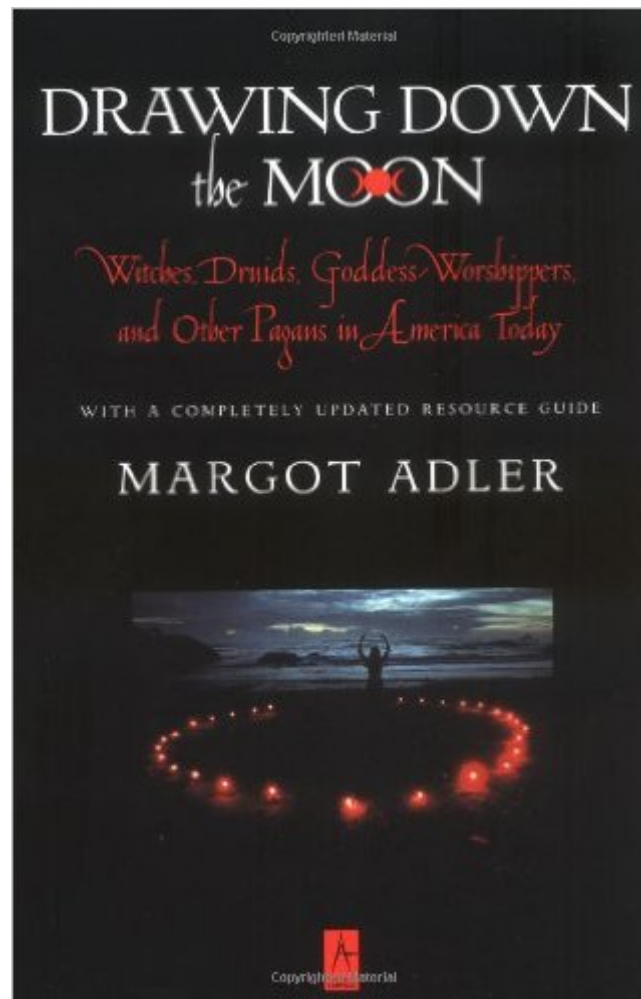


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Drawing Down The Moon: Witches, Druids, Goddess-Worshippers, And Other Pagans In America Today (Compass)



Synopsis

Explores the current Neopagan movement in the United States through discussions with various groups whose rituals are inspired by ancient deities, visions from science fiction, or witchcraft.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

That the Pagan community is a very large and very diverse one should come as no surprise to anyone -- except perhaps to a vocal minority within the Christian faith who persist in lumping all of Paganism into "Devil-worship". Confused about the differences between Gardnerian Wicca and Alexandrian Wicca? Not to mention all those other Pagan religions? Then this is the book for you. Margot Adler's ambitious volume is a sort of field guide, if you will. Encyclopedic in scope, it has got to be the definitive overview on the various beliefs and religious practices that fit within the broad term "Paganism". The book's strengths are in the illuminating history it provides about various pioneers of modern Pagan movements. Wicca, in its various permutations, receives the most thorough treatment. If I have any fault with the book, it is that other Pagan religions are not treated with the same exhaustive and in-depth scope with which Adler treats Wicca. Accurate and respectful mention is made of statements by Aleister Crowley, but references to him are thinly spread. Consequently, I missed many of them in my reading of the book. Adler primarily presents Crowley's contributions to the occult scene through the filter of someone else's interpretation or adaption of his work. I would like to have seen a more in-depth look at Crowley's contributions to the modern occult

and Pagan scene, given that he is the most well-known occultist in non-occult circles. For better or for worse, that "most evil man in the world" reputation has stuck (his self-proclaimed identity as "The Beast" probably hasn't helped matters), and rather undeservedly, from what I can tell in my limited exposure to his writings.

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

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