



Hi all and welcome to the 44th issue of Pagan World!

Brrrr.... This has been a horrible winter for those of us in the Northern Hemisphere. Most people say it is due to global warming but I can't find the 'warming' anywhere this winter. It's scary if this winter is a sign of worse yet to come. Thank the Gods that the Wheel always turns and soon it will be spring again!

We are happy to welcome Ian Elliott back to Pagan World with his article on the 'Mysteries of Janus'. I was thinking about Ian last month and wondering how he was doing. The next day, I received his article in my inbox. I must be more psychic than I realize ☺

I hope that you enjoy these articles as much as I have.

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***Bright Blessings,
Diana***

Mysteries of Janus
by Ian Elliott, January 28, 2010

1: The Mysteries of a God

In the Old Testament, which is chock-full of pagan religious conceptions (especially when it is honestly translated) , the word used for "knowing" a god is the same as that used for a man "knowing" a woman. In the rare cases of Anchises with Aphrodite, or unfortunate Semele with Zeus, this usage may be taken literally, but it need not always mean carnal knowledge. The way in which one comes to know a god, goddess, or lesser spirit, depends a lot on the nature and offices of that deity. But in every case, it is an intimate knowledge, not the sort that can be put in words and published in a book of mythology.

Every complete being contains a world, his or her or its view of the surrounding cosmos. This includes gods, demigods, elemental spirits, men, women, even some animals and plants (in the last case, psychoactive plants) . The world of a being is shot through with the colors and forms of that being's personality, thoughts, feelings, predilections and aversions. Thus, in an intimate relationship I am initiated into the mysteries of my beloved, and she into mine. The same is true of unequal unions like that between a human devotee and a deity. The deity's consciousness is extended, to a small extent, by that of the devotee, and the devotee's is engulfed by that of the deity.

The difference between pagan or nature deities and certain anti-pagan beings is that the latter are 'jealous gods' and wish to absorb their worshippers completely and permanently; whereas nature deities are willing to share with each other and do not require lifelong service. One can see the same attitude with respect to human unions in pagan vs. anti-pagan cultures. We are free to become pagans once again in our culture because human unions like marriage are no longer required to be permanent, and the sanctions against infidelity are much relaxed now in society. Now we are free once again to enter into the mysteries of the nature spirits.

The mysteries of different deities are very diverse from each other, but each offers possibilities of personal growth and exploration of a new world. The cosmos is thus at least potentially multi-faceted, like the eye of a bee, and it is the prerogative of a pagan to explore as many facets as he or she likes.

2: Our Two Souls

Numerous ancient and indigenous cultures posit two or more souls. In ancient Baltic religion, these were called the vele and the sielas. In Chinese folk religion, they were the hun and the p'o. In Mongolian shamanism they are called the ami and suld. The Mongolians add a third soul, the suns, which seem to be derived from Tibetan influence. Michael York, in his study Pagan Theology, calls these the life-soul and the dream-soul.

The life-soul (siela, p'o, suld) is close to what we call the conscious personality. When the body dies, it stays by the grave and, in former times at least, was the recipient of offerings. It passed the subtle essence of these on to the dream-soul (vele, hun, ami) , which after death went into the Otherworld to sojourn with the ancestors until it was time to be reborn, at which time it re-united with its life-soul. In order for offerings to "feed" the dream-soul through the life-soul, the connection

between them had to be sturdy, and the same condition determined whether or not the dream-soul would find its former life-soul upon returning to the Earth to reincarnate.

In order to understand how offerings can nourish these souls, we must first of all get rid of the post-pagan notion (which seems to have started with Plato) that spirit is immaterial. For the ancients and indigenous cultures, spirit is a subtler form of matter, called the astral body in yoga. It permeates the material body as water permeates the interstices of a sponge. It is both within the material body and extends beyond it, in the form of an "aura." Offerings of food and drink likewise have an astral kernel, which can be passed on to the dream-soul in the Otherworld via the subtle cord joining it with the life-soul.

Spirit being a subtle form of matter, self-consciousness is due to the sharing of awareness in tandem by our two souls. We require an inner companion, a sort of feedback signal, to accompany us through life so we can feel our own existence. As life-souls are generally not aware of their accompanying dream-souls except in special circumstances, this echo-effect is provided by talking to ourselves mentally. At the same time, mental chatter distracts the life-soul from the possibility of noticing the presence of the dream-soul; inner silence must be cultivated in order for the life-soul to become aware of its silent companion. The dream-soul, on the other hand, experiences material life through the eyes of the life-soul and loses its self-awareness until there is sufficient inner silence. The dream-soul does not speak; it communicates in silent images. The life-soul has to shut up before the dream-soul can wake up.

3: Janus and the Sacred Household

I said above that every complete being contains a world, a cosmos in miniature. By 'complete' I meant that all the features and laws pertaining to a cosmos (generally speaking) are present in the being. All such beings, up to and including the cosmos itself, are capable of evolving and seek to evolve. This is one reason psychoactive plants are addictive: they grab onto their human hosts in order to evolve through absorbing certain energies from the human psyche.

The hermetic teaching on this is expressed in the words "As above, so below; all that is over, under shall show." 'Over' and 'under' refer to beings on different scales, as a human being exists on a different scale from, and contains, beings on the cellular level.

Households in antiquity and even in pre-history were designed to reflect the features of the greater cosmos, and later on early cities were similarly designed. The world was observed to revolve, ¹ and so ancient and indigenous peoples concluded it must have a pillar to rotate around. The central supporting pillar of a yurt, cot, or hall corresponded to the World Pillar, and the human spine, with its subtle inner passage (called by yogis the sushumna) , corresponded to both on a smaller scale.

The hearth or stove corresponded to the heart and was the place of memory, where ancestral spirits were contacted and where offerings to them and the gods were made in the hearthfire, and carried thence by the hearth guardian (Hestia for the Greeks, Vesta for the Latins, Gabija for the Balts, etc.).

¹ That is, they could see that the heavens apparently revolve. From this they concluded that the heavens must revolve around an axis, which many called the "World Pillar".



The principal doorway and windows corresponded to the eyes and ears and other senses on the human level. Janus, in addition to guarding the entrance into the New Year and other time periods, served also as the door or threshold guardian. He had two faces, and looked out and in at the same time. The life-soul and dream-soul are meant to look out and in, psychically speaking, at the same time as well, and can do so when there is sufficient inner silence so that they become aware of each other and themselves. When this occurs in a dream, the dreamer realizes he or she is dreaming and can take free action in the dream, which often leads to waking up but can also provide an entrance into dream-journeys (hence York's name for the dream soul).

When this occurs in waking experience, the life-soul acquires a heightened sense of its own existence through the "feedback signal" of the dream-soul. It feels more solid and can act in the world with greater confidence and a sense of inner peace.

But the life-soul is habituated to mental chatter and finds it difficult to stop, as it is used to deriving its sense of solid existence from inner talk. In the fourth and final section I will describe some techniques that provide a substitute for the feedback signal so that inner talk can cease, allowing the dream-soul to wake up to its own separate existence.

4: Standing in the Doorway

For most of us in everyday life, the life-soul, that focal point of our awareness that thinks in words and talks to itself and other people, is unaware of the presence of another identity that stands behind it. This identity, called by Michael York the "dream-soul," is that soul that can go on dream-journeys if it awakens to a sense of its own existence as separate from, though linked with, the life-soul. This can only happen either by accident (as in some lucid dreams or spontaneous waking visions) or by long cultivation of inner silence. The rest of the time, generally speaking, the dream-soul looks out through the eyes of the life-soul and identifies with it.

Certain substances that contain within themselves cosmic properties (and thus can affect consciousness) can cause the dream-soul to wake up for a while. This happens when the drinker has had "just enough" and is "beautiful." Fritz Peters, who attended the mystic Gurdjieff's school at Fontainebleu in France in the '20's, gives an interesting account of this. As a teen-ager he was assigned the task of waiting on guests, and Gurdjieff had him drink a shot of Armagnac brandy to prove to some of the guests that the drink was harmless. In fact, Peters became quite tipsy, but managed to go on serving, noting "I only did so by staggering around the table and shoving the platters at them, feeling giddy and completely unconcerned. I had never experienced such a sense of carefree well-being in my life. I thought it was particularly comical when Gurdjieff, each time I arrived near him, would direct attention to me and my complete sobriety. I remember having a strange sense of separateness as if I had actually departed from the confines of my own body and

was able to watch myself, as if from a distance, tottering gaily around the table with the heavy platters in my hands.”²

Later on Gurdjieff remarked that this very interesting state of self-awareness could be achieved while actually sober, and could even help prevent drunkenness. Peters had reached the second position of observation and acquired a form of second sight. This second position of observation is the dream-soul.

When someone died in antiquity or in indigenous cultures, relatives and friends would gather for a wake. They would drink, breathe hemp fumes in a fume-pit, or otherwise change their consciousness through psychoactive substances, then chant, pray and sing to the deceased.³ The original purpose of the wake was to guide the separated dream-soul of the deceased to the road that would lead it to the world of the ancestors; otherwise it might get lost and linger about middle-earth as a ghost.

In order to do this, those attending the wake knew they had to achieve a separation between their own life-souls and dream-souls, so that the two souls were aware of each other. Then the chants of the life-soul could be conveyed by the dream-soul to the dream-soul of the dead person.

Our habit of inner talk, as mentioned earlier, tends to distract us from our dream-souls. In dreams, this inner talk is replaced by the plot of the dream-story in which the dreamer is immersed. A moment of inner silence is necessary for the dreamer's dream-soul to bestir itself and stand back from the dream-story, questioning why it should go down that path or open that door in the dream, and choosing instead to take a different action in another direction.



Janus can help us silence inner talk and acquire the double-face, so that we can look out and in at once, looking out with the life-soul and in with the dream-soul. It helps to establish a threshold shrine, hanging a shelf by the main doorway of the home and offering salt, water, incense and a burning candle on it to the threshold guardian at the beginning of the week or month or some enterprise. The god can be represented by his double-face hanging over the shelf, or the single face of a satyr or the Green Man can serve as a substitute (in which case one assumes he penetrates the wall, with his outer face on the other side). Entering or leaving the home, step over (never on) the threshold and touch the doorframe as you do so, greeting Janus aloud or silently. Jews still do this with the mezuzah, which replaced a representation of the door guardian when their ancestors ceased to be pagans.

My invocation to Janus goes like this:

”Honor and thanks to you, O Janus, for guarding the entrance to my home. May only harmonious beings enter here, and may the discordant depart! Open this day (week, etc.) for me on blessings, and teach me the double-face, so I can look out

² Peters, pp. 124-5. See bibliography.

³ See Herodotus' discussion of the use of hemp in Scythian funeral customs, 4: 73-75, p. 307.

and in at once as you do, thus guarding the threshold of my inner home; for I , too, am a threshold guardian.”

By giving Janus a conspicuous place in the home, we allow the god to remind us to practice the double-face by standing in the doorway (or archway), as he does. There are a number of ways of doing this. When in company, if we bear in mind the rather obvious fact that people cannot read our thoughts, this can help to put us in the doorway. It does so by drawing the attention simultaneously to people and to our private thoughts, thus placing the observer on a boundary between the two, looking out and in at the same time.

Whether in company or alone, a more potent method is to realize that, in terms of perception and in the absence of a reflecting surface, I have no head (see Douglas Harding's excellent book on this in the bibliography). If the attention is drawn to the perception of one's headlessness, that is, to all one can see of the head without a mirror – a blur for the nose, eyelashes when I blink, etc. – then once again the attention is anchored in a position midway between inner thought and outer perception, instead of fitfully alternating between the two as it usually does.

Janus is the god of beginnings, and we must begin with the doorway again and again, training our minds to stay in this intermediate position. But beyond this, we can move to the hearth and practice the mysteries of Vesta, which liberate memory and allow us to travel down our inner world pillar. This requires another article, but briefly, if instead of using memory to associate on present sensations, we simply echo the sounds we are hearing in the present moment, as perhaps animals do, memory itself will be liberated from the associative process and begin opening up in a free flow. If we maintain our double awareness, we can follow this flow down into our past and beyond, into far memory. The key is to maintain inner quiet.

Inner quiet is almost infinitely extendable. The deeper our inner quiet, the deeper in our own inner world pillar the dream-soul can descend.

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Quaker Paganism
by Bradus V. Maurus III



‘Christian’ and ‘Pagan’ usually seem almost opposite terms. Centuries of persecution and cruelty have led to a certain lasting suspicion in both communities. There is however at least one originally very Christian denomination which has shown itself to be truly Pagan-friendly, and that is the Religious Society of Friends or Quakers.

The Society of Friends was founded in the middle of the seventeenth century by George Fox and others, and was a very radical grouping among the diverse religious tendencies of that tumultuous period. It considered itself a return to Primitive Christianity, and emphasised the ability of any human being to access the “Inner Light” at any time or place, so that sacraments, churches, holy days, and paid ministers were considered unnecessary, and the Bible was put in second place after living inspiration. Since they thought (partly rightly, no doubt) that many of the changes that had occurred in the Church since its early apostolic days were “pagan” in nature, they wished to de-paganise the Christian religion. They therefore proposed, for example, the identifying of days and months by number rather than by the names of pagan deities. Thus, instead of “Sunday”, named for the sun god Sol or Helios, they said “First Day”, and this is still often practised today: “First-Day School” sounds rather better to the Quaker ear than “Sunday School”.

This may not sound especially promising for Pagan/Christian relations, but there were other aspects to early Quakerism. The Friends felt that a written and obligatory creed was virtually a form of idolatry, the same as sacraments and fixed liturgies. Therefore one did not have to believe any particular thing in any particular way. This made it possible for early Quaker theologian Robert Barclay to write that not only Protestants (of all kinds) and Catholics, but also Jews, Muslims and “Heathens” (all Pagans and non-monotheistic people) could be saved and this did not depend on their changing their religious affiliation, but only on their accepting the grace and guidance of the Inner Light. God’s People were felt to be a community larger than all Christianity (and indeed not including all professing Christians, certainly not hypocrites, inquisitors or literalist Bible bangers). William Penn, the founder of Pennsylvania, even went so far as to equate the doctrines of several pagan philosophers to Quaker teaching.

When we come to modern Quakerism, we must note that many Quakers over the years became increasingly assimilated to evangelical Christian ideas and practices, and today are strictly Christian and have pastors, statements of faith which are effectively creeds, and programmed church services with Bible readings and hymns. The Quakers we are talking about which are open to Pagans are specifically the traditional Friends, technically called “liberal unprogrammed Quakers”, who are the vast majority of Friends in Europe.

One aspect of traditional Quaker practice which has been attractive for Pagans is the Meeting for Worship. This involves gathering in a simple Friends Meeting House or other location and sitting in silence awaiting the coming of the Spirit. And in a good meaning this is a very real and palpable force which “gathers” or “covers” the

meeting. Such a meeting is usually not in fact completely silent. In the middle part anyone – man, woman, child or visitor – may stand up and deliver a short spiritual message if it is truly felt to be a duty laid on one by the Spirit. Thus there are no fixed texts or prayers or hymns which are aggressively sectarian in nature, and all are made to feel welcome.



Another important aspect is that most Quakers accept Pagans quite readily. Quakers are not shut out from either participation or formal membership, nor are they expected to give up Paganism. The average Quaker is at least as tolerant as the average Pagan. In fact many Quakers also practice aspects of Buddhism, and among British Friends, according to the best study available, only 43% wish personally to be called Christians. This is often due to unpleasant experiences with other denominations such as many Pagans too have experienced. There are also a few agnostic and atheist Friends, who are spiritually orientated but doubt the existence of the traditional Judaeo-Christian God. The watchword is “unity in diversity”.

Equally attractive to many Pagans is the traditional sexual equality of Friends. From the mid-sixteenth century women were allowed to preach and to hold their own business meetings dealing with very substantive matters, such as managing the finances and relief programmes. Many, such as Margaret Fell, were important leaders of the movement. And this concern with sexual equality was extended beyond the Quaker movement: the American Women’s Movement is often considered to have begun with the meeting of Women’s leaders in Seneca Falls, New York in 1848, and the majority of these leaders were Quakers. Susan B. Anthony, a later American women’s suffrage leader, was also a Friend, as was another of the nineteenth century’s most respected women social reformers, Elizabeth Fry, who worked tirelessly for penal reform. At present the head of the highest Quaker umbrella organisation is a woman, as well as the head of its European branch, and the director of its most important educational institution in Europe.

Quakers also attract Pagans who are interested in spiritually based work for peace, equality and social change. Quakers were some of the earliest people in the United States to oppose slavery, and have since been working to promote peace, homosexual rights, penal reform, and the rights of indigenous peoples. In 1947 two Quaker organisations jointly won the Nobel Peace Prize for their relief work in war-torn Europe. More recently, individual Quakers or small groups of them have taken initiatives in founding organisations promoting Quaker values in collaboration with

others and so not specifically under the Quaker name. These include Amnesty International, Greenpeace, the Youth Hostels Association, and Oxfam.

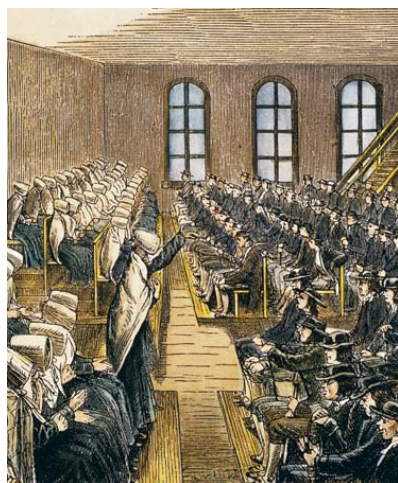
Of course it is not only that Pagans are attracted to Quakerism; many Quaker Pagans were originally Quakers who with typical Quaker open-mindedness have explored Paganism for its connection with the earth and nature and/or its goddess-affirming spirituality, and chosen to accept it as part of their religious life.

Traditional Quakerism has been slowly shrinking in numbers, as has most liberal religions in the world. (Statistically, secularism and fundamentalism are the trends on the increase.) In many cases in America an influx of Pagan Quakers has saved some small Friends meetings (congregations) from withering away, and has introduced a new vitality and larger numbers of younger people. Quaker conferences in America have had workshops on Wicca, now becoming a regular thing, and Europe's most important Quaker educational institution, Woodbrooke in Birmingham, U.K. has held week-end courses in Wicca and other topics interesting to Pagans. (See <http://www.woodbrooke.org.uk>)

Most Quaker Pagans are Wiccans and a good number of Druids are also present, especially in Britain. Other forms of Paganism exist, but are not well represented. Three leaders of the Quaker Wicca movement are Cat Chapin-Bishop and Peter Bishop (*Quaker Pagan Reflections*: <http://quakerPagan.blogspot.com/>) and Stasa Morgan-Appel (*Musings of a Quaker Witch*: <http://aquakerwitch.blogspot.com/>). There is also a Yahoo group mailing list specifically for Quaker Pagans, and it is rather lively (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/QuakerPagans/>). Another information source is the author's blog at <http://quaganica.blogspot.com>, written from the viewpoint of a universalist Quaker and Graeco-Roman Pagan.

Quaker Pagans are sometimes called (perhaps somewhat in jest) "Quagans", and Quaker witches are sometimes known as "Quiccans" or "Quitches". There are apparently several hundred Quagans, mostly in the United States and Britain, and this is a significant number in the fairly small realm of traditional Quakerism. Most Quagans are a minority in their meetings, but there is at least one explicitly Quaker Pagan meeting in the United States.

Both Pagans in general and orthodox Quakers reject dogmatism and hierarchy, and emphasise the need for each person to come to his or her own religious position based on spiritual experience. Both groups believe that spiritual realities are



present in all aspects of life, not just in church on Sundays, mosque on Fridays or synagogue on the Sabbath. And both consider the collaboration and support of spiritually-minded friends in community to be highly helpful. There are indeed some important differences, especially in attitude towards ritual, but on the whole the two traditions are remarkably congruent and complementary, and may serve to provide a rewarding and synergistic spiritual synthesis for many people.

The author is an American Graeco-Roman Pagan and universalist Quaker living in Poland, where he is a lecturer at Adam Mickiewicz University.

DOREEN VALIENTE 1922-1999
by John Belham-Payne

Childhood years:

Doreen Edith Dominy, daughter of Harry and Edith, was born in Mitcham, South London on 4th January 1922. Finding herself growing up in the West of England, the young Doreen acquired the local accent that she never lost. The West Country (as it is known in Britain) is an area noted for its rural beauty and strong attachment to the land. Even today it is not unusual to find folk dances at midsummer, fertility stones and healing wells that have been used continuously for centuries. It is in these surroundings that the young Doreen grew up.

As a young girl, she began to play a solitary game to amuse herself – running up and down the street riding a broomstick. Why she did this at such a young age she never knew, but her parents feared she would become a witch – something they found quite disconcerting (her parents were very religious and were ardently opposed to witchcraft).

Teen Witch

In her teenage years, whilst living in the New Forest in Hampshire, Doreen began to experiment with simple magic. At the tender age of thirteen, she heard that her mother was being subjected to persistent persecution and harassment in her work as a housekeeper. She confided in her daughter that a particular unpleasant woman had been picking on her. In response Doreen asked her mother to obtain a lock of hair belonging to the bullying colleague and intimated that she would work a charm to solve the problem once and for all. Whether Mrs. Dominy went along with this out of amusement, desperation or simple curiosity is not actually known but she did bring back a few strands of hair belonging to her persecutor. Using black-ended pins and a few traditional herbs, Doreen made a figurine of the woman in question and wound the strands of hair around the doll. She then cast a spell to protect her mother from further interference. Shortly afterwards, the woman who was causing so much trouble to Mrs. Dominy, was herself harassed – by a blackbird! The creature began tapping on the window every time she entered a room and followed her around the house, pecking on the glass. The woman was absolutely terrified as the stalking blackbird continued to pester her for some time. Doreen maintained that the bullying of her mother abruptly ceased. It must be said that Doreen was in fact brought up as a Christian and sent to a convent school where she walked out at the age of fifteen and refused to return.

War Years

Doreen's first marriage was to Joanis Vlachopoulos, a thirty-two-year-old able Seaman serving with the Merchant Navy. The marriage took place in South Wales on 31/1/1941 where the couple were living at the time; Doreen in Barry and Joanis in Cardiff. An interesting fact is that the nineteen-year-old Doreen is named as Rachael Dominy on the marriage certificate, information kindly supplied by long-standing friend of Doreen's, Patricia Crowther. It also appears that Joanis was unable to sign his name (illiteracy was not all that uncommon during the war)

Tragically, less than six months later, Joanis went missing, presumed dead. We are

not sure how Doreen coped with this huge loss but she was not alone – there were families losing loved-ones every day during World War II. However we do know that, as the War progressed, Doreen continued to work as a secretary in Wales.

On 29/5/1944 Doreen wed Casimiro Valiente - the name which would stay with her for the rest of her life. They were married at St Pancras Registry Office, and now Doreen's name and nationality were amended by virtue of marriage. She was now a Spanish national.

1950's



In the summer of 1952, in the little town of Christchurch, New Forest, Hampshire, England, lived a lady named 'Dafo'. She used this pseudonym because it was only the year before that witchcraft was still a criminal offence (the Witchcraft Act of 1735 was repealed in 1951). Dafo had initiated Gerald Gardner in the autumn of 1939 and was a key member of the original New Forest Coven. On this occasion in 1952, Dafo introduced a raven-haired lady of thirty years to Gerald Gardner. So began Doreen's first footsteps along the path of Wicca.

However it was one year later in 1953 that Doreen received the first degree initiation into the Craft, given (as tradition demanded) by a member of the opposite sex. Gardner conducted the initiation himself on Midsummer's Eve. He had just travelled from his witchcraft museum on the Isle of Man to attend the Druid Solstice gathering at Stonehenge where he was to loan the Ancient Druid Order his ritual sword. On this journey he dropped by the home of Dafo and initiated the young Doreen, whom he had met the previous summer.

Gardner used his Book of Shadows from the late forties up until 1953 when he initiated Doreen. He claimed the material was taken directly from the New Forest Coven and was the remnants of the Old Religion, which had been passed down through the ages. His astute student Ameth (the name given to Doreen) noticed that one passage read out by Gardner was taken from Aleister Crowley's Gnostic Mass. On this point, Doreen took Gardner to task and he replied that the Wicca rites he had received were fragmentary and he had filled them in the best he could. He gave Doreen his Book of Shadows saying "Can you do any better?" She did, replacing much of the Crowley and Masonic material with her own verse. She reconstructed the documents into a logical, practical and workable system, leaving us with what we know today as "Wicca".

It was Gardner's penchant for interviews with the press that eventually led to Doreen severing contact with him for several years. In Doreen's book *The Rebirth of Witchcraft*, she explains that as the coven's High Priestess, she felt that by speaking to the press, Gardner was compromising the security of the group and the sincerity of his own teachings. A set of rules were introduced called the "Proposed Rules for the Craft" which would prevent any members of the Craft from speaking to journalists or writers without permission from the Elders. Gardner was fully expected to follow these rules but retaliated with the claim that the Craft already had a set of traditional laws. He then sent the members of the coven "The Old Laws" – documents containing practical advice and theology. Doreen didn't believe these "Old Laws" were authentic and parted company with Gardner. However they did later restore their friendship but never to the same degree as before.

1960's

Doreen had always conducted her magical activities with complete discretion, avoiding publicity and the media, unlike her mentor Gerald Gardner. One reason for this rather circumspect attitude was out of consideration for her mother who did not know her daughter was a practicing Witch.



In 1964 after the death of both her mother and Gerald Gardner in the same year, Doreen cast off her Gardnerian mantle and was initiated by Robert Cochrane into a traditional, hereditary branch of Witchcraft. The 1960's brought fresh public perceptions. The sexual revolution, contraception, peace movements and social upheaval led to old-fashioned ideals being swept away. Witchcraft was no exception.

Suddenly Witches, in particular Sybil Leek and Alex and Maxine Saunders, became media personalities and actively courted the publicity. The Old Guard of Wicca still refused to yield and come forward, shunning all contact with anyone outside the Craft. Doreen was one of the few who managed to find a middle-ground; never denying paganism or fearing to speak out in its defence, yet still maintaining the traditional low-key approach to Wicca. The Cochrane initiation only strengthened this position and allowed Doreen to move away from internal politics which were beginning to emerge within Gardnerianism. However, Doreen soon became disillusioned by Cochrane and noted his obsession with 'witch potions' that nearly led to some unfortunate consequences. Cochrane later died at Midsummer, 1966.

1970's

Doreen entered a decade where her life was to change dramatically. Her beloved husband Casimiro Valiente died in April 1972. Finding herself alone she began to, in her own words, "concentrate on writing books." Her books, *An ABC of Witchcraft* (1973), followed by *Natural Magic* (1975), established her as an authority on magic and Wicca. *An ABC of Witchcraft* gave an alphabetical listing of concise occult information dealing with a host of differing subjects, from ancient mysticism such as the Kabbalah, to drug use by occultists.

Natural Magic, a much shorter work but none the less informative, took a different approach and empathized with the knowledge seeker. Basic questions and formative experiences are addressed here; which plants to introduce into the home for a certain astrological influence; which amulets and stones to wear which bring peace and tranquillity; herbal remedies and numerology. Perhaps the style and material was designed to aid the Wiccan beginner but it also helped those already on the path by providing another reference book full of well researched facts.



1980's Searching Dorothy

It is a well-known fact that Doreen Valiente initiated her search for Old Dorothy Clutterbuck due to historian Jeffrey B. Russell's 1980 book, *A History of Witchcraft*. In his book, Russell implies that Gerald Gardner invented Old Dorothy (although Gardner claimed that Old Dorothy initiated him in 1939).

Although it was Doreen's painstaking and diligent research that finally unearthed the death certificate of Old Dorothy Clutterbuck in 1982, it must be noted that it was Virginia Russell who suggested that Doreen should look at the Indian Military Records. Many English families had connections with India during the Colonial period, and as luck would have it, so did the Clutterbuck's.

With the passing of Ron (Cookie) Cooke in 1997, Doreen found herself alone in the world once again. Her grief was great and close friends noticed the sadness that came over her. Yet Doreen still made time for the Pagan community despite her bereavement. Her beloved partner, nicknamed 'Dusio', had passed over to the Summerlands.

Her contribution in terms of personal guidance, research, writing, poetry, public speaking and ritual, must be viewed as part of a prolific wave that firmly established not only Wicca, but Aquarian values as a whole. It was this sheer volume of output that helped make Wicca the fastest growing religion in the Western world.

One issue that did concern Doreen was the ethical and educational standards of the Craft. As seekers increased, so too did charlatans and spurious teachings, imparting distorted or degenerate practices. It was something she detested and was firmly opposed to. When the "[Centre For Pagan Studies](#)" opened in 1995, offering a facility for learned research and a non commercial environment, Doreen welcomed the initiative and became the Patron. She gave her last talk there. 1999 was beset by increased physical illness, but at no time did her mental agility nor command of magic desert her. She continued to remain a very powerful, resolute individual until her final breath on this Earth.

In her last days, Doreen was moved to a nursing home. She was suffering from a multitude of conditions – cancer being one of them. Friends kept vigil by her bedside (some coming from as far afield as London) and kept her company in the last days. On the day of her death on 1st September 1999, John remained with her – the man she had chosen to pass on her magical legacy (Dagda). At precisely 6.55 a.m. Doreen (Rachael) Edith Valiente shook off her mortal coil and took a new form in the Otherworld.

One of her last wishes was that the poetry she had written over the years be published. Only time will tell whether her mystical verse and ritual rhyme is recognised for its spiritual value as well as its literary merits. Her latest work, Charge of the Goddess, most of it designed for practical use in Witchcraft, may possibly become the template for a new generation of Wiccans. To those who have finally arrived in a new era, new millennium and new age, and require fresh inspiration and contemporary rites, Charge of the Goddess could provide a 21st Century Book of Shadows. 1999 was beset by increased physical illness, but at no time did her mental agility nor command of magic desert her. She continued to remain a very powerful, resolute individual until her final breath on this Earth.

Century Book of Shadows © 2009 Reproduced with permission from Jon Tapsell and John Belham-Payne

Netherlands and Elsewhere
Interview with Morgana
By Christopher Blackwell

Sometimes I can be blind to the obvious. Back when I started ACTION, AREN's president suggested I try networking with some of the Europeans groups, which included Pagan Federation International. There I have been in contact with Morgana for a few years now and I even post PFI forum.

While there I asked who they would like me to interview in Europe and one person suggested Morgana. Talk about missing the obvious. [Grin] So that is how this interview came to be.

Christopher: Could you tell our readers a bit about yourself and how long you have been Pagan?

Morgana: I was born in Wales although my parents were born in Lancashire, England. I also spent my school years in Lancashire, not far from where Gerald Gardner was born at Blundell Sands near to Liverpool. After teaching for a year in Liverpool I moved to the Netherlands. I didn't intend staying there since I wanted to go to India... which I did in 1977. I was fortunate to be able to go overland via Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan to India. I stayed for a year - did a bit of teaching - went to Nepal and Sri Lanka as well and returned via Afghanistan in 1978. I was greeted by the Russians... that was in effect the last year of the backpackers and the historic "Hippy trail".



I never lost my wonder for travel but once back in the Netherlands I settled down to domestic life. Well not quite...

I met Merlin before I left for India. In fact he introduced me to the phenomena of Wicca. He called it "the Old Religion" and something familiar clicked, but India called. During my travels he had met a couple of Alexandrians. So when I came back he introduced me to them. However I didn't find them that "spiritual". Merlin didn't seem to get too far either so we decided to look to England for more information. We came across the works of Dolores Ashcroft Nowicki from the Servants of the Light (SOL) and Marian Green. Both gave correspondence courses - Marian's "Natural Magic Course" seemed the most appropriate, so that is what we decided to follow.

As it happened we would meet both ladies later and both would be tremendously important in our Craft career. I still meet Marian regularly, more than 30 years later!

1979 however was the year when things changed dramatically. We had done quite a lot of the Natural Magic Course. However I lost my job as a teacher and I lost my room because my landlord wanted to move. Merlin also had to move house...

hrmmm what should we do? Of course fill the car with as much as we could and go to England for a holiday. And what a magical journey, starting with a visit to the Atlantis bookshop in London. Merlin found a newsletter with a call for new members in a coven in Brighton. No email address of course, not even a phone number, just an address.

In those days one wrote letters and waited for a reply... but we hadn't time for that. We had to go back to Holland. So we after visiting Avebury, Glastonbury, Tintagel and the New Forest we decided to call in at Brighton. There one late afternoon I knocked on the door of an old Victorian house. The door opened and a man - the spitting image of Gerald Gardner stood before us. But he just took a look at us and closed the door!

A minute later the door re-opened - he said "I have to pick up my wife, would you like to come?" So 2 seconds later we were in a car with a complete stranger heading for the centre of Brighton.

We met a lady - in her late 30's early 40's. She looked at us and said "Aha..." We joined them for dinner and talked and talked. Who were we? What were we looking for? Who were they? We met them once more before leaving back to Holland.

Back to - no job, no home. It didn't take too much time before we found a room albeit way too expensive for a student and unemployed teacher. Three weeks later we got a telephone call "would we like to be initiated?"

And at Autumn Equinox 1979 - we went back to Brighton and were initiated 1st degree Gardnerians.

Christopher: What was it like to be Pagan when you started? Morgana: There were few books around and no Internet. I didn't even know the word "pagan" could refer to something contemporary. Classical Paganism was something to do with Greece. ;-) And Shakespeare.

I grew up in the 60's & 70's and my first pagan experiences were as a hippy. I loved the music of the Incredible String Band and loved the lyrics of Robin Williamson and Mike Heron. I also went to the festival at Bath in 1969 following the huge success of Woodstock. Seeing Santana, Jefferson Airplane, Led Zeppelin and dancing on stage with Dr. John probably sealed my fate.

Although I was the first in my family to receive higher education and could support myself financially it was the advent of the Pill which truly meant that I was able to escape the cycle of "marriage and babies".

I knew that I as a woman could achieve more than my mother in the 1970's than the 1930's but it was more than being "emancipated". I never became a feminist - and yet I knew that I could not accept Christianity and the patriarchal stance of the Church. I wanted to be a priestess!

Christopher: How did you meet other Pagans? Were there Pagan organizations available?

Morgana: We met few pagans. There was very little organised in the late 70's - early

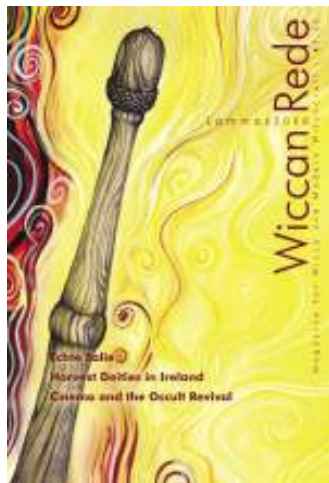
1980's. The people we met were Gardnerians we met as we went back to England for coven meetings. Some of my Craft friend were also involved in the Pagan Federation but that was in the UK. And we met Marian at the Questfest in 1981. So gradually our circle of friends expanded. Travel to the UK then was by boat from the continent. It would take us the best part of a day to get to Brighton and London. Air travel was far too expensive!

So we founded our own organisation :-) In 1979 shortly after our initiation we founded "Silver Circle" and launched a quarterly magazine "Wiccan Rede". We started holding information evenings and gradually started training our own people. By 1984 - yes five years later - we initiated our first trainee.

Over the years Silver Circle has grown and by 1996 Internet entered our lives... And email!

Our daughter who was born on the Summer Solstice 1985 was no longer a baby .. and I started to spread my wings ... again.

Christopher: How did you start getting active in the community?



Morgana: Our first public appearance was with the foundation of "Silver Circle" and the launch of the Anglo/Dutch magazine "Wiccan Rede" in 1980. At this time only a handful of people had even heard of Wicca in the Netherlands. We managed to get good quality articles from Dolores and from Marian. We wrote most of the articles though.

Then we started the Information evenings, fondly called "The Friday Evening group". We covered all sorts of subjects including Western Mysteries. We started the coven but also had a ritual group. Most weekends were filled with craft activities.

Then in 1997 Lady Bara, an Alexandrian HPS, and I decided to volunteer to run PFI Netherlands under the then International Coordinator Tony Kemp. It was at this time too that a number of witches - including Lady Bara, Merlin and I - decided to start the "Witches Cafes" monthly moots. The first one was in Utrecht. Later other people would start cafes throughout Holland and Belgium.

By 1999 I was International Coordinator for PFI and started expanding it. At first PFI was a district of the PF but by 2006 we had started a foundation "Stichting PFI". We split off from the PF and became an affiliated organisation. This meant that we retained an advisory seat on the Council for International affairs but were a separate legal entity. The PFI nations fall under the Foundation. Now there are more that 20 separate PFI Nations and we are present on all continents.

Christopher: How did you start writing booklets?

Morgana: By necessity! There was little literature available in Dutch, so we introduced many concepts via articles in "Wiccan Rede". I should add I wasn't really a writer. Merlin wrote the editorials and many more articles than I ever did!

I was also working full time. Merlin was a full time house husband, so short articles and essays were about as much as we could do manage. Merlin revised a booklet he had written into a book "Horens van de Maan" (Horns of the Moon) which was published by a Christian publishing house.

He also wrote the readers we would use for our "Guidance Course". This was in 1990. Our booklets were also used to support the information we were giving via Silver Circle.

Sometimes we would sell books etc at medieval fairs. Now most of it is done via Internet of course.

Christopher: What about "Beyond the Broomstick"? I understand it is available in English at Amazon.com



Morgana: Yes. This is what I wrote when a friend of mine offered to publish the English version:

"Twijgen uit de bezem" was first published as a series called Beyond The Broomstick (1980, Wiccan Rede) it was translated into Dutch and published as a book in 1982. At that time there were virtually no books about Wicca available in Dutch.

Morgana wrote the eight-part series as an introduction to Wicca with particular emphasis on the philosophical thoughts behind it. As a new religion in the Netherlands, few people knew what Wicca was, and there is a natural tendency to explain something against a background of 'what it isn't.'

Examining major concepts such as 'Polarity', the 'Triple Goddess', the 'God' and the 'Elements', Morgana has presented Wicca in a clear, easy-to-read manner. This is an excellent primer for beginners but is also a handy source of information for the already interested to learn more about 'what Wicca is'."

Both "Beyond the Broomstick" and the Dutch version "Twijgen uit de Bezem" were published in 2008.

Christopher: How long have you been working with Pagan Federation International? What do you do in PFI?

Morgana: I have been the International Coordinator since 1999. I manage the various PFI Nations, coaching new national coordinators and generally oversee the whole operation.

The PFI Forum has several sub fora including one for the NC's so we have an ongoing dialogue. Most of PFI is cyber-run, It has to be otherwise it would be too expensive!

I am also the co- NC for the Netherlands so help the members here. We have an annual conference which Lady Bara organises. I tend to visit the different PFI's and give talks about Wicca or Paganism.

Since I have had quite a lot experience working in an international setting I am

(getting) quite used to different cultures. Within Paganism this is vitally important I think. I try to encourage each PFI to work locally - but also know they can ask us (especially from the UK and US) for advice. There is a vast amount of pagan heritage in Europe which has yet to be uncovered. Through war, political structures and foreign intervention in general plus increasing globalisation many Europeans feel that their culture is disappearing. Religious fundamentalism too hinders acceptance of a different way of thinking - a different kind of spirituality.

There is a place for interfaith although many pagans shirk at the thought of interreligious dialogue. Many too do not want to be involved in "politics" and yet this is often because they are still afraid of standing up and being counted. There is still discrimination and old Church laws undermine secularism.

Christopher: I have been told you are active in Pub Moots and Forums? Care to tell us a bit about them?

Morgana: Yes this is all part of the networking which I do. I meet many different kinds of people from young to old, and from many different countries and social backgrounds.

Christopher: How far have Pagans come since you were new to it? What yet would you like to see happen?

Morgana: When I started, finding information was very difficult. Now there is an overkill! However people have to be much more discerning today. Not everything you read on Internet is correct. And this certainly applies to paganism.

Christopher: What yet would you like to see happen?

Morgana: On the one hand I would like to see paganism accepted as a valid spiritual path. On the other hand as soon as it becomes mainstream I think it will lose the its wildness and independence. Witches should be subversive. We should not be afraid to show where there are anomalies. That women can be equally proficient in administering rites of passage. That the sacredness of life includes having full control of your own body and your own life. That personal responsibility and respect is something we earn and is not enforced by some government body. I would like to see our children having the freedom to think and believe (or not believe) for themselves. But above that we can live in a world in harmony with nature. That WE try to adapt to nature and not vice versa. That we know our place in the order of things, not as slaves but as free men & women.

Christopher: Any advice to some of the newer members in the Pagan community?

Morgana: change really does begin with yourself. However it is not instant. And you certainly can't buy it! Community spirit, a sense of belonging, love & respect are all things which do not have to cost a lot. Look at different forms of organisation. Be open to the lessons we can see in nature. There are natural hierarchies, take heed and listen. Most nature religions are based on an oral tradition not books.

It is worth looking at how different cultures have survived and even if we live in the city to integrate those old well tried customs. And not get bogged down with the "authenticity" of a Book of Shadows. Use your common sense. ;-)

***The Charge of the Goddess:
A Perspective from the Pagan Federation International Stand in London
By Sara Timóteo***

After a taxi trip from the hotel we arrived at Conway Hall on the 13th of September 2009 and faced a long queue of pagans from everywhere who like us, seek some enlightenment and the chance to meet some great names of Witchcraft known worldwide.

The perspective I present here is from those assembled in a stand for the sole purpose of representing PFI.

The PFI information stand is located next to diverse magickal paraphernalia and jewellery produced by talented craftsmen. People have the opportunity to get to know the work developed by the Federation better.

The stand also constitutes a meeting point for old acquaintances and friends and some of the guests pay their compliments to PFI and Portugal. I am honoured to exchange some impressions on the Conference with Fred Lamond, who thanks us for the warm welcome we gave him in Portugal some years ago; with John Belham-Payne and Julie



who work hard so that this event goes smoothly both on and off the stage. I also meet Lois Bourne who signs some of her books near us. The gentlemanlike manners and humour of Sir Ralph Harvey and the kindness of Audrey make my day brighter. Marian Green also pays a visit and her compliments promptly delivered. Will Kale brings a professional posture and also a lovely baby child whom everyone wants to babysit. Backstage I have the chance to meet Maxine Sanders, a kind and real lady and also Janet Farrar & Gavin Bone, always considerate and a bit polemic as ever. I am surprised by the openness demonstrated by all these great names of the Craft; such candour and simplicity are characteristic of wise people and that never ceases to surprise me.

Throughout the day I meet all who represent PFI. It is very enriching to know in person those that work with us to promote and defend a correct idea of Paganism in Europe and internationally. They all are always ready to help with any question. I think namely of Morgana, PFI International Coordinator, Lady Bara, NC PFI Netherlands; Gwiddon, NC PFI Russia and Saddle LaMort, NC PFI Hungary.

Nearby is the Pagan Federation stand and I enjoy particularly to talk with everyone there, specially the very useful contact I had with John Macintyre, Pagan Federation president.

Brian and Trish who work so hard offstage with John and Julie so that everything



goes as it should and so many others that made our stay much to our content here in London. Thank you.

Regarding the few talks I have the chance to hear (because there should always be someone representing PFI in our stand), I believe that the talk by NC of PFI Portugal Isobel Andrade is deeply moving. Beside her personal experience of Doreen's work *Natural Magic*, she analyses the precious contribution of Doreen for her growth as a priestess and for the growth of the Craft. Isobel fully demonstrates how important Doreen Valiente has been in her life and also in the lives of everyone who contacted her directly or by indirect means. The poem Isobel dedicates to Doreen is of such beauty that I do not recall hearing something comparable in memory of someone gone to Summerland and not few visitors had tears in their eyes when she finished her talk.



The panel with contributions from Janet Farrar & Gavin Bone, Lois Bourne, Prof. Ronald Hutton and Marian Green, among others, is also very interesting in exploring the possibilities of Christian Wicca and of auto-initiation.

Lastly, the filmed interview with Doreen is a very powerful experience for both who knew her and for those that, as myself, never had the privilege. Doreen Valiente's down-to-earth attitude, her sense of humour and the unaffected way she approaches her experiences of contact with «Otherwhere» and also sexual freedom back in the days when women hardly knew about orgasm are particularly impressive for those who, on a daily basis, deal with the fantasies and tricky ways of the Internet. But Doreen was the real thing and the interview clearly shows the true nature of someone of great name inside the Craft of our times. Doreen never ceased to practice, learn and teach to those prepared the principles she believed in. By doing so, she decisively contributed for the consolidation of Paganism and Witchcraft everywhere in the world. She was, indeed, a great priestess and an outstanding human being.



It was a Great Day in memory of a Great Lady.

Merry Meet, Merry Part, Merry Meet once again, Doreen!

Sara Timóteo
PFI – Associação Cultural Pagã *** Portugal

***Nordic Satanism and Satanism Scares:
The Dark Side of the Secular Welfare State***
By Titus Hjelm, Henrik Bogdan, Asbjørn Dyrendal & Jesper Aagaard Petersen

The authors examine the interaction between the practice of Satanism and widespread public concern over Satanism in the Nordic countries of Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden. The authors analyse the unique features of Satanism and Satanism scares in the social and cultural context of Nordic “folk church” Lutheranism and the Nordic welfare state. They also discuss how and why in certain periods the fear of Satanism became one of the most visible public issues in the region, and what factors contributed to the decline of public interest in Satanism.

In popular imagery the term “Nordic countries” is often synonymous with pristine nature and successful social policies that have led the region from relative poverty in the early 19th century to the top of the global gross national income and welfare statistics. But there is a dark side to this success story. Since the early 1990s the region has experienced widespread public concern about alleged deviant satanic subcultures afflicting especially the youth in the region. Some examples of the headlines Satanism has made from the early 1990s onwards are church burnings and murder in Norway, allegations of ritual child abuse in Sweden and a case of alleged ritual sacrifice in Finland. The strong subculture of Black Metal music has made Norway especially known internationally for its “satanic youth”, and the genre has inspired equally famous and controversial manifestations in Denmark, Finland and Sweden.

This article seeks to answer two main questions pertaining both to the actual practice of Satanism and to the social reaction to real and alleged Satanism in the Nordic countries⁴. First, what makes the Nordic phenomenon of Satanism unique, and what differentiates it from other cases, such as the Satanism scares in the USA? Second, why did Satanism become such a visible phenomenon in the Nordic countries in the 1990s and after?

1. The social and religious context

Satanism is inseparably intertwined with its social context, making it necessary to outline some aspects of social and religious life in the Nordic countries. At least four factors are relevant to the current discussion. First, national Lutheran churches have a central place in Nordic religion. All countries in the region have had in effect a state church system. Denmark and Sweden have severed church–state bonds (in 1849 and 2000 respectively) and prefer the notion of a “folk” church. Norway still has a state church, and in Finland the separation is less clear, but the term “folk church” is widely used in these countries as well.

Even if church attendance is low and indifference towards religion quite common (see below), the churches retain an important cultural position and exert their influence beyond the religious sphere as an integral part of national identity.

⁴ For the purposes of this paper, “the Nordic countries” refers to Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden. Although traditionally included in the term, Iceland has not experienced significant public reactions to alleged Satanism. Also, the number and public presence of practicing Satanists in Iceland is, to the best of our knowledge, very small.

Second, the churches' power over the individual practice of religion has waned steadily in all of the Nordic countries. Church attendance has gone down, and the number of people unaffiliated with any religious community has risen significantly. The majority of Nordic citizens are still members of the national Lutheran churches, but as the popular phrase goes, this can be seen mostly in terms of "belonging without believing". In this sense it is interesting that religious—that is, Evangelical Christian—discourse has been important in shaping the public image of Satanism, despite the fact that the attachment to an explicitly Christian worldview or to the church as an institution is nominal for the majority.



The third relevant factor for the study of Satanism and social reactions to Satanism is the proliferation of Evangelical, Pentecostals and charismatic Christian sects in the Nordic religious field. These movements have been quite visible in the public sphere, and although their reception in the countries of the region has varied, individual "experts" hailing from a charismatic background have been important in constructing the public image of Satanism.

Finally, all of the Nordic countries were religiously homogeneous until the late 20th century. A new religious diversity gradually emerged, first in Sweden, starting in the 1960s, and subsequently in the other countries. By the late 1990s, Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden all had a growing number of minority religions ranging from ethnic minority based (e.g. Islam) to a plethora of new religious movements. The public reaction to alternative forms of religiosity has ranged from progressive multicultural and multi-religious policies in Sweden to a more sluggish recognition in the other three countries. This emerging religious pluralism is relevant in the sense that in some cases the new and "strange" religions have been drawn (very much against their will) into the controversy surrounding Satanism. Movements such as Wicca have been taken as proof of satanic activity by people concerned and confused about the fast-paced change in the religious landscape of the region.

2. Denmark: from secularized Christian other to rational secular self

There are two separate discourses on Satanism in the Danish public sphere: the discourse on Satanism-as-lifestyle, and the discourse on Satanism-as-deviance. When the media wants to report on Satanism as a serious lifestyle option it seeks out visible insider exponents of Satanism proper (or academics on the odd occasion). The inclusion of Satanism-as-lifestyle is a noticeable shift in the Danish discourse on Satanism. Still, when the media uncover vandalism committed (usually) by adolescents, they frequently use the label of Satanism uncritically as an explanation. Satanists themselves have actively engaged in combating this Satanism-as-deviance discourse by attacking its theological and psychologising underpinnings, and trying to promote an alternative understanding of deviance as adolescent ostensive action rather than Satanism.⁵

⁵ One recent (Petersen, 2009: 6–7) categorization recognises three types: Rationalist, Esoteric, and Reactive Satanism. Rationalist Satanism is an atheistic and philosophical Satanism with roots in the work of Anton LaVey and the Church of Satan; it uses Satan as a symbol for the human condition, as a carnal, emotional and rational being, and thus as an ideal figure of adversarial practice and self-development. Esoteric Satanism is a more mystical and initiatory formulation of Satanism as self-deification; thus Satan is associated with magical practices and mystical experiences, and seen either as a literal entity or as a symbolic being. Reactive Satanism is an appropriation of stereotypes of inverse Christianity and popular conceptions of Satan; it is thus mainly a

2.1 Constructing Satanism from the 1970s to the 1990s

Early exponents of rationalist Satanism in Denmark were connected loosely to witchcraft and “occultism” and later more systematically to the thoughts and practices of Anton LaVey and the Church of Satan (CoS), as with the 1970s satanic witch Gittan Jäderberg. In this sense, rationalist Satanism underwent the same fracture from the cultic milieu in Denmark as in the United States: from broad associations with witches and ceremonial magic in the 1970s to the atheistic philosophy of today. A predecessor of esoteric Satanism in Denmark is Carl William Hansen aka Ben Kadosh (1872–1936), but his influence has been virtually non-existent outside closed circles such as the *Neo-Luciferianske Kirke*. This was formally established in the winter of 2004 but built upon loose networks of initiates dating back to the 1970s. Another, more visible ideological successor is Erwin Neutzsky-Wulff, who in numerous interviews and books from the mid 1980s onwards describes Satanism both as a rhetorical position given by Christians to all freethinkers and non-Christians, and as “humanism” or a “mystery cult” with a long tradition of opposition to Christianity.

These spokespersons should be seen in relation to the main examples of rumour panic in Denmark in the same period. First was the “Anholt affair” of 1973–1974, when various objects found on a small island sparked speculations of a satanic cult. This activated the engagement of Christians, folklorists and self-declared Satanists such as Gittan Jäderberg, thus constructing an “Evangelical” and a “countercultural” voice in the public debate (Dyrendal and Lap, 2008: 331ff). In the 1980s, Satanism was mainly represented in connection with graveyard and church vandalism, adolescent interest in role-playing games, heavy metal and the “occult”, all allegedly leading to participation in satanic groups, a full-time criminal career or suicide (e.g. Frederiksen, 1999). This position was maintained in the early 1990s, especially in the light of Norwegian church burnings and an increasing number of grave desecrations in Denmark, but came under attack from the media and some academics who gradually dismantled the underpinnings of the Evangelicals’ claims from the late 1990s onwards (Dyrendal and Lap, 2008: 351f).



This shift can also be understood in relation to activities undertaken by Satanists themselves. The formation of the *Prometheus Grotten* in 1997 marked the formalization of the individual aspirations of a handful of visible Danish Satanists, namely Amina Lap, Max Schmeling and Hr. Vad (Lap and Wolf, 2003). All were members of the CoS at the time and articulated an atheistic humanism in the tradition of LaVey. One immediate motive for creating an official organization was the wish to publish a newsletter, *Satanisk Bulletin*, which began in 1998 and continues to this day. Another motive was the mobilization of a counter-cultural resistance to and possible seizure of the hegemonic public discourse on Satanism. As indicated above, they have had some success.

2.2 Satanism in Denmark today

The satanic milieu in Denmark is diffuse, fragmented and detraditionalized. If we work with an estimate of 800 self-declared Satanists in Denmark, a majority is

“living out”, or ostension, of a mythical frame. When this bricolage condenses into a more coherent world view with explicit practices, community and institutions, we have often moved into one of the other two categories.

rationalist in the LaVeyan tradition (perhaps 500–600), of which members of *Satanisk Forum* comprise roughly half. The rest are unorganized rationalist individuals and informal groups. The same fragmentation can be applied to the esoteric Satanists, who are diffused into the wider cultic milieu (solitary members of Michael Aquino’s Temple of Set, Thelemites, Pagans, etc.), and to the reactive Satanists of the Black Metal scene and parts of the gothic subculture.⁶ Significant changes followed the death of LaVey in 1997, most notably the expulsion of Hr. Vad from the Church of Satan and *Prometheus Grotten*’s declaration of independence from the CoS around 2000–2001. *Prometheus Grotten* itself split in 2001 along both ideological and organizational lines. One group, continuing as *Prometheus Grotten* around Hr. Vad, focuses on the solitary nature of the Left Hand Path and associates itself with the *Satanic Reds*, an informal internet group combining left-wing politics and esoteric speculations. The present activity of *Prometheus Grotten* seems to be virtually non-existent.

The other group, *Satanisk Forum*, formed around Amina Lap, Max Schmeling and Ole Wolf in 2001, is an example of rationalist Satanism taken almost to its logical extreme. The group comprises around 200–300 members in Scandinavia (the exact figure is unclear) and hosts a message board with around 400 subscribers; it manages the publication of *Satanisk Bulletin* and has a strong presence both online and off-line. Its stated goals are to “build a network benefiting individuals in Satanic Forum and the satanic community” and to “create a satanic ‘subculture’, where the satanic identity and culture is strengthened for present and future generations”.⁷ It is thus an umbrella organization uniting all Satanists interested in combating misconceptions and prejudice.

Satanisk Forum has actively engaged both Christian, secular and insider conceptions of Satanism through many channels: by integrating the Satanic Media Watch and News Exchange archive of Amina Lap, by publishing a Danish demographical analysis of Satanists, by constructing an ideological history and by advocating a specific local version of Satanism in contrast to what they have described as the Americanized values and goals of the Church of Satan. The main thrust of the organization’s ideology could be described as materialistic and rationalist, since their texts refer to modern physics, logic, and materialist arguments rather than to mystical monistic conceptions. Satan is a symbol referring to the act of rebellion as well as to subjective states, and the organization is aggressively atheistic and secular in its rhetoric. Although the cultic milieu contains varieties of subcultural, esoteric and philosophical formulations, the interpretations that are most secularized seem to fit best in the public arena.

3. Finland: the “religionization” of deviant youth

Satanism entered the Finnish public consciousness in the mid 1980s through Pentecostalist Christians like Finnish preacher Leo Meller. Meller’s book *Rock* “exposed” the “satanic” content of rock and heavy metal music, very much in line with contemporary discussions in the USA. Whereas the public attention generated by Meller and others denouncing the “satanic” popular culture of the times was initially regarded with scepticism and mild amusement in the media, Satanism acquired a more sinister image in the early 1990s with the church burnings and

⁶ Note that most Goths are not Satanists; this is merely a description of a tentative congruence on the fringes of the respective milieus. The same can be said with of BDSM scene and metal enthusiasts in general; the majority in these subcultures are not Satanists, but some Satanists are both.

⁷ See the bylaws on the website, article 2.

murders connected to Satanists in Norway. Mainstream newspapers discussed the possibility of satanic cults in Finland and some murders were linked—no matter how tenuously—to an allegedly satanic motivation. The reality of Satanism was finally “proven” in the public eye when some people, namely the Finnish rock singer Kauko Röyhkä, publicly professed to be practising Satanists.

3.1 Finnish Satanism in the early 1990s

Some anti-Satanist commentators have suggested that satanic ritual groups existed in Finland as early as the 1970s, but this claim hardly stands the test of critical scrutiny. There may have been magical/occult groups or individuals in Finland at that time, but there is no knowledge of explicitly satanic involvement by any of these. Religious Satanism first became visible in Finland in the early 1990s. The most famous self-professed Finnish Satanist was the rock singer Kauko Röyhkä mentioned above. He was frequently interviewed about his satanic beliefs and became the face of Satanism for a short period in the early 1990s.



Röyhkä’s Satanism was mainly influenced by Anton LaVey and in his public appearances he consistently denied having anything to do with alleged satanic crime. Röyhkä tried to organize a public satanic ritual in 1993 but failed, showing that his Satanism was more a public expression of a private belief than an example of organized Satanism in Finland. It was also short-lived; by the late 1990s he described Satanism as a phase that had since passed.

At a less visible, grassroots level, a few individual Satanists attempted to organize a satanic group in Helsinki in the early 1990s. In a time before the internet, the word-of-mouth recruitment campaigns had little success, despite the fact that the main person behind these early attempts also appeared in a very popular television talk show. Apart from a few card-carrying members of the CoS and some self-professed Satanists drawing from the philosophy of Anton LaVey, Satanism had few followers and did not manifest as an organized religion in the early 1990s in Finland—despite the fact that it was presented as such in an influential book on religion in Finland, written by the late Harri Heino, director of the Research Center of the Church of Finland.

3.2 The Finnish Satanism scare

Considering the lukewarm reception that practising Satanists had in their early attempts to recruit members, it is perhaps surprising that by the end of the 1990s Satanism was one of the most discussed public issues in Finland. Despite the fact that there were only a handful of practising Satanists, the Finnish media, and through it large segments of the population, became convinced that Satanists were rampant in Finland and that Satanism posed one of the most serious threats to Finnish youth.

Unlike in the USA, where the Satanism scare focused mainly on ritual abuse, or in Norway, where Satanists were connected with church burnings and murder, the Finnish Satanism scare centred on cemetery vandalism⁸. Between 1997 and 2001, hundreds of gravestones were toppled in cemeteries around Finland. What made

⁸ The two exceptions are the so-called Hyvinkää rubbish dump murder of 1998 and the short-lived claim of satanic involvement in a child abuse case in the Finnish town of Toijala in 2005.

the phenomenon interesting for the wider public was that from very early on the news media attributed the cause of this widespread vandalism to Satanism. True, in some cemeteries chapels were painted with pentagrams, inverted crosses and “satanic” slogans, and burial crosses were stuck upside down in the ground. However, the conjecture that this was the work of Satanists was almost always made without any knowledge of the actual perpetrators or their motivations. Upon closer examination it becomes evident that the interpretative leap from a toppled gravestone to Satanism was made by journalists and in many cases a specific group of experts hailing from an Evangelical Christian background, influenced by American anti-Satanist discourse. The hegemony of Evangelical Christian experts in the news media was in turn a result of the late awakening of the Finnish academic community to the phenomenon of Satanism.



While some of the reports regarding satanic activity at cemeteries might have been received with scepticism among journalists and the wider audience, especially in the beginning of the phenomenon, the case referred to as the “Hyvinkää rubbish dump murder” etched the horror of Satanism indelibly into the consciousness of Finns. With its gory details of a group of Black Metal fans who—after a long day of drinking home-brewed spirits—killed and mutilated their friend, the Hyvinkää case defied rational explanation. Building on the already widely discussed public myth, Satanism seemed like a valid explanation. And this time it was the secular public prosecutor, not a sectarian with a religious agenda, that brought the issue up. Although the appeal court decided that there was not enough evidence to link Satanism to the murder, in the public consciousness—largely thanks to the media—the Hyvinkää case remains a satanic ritual murder.

3.3 Satanism in Finland today

The easy availability of information on the internet may have aroused interest in Satanism, but this has resulted neither in a marked growth of practising Satanists nor in the establishment of organized satanic groups in Finland. Instead, most of the Finnish internet pages are informational in nature, outlining the basics of LaVeyan Satanism. In addition to the websites, there are two small independent publishing houses (*Voimasana* and *Ixaxaar*) that have specialized in the publication of satanic and Left Hand Path literature.

In sum, Satanism does exist in Finland, but hardly in the conspiratorial form imagined by some of the spokespersons of Evangelical groups. The most visible form is reactive Satanism, where the aim is to shock, often without any personal commitment to a satanic worldview. The number of practising Satanists remains small and no stable and explicitly satanic groups have emerged in Finland. The advent of the internet has created a group of people interested in Satanism and possibly subscribing to some of its tenets, but refraining from organized or ritual activity. In addition, there is a group of self-styled, reactive Satanists whose inspiration comes mainly from secondary sources, such as extreme metal music and horror films. However, as long as the “dark” youth subculture of gothic rock and extreme metal continues to be popular in Finland, there will be reactions—albeit probably not as strong as in the late 1990s—from wider society to its

perceived Satanism. Even if Satanism as a religion remains marginal, the discourse on Satanism is potentially alive and well in Finland.

4. Norway: From Evangelical fright and violent deviance to mainstream indulgence⁹

Satanism first became a topic of debate in Norway in the mid 1970s as a result of two factors: the emergence of Charismatic Christianity and the development of new religious movements and their opposition. Both phenomena were imported from the United States. The Charismatics' literature—parts of which were translated into Norwegian—presented Satanism as a historical development pointing towards Armageddon. Although the central frame was spiritual, Satanism was also framed as a social problem, illustrated by American atrocity tales. However, the spiritual, apocalyptic frame was of little interest to a strongly secular media, and the movement thus stayed within the Evangelical subculture, while the crime stories were neither “hard news” nor relevant to an overwhelmingly “local” perspective in the media.

At this time organized occultism was hard to find in Norway, and there were very few active non-Christian new religious movements. Even the Christian ones were marginal and, except for the Charismatics themselves, nearly invisible. Satanism entered into the discourse by way of a few references to LaVey's CoS as a foreign phenomenon, far away. The first mention of (anonymous) Norwegians claiming to be Satanists in the press was in the mid 1970s, in response to the brief “scares” in Denmark. These alleged Satanists never showed up again.

4.1 From silence to black metal noise

From the late 1970s to the late 1980s, even the Evangelical output on Satanism dropped to almost nothing. A few Norwegians joined the CoS, but in accordance with the general, individualizing trend in Satanism after 1975, there seems to have been no contact between them. When public interest in Satanism redeveloped, it was because of a metal scene that derived its ideas about Satanism largely from horror comics, metal lyrics and apocalyptic Christian narratives. LaVey's ideas about worldly success, human potential and self-development were of no interest to most, and their elements of misanthropy, elitism and social Darwinism too soft. The Black Metal subculture in Norway preferred a recognisably evil, Christian Satan.

What made Black Metal interesting news was not its ideas as such, but an escalation in internal competition for transgressive, subcultural capital that ended in two murders, multiple church arsons and episodes of assault. This, combined with a militant, anti-Christian, anti-social attitude, made Black Metal an ideal example of the Satanism that the Evangelicals had warned about. The Black Metal subculture, personified by its “media spokespersons” and its most militant acts, lived up to this Evangelical image. The Satanic symbols left at several arson scenes made Satanism the focus of the scare that followed, leading to enormous media interest, local vigils and collective patrols of church grounds. In both secular and religious public discourse the growth of “threatening” popular culture was presented as a symptom of a degraded, decadent society, where the youth were victims. The dissemination of American claims about a worldwide satanic ritual abuse conspiracy made the frame of “threatened children” radical.

⁹ For references to this section, see Dyrendal and Lap (2008).

4.2 Claims of a satanic ritual abuse conspiracy

The dissemination of satanic ritual abuse (SRA) claims by Norwegian media started around the time of the formation of the first Black Metal bands. SRA claims first aroused interest in 1991 (the year before the arsons started) and interest in the SRA myth peaked in 1992–1993, when it was presented to the public by “experts” from the police, therapists, (often Evangelical) journalists and “Satanic survivors”, who claimed a personal history of victimization. The mythos had arrived in Norway primarily through international seminars and workshops for therapists and police officers. As Jeffrey Victor and Jean La Fontaine, among others, have noted, a common language (English), and seminars and conferences spreading claims through professional and ideological networks facilitated the diffusion of the Satanism scare.

The latter also turned out to be one of the causes of SRA-theory’s downfall. With the international publication of several research reports as well as news coverage of scandals like the McMartin case in the USA, there was ample ammunition for the critics. When no corroborating evidence for the Norwegian claims was found, it was they who won the day. This did not mean that the proponents of the theory lost belief in a satanic conspiracy.

Therapists continued “discovering” cases of SRA, “survivor” communities continued to promote their theories and charismatic Christian anti- Satanists continued to preach against Satanism. Apart from a very few instances, however, such claims were kept out of the public eye thereafter.

4.3 Mainstreaming Satanism

The frame for the public perception of Satanism was that of “rebellious youth behaviour”. As Black Metal musicians aged and the genre became “mainstreamed”, the perception of “satanic culture” changed. Central figures like Varg Vikernes were linked with right-wing extremism, and a few new cases of sensationally transgressive behaviour also made the news—most significantly the 2003 beheading of a body scheduled for burial—but the connection with Satanism was later dropped.

By that time, Norway had got its first semi-organised LaVeyan Satanism. The most important group was the strictly LaVeyan *Det norske sataniske samfunn* (NSS). The second was *Ordo Illuminatorum* (OI), which tempered its Satanism with a more esoteric interest in the Hermetic and Thelemic tradition. By 2008 the marginal OI activities had become focused on Crowley’s Thelema, and in 2009 the group seems to have become defunct.

The NSS started out as a website trying to promote contact between people who were attracted to LaVey’s ideas. The owner of the website, which has since evolved into a small online community with a discussion board and a newsletter, has been the main spokesperson ever since. Almost all “group” activity is online, only a small proportion of the 400 or so subscribers being active participants.

Most participants are teenagers, and the older members are rarely active. Only a few of the forum participants are members of the CoS, and most adult members of

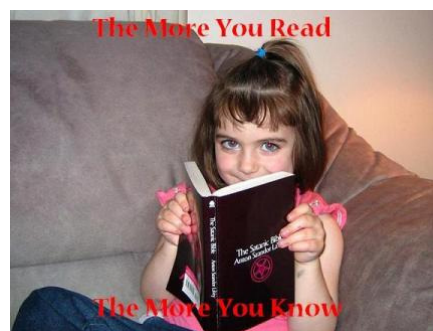
the CoS seem to stay away. The general impression is of a form of Satanism with more than LaVey's prescribed "nine parts respectability".

Politically, most active participants are slightly right of centre, but extremists are not welcome and members seem to come from across the spectrum of "decent" political affiliation. Controversial ideas, attitudes and practices are hard to find.

Media interest in these real, self-identified Satanists has thus been small. Presently then, Satanism has become established in Norway as a philosophical perspective on life among a few young people, as well as being entrenched as a stylistic element of Black Metal. There are "old school" Black Metal fans who idealize the transgressive acts of the early years, but they are few, and new acts rare. Although the stereotype of a Satanist is still a rebellious, black-clad, long-haired teenage male, public discourse has moved towards a slightly more nuanced understanding. It is no longer driven solely by "expert" statements interpreting Satanism as a criminal conspiracy or a symptom of demonic possession, psychiatric disturbances or a society and culture gone bad. Academic descriptions of Satanism and the establishment of satanic spokespersons have made Satanism look more like just another philosophy legitimating modern life.

5. Sweden: between fear of the "other" and antinomian constructs

Although it is likely that a number of Swedes during the 1970s and 1980s took an interest in Satanism, and a few perhaps even joined foreign organizations such as the CoS, it was during the first half of the 1990s that Satanism entered the Swedish religious landscape in earnest. As is the case is with the other Nordic countries, organised Satanism can be divided into two main categories: groups inspired by the LaVeyan brand of Satanism, and groups that have evolved from the Nordic Black Metal scene. It should be noted, however, that organised Satanism has always been a minor phenomenon in Sweden, even during its heyday in the 1990s. The majority of Swedish Satanists appear to have been individuals who did not belong to any satanic group or organisation. The majority of these found Satanism either through the internet or by reading the *Satanic Bible*, which was translated into Swedish in 1995 by Carl Abrahamsson.



Although during the early 1990s Abrahamsson was often considered to be a high-ranking member of the CoS and a personal friend of Anton LaVey, there has never been an official Swedish section of the CoS.

5.1 Satanism in Sweden today

Of the Swedish satanic organisations it is in particular *Svenska Satanistkyrkan* and *Misanthropiska Lucifer Orden* that stand out, in terms of both the attention they have received in the media and their organisational efforts. *Svenska Satanistkyrkan* (SSK) was founded in Uddevalla in 1996 by Tommy Eriksson and had at one stage two local sections, the Muspelheim lodge in Uddevala, and the Nexion lodge in Malmö. In addition to these sections it maintained for a number of years an internet-based bookstore called Belial Centre, which sold esoteric and satanic literature, specialising in books by Anton LaVey. SSK's Satanism was heavily

coloured by LaVey's atheist Satanism, although its members emphasised that they did not want to limit their understanding of the satanic view of life and philosophy to that of LaVey, stressing that they did not have any formal ties to other satanic organisations, such as the CoS. During the first years of the 21st century SSK gradually reduced its activities, and at the time of writing (2009) it seems to have closed down.

Misanthropiska Lucifer Orden (MLO) was founded in the mid 1990s in Gothenburg and received a lot of attention from the media in connection with a murder in Gothenburg in 1997. Two leading members of the organisation shot to death a person they believed to be homosexual. It is hard to ascertain to what extent (if any) the perpetrators' satanic ideology was a motivating factor in the murder, but it is nevertheless obvious that MLO represented a far more radical form of Satanism than mainstream LaVeyan Satanism. The original members of MLO belonged to the Black Metal scene and the movement was in its initial stage closed and highly introverted, but it gradually opened up and even launched a website. In order to become a member of MLO, at least in the early days, one had to undergo a rite of initiation that, according to an interview, included the sacrifice of five cats. The satanic doctrines of MLO are set down in a collection of texts, *Chaosophy*, and the content shows that the author was well versed in a number of occultist systems. *Chaosophy* contains a large number of rituals, which might account for the fact that MLO emphasises the performance of rituals and the practice of magic. MLO has in recent years changed its name to Temple of the Black Light and its doctrine is best described as esoteric Satanism, or, as the group prefers to call it, a "new wrathful form of Gnostic Left Hand Path".

5.2 The Swedish Satanism scare

During the 1970s and early 1980s, the Swedish notion of a satanic underground was to a large extent influenced by the American Christian Evangelical counter-cult movement, with a special focus on the malevolent nature of heavy metal music. It was claimed that the music genre functioned as a cover for a sinister organized satanic underground which, through the music, aimed to seduce Swedish youth into embracing Satanism, drug abuse and sexual promiscuity. The impact of this discourse is remarkable, and the awareness that heavy metal records allegedly contained hidden messages—especially when played backwards—(if not actual belief in this) was widespread among schoolchildren in the 1970s and early 1980s.

The Satanism scare of the 1990s was to a large extent influenced by events in Norway, and it was the Black Metal version of Satanism that was singled out as being especially dangerous. Although cemetery vandalism had been reported in the media in the early 1980s (in the form of alleged occult/satanic ceremonies), the 1990s witnessed a widespread vandalism that often included toppled gravestones.

In addition, satanic symbols, such as pentagrams and inverted crosses, as well as sacrificed animals, such as cats, were found at cemeteries, lending credibility to claims of satanic involvement. In a similar manner, a number of church burnings were assumed to have been perpetrated by Satanists, and in a few cases this was confirmed. The murder committed by two leading members of MLO in 1997 was widely discussed in the media, and it was often assumed that the murder was motivated by their satanic ideology. The 1990s Satanism scare was thus based to a certain extent on actual events that had been committed by self-styled Satanists,

but as in the other Nordic countries, allegations of satanic crimes were often founded on hearsay and wild speculation, and hard facts and evidence were absent.

The absence of evidence becomes even more conspicuous in the case of Eva Lundgren, professor of sociology at Uppsala University. Lundgren claimed on a number of occasions during the 1990s and the early 2000s that Swedish organized satanic groups not only sexually abused children, but also ritually sacrificed children.

The fact that these allegations came from a professor at one of Sweden's most prestigious universities caused it to be widely discussed in the media. The controversy surrounding Lundgren's allegations (which were not limited to claims of satanic ritual abuse and murder) culminated in 2005 when Uppsala University evaluated charges that, among other things, her research was based on fabricated sources. Lundgren was, however, acquitted from the charges.

In sum, then, the Satanism scare and the actual forms of Satanism practiced in Sweden follow the same pattern as in the other Nordic countries. It should be noted, however, that rationalist Satanism of the LaVeyan kind has all but disappeared from the Swedish scene, while the more radical and esoteric forms—as typified by the Temple of the Black Light—continue to have a presence.



6. Nordic Satanism—the hows and whys

We have shown above how Satanism was constructed as a social problem in all of the Nordic countries by importing American interpretations of the phenomenon. Similarly, in some of the cases it is clear that a satanic tradition and community were constructed by importing American ideas and discourse. Therefore, Nordic Satanism, both as social problem and as lifestyle, is part of a global culture of Satanism. That said, these imports are always refracted through the lens of local culture, supporting the understanding of globalization as a process of glocalization. Glocalization can go a long way towards explaining the specifics of the Nordic cases, understood as a “heterogenizing, adaptive response” and as resistance to “homogenizing pressures from the ideological centre”, namely the United States.

For our analysis, the most important sociological feature of the Nordic case is the virtual monopoly of Lutheran state churches, regardless of their actual institutional ties to the state. There are two markedly different ways in which Satanism (both as public discourse and as lifestyle) relates to the mainstream Lutheran churches. First, there is the oppositional and reactive “anti- Christianity” of church burnings, grave desecrations and moral deviance. This constitutes an inversion of Christian values and a symbolic re-enactment of narratives of Satan as the enemy of Christianity and the Church.

Thinking of Satanism solely in terms of anti-Christianity, however, misses a second and more important point. Lutheranism is still considered an integral part of the culture of “Danishness”, “Swedishness”, etc. Thus Christianity is discursively connected to establishment values, moral judgement and national identity, despite the “belonging without believing” dimension of Nordic religiosity. In this light,

reactive Satanism can thus be seen equally as opposition to the churches and as opposition to the complacent and bourgeois values of the establishment, the “consensus culture” and “discourse of the good”. This also explains why participants in the public debates on Satanism have tried to cast the issue first and foremost as a *social* problem instead of a *spiritual* problem. The historical reason for this is the institutionalization of the welfare state after World War II—a social democratic project which transformed the working class into religiously indifferent middle-class consumers. Therefore, it can be argued that Satanism—both as a social problem and as a lifestyle—is a *reaction* to Nordic “secular, social democratic Protestantism” but is also *adapting* to the same conditions.

Extravagant acts such as church burnings combined with an Evangelical framework of interpretation and a media hungry for sensational news is the obvious answer to why Satanism became such a visible phenomenon in the Nordic countries. This, however, overlooks the fact that Satanism featured in national public discussions only during particular peak periods—the early 1990s in Norway and the late 1990s in Finland, for example—and as a social problem has been a relatively short-lived phenomenon. Partly this has to do with the dynamics of public reaction to actions considered “satanic”. Although a strictly causal link is impossible to establish, it is clear that the number of cemetery vandalism cases, for example, correlates with the amount of media exposure. Media exposure, in turn, correlates with the potential news value. When cemetery vandalism ceased to be considered inspired by Satanism, the media lost interest. *Potentially*, however, Satanism remains a controversial issue. First, “Satanism” can provide a legitimation for condemnable acts even if the action is not inspired by any religious or philosophical conviction. Second, atrocities such as abuse and murder can spark the media flame even if the act itself or the perpetrators have nothing to do with Satanism. It remains to be seen whether public discussion in the Nordic countries will pick Satanism as a trope in cases like these in the future.

When we turn to the visibility of Satanism as a lifestyle—especially that of the rationalist Satanists, who distance themselves from the reactive acts done in the name of Satan—the picture is different. Practising Satanists are few in number and low in profile. The small numbers and lack of organization are at least partly explained by the open-ended, “pick and mix” nature of Satanism mentioned earlier. Without a central legitimating factor, either a tradition or a charismatic leader, community formation is minimal and cohesion in (often virtual) communities low. Members drift in and out, and very little reminiscent of a proper social movement is achieved—or aspired to, for that matter.

Satanism is the emblematic form of “light sociality” in which few heavy commitments are made. That said, there is a coherence in the use some of key texts around which communities—real, virtual and imagined—are formed. Also, as mentioned above, there are proper satanic organizations, although their level of activity varies between the countries.

To take a slightly different perspective, we can examine Satanism in the broader framework of modernity. Writing in 1976, Randall Alfred analyses the rationalist Satanism of Anton LaVey as a natural development of the Protestant ethic: “It is a final ratification of the spirit of capitalism”, as it “provides the religious legitimation for worldly hedonism in place of ‘worldly asceticism’”. In this sense, Satanism builds upon basic elements of post-Reformation Western culture: individualism, world-affirmation, utilitarianism and a hedonistic culture of consumption, all of

which feature strongly in the values of the people living in the Nordic countries. In consequence, individualistic religion—whether Charismatic Christian, New Age or Satanic—is in tune with modern society, and Satanism, whether rationalist or esoteric, is a negotiation of the means and values inherent in mainstream culture. “Real Satanism” is hardly visible because those adhering to a satanic lifestyle are not the monsters of myth and popular culture. They are just like the rest of us.

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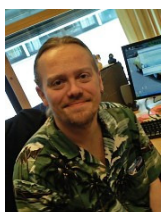
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