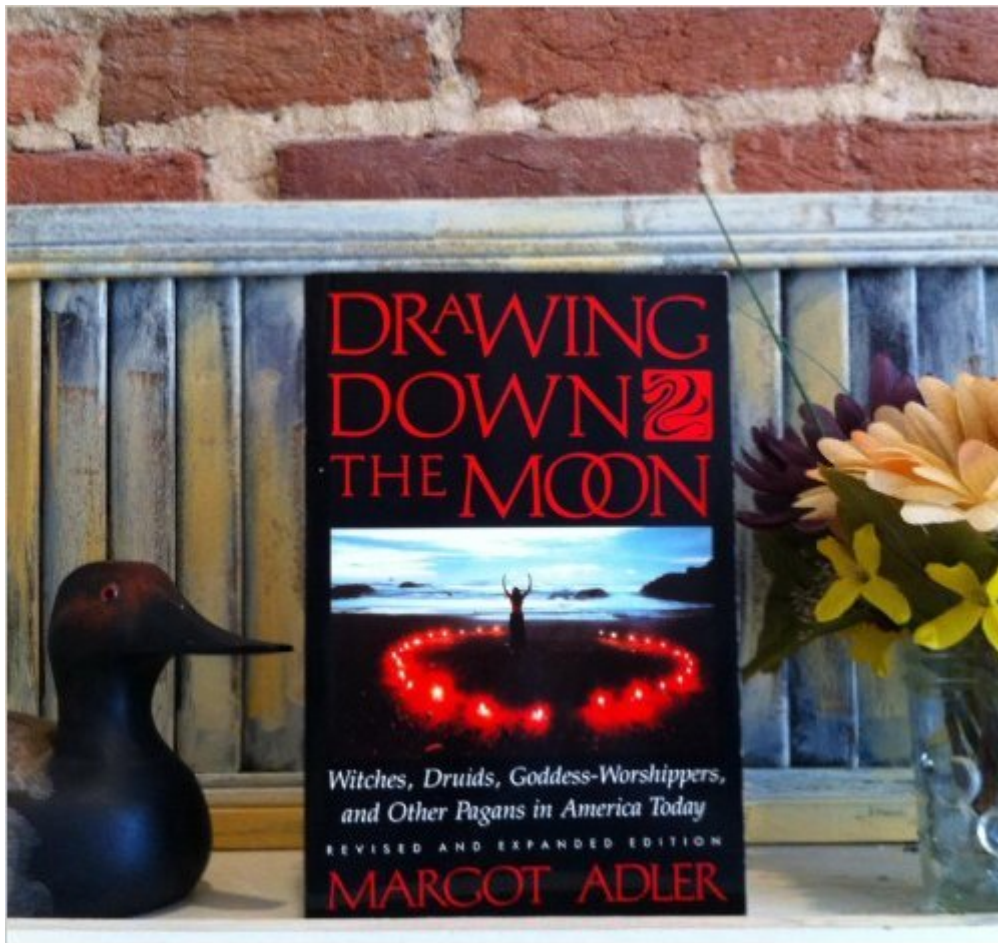


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# Drawing Down The Moon : Witches, Druids, Goddess-Worshippers, And Other Pagans In America Today



## Synopsis

Explores the current Neopagan movement in the United States through discussions with various groups whose rituals are inspired by ancient deities, visions from science fiction, or witchcraft. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I read this book when it was first published and recommned it to anyone who wants to become more enlightened about the topic. I have a social science background, and thus a general understanding of the various world views of traditional societies who are in my opinion closer to old Mother Earth than most of us "moderns" who spend far too much time caught up in our technology. Margot Adler (granddaughter of the famous psychologist) went exploring (ethnographic field work) and this book is the result. She does not promote any of the world views she describes, she plays the good ethnographer and records what she finds. She participates on several occasions, and thus becomes the "participant observer" recorder. I didn't know much about the revival of "paganism" and had never heard of Wicca before I read Adler's book. I learned that in spite of the professed enlightenment of our modern age, many fear the practices described. Why? Basically, the practice of Wicca seems to be a female oriented way of life--focusing on nature, life, a spiritual path. I for one am continuing to read about Wicca and explore what others are doing. I figure some of the so-called witches etc. are not what they purport to be, just as some of the aggressive so-called Christians driving with bumper stickers that advertise their "faith" are not what they purport to be. I recommend

Adler's book if you are interested in comparative religion, are looking for a new way of living or just curious about a somewhat maligned and often persecuted group of mostly women.

That the Pagan community is a very large and very diverse one should come as no surprise to anyone -- except perhaps to a vocal minority within the Christian faith who persist in lumping all of Paganism into "Devil-worship". Confused about the differences between Gardnerian Wicca and Alexandrian Wicca? Not to mention all those other Pagan religions? Then this is the book for you. Margot Adler's ambitious volume is a sort of field guide, if you will. Encyclopedic in scope, it has got to be the definitive overview on the various beliefs and religious practices that fit within the broad term "Paganism". The book's strengths are in the illuminating history it provides about various pioneers of modern Pagan movements. Wicca, in its various permutations, receives the most thorough treatment. If I have any fault with the book, it is that other Pagan religions are not treated with the same exhaustive and in-depth scope with which Adler treats Wicca. Accurate and respectful mention is made of statements by Aleister Crowley, but references to him are thinly spread. Consequently, I missed many of them in my reading of the book. Adler primarily presents Crowley's contributions to the occult scene through the filter of someone else's interpretation or adaption of his work. I would like to have seen a more in-depth look at Crowley's contributions to the modern occult and Pagan scene, given that he is the most well-known occultist in non-occult circles. For better or for worse, that "most evil man in the world" reputation has stuck (his self-proclaimed identity as "The Beast" probably hasn't helped matters), and rather undeservedly, from what I can tell in my limited exposure to his writings. Many people who are otherwise ignorant of Paganism, the occult or hermetic orders nevertheless have heated opinions about Crowley, and I can't help but feel that Adler should have given him a little more attention in her book -- if for no other reason than to point out that maybe he isn't such a horrible person as some members of Christian and Wiccan communities seems to think he is. The questionnaire Adler includes is an especially valuable reminder that Pagans, like other members of a socioeconomic, racial or otherwise narrowly defined category of human beings, do not share common political views. If some preconceived notions -- i.e. all Pagans should be liberal -- are challenged, all the better. In conclusion, this is probably the first book I would recommend to someone who has heard of the Pagan community and wants more information about it. If that's you, I strongly urge that you read this book -- with the caveat that this is one woman's opinion, and that what matters is that you discover the truth for yourself.

Some people complain this book is too long. Hardly. Adler could add more good information and I'd

read it all. Others say it is too dry. I rarely skipped anything. Still others say it is outdated. I reply by saying that this is an excellent view into the times when paganism wasn't a fad, before Ravenwolf and Cunningham came on the scene, before pagan books were written to make money. Not only does Adler's book detail various types of the Craft from Gardnerian to Dianic, but also highlights lesser-known groups such as the Feraferians and NROOGD (New Reformed Orthodox Order of the Golden Dawn). For this alone it is an invaluable book, for where else can you find a book that isn't about Wicca or sugarcoated spellcraft? This book is a classic, and should be read, if nothing else, for its historical value. It reminds us that, just 15 years ago, things were quite different. Wicca wasn't officially recognized, nor was it as prominent as it is now. The media was harsher on pagan religions, and there was less acceptance. We tend to take for granted the freedom we have today. I have been in practice for only three years, and yet I know that those who have come before me had a bitchier time than I have. Also, it is often a shock to some to find that not all neopagans are liberals or libertarians, as the questionnaires that Adler has given pagans have shown us. And the wide range of occupations held is also quite a fascinating thing to find in the pagan community. And yes, Adler does tend to focus more on the Goddess, but perhaps that is more how Wicca was back then. Also, I have heard "Goddess bless" from more Wiccans than I have heard "Lord and Lady bless". There IS a marked leaning towards the Goddess, even today. I don't agree with it--I prefer a balance between the God and Goddess--but it is perfect for some people, and perhaps it was acceptable for a lot of people Adler interviewed. So read this book, if nothing else, for its informative value. Yes, it is a big book, and it isn't "The Mists of Avalon." But it is well worth the time and effort given into reading it.

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