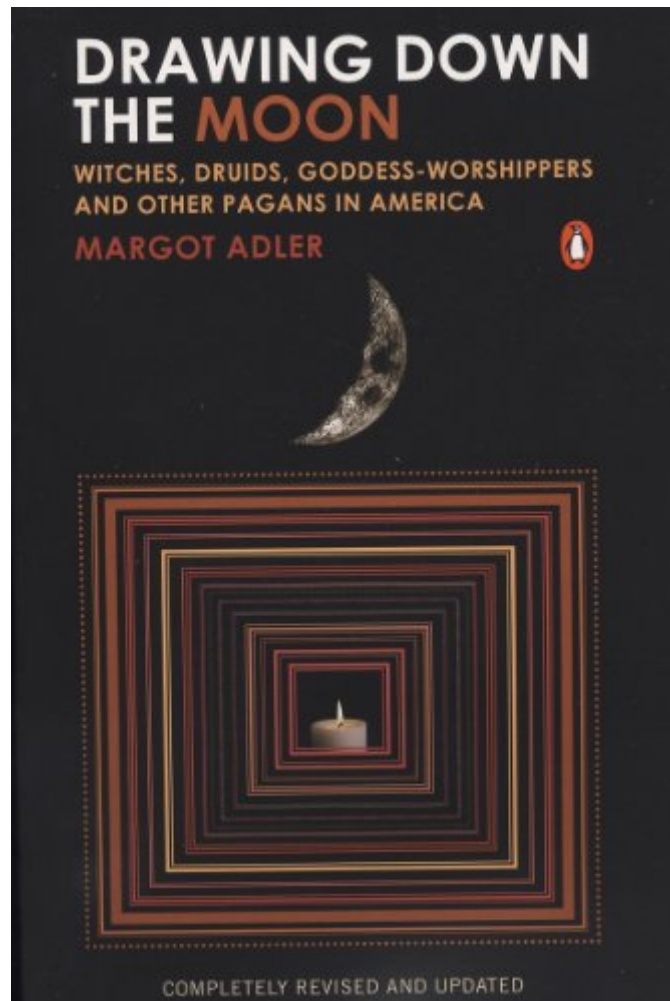


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Drawing Down The Moon: Witches, Druids, Goddess-Worshippers, And Other Pagans In America



Synopsis

Now fully revised-the classic study of Neo-Paganism Almost thirty years since its original publication, *Drawing Down the Moon* continues to be the only detailed history of the burgeoning but still widely misunderstood Neo- Pagan subculture. Margot Adler attended ritual gatherings and interviewed a diverse, colorful gallery of people across the United States, people who find inspiration in ancient deities, nature, myth, even science fiction. In this new edition featuring an updated resource guide of newsletters, journals, books, groups, and festivals, Margot Adler takes a fascinating and honest look at the religious experiences, beliefs, and lifestyles of modern America's Pagan groups.

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Customer Reviews

I picked this book up in a local thrift store for \$1.99, intrigued by the beautiful red and black cover design with a mysterious witch standing against the backdrop of an ocean expanse, within a circle of flames. The title of the book was equally enigmatic to me, not knowing the relevance or meaning of it within Pagan history or practice. Flicking through the pages I noticed that there was some discourse on the RDNA (Reformed Druids of North America), the ADF and Isaac Bonewitz, and I

guess that this was the crucial factor in deciding to part with the best portion of two dollars in return for some practical knowledge. Before I read this book I saw modern Pagans as crack-pots, foundationless cults, weirdo's and overgrown hippies. I was at a stage where I could accept the slightly eccentric but practical spirituality of 'OBOD' and the AODA but found even the notion of polytheism beyond my understanding. My mind was absolutely closed to this book in the beginning, the 1 1/2 inch's of solid paper suggested a good door-stop and I lay it down in a corner of the room where it gathered dust for several months. Visions of naked feminist witches haunted my dreams, strangely effeminate men on LSD staring into glass globes on a wayward camping trip whispered profanities behind my back. I secretly made private jokes about people with names like 'Ferret-Raven Wolf Prancer' and 'Moon-Swirler.' !!!!This book actually scared the hell out of me, literally. I clearly saw the book for what it was; a genuine account of modern American Paganism and this frightened me, maybe because I didn't want to come to the realization that such a thing actually exists. I was too wrapped up in the comfort of a semi-gnostic, spiritual haven of abstract and unspecific wandering.

An insider's chronicle, a journalist's survey, and a participant's history of "witches, druids, goddess-worshippers and other pagans in America," this third edition's welcome. Myth-busting and myth-celebrating, Adler combines scrutiny with compassion, analysis with enthusiasm. Her depth of research matches a brisk yet contemplative style I found easy to read yet often profound in its conclusions. Adler entered as a '60s activist bridging the social reforms she sought with a spiritual dimension that appealed to her even as a girl admiring the Greek deities while growing up in a secular Manhattan family. She explores in this feminine-based, earth-connected, non-salvific, and sexually freer array of practices and lore a fascinating variety of people who yearn for change, but who cannot find it within conventional intellectual, political, or religiously dominant frameworks. Pagan seekers built an alternative that doesn't proselytize or threaten, but a lower profile system of thought and action which awaits those who tend to find in freedom of divine choice what they have always sought but did not know how to name. Diversity counts. "Most Neo-Pagans I know see polytheism not as competitive factions but as facets of a jewel, harmonious but differing." (28) It's bracing to watch a belief option much more open to cooperative rather than hierarchical decision-making coalesce. "Modern Wicca descends 'in spirit' from precisely those fragments of pre-Christian beliefs and practices nobody denies: myths, poetry, the classics, and folk customs." (83) Way back, all of our ancestors practiced a similarly rich combination. This worldview may not, for Western Europeans, have survived after the Christian centuries, but practices did, if severed

from their ancient roots.

Dear Reader, This book isn't a how-to book and is often mislabeled as a Wicca 101 textbook. This is probably because most Wicca 101 'read' lists will list this book; often this is mistaken by the reader to mean it is a hands-on teaching manual. No. All 101 'read' lists should have a historical texts or several. It isn't, in fact, about just Wicca. But rather the modern history of all Pagan religions in North America and Britain that are even similar to Wicca. The various definitions of 'pagan' and 'magic' are gone over and many, many quotes from other witches. I like this because I can't afford to buy all these texts she references and I trust that she pulled out the 'most relevant' information for her work. I, personally, love hearing her stories and personal experiences with these historical figures. Like meeting Maxine Sanders and finding out she is quite a terrible teacher. And the story of an initiation that 'took' even though it was a botched job.

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