left. Well, once again, a few minutes later there was a knock at the door". The farmer answered it and who do think it was? The cow and the pig, of course.

**Puns.** The following are a few examples of puns which have been altered in a specific Pagan context.

In the gay and lesbian community, many times the task of letting it be known that one is in fact gay or lesbian, is termed, "Coming out of the closet". In the Wiccan world, a similar task of letting others know that you are a Witch is referred to as "Coming out of the broom closet".

This second pun is a take off from a common saying sometimes found on bumper stickers and buttons. The original pun reads, "Life's a bitch and then you die". However this has been altered in the Pagan community, to say, "Life's a Witch and then you fly". I've seen this saying on bumper stickers, tee-shirts and buttons sold at Pagan festivals.

A bumper sticker commonly seen to allude to the owners perception of the car as less than adequate, is "My other car is a Mercedes". This, following in the Wiccan tradition has been altered to say, "My other car is a Broom".

The following is an alteration of a line from Shakespeare's *MacBeth*; the original being, "By the pricking of my thumbs, something wicked this way comes". The alteration which I have
seen on bumper sticker and buttons reads as, "Something Wiccan this way comes".

**Humorous chants/songs.** As I mentioned earlier, many times at the festivals I attended, chants and songs would spontaneously spring up among a group of people. Following in the Pagan tradition of holding nothing completely sacred, many times these chants were altered to suit specific conditions, etc., and the results were usually humorous.

At one festival I attended on one afternoon a thunderstorm broke out, and temperatures dropped dramatically during the following evening as well as the following day. As you probably know, when camping, nothing is completely protected from a major thunderstorm, and of course, after the storm, not only was everyone and everything wet but with the temperatures dropping rapidly, everyone was freezing. To keep warm people were huddling together in groups and many times alterations of popular chants arose, lifting everyone's cold and wet spirits. Some of these alterations went as follows:

From the original chant which goes as:

We are a circle, within circle
with no beginning, and never ending

To:

We are a circle, within a circle
with no beginning, and very muddy

And:

We are a circle, within a circle
with no beginning, and we are freezing.

From the original which goes as:
Earth my body, Water my blood
Air my breath, and fire my spirit.

To:
Cold my body, Sluggish my blood,
Stale my breath, and Dampen my spirit.

The final day of festivals are often filled with many mixed emotions, and the common feeling among many people is often one that participants are not ready to leave and go back to the "outside" world. Variations on chants, of course, arose to express those very feelings. An example of this goes as follows:

From:
Hoof and Horn, Hoof and Horn
All that dies shall be reborn.

To:
Bitch and Moan, Bitch and Moan
We don't want to go back home.

Another of these is in reference to the name of a particular coven, "Children of the Laughing Greenwood. On the final day of one festival this particular group altered the following chant from its original wording of:

From:
We come from the spiral;
Living in the spiral;
Go back to the spiral;
Turn the world around.

To:
We come from the Greenwood
Living in the Greenwood;
Go back to the Greenwood;  
Laugh our asses off!

Finally, it is a common humorous practice among Pagans and to alter versions of Christian songs for their own amusement. For example the well known song "Jesus Loves Me" frequently taught to Christian children, is many times altered to include the names of Pagan gods and/or goddesses, a common rendition being in reference to the Norse god *Loki*, which goes as:

Yes Loki loves me, Yes Loki loves me, Yes Loki loves me, Yesterday, he told me so.

Another song commonly heard among Pagans, was originally a Christian song, which in a Pagan context takes on an entirely different meaning. Pagan's sometimes refer to their religious practices as the "Old religion", meaning the practice of ancient pre-Christian religions, and the following song if interpreted in a Pagan context refers to just that. The Christian song entitled, "Give me that ole' time religion", is an obvious target for such interpretation. I have heard many many versions of this song, and have been told that hundreds of variations exist. Here are a few examples:

Chorus: Give me that old' time religion (repeat three times)  
It's good enough for me!

Verses: Let us all worship Freya  
She is certainly a stayer,
And all the Gods obey her,
So she's good enough for me.

Let us all worship Horus
He was here long time before us
But he certainly won't bore us
That's good enough for me.

Let us all worship Isis
She'll bring along Osiris
They'll see you through a crisis
They're good enough for me

Let us all worship Bacchus
He'll sure create a rackus
But he'll never ever knock us
So he's good enough for me

Let us all worship Kali
She sure can throw a party
And she'll ride there on her harley
And that's good enough for me

Another example is entitled, "What a Friend We have in Bacchus"
which is performed to the tune of the original, "What a Friend We have in Jesus":

What a friend we have in Bacchus, In his drink we lose all care; Gaily stomping grapes and berries, of his wine we want our share. Oh, what fun we often forfeit, when abstaining from his fare; Grab you friends and come on over, Bacchus we will worship there.

Bacchus sends his invitation, wine and nectar everywhere; Hold your faith and affirmation, never let yourself despair. Can we find a friend so faithful, who will all our pleasure share; Join the gentle celebration, raise a toast to him in prayer.
The following song is one which makes fun of "urban Pagans", or those Pagans who come to outdoor festivals bringing with them all the luxuries of home. The song is further in reference to the curious irony in the Pagan community, that although most contemporary Pagan religions claim to be "nature oriented", the majority of participants still live in urban or suburban environments. I first heard the this song performed at a talent show and later at a Bardic circle. There are literally hundreds of verses to this song, and improvisation is encouraged. These particular verses are courtesy of Tavia Rowan:

I'm out here in this field of tents
Wonderin' where the 220 went
Chorus: I'm a Winnebago Pagan, I'm a Winnebago Pagan
I love Mama Nature, long as she don't get too close

I got cruis control and auto drive
My bumper sticker says, "The Goddess is Alive"
Chorus

I don't mind doing volunteer work
But I'm not going to sleep on dirt
Chorus

Skyclad is a lovely thing
But it can't beat air conditioning
Chorus

I love that God and Goddess of mine
Long as I don't have to miss Deep Space Nine
Chorus.
Humor provides yet another venue for identity formation. The understanding of humor in many contexts also shows a certain level of knowledge about a culture, as most humor is culturally specific, understood only if one is privy to information that outsiders are not. This is true of Pagan humor. The humor shown in the Pagan context also points to a certain sophistication and self-reflexiveness on the part of participants as they analyze their own beliefs and practices in the non-threatening setting of humor. In this way humor serves to validate and reaffirm beliefs as participants recognize themselves there.

Humor, as pointed out earlier, has played a key role in the formation of several Pagan traditions, and as such, humor is seen as an essential part of spiritual life. Pagans view humor as providing a sense of balance. One participant noted, "Without humor, we would lose a sense of balance, those who take their religion too seriously must find other outlets for release, those outlets, unfortunately, often come in the form of discrimination and dogma". Others see humor as adding a dynamic dimension to Paganism, as one participant, leading a workshop on the role of humor in the Pagan community noted:

Humor plays an important role, it encourages us to create, not to be static, not to let ourselves get fossilized in our religion. I've said for years if you're not enjoying your religion - Why bother? Satirical cults and rituals may start out silly, but actually end up having archetypal power behind them. People need practice in creativity, at one time we thought our religion was handed down from the ancients and we couldn't change it because it wouldn't be authentic
anymore, now we know better. All religion was made up somewhere. The practice of creating new religions is a good mental exercise".

Humor in the Pagan festival context also allows for the refinement of "in-group ethnicities" as is evidence in several of the above examples, as ways in which certain groups choose to interpret their various Pagan paths are made explicit. That is humor becomes a means to mark particular groups inside the festival community itself. Through the venue of humor, however, such explicitness can be carried out in a capacity with is non-threatening to the continued co-existence of divergent Pagan traditions.

Pagan humor also serves to forge Pagan identity through the juxtaposition of that identity with that of other religious groups, especially Judeo-Christian ones. While it is the case that Judeo-Christian religions are not necessarily singled out by participants in the Pagan movement as targets for hostility, Judeo-Christian religions are viewed to some extent within the Pagan movement as antithetical to Paganism (i.e. Christianity is characterized as monotheistic, dogmatic, proselytizing, canonical, hierarchical, etc., as opposed to the polytheistic, non-dogmatic, non-hierarchical characteristics of Pagan religions), and as such a juxtaposition of the two provides for the Pagan community a reflective base through which Pagan identity can be further illuminated. Many Pagans also view Christians as a potential threat as it is primarily Christian individuals and groups who
have continued to characterize contemporary Pagan religions as a form of "Satanism", and who are often viewed as responsible when cases of discrimination occur against Pagans. Thus through humorous reflection the threat that Christians are viewed as potentially posing is diluted and placed within a new framework. There are also many Pagans who, prior to their identification with Paganism, were affiliated with Judeo-Christian religions. Following, humor directed towards such religions within a Pagan context may serve as a means for such individuals to subvert their former Judeo-Christian identities. For example the substitution of Pagan themes in familiar Christian songs, as in the above examples, may allow such songs to take on a new meaning for the individual. Thus songs which in one context were once regarded as sacred can be "desacralized" and stripped of their former power.

Ritual

The study of rituals like the study of festivals has been especially popular in ethnography due to their easily encapsulated performative and textual nature. Ritual is included here, in the chapter on Pagan folklore and oral expressions because rituals at Pagan festivals are essentially formalized performances of an oral nature. Furthermore, ritual at Pagan festivals constitutes the primary site for the performance of Pagan mythical cycles. They are also sites for the construction of
identity and cultural standards. While many Pagans read about how "to do" Pagan ritual through the avenue of text, a basic Pagan ritual structure learned through performative and orally instructed channels has passed into the larger folkloric matrix of festivals.

In the anthropological literature a great deal of theorizing has surrounded the practice of ritual. Ritual has been interpreted in terms of its functional, textual, and performative nature. In anthropological terms ritual sacralizes, it reinforces meaning and identity, ritual moves people from one status to another, it creates community and social cohesion, ritual produces change and culture.

Early ritual theory focuses around how it functioned in society serving to bring individual interest in congruence with those of their social group. Durkheim (1915) saw ritual as promoting social solidarity through the projection of idealized morals, beliefs and standards into a performative context where it was in turn reflected back to participants. Durkheim saw ritual as serving four basic functions 1) pedantic, 2) memory facilitation, 3) innovation and 4) provision of dramatic context for the collective to impress itself upon the individual. Finally, in its performative context, Durkheim viewed ritual as constituting myth put into action.

Weber saw ritual as focusing around the playing out of magico-religious systems, allowing them to become fixed in the minds of the participants (1991). Weber's evaluation of ritual is,
however, more culturally specific than that of Durkheim's, as he took into account the purpose ascribed to ritual by the participants themselves. Weber viewed ritual from a pragmatic stance, seeing it as the primary performative aspect of religion. Ritual, in Weber's terms provides the function of connecting to the sacred or the supernatural; it is a way to carry out the symbolic activity, to appeal to the supernatural on its own terms.

Levi-Strauss noted the ability of ritual to provide access to a cosmology which in turn allows for a greater understanding of the world. Through this process ritual action projects itself into the religious subconscious providing for deeper meaning (Champagne 1987).

Turner defines ritual as "a process of communication, serving the highly important functions of... storing and transmitting information" (1968:28). Turner views ritual as serving several functions in society which include, the alleviation of social stress and the "existential turmoil" suffered by individuals. Ritual is a social drama, providing a social model for how "things should be", as Turner notes, "Ritual is a periodic restatement of the terms in which men of a particular culture must interact if there is to be any kind of a coherent social life" (Turner 1968: 6-7).

Ritual and the model of ritual serve as Turner's basic heuristic device to discuss the dynamics of religion. Turner borrows much of this model from Van Gennep pointing out ritual involves a trifold process of separation, transition, and reincorporation. It is a model which moves participants from one structure, to a state of
anti-structure, to another structure, and in doing so redefines the parameters of the group and the individual within the group.

Geertz (1966) defines ritual as "consecrated behavior". Ritual is the place where, "in some sort of ceremonial form... that the moods and motivations which sacred symbols induce in men and the general conceptions of the order of existence which they formulate for men, meet and reinforce one another" (Geertz, 1966:112). Following, Geertz's interpretation of ritual focused around its textuality as it incorporates particular sequential ordering of acts, utterances and events. Geertz also recognized the performative action involved in ritual, with which the text is fused. Ritual is thus a place where beliefs are confirmed, where the ideals of a culture become stabilized through their performance.

The following is a description of a ritual performed at a Samhain (Halloween) festival in the Southeastern United States. This time of the season represents in Pagan terms the time of the year, following the harvest, where the world grows dark, and where the deities descend into the underworld of death from which they will return in the Spring.

Participants were anointed with oil as they entered the ritual space. Males were anointed by a female, who placed a drop of oil with her finger on their forehead and said, "Thou art God". Females were anointed by a male in the same manner, who said, "Thou art Goddess". In the center of the circle was a large alter which contained candles, bowls of fruit and a sword. Torches
were set up around the edges of the ritual circle to light the area, as the ritual was performed at about eight-o-clock in the evening. Four individuals gathered around the alter in the center of the circle. Each of them greeted the direction they faced. The circle was then "cast" with a woman walking the circle with the sword in hand. A woman representing the Goddess then entered the space. She was dressed in black and red and wore a hooded cape. She walked slowly around the circle and looking into the each of each participant she asked, "Have you seen Death? I am searching for Death." After she was all the way around the circle, a man entered, representing the God. He took the woman by the hand and said, "My love, it is time to go. He is waiting for us". The woman started to take his hand, but replied, "No! I won't go. Why should I leave my children every year. They need me now. They are scared and I must comfort them. Why must I mourn? Why must I spend the next half of the year immersed in my tears, when we could stay here, with our children?" The man taking the woman in his arms said, "My love, maybe you are right, maybe we could stay for a little while longer". Then an individual dressed as "Death" or the "Grim Reaper" donning a skull mask, a black hooded cape and a large scythe, entered the circle and held out a hand in silence to the couple. The woman looked around and finally said, "No, it is time. It is the way of the world, if we do not go now there will be no renewal in the Spring for our children, no rebirth. Our children rely on us as much to go as
they do for us to return. The man and the woman both taking the hand of Death, leave the circle.

By this time it had started to rain, and it was announced that the ritual, "cakes and wine" would be served at the main lodge, with dinner which was to follow the ritual. The same four individuals that greeted the directions thanked them for their presence, and the circle was ended with the following saying, "The circle is open, but unbroken. Merry Meet!, Merry Part! and Merry Meet again!".

This ritual like the stories presented earlier contains within a number of features which are indicative of the creative process involved in the formation of Pagan identity:

1) First, the ritual is recognizable as ritual - That is, it is set up in the same ritual format as most rituals which occur at festivals rendering it familiar to veteran festival goers and therefore reinforces a sense of continuity. At the same time is it pedagogical as it serves to convey this same structure to those who may be unfamiliar with it. Here ritual organizers have played their role in instilling such ritual "structure" into the larger folkloric matrix of the Pagan community.

2) Second, the ritual involves the performance of the mythic cycle of the God and Goddess and furthermore relates this cycle to that of the cycles of nature. Here once again, the pedagogical role of ritual in the festival context is evident,
with myth being put into action allowing another avenue for participants to learn the associations between the holidays, seasons and mythic cycles of the deities. In its performative aspect, the ritual is also a reflection of the beliefs of participants, allowing for such beliefs to be played out before their very eyes. Thus the myth of the God and Goddess may be more easily understood when presented in a dramatic framework meant to emotionally move participants.

3) Thirdly, the ritual is generic - That is the specific nature of the God and Goddess portrayed, or the specific cultural background from which they were derived is not made explicit within the context of the festival. Such generic ritual drama works well within a festival context where participants are present from a number of Pagan traditions each of which may attribute specific names and characteristics to the Gods and Goddesses. Following, in order to make the ritual more appealing to everyone, festival rituals often draw from a more generalized or "generic" Pagan lore, allowing for greater inclusion rather than excluding participants who may not share specific deity attributes.

The second ritual I would like to present is one performed at a Summer Solstice festival in the Midwest. It involves the
mythical re-enactment of the "sacred marriage" of the Goddess to the God.

Participants were led into the ritual space through a large paper-mache dolmen reminiscent of the standing stones in the British Isles. The four directions were greeted, and a chant was begun to entice the Goddess into the circle. A woman representing the Goddess entered the circle. She was dressed all in white with a large lace veil which covered her entire body and which was adorned with roses all over. She was pregnant. She stood upon a large platform awaiting her consort's arrival. A chant was then begun to entice the God into the circle. Bells were heard as the "God" entered the circle. The man was painted green and had green leaves all over his body, and large dancing bells around his wrists and ankles. He danced around the circle and went up to meet his bride. They then performed a rite common among Wiccan circles known as the "Great Rite" where the woman held up a cup and the man plunged into the cup a ritual knife. This is to symbolize the sacred marriage/sexual union of the God and Goddess. The woman then wrenched the knife out of the hand of the God and pretended to slay him. As he lay dead on the platform, participants were led through a long corridor of individuals all dressed in black. Each couple on either side of the corridor uttered a saying referring to life and death, such as "The rose and the thorn", "Life in death, Death in Life", "The Darkness and the Light". After going through the row of people individuals were led into the presence of a veiled woman dressed all in black,
as individuals approached her, an individual standing near said, "Greet the Dark Mother of Death, but do not look upon her face". The veiled women then drew out from under her veil a pomegranate, the fruit of the underworld. Then participants were led into to a small tent, covered in black and shaped like a vulva, symbolizing entrance into the womb, inside it was red, lined with roses and lighted, then an individual would reach in taking your hand, and saying, "Emerge from the Summerland, be reborn", participants were then able to join a spiral dance, accompanied by chants. The dance lasted long and constituted the end of the ritual, with everyone dancing around the ritual fire.

Specific features of this ritual important to the formation of Pagan identity may include:

1) The mythical re-enactment of the cycles of the God and Goddess, for reasons mentioned above.

2) Visual references to ancient pre-Christian Pagan practices, such as the inclusion of the dolmen reminiscent of early European megaliths and the performance of the "Greenman", modeled after depictions of such a figure in early European art, meant to instill in participants a connection with an ancient Pagan past.

The following ritual was entitled, "Remembering Salem" and was held at a festival in honor of the 300th anniversary of the
Salem witch trials. While creators of the ritual announced that they realized that the individuals killed at Salem were not Witches in the sense that Neo-Pagans understand that term today, they did realize that the killings were done out of intolerance, fear and ignorance. The following ritual was conducted in order to remember all of those who had died due to such type of persecution.

The participants were lead into the circle. In the center of the circle stood a gallows with a noose hanging from it. Two men were hammering nails into the structure as participants entered, as if they were finishing its final construction. A group of individuals representing the Salem townsfolk then began to move around the circle in groups of two or three, speaking loud enough that the circle participants could hear them, they were speaking of the accusations of witchcraft which were taking place in their town. Every so often, one would stop and ask one of the participants in the circle, whether or not they had heard the news about, Bridget Bishop who had been accused of witchcraft. They began to whisper rumors about the accused such as, "I heard she could sour milk", "I heard she put a blight on the crops this year". A bell hanging from the gallows was then rung, and a person dressed in black with an executioners hood entered. Then an individual representing the magistrate, holding a scroll began to walk around the circle asking, "Where is Bridget Bishop? Where is the witch". The men who were hammering the nails then began to walk around the circle, pointing their fingers at participants
and asking, "Are you Bridget Bishop?". They found her hiding behind some people in the circle and took her forcibly to the gallows. She cried out, "I am not a Witch, I had done nothing wrong!" After that the rest of the names of the accused in the Salem witch trials, such as Sarah Good and Susannah Martin, were read aloud from the gallows by the magistrate. After each the bell was rung, and the two men would go out into the circle and bring back a person representing the accused. The townspeople who had walked the circle previously begin to jeer at them, calling out such things as, "Liar, you are in league with the devil", "You deserve to die". The magistrate then looked around at the participants and said, "Before this is all over 400 more will be accused". The woman playing the part of Bridget Bishop then ran up to the gallows, and screamed, "No! No more! this insanity must stop!" Music then began to play, performed by a Pagan band, playing a song entitled "The Burning Times" which is about the witch burnings in Europe. As the song ended in a whispered chant, the individuals playing the accused surrounded the gallows and faced their open arms out to the participants and said together, "I am a Witch, who will stand with me?" The circle of participants then rushed up to hug the accused, most were laughing and crying. The circle was then reformed as the following chant was sounded, "We are alive, as the earth is alive, we have the power to fight for our freedom, If we have courage we can be healers, like the sun we shall rise". As the energy peaked the woman representing the priestess raised her hand in
the air, to send out the energy and then she dropped to the ground. She then stood and said, "Let the bell toil and let their be a moment of silence for people all over the world who have died for their beliefs". The bell was toiled and the circle of the accused, walked around the circle saying, "The circle is open, but unbroken, may the love of the Lady and Lord Be in your heart, Merry Meet!, Merry Part! and Merry Meet again". A group of drummers then filed out of the circle and the rest of the participants followed them as they processed through the village of tents, shouting, "Never Again. Never again!". After the procession returned to the main ritual area where the gallows stood, the gallows were taken apart and burned in the ritual fire.

The above ritual contains within it some important implications for discerning the process of Pagan identity formation:

1) Specifically the organizers seemed to be targeting the willingness to admit to such an identity in the face of potential discrimination.

2) The ritual was also designed to reclaim in Pagan terms an event which, although not involving Pagans has in the past been specifically associated with Pagan history, and create in the minds of participants something which is meaningful in a Pagan context as well as empowering.

3) The ritual designed to be transformative and empowering as it involved the combined groups recognition
of the injustice that can occur as the result of religious intolerance, and served as a means for the participants to come together around this point of reference and participate in the mutual agreement to rally against such injustice. Such a design is also indicative of the degree to which Pagans see potential discrimination and religious intolerance as directed towards them as Pagan being part and parcel of the adoption of a Pagan identity.

The next ritual I would like to present was performed at a Spring May festival in honor of the Pagan holiday, "Beltane".

The ritual began with a procession which was lead by the "King" and "Queen" of May. Both the king and queen wore a wreath or crown of flowers and greenery on their head. The procession was accompanied by the song, "Greet the sun this Beltane Morn, Hail the May Queen and her Bonnie Lord, Heed the dance and plant the corn, Fa la la la la la la la la la la. On every branch there grows a flower, Hail the May Queen and her Bonnie Lord, Welcome them to the Bridal Bower, Fa la la la la la la la la la la". Once the procession reached its destination, participants were lead under a flower covered archway into a circle where in the center stood a large May pole with long colorful ribbons flowing from its top. The four directions were greeted by four individuals, and the circle was cast as a four different individual each walked the circle, first an individual throwing flower petals, then an individual with a bowl of water which they sprinkled, and then
an individual with incense, and then an individual with a sword. Following the setting of the circle, a woman, representative of the Goddess emerged from the circle. Her head covered with a shroud, she said, "Why is all that I love taken away?" She is greeted by a man, representative of the God who replied, "You must understand, there would be no life without death, in the circle of life, all with return". The couple then led the participants in a spiral dance, chanting, "Comes the Lord of the Greenwood, Greenwood (repeat), To court the Lady Fair. In the heat of their passion, passion (repeat), the corn will rise again". After the dance, everyone held up a sprig of green leaves or budding flowers which they were asked to bring with them, and yelled, "Bring in the Greening". Participants were then asked to be seated as juice and cakes were passed around the circle. The ritual facilitators then announced that some of the cakes and wine will be given back to the land. The woman and man representing the God and Goddess then performed the "passing of the sword" rite where the sword which had been kept by the "Dark Goddess" during the winter months is passed to the God who represents fertility of the land. Volunteers were then asked to join a May Pole Dance, which was accompanied by the following chant, "Round an' around and around we go, sometimes fast and sometimes slow, Round an' around and around we go, to bring the greening in". After the ribbons were wound tightly about the pole, participants brought up the sprigs of green they had earlier
and placed them between the ribbons. The ritual was then ended with the "Merry Meet" chant.

I found this ritual to be particularly interesting in light of the research goals of this project as it provides a good example of the deliberate incorporation of historical May Day "traditions" such as a May pole dance, and the crowning of the May Queen and King into Pagan ritual. In the Pagan context such "traditions" are seen as being placed back within their original Pagan context, and thus represent a "return" to "authentic" Pagan activity. Such a revival is particularly interesting as these same May Day traditions enjoyed a similar reclamation in nineteenth century England, as well as, other parts of Europe, as they were incorporated into the creation of various nationalistic identities (Judge 1991).

Contemporary Pagan rituals may furthermore be viewed as experimental models for the playing out of academic theories on the roles and functions of ritual. For example, Neo-Pagan rituals in the festival context could be interpreted as fulfilling the functional requirements for ritual which were originally drawn out by Durkheim, albeit with one important difference - the fulfilling of such functions is self-conscious and deliberate on the part of ritual organizers. Organizers design rituals in ways that will be pedantic, that will allow for the creation of "ethnic" memory which will in turn help to facilitate the creation of "ethnic" selves, that involve innovation, creativity and transformative properties, and which will help in the
strengthening of group identity and community. Rituals are organized in ways which allow for a solidarity to emerge, a solidarity which is seen by organizers and the community at larger as desirous and in need of an extra ritualized push to bring it into fruition. Ritual is thus, recognized by organizers, via their familiarity with theory on ritual, for its ability to create such solidarity and is selectively employed by organizers who see ritual as a strategic mechanism to help foster a better integrated Pagan community and identity. The selective employment and manipulation of ritual techniques on the part of organizers also incorporate other theoretical perspectives on ritual etiquette. For example deliberate attempts are made on the part of organizers to echo the tripartite system of ritual originally described by Van Gennep. Rituals, following in this model are therefore usually begun by the separation of sacred space from the profane, followed by the transformative phase of the ritual be that transformation be carried out through the working of magic or through the emotive effect of mythical performance, followed once again by the symbolic return to profane space and the reincorporation of participants into the community at large.

The above examples are only a few, but demonstrate clearly the collapsing of boundaries of religion, myth, play, ritual, and drama which occurs in the context of the Pagan festival. Through such performances new ties are drawn to the "old Gods" and myths, new traditions are created within the context of old. New meaning is given to old ways to celebrate the seasons. Folklore
and ritual in this sense, are selectively employed in a way that fosters links with past. It is, furthermore, a strategic way to "traditionalize", providing legitimation through its performance; performances which create images in the minds of participants and help to validate beliefs and identity. Memory is invented of a past that may or may not have existed in the pre-Christian era, but through which contemporary participants can create their world anew. In the Neo-Pagan context history and pre-history are reinterpreted in a way that is mutually reinforcing to the Pagan belief system and culture, sustaining it through its validation and ties to the past, and offering a vision of the future where nature and the old Gods and Goddesses are once again revered. Stories, chants, humor and ritual work simultaneously to effect the emergence of a new Pagan identity. They provide opportunities to see firsthand the mediums of their folk-culture displayed and through such displays their characterization of themselves as a "folk" is validated and upheld. Context to build such identity is provided through shared oral expressions and is actualized through ritual and the reflective performance of folklore. This context provides participants with a new story with which to explain the world and allows for the subsequent location of their present Pagan identity within that world. It furthermore, allows for the production of an "indigenous" Pagan discourse characterized by the constant renegotiation of boundaries, reinterpretation of former identities, and the alignment of identity features which correspond to one's present
understanding of self and the world. Through folklore and ritual contemporary Pagans have found a way of enacting and maintaining a link with an ancient Pagan past, albeit a past represented symbolically in the present. This link in turns helps to produced a shared sense of "timelessness" among participants producing a state which lends itself to the interpretation of identity as "authentic". Identity becomes a set of stories told by Pagans to Pagans about who they are with such stories being permeated throughout by all the stories they have absorbed about who they can be again.

At one time in anthropological and folkloric studies the idea of an invented ritual would have constituted a contradiction in terms, however through the rituals performed at Pagan festivals such a contradiction has lost its validity, through showing that is is possible to invent or create rituals in a cultural context which is both, new and not new, invented and meaningful, self-conscious and affirming of identity. Contemporary Pagans through ritual, have found a way to bring these all together in a context through which meaning, creativity and identity all spring.
CHAPTER VII
CONCLUSION: PAGANISM, ACADEMICS, 
AND THE POSTMODERN PARADIGM SHIFT

The contemporary creation of Pagan identity owes a tremendous debt to the academic fields of anthropology and folklore studies. It is an accepted practice among Pagans as they go about building identity and culture through festivals to selectively employ data from these fields with the goal being to bring about, to create, to cultivate an atmosphere reminiscent of the tribal village, the rural folk festival, an atmosphere which exudes an air of archaic livelihood and "primalness" without at the same time, giving up any sense of self-reflexive sophistication. From this selective manipulation, Pagan identity and culture are at once folkloric and make use of folklore, it is both a neo-tribal culture and culturally sensitive. Folklore material, history, ethnographic data, and archaeological findings are used as the foundation for the furthering of religious goals and group behavioral norms and identities. They constitute the
raw material from which Pagan community and culture are modeled. As such, data as it is appropriated, manipulated, selected from, reinterpreted, blended, and jumbled about, it is transformed and recreated into something uniquely and characteristically Pagan.

Early 19th century folklore scholars, approaching folklore with the goal in mind of furthering national identity, characterized folklore as being the container for the soul of a people. Pagans have in turn adopted a similar ethic as they self-consciously attempt to generate culture and identity through the selective manipulation and creation of their own folklore. Thus seeing themselves as being defined by it and in turn defining how it is to be used to promote community and culture.

Important in this characterization is the question as to whether or not contemporary Pagans share with anthropologists and folklorists similar attitudes and theoretical assumptions about the data they are using, or rather, "What is the Pagan conception of folklore?" The answer here is complex for there are Pagans who are at once academicians and who share and work within such a framework maintaining similar theoretical assumptions and methods. However, as a whole, Pagans are generally unconcerned about how and why such scholars came to their conclusions and rather just want to know what it is from such data that can prove useful in religious practice and reconstruction. Following such an approach proves to be very pragmatic as Pagans search through the data often disregarding
theoretical validity and selectively adopt what is useful and
discard that which is not or proves to be unappealing or even
unsubstantiating of their present identities and beliefs.

It is also the case that many Pagans as they engage in this
process of sorting through the data, do not regard themselves as
creators of folklore and culture, but rather see themselves as
uncoverers of such hidden lore, thus and inheritors of the past.
This is the area in my research in which I encountered the
greatest ambiguity and the widest array of opinions among
responses from participants. When I asked participants about
"Pagan folklore", I often got responses either questioning what I
meant by "Pagan folklore" or reciting sources from ancient texts.
The few exceptions where the responses from the individuals
who saw themselves as actively involved in the deliberate
creation of Pagan folklore such as known storytellers and ritual
organizers. Thus participants saw their lore as being primarily
generated by scholars of folklore and anthropology through which
they were merely the secondary appropriators. Rarely did they
take into account how such lore went through a process of
manipulation and transformation to become something new,
something uniquely Pagan. Yet to draw the conclusion that
Pagans are not highly self-reflexive and critical in their usage of
such data would also be a mischaracterization. There seems to be
a continuum along which Pagans place their reflexivity in terms
of the employment of data from scholarly sources. At one
extreme there are those who characterize folklore in much the
same way as did its original scholars - a form reminiscent of Tylorian survivals. At this end of the continuum, contemporary Pagan folklore is viewed as being that which has survived, possibly distorted through decades of filtration through a Christian ideology or devoid of meaning, but which persists and whose origin remains if effectively uncovered, Pagan.

Participants here engage in the highly positivistic act of searching for the "real", the "original", the "authentic" Pagan origin of known traditions, which they in turn intend to reclaim, re-appropriate from the present unrightful owners of such traditions and to re-establish such lore as part of their present ideology and practice. The dominant opinion at this end of the spectrum, is that there is a need for accurate and detailed research of the pre-Christian Pagan past and that only through such research can the act of simply "making-up" religion be sufficiently avoided.

Like former folklore theorists (Dorson 1976) they engage in the process of categorizing material as "real" versus "fake", "original" versus "synthetic" with the "real" being contained in the hands of archaeologists, folklorists, anthropologists and historians -those who they see as having access to the "raw data" of the past. They feel here there is a need for ritual, lore and beliefs to be held academically accountable. The belief is held that through such appeals to authenticity, Paganism will gain recognition from the non-Pagan world and will in turn be legitimized. The idea being that if contemporary Pagan beliefs and practices are based on those of their ancient pre-Christian predecessors as delineated
by legitimate and recognized scholars then there will be no recourse but for the outside world but to recognize their validity as a religion. Here we can observe what Bendix notes "demonstrate more and more the search on the part of natives for what they perceive to be authentic manifestations of their own culture" (1989:133). Following, there is a need to characterize the use of such scholarship in terms of "reclaiming" rather than "inventing" for such an admittance would allude to the idea that the "original" is somehow contingent and subjective; an admittance which could threaten to undermine the premise of their validation. Such an admittance would furthermore call into question personal identity and validity as such claims seem to be made as much for individual legitimation as they do for the outside non-Pagan world, as these are stories which are told both inside and outside of the community.

Ironically, at the same time academicians are engaged in the postmodern paradigm shift which moves the interpretation of their data away from the positivistic assumptions that appeal to a search for origins and that hold that truth is objective and discoverable, and subsequently are beginning to favor interpretations which problematize such assumptions and characterize truth as contingent, origins as undecipherable, and traditions as invented. Following scholars continue to take account of the subjective interpretation of cultural origins, noting that such origins are "largely irrelevant to the experience of tradition" with "authenticity" being forever constituted in the
present with the ability to take on a variety of assigned meaning rather than being something discoverable in any objective capacity (Handler and Linnekin 1984:286). Even in the midst of such irony there remains among Pagans an idealistic conception about the "truth" that academics possess, and as such place such scholars on a pedestal, appealing to their knowledge to validate religious beliefs and practices.

On the opposite end of the continuum, lie those Pagans who regard Paganism and their participation in it as being wholly created, invented, reconstructed and subjectively interpreted. It is in this capacity, the wholly subjective, that they see their religion as becoming personally meaningful. Thus at this end, meaning is viewed as being generated through self-conscious reflection and therefore cannot be defined through any parameters outside of the self. If it provides meaning, then it is legitimate regardless of the sources of the material. Meaning is generated and filtered through scholarship, yet that scholarship is not regarded as a given or unquestionable. Considered just as valid are the personal insights gained from participation in religious activity, idiosyncratic behaviors, personal aesthetics and creative endeavors. They characterize not only their own, but all religion as invented and thus see themselves as being no different from the practitioners of any other religion, except for perhaps being consistently aware of their own self-conscious reflection on the matter. Many others among the Pagan community lie somewhere between these two extremes, holding
in essence contradictory opinions about how meaning is constructed and personally maintained through its mediation with academic sources.

Regardless of where along the continuum any individual may lie, from an academic perspective, individuals are continuing to engage in the selective manipulation of lore and the process of inventing new and meaningful traditions. Such processes, however, should not be necessarily regarded as a distortion of academic knowledge, because if one is to adopt the postmodern perspective that all knowledge is in fact subjective and thus filtered through a variety of social channels, one must also admit that these processes cannot be judged according to their validity and ability to correctly employ scholarly material, but instead should be looked to as an excellent example of the process of identity and cultural creation. As Handler and Linnekin point out, "Tradition is neither wholly unself-conscious or is it ever wholly unrelated to the past. The opposition between a naively inherited tradition and one that is consciously shaped is a false dichotomy" (1984:285). It is a recognition of such processes which requires reflection not only on the part of participants in Pagan religions but on the part of scholars, who must now look at how data may in turn generate and become a part of religious practices and beliefs.

In general anthropologists and folklorists, even in their self-reflexive state, are only beginning to recognize how their material can in turn influence cultural construction and behavior. Most do
not consider, for example what the potential uses of their data outside that of the academic community could result in, and even fewer reflect on the potential for their data to become the building blocks for the creation of religion. Anthropological and folklore methods as a rule do not require researchers to be concerned about the future religious implications of their work. I think it is probably safe to say that most anthropologists and folklorists do not publish their material in the form of religious tracts, nor did they intend for it to become the data used to support a religious movement. That is, most scholars of religion, folklore and culture are more concerned with documenting that same religion, folklore and culture and not with generating it.

It is in this light that Warshaver's (1991) characterization of "postmodern folklore" is particularly applicable. According to Warshaver, researchers must become aware of how once such material is out of their hands, it can in turn be generated into second level and even third level folklore, as the data becomes translated into an academic framework only to filter back into practice among the "folk", and finally to once again, in works such as this become once again the focus of academic scholarship and interpretation. The study of Pagan identity and culture as such provides us with a window into this process and can only serve to create among us a new self-awareness about "ownership" and intent of theoretical interpretations and scholarly data. It is a place through which anthropologists and folklorists can become more aware of their role in the constitution of culture, as well as,
a place to observe first hand the migration of folklore and ethnographic data from field, to text, and back to the field. It provides for us a realization that data cannot be controlled and that in fact may assume a life of its own outside of the realm of scholarly intent.

Growing out of this ironic intersection between Paganism and academia, is a renewed focus on research on Pagans from within the Pagan community itself. Festivals as such have become a breeding ground for academic research on Pagans as they provide for researchers easily encapsulated areas for study and are areas where researchers are meet with unprecedented acceptance. It is also the case that many Pagans are highly educated and have obtained or are in the process of obtaining academic degrees through which they intend to put the knowledge gained in the Pagan community to work, as well as intend to filter their academic knowledge back into the Pagan community. Not only is academic scholarship seen among Pagans as a worthwhile pursuit, but many Pagan organizations actively encourage it and include it as part of their training. It is at this venture that the roles of scholar and Pagan intersect. Research endeavors are furthermore made less problematic due to such intersections as in many cases there is no need on the part of researchers to come up with new categories in which to place their findings, as Pagans themselves have already adopted the categories of the researchers with such categories being selectively used to define the parameters of identity, culture and
community. Following, one could argue that such an occurrence is only possible within the so-called Western world in which, such knowledge is privileged and individuals have access to scholarly materials through both their commodification and through their presentation in the domain of public education and media. Only in a postmodern world can one watch, for example a syndicated television show on the religious practices of the ancient Egyptians via an interpretation of their archaeological remains and proceed to put that information into religious practice. With such information being readily available to a mass audience it is not difficult for that same audience to appropriate it, adapt it and reclaim it for their own purposes. Practices once characterized by "Western" elites as "primitive" or "archaic" are now, filtered once more through the "Western" academic world becoming regarded by participants in that same postmodern paradigm as desirable states to draw upon for spiritual awareness and growth.

Paganism as it participates in this process could be characterized as belonging to and growing out of this postmodern paradigm shift in which positivistic, materialistic assumptions about the world are abandoned in favor of the subjective the, multiple and the contingent. Paganism embodies the postmodern as it proceeds in the merging of multiple traditions of both a romanticized past and a utopian future. They are engaging in Lyotard's (Conner 1989) characteristically postmodern practice of breaking up the metanarratives of a modern world in favor of multiple peacefully co-existing micronarratives. Thus, Neo-
Paganism, like the postmodern paradigm it is the inheritor of encompasses and allows for the existence of multiple "truths", multiple identities, and multiple "selves", while at the same time acting to subvert what have been characterized as the modernist metanarratives of patriarchy, monotheism, and uncensored commodification. Thus the characterization of the postmodern world in which, "the only way to make a new move is to rearrange the information in a new and unpredictable way" (Conner 1989:33) holds true for the contemporary Pagan movement in the United States demonstrating that in fact the goal in a postmodern world is not "truth" but "production, reproduction, power and performity" (Conner 1989:34).

Pagan culture in many ways can be seen as the ideal forum for the playing of postmodern fantasies and identities. Pagans as whole tend to be highly self-conscious, being impressed by a continuous need to establish a unique Pagan identity performed in turn both for their fellow Pagans and as well for and in contrast to the dominant Judeo-Christian world. Following, American Pagans who grew up in a culture which as a rule includes an ongoing tension between the cultivation of heterogeneity and homogeneity in the face of political and ethnic pluralism are quite comfortable with the postmodern practice of integrating beliefs and practices from many systems and acting in a manner which will subsequently mark these same beliefs and practices making them a part of their own indigenous discourse. Here we find a picture emerging of an "emergent culture", a
religious movement in which identities and "ethnicities" are fluid and dynamic and where individual agency and consumer's choice are given precedence over other ways in which religious meaning can be maintained and cultivated. This unique combination of multiplicity, religion and individual agency and choice in turn may be reflective of an American capitalist ethic, while at the same time it ironically works to subvert such an ethic, as many Pagans see the commodified world of late twentieth century capitalism as being antithetical to the ecological sound, community oriented world which they are trying to cultivate.

Such a process is similar to what Levi-Strauss (De Certeau 1984) termed *bricolage* involving the process of selection on the part of consumers from the goods available to them and following through their unique selection and recombination grows a new cultural narrative which has both the ability to reflect and provide a road through which to construct resistance to the dominant culture out of which it sprang. In this process the various labels which have been attached to Pagans and which they have chosen to attach to themselves - religious, political, subversive, reflective, playful, authentic, invented, inventive, dramatic, academic - can at once co-exist, disappear or fluctuate rapidly. Contemporary Pagans have a characteristically postmodern ability to hold at once an attitude of self-conscious critical reflection and religious sincerity. As Grimes pointed out, "In the face of myth, Tillich showed, we no longer believe, yet we do not not believe. If a myth is broken we recognize it as a myth
but continue to believe in some sense of the word" (1990:127). Grimes' insight here is particularly applicable to the case of contemporary Pagans, who while maintaining a sense of enthusiasm and sincerity in their beliefs at once continue to engage in a process of constituting, problematizing and inventing those same beliefs, as well as holding out for the possibility for the co-existence of multiple beliefs and practices all of which can be contained under the larger rubric of Pagan religion. That is, participants, sincere in their beliefs, also feel quite comfortable operating in an environment which caters to the existence of multiple and alternating myths and where truth is contingent and individually subjective. There is a comfortable sincerity involved in their re-mythologizing acts as they are able to claim that such acts are indeed essential to their religious beliefs and practices and thus they are able to avoid the "guilt" often felt by academicians when they must admit to the same processes.

The postmodern paradigm shift in religion has been characterized through the theme of interconnectedness, as the following quotes indicate, "No feature of postmodern spirituality is emphasized more than the reality of internal relations" (Griffin 1990:1). Griffin, in his research on postmodern spirituality, looking at how religion is presently being characterized noted:

Catherine Keller, for instance, says that "interconnection is the cosmic case", and that "No one and no thing is really separate from anything else." Bernard Lee says, "We are interconnected in a system in which whatever happens to any part of the system reverberates in small or large ways
throughout the system." Joanna Macy speaks of "interexistence" of "a vision of radical and sustaining interdependence", of an "experience of profound interconnectedness with all life" and of ourselves as "inseparable from the Web of life in which we are as intricately interconnected as cells in a larger body." (1990: 1-2).

As such, Neo-Pagan religions could be viewed as characteristically postmodern, with the interconnectedness being stressed as being one between Pagans and the environment, between contemporary Pagans and Pagans of the past, and between Pagans and indigenous non-Judeo-Christian cultures around the world. As Strathern notes, along with this postmodern shift goes a "reinterpretation of cultural change that we live in a world simultaneously more diversified and homogenized than before. There is both more culture and less. Local identities are either hypertrophied or atrophied" (1992:49). Neo-Pagans have embodied this reinterpretation of cultural change and made it part and parcel of their cultural identity as individuals within the community can become as "generic" and diversified as is potentially possibly or as specifically "ethnic" as they want and still be included in within the larger boundaries of the Neo-Pagan movement. As was pointed out earlier, it is within the boundaries of Pagan festivals that such identities are cultivated and allowed to interact and co-exist.

Contemporary Paganism in the United States is at once both a culture and contains within its boundaries a multitude of
cultures. It is a belief system characterized by multiple beliefs and which contains within the potential for the infinite variation and revision of such beliefs. If can be characterized as both an invented tradition which seeks to court an atmosphere of nostalgia while at the same time demanding a utopian vision of the future, and an organic "grass-roots" social movement which seeks to flow, intersect with and subvert the world of the late twentieth century. Its participants appeal to a mythos which far pre-dates those of the Judeo-Christian era, but at the same time such appeals are put in terms of a Paganized future which involves the emergence of an identity or identities and culture or cultures which is characteristically postmodern in its composition.
ENDNOTES

1. There are individuals within the Pagan movement who claim that the religion of “Paganism” has existed as a hidden underground movement since pre-Christian times. Such claims are however heavily debated within the Pagan community itself.

2. The Church of All Worlds has a complex history, which also involves a vision of environmentalism, liberal politics, and Goddess worship.

3. There is some controversy surrounding the validity of particular individual’s claims of being a member of a specific Pagan group. This controversy mostly surrounds the question of whether or not an individual has been “initiated” in the particular traditions of which they claim to be a member. Some traditions, on the other hand do not involve any type of initiation.

4. It is not stated by Orion what exactly a “few” means, however I have heard estimates of 400,00 Pagans on a world-wide scale.

5. Orion’s research focused on the practice of healing within the Pagan community which may be a confounding factor in the high percentage of health care workers in her sample.

6. There is quite a bit of controversy within the Pagan community surrounding the claims of “hereditary Witches”, as many believe that such claims are entirely fabricated or at the least embellished.
7. Such an assessment is informed through the earlier literature present on Paganism, through Christian characterizations of Pagans and through personal encounters with non-Pagans who often conveyed to me their previous conception about what Paganism actually entailed prior to learning of my research.

8. An “all-thing” is a phrase taken from early Norse historical sources to refer to festivals which involved celebration, politics and economics. The term has subsequently been adopted by practitioners of Norse traditions to refer to Asatru festivals.

9. There are African Americans, Native Americans and Asian Americans who identify themselves as Pagan. Recent trends within the Pagan movement have been towards greater recognition of non-European spiritual paths on the part of both European Americans and non-European Americans resulting in greater inclusion of non-European spiritual practices at Pagan festivals.

10. I have overheard participants preparing for a ritual saying such things as, “We need a Goddess chant here”, indicating that participants recognize such categorization.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


325
*Journal of American Folklore* 77: 3-30.


Dundes, Alan (1973) (ed.) *Mother Wit From the Laughing Barrel*. Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ.


Geertz, Clifford (1966) Religion as a Cultural System.


Leach, Maria (1972) (ed.) Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology and Legend. Funk and Wagnalls, NY.


Murray, Margaret (1921) *The Witch-Cult of Western Europe.* Oxford Press, NY.

Murray, Margaret (1933) *The God of the Witches,* Oxford Press, NY.


