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# A DISTINCT PAGANISM



## The Contemporary Pagan Revival In Montreal At the Turn of the Millennium

By

Marisol Charbonneau

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of Classics and Religious Studies  
University of Ottawa  
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## ABSTRACT

Contemporary Paganism, including Wicca, is a new religious movement that has taken root in the worldwide Anglophone diaspora, including Canada. Due to the fact that the majority of the population within Quebec is Francophone, several researchers of Paganism have cast doubts as to whether the Pagan movement could ever take root in the province. This research is an ethnographic study of Paganism in Montreal, Quebec's largest city and sole metropolis, using participant-observation, survey questionnaires, and one-on-one interviews in both English and French. This research aims to determine whether there are any significant differences between Anglophone and Francophone Pagans in Montreal, the degree to which Quebec culture has influenced the development of the religion within the province, and how the unique and distinct forms of Paganism in Quebec challenge the hegemony of the American model of Paganism. This research also explores the ways the development of a Pagan identity can be likened to the process of ethnogenesis.

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# INTRODUCTION

Paganism is not concerned primarily with the unusual or the supernatural, but with the miracle of ordinary life in all its facets.

- Graham Harvey<sup>1</sup>

In the early morning of Saturday, November 17, 2007, I made my way to the Scottish Centre in Verdun to attend one of the Montreal Pagan Conferences. Held on a semi-annual basis, these events continue to bring together, if only for a day, practitioners of diverse Pagan<sup>2</sup> paths in order to create social networks and to bridge communication gaps caused by the countless differences in worldviews and practices among Pagans.

My motives for showing up at this event were many. On the one hand, as I expected, I spent the day enjoying the company of old friends and acquaintances, meeting new people, attending workshops, and drinking too much coffee. On the other hand, my official purpose for attending was to find additional participants in my research and to distribute the last copies of my survey questionnaires before wrapping up fieldwork for my Master's Thesis project. This particular Pagan Conference aptly illustrated my own long-term observations of the unique features of Paganism in Quebec's sole metropolis. With the theme "From Language to Liturgy: Crafting Understanding in Montreal's Diverse Pagan Community" this event primarily addressed the cultural and linguistic

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<sup>1</sup> Harvey, Graham. *Contemporary Paganism: Listening People, Speaking Earth*. New York: New York University Press. 1997:11.

<sup>2</sup> In this text I refer to the people who self-identify as belonging to and participating in the contemporary Pagan revival as "Pagans". This is not to be confused with the lower-case "pagan", a mostly derogatory term used by some to qualify pre-Christian and/or non-Christian peoples, and non-Judeo-Christian religious traditions and beliefs.

divide that separates Anglophone and Francophone Pagans, a phenomenon distinctive of the Montreal Pagan community. This divide is what I decided to investigate further.

My intellectual and philosophical fascination with contemporary Paganism began in early 1997, when I first became acquainted with Pagan individuals, groups and their worldviews in the city of Montreal. This interest quickly translated into a long-term academic pursuit, resulting in the publication of two academic articles<sup>3</sup> and culminating with this ethnographic research.

In the summer of 2007, I began official fieldwork within the Pagan community I had grown to know and love. Through ethnographic fieldwork, participant-observation, structured interviews, survey questionnaires and literature-based research, I pursued my enquiries of the salient features and unique development of Paganism in Montreal. In doing so, I sought to shed light upon the myriad ways in which the particular social, cultural, religious and linguistic context of life in Quebec, and more specifically Montreal, influences the Pagan movement within this Francophone province. In particular, I sought to determine if there were any marked differences between Anglophone and Francophone Pagans, and whether these differences would hinder the growth of Paganism in Quebec or foster the development of parallel yet distinct linguistically based Pagan communities within the province.

Gaining access to Pagans in Montreal for the purposes of this research did not require me to breach the invisible philosophical veil that separates most Pagans from the rest of society. Instead, it involved a premeditated exile from and return to a community

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<sup>3</sup> Charbonneau, Marisol. "Mother Earth, Father Sky? The Sexual Politics of Contemporary Wicca and Paganism". In Saxton, Tammy, Crystal Léger and Karoline Truchon (eds). *Stories from Montreal 2: Ethnographic Accounts of Life in North America's Francophone Metropolis*. Montreal: Armchair Academic Publications / Concordia. 2002: 1-19; Charbonneau, Marisol. "The Melting Cauldron: Ethnicity, Diversity and Identity in a Contemporary Pagan Subculture". *The Pomegranate*. Vol. 9.1. 2007: 5-21.

with which I was already very familiar. I first became aware of the existence of contemporary Paganism in my teens, and made my first encounter with Pagans in Montreal after a fortuitous visit to the occult store *Le Mélange Magique*<sup>4</sup>. After meeting many Witches and Pagans, and researching much of the literature on Paganism that was available a decade ago, I decided that Paganism corresponded well with my already existing worldview, which prior to that time I had thought truly unique<sup>5</sup>.

In the years following that first fateful encounter, I befriended many Pagans of all varieties, and regularly attended and participated in public Pagan rituals organized by a group of volunteers informally referred to as the Montreal Grove<sup>6</sup>. I also became an occasional member of the Concordia University Pagan Society (CUPS) while I completed my undergraduate degree in anthropology at Concordia University from 1998 to 2001. By the time I graduated, I had written many essays and research papers on Paganism, and especially on Pagans in Montreal. After getting one of these projects published<sup>7</sup>, I decided that I also wanted to conduct a large-scale ethnography of Paganism in Montreal. In order to get this accomplished, I relocated to the National Capital Region in early 2003, and in 2005 I began Graduate course work at the University of Ottawa.

Before investigating the processes of identity formation and community building among Montreal Pagans, I was concerned that my previous involvement in the Montreal Pagan community could potentially affect the integrity of my research data. In order to distance myself from the population under study, I kept minimal contact with Montreal

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<sup>4</sup> *Le Mélange Magique* is located at 1928 Ste-Catherine Street West, in Montreal. Like many Pagans, my first encounter with this religious movement occurred through coincidence and/or serendipity.

<sup>5</sup> Like most Pagans, I had also developed an interest in mythology at an early age. At thirteen, I perplexed a bookstore clerk when I complained to him that I couldn't find books on Classical mythology in the store's "Religion" section. I remember how annoyed I got when he corrected me by stating that such books are to be found in the "History" section, as no one alive today still believes in the Greek gods.

<sup>6</sup> This group is officially called the "Open Circle".

<sup>7</sup> Charbonneau, 2002.

Pagans for four years. By the time I began my fieldwork in July 2007, the community had changed and evolved in my absence. Though many people remembered me, there were a number of people who were new to the community and whom I had never met. I took this into consideration and my methodological framework allowed for people who were not known to me personally to participate in my research.

I collected data through ethnographic fieldwork supported by literature-based research, surveys questionnaires, participant-observation, and interviews with both survey respondents and select key informants. These key informants were chosen because they played a major role in the maintenance of semi-organized networks within the Montreal Pagan community<sup>8</sup>. Participants in my study had to conform to three criteria: they had to be at least eighteen years old, self-identify as Pagans and live in the city of Montreal<sup>9</sup>. I chose Montreal as the locus of my research because this city is home for the majority of Pagans in Quebec<sup>10</sup>, and is highly multicultural, multiethnic and multilingual. Since Montreal is also home for the majority of recent immigrants in Quebec, I expected to find a number of Pagans with first- or second-generation immigrant backgrounds. All completed surveys, and all but two interviews, were conducted among people residing within the Island of Montreal. These research participants who lived off-island were interviewed because of their knowledge of and their role in the development of Paganism in Montreal and in Quebec.

My survey questionnaires allowed me to collect demographic and statistical information on Montreal Pagans. These surveys were made available in English and

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<sup>8</sup> Many of these key informants also volunteered to fill out the survey questionnaire.

<sup>9</sup> This includes all merged boroughs and municipalities on the Island of Montreal.

<sup>10</sup> See Gagnon, Mireille. "La mouvance wiccane au Québec: un portrait de la sorcellerie contemporaine". Master's Thesis, Université Laval, 2003.

French on a bilingual web site created for the purposes of this research<sup>11</sup>. Paper copies were also placed at two occult stores in Montreal. *Le Mélange Magique*, located in the downtown area of Montreal, caters primarily to an Anglophone clientele, and *Charme et sortilège*<sup>12</sup>, located on the Plateau Mont-Royal, has a mostly Francophone customer base.

Respondents to the survey questionnaire were given the option of participating in the interview if they felt so inclined<sup>13</sup>. The interviews consisted of thirty-five questions that delved deeper into the topics mentioned in the survey questionnaires. Though many survey respondents did in fact opt for an interview, only a few were able to make themselves available for the actual interviews. As a result I ended up interviewing a non-random sample of people, based on their availability and their willingness to meet with me when I came to Montreal to conduct fieldwork.

I advertised my research in a Montreal Pagan community electronic listserv<sup>14</sup>, and attempted to contact various University and CEGEP-based Pagan associations whose electronic addresses were listed in the networking section of the Summer 2007 issue of the Montreal Pagan newsletter *WynterGreene*. In hindsight, I now realize that advertising to student-based Pagan associations in the middle of summer was very poor judgement on my part. As a result, I got no responses from the owners of the University and CEGEP-based e-mail accounts. I also attempted to place an advertisement in an upcoming issue of *WynterGreene*, however the summer issue was already out, and the next one would appear only after the bulk of my fieldwork would have been completed. The awkward timing of my research resulted in a somewhat limited pool of participants,

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<sup>11</sup> <http://www3.sympatico.ca/arktos>

<sup>12</sup> *Charme et sortilège* is located at 4933 rue de Grand-Pré, Montréal.

<sup>13</sup> There was a check box at the bottom of the cover page of the survey questionnaire listing that option.

<sup>14</sup> [mtl\\_pagan\\_community\\_elist@yahoogroups.com](mailto:mtl_pagan_community_elist@yahoogroups.com)

which consisted mostly of the Montreal Pagans who were registered on the aforementioned listserv, and those whom I met in the field.

I also posted advertisements for my research at the stores *Le Mélange Magique* and *Charme et sortilège*, and attended events that would put me in contact with a greater number of Montreal Pagans than those with whom I interacted on the Montreal Pagan community listserv. I attended one of the Montreal Pagan brunches, which are held once a month at a restaurant on the Plateau-Mont-Royal, right next to Jeanne-Mance Park. I also attended the 2007 Kaleidoscope Gathering, a Pagan camping festival (or “Fest”, as these events are called within the Pagan community) held every August on the Civic Holiday weekend<sup>15</sup>. The venue for Kaleidoscope Gathering was Whispering Pines, a campsite located in Plantagenet, Ontario. I chose to attend this event in particular because it is usually well attended by Montreal Pagans. There I was able to expand my pool of survey respondents to those Pagans who were not registered on the Montreal Pagan community listserv. It also gave me the opportunity to meet with friends and acquaintances whom I had not seen in years.

On the whole, my previous familiarity with the Montreal Pagans, and the fact that many people knew me as both a researcher and as someone familiar with Paganism, made my field experience a lot easier than it would have been had I been new to the community. The people who agreed to participate in my research were friendly and open, and were very willing to help me in my networking efforts.

Chapter 1 provides a brief historical overview of the development of the contemporary Pagan revival in Britain in the 1940s, and of the successive paradigm shifts

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<sup>15</sup> In Ontario and a few other Canadian provinces, the first Monday of the month of August is a statutory holiday.

the movement underwent after taking root in North America in the last decades of the twentieth century. These paradigm shifts are the starting point for identifying the components of the hegemonic form of Anglophone Paganism now prevalent in North America, and most notably in the United States. Chapter 1 also includes a review of the literature within the growing field of Pagan Studies, as well as a discussion of the theories I used to frame my field research among Pagans in the city of Montreal.

Chapter 2 provides an ethnographic account of the various key individuals, organizations, networks and institutions that foster the development of Paganism in Montreal. Chapter 3 presents a demographic portrait of the research participants grouped into eight categories according to ethno-linguistic background and nationality. This chapter highlights the importance of social networks in the creation of a local Pagan community and a broad Pagan movement, and hints at the subtle differences that distinguish Anglophone and Francophone Pagans in Montreal.

Chapters 4 and 5 discuss the processes through which participants in my research construct their Pagan identities, and how participants' voluntary Pagan affiliations shape their views on cultural facts such as language, politics, gender, the environment, and the future of the movement. These responses illustrate the ways in which Quebec culture influences the development of Paganism within the province, and conversely how Paganism, in spite of being a minority religious movement, subtly changes notions of religiosity and spirituality wherever it takes root.

# CHAPTER ONE

## 1.1 THE PAGAN REVIVAL IN BRITAIN AND NORTH AMERICA:

The contemporary Pagan revival<sup>1</sup> originated in Britain in the mid-twentieth century as a quiet, obscure, initiatory tradition of Pagan Witchcraft, popularized by the writings of former British civil servant Gerald B. Gardner<sup>2</sup>. Gardner's version of Witchcraft, now called British Traditional Witchcraft (BTW), took official root on North American soil when his initiates Raymond and Rosemary Buckland formed a coven in Long Island, New York, in 1963<sup>3</sup>. In the following decades, offshoots of BTW Witchcraft became wedded (quite unwittingly at first) to broad North American counter-cultural trends. The most notable of these trends were Second Wave Feminism, the sexual revolution, and the "back to the land" movement<sup>4</sup>. This hybridization resulted in the metamorphosis of Wicca<sup>5</sup>, and in the creation of innumerable, extremely diverse, loosely related Witchcraft and other Pagan religious traditions in North America and other parts of the English-speaking world. This happened independently of the

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<sup>1</sup> The "Pagan revival" is a term used by both Pagans and non-Pagan researchers to refer to the emergence of Wicca and related religions in the Western world (see Adler, Margot. *Drawing Down the Moon: Witches, Druids, Goddess-Worshippers, and Other Pagans in America Today*. New York: Penguin/Arkana. 1979, 1986; Hutton, Ronald. *The Triumph of the Moon: A History of Modern Pagan Witchcraft*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1999; Harvey, 1997, among others). In this text I will refer to the contemporary Pagan or Neo-Pagan movement as "Paganism" for the sake of simplicity.

<sup>2</sup> For a detailed history of what is now called Wicca and the precursors to the Pagan revival in Britain in the last two centuries, see Hutton, 1999. See also Hutton, Ronald. "The Roots of Modern Paganism", in Harvey, Graham and Charlotte Hardman (eds.). *Pagan Pathways*. London: Thorsons. 1996: 3-15.

<sup>3</sup> Chappelle, Heather. "Buckland, Raymond", in Rabinovitch, Shelley T. and James Lewis (eds). *The Encyclopedia of Modern Witchcraft and Neo-Paganism*. New York: Citadel Press/Kensington Publishing Corp. 2002: 30-31. Shortly afterwards, in 1965, Justine Glass' British book *Witchcraft: The Sixth Sense* was being re-published in Hollywood, California by Wilshire Book Company.

<sup>4</sup> For an account of the development of contemporary Paganism in the United States of America, see Adler, 1979, 1986.

<sup>5</sup> For a discussion of the origin of the word "Wicca", see Adler, 1979, 1986. For a discussion of how American Paganism affected its "parent" subculture in Britain, see Hutton, 1999: 361-368.

development of non-Wiccan, “ethnic” traditions of North American witchcraft such as Hoodoo, Root magic and folk spell-work<sup>6</sup>, or Québécois folk magical traditions<sup>7</sup>.

Contemporary Paganism, or Neo-Paganism, is a wide-encompassing religious movement that includes a great variety of traditions<sup>8</sup>, the growth of which Graham Harvey has likened to that of a forest: “Paganism is not a single tree, but an entire wood, not an “-ism” but a broad movement. The roots have produced a tree which has seeded many trees which have evolved in different forms”<sup>9</sup>. Though diverse in belief and practice, the majority of Witchcraft and Pagan traditions today attempt to revive the religious beliefs, practices, philosophies and mythologies of European, Mediterranean, and Near Eastern pre-Christian peoples<sup>10</sup>. Furthermore, Pagans tend to share a reverence for nature, a vision of the world as enchanted and alive, and a view of Divinity as immanent and encompassing both male and female aspects<sup>11</sup>. The latter translates into a broad spectrum in conceptualizations of Deity<sup>12</sup>. Many Pagan traditions also have a strong feminist and/or environmental focus.

Over the years, many North American Pagans have come to perceive the diversity of their beliefs and practices in a very positive light. Prominent American feminist witch

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<sup>6</sup> Yronwode, Catherine. “Hoodoo in Theory and Practice: An Introduction to African-American Rootwork”. <http://www.luckymojo.com/hoodoo.html> Accessed 2008-04-26.

<sup>7</sup> See Gagnon, 2003. See also Séguin, Robert-Lionel. *La sorcellerie au Québec du XVIIe au XIXe siècle*. Ottawa : Léméac. 1971.

<sup>8</sup> Within Paganism, denominations and variances in individual or collective beliefs and practices are referred to as “traditions”. Shelley Rabinovitch writes: “The term tradition can be read as synonymous with sect in Church discussions, and deals with the format and/or focus of the individual style of Neo-Pagan religious expression” (Rabinovitch, Shelley T. “An Ye Harm None, Do What Ye Will”: Neo-Pagans and Witches in Canada”. Master’s Thesis, Department of Religion, Carleton University. 1992: 49).

<sup>9</sup> Harvey, 1997: 2.

<sup>10</sup> Although, it should be noted, a growing number of Pagan traditions also focus on non-Western ancestral cultures.

<sup>11</sup> See Adler, 1979, 1986.

<sup>12</sup> Some Pagans will imagine Divinity as a plurality of gods and goddesses, while others, many of whom practice some form of Witchcraft, will conceive of the Divine as a male-female pairing. Some Feminist Witches will sometimes conceptualize the Divine in exclusively female terms.

Starhawk has come as close to canonizing this perception of Paganism as this non-dogmatic movement will ever allow: “The Goddess, like nature, loves diversity”<sup>13</sup>.

As a number of academic researchers have attested in recent years, one of the consequences of this ubiquitous and celebrated diversity is that it causes great difficulties for both adherents and scholars alike when attempting to define Paganism as a religious movement: “Without an agreed upon doctrinal framework, common definitions, dogma, or criteria for establishing expertise, Paganism defies many of the common definitions for both religion and community”<sup>14</sup>. Furthermore,

It is possible for each individual to have her or his own brand of Neo-Paganism. In practice, however, there is a good deal of similarity, as Neo-Pagans share information and ideas on the Internet, at festivals, and in books and journals (H. Berger 1999a). This means that on the one hand, it is almost always possible to find at least one Neo-Pagan who is the exception to any generalization about the group. On the other hand, there is a growing similarity in practices, imagery, and language used in rituals and descriptions of mystical experiences.<sup>15</sup>

To make matters even more interesting, some Pagans appear to be impervious to what others would consider irreconcilable contradictions in their self-definition as *Pagans*<sup>16</sup>. As many observers remarked, this is not surprising, since Paganism has extremely porous boundaries, a decentralized nature and a lack of formal organization or criteria of membership:

Determining the boundaries of the Pagan community is difficult for a number of reasons. Neo-Pagans do not, for the most part, separate themselves geographically from the surrounding culture. Membership is usually informal and nonexclusive: individuals may belong to a variety of groups, holding multiple initiations and attending some rituals but not others. In some cases, Pagans may think of themselves as belonging to other religious communities simultaneously: for example, I

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<sup>13</sup> Starhawk. *The Spiral Dance: A Rebirth of the Ancient Religion of the Great Goddess*. Harper Collins and Harper San Francisco. 1979, 1989: 27.

<sup>14</sup> Pearce, Maryanne E. “Something New, Something Old: “The Old Religion” in the Modern World”. Master’s Thesis, University of Western Ontario, 2000:6.

<sup>15</sup> Berger, Helen A., Evan A. Leach and Leigh S. Shaffer. *Voices from the Pagan Census: A National Survey of Witches and Neo-Pagans in the United States*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press. 2003: 4-5.

<sup>16</sup> In the last ten years of interacting with Pagans of all affiliations, I have met and/or corresponded with people who self-identify as Christo-Pagans, who blend Christian images of Divinity with Pagan ritual practices. Many within the Pagan community would consider any form of Christianity anathema to contemporary Paganism.

met numerous Jewish Pagans who felt their two religious identities were not mutually exclusive. Neo-Pagans also overlap or are contiguous with a number of other groups: these can include reenactment organizations such as the Society for Creative Anachronism and the Renaissance Pleasure Faire, role-playing gamers, science fiction and fantasy fans, environmentalists, feminists, Goths, folk musicians, and followers of the New Age movement.<sup>17</sup>

For these reasons, in order to delineate their group boundaries, Pagans often must define themselves in oppositional terms:

Because Neo-Paganism is an amorphous religion in which there are no clear criteria of membership, it is difficult to speak of anyone or any group who claims membership as being outside the religion. Nonetheless, in speaking about their religion, most Neo-Pagans distinguish themselves from Satanists, New Agers, and those who are intolerant of diversity<sup>18</sup>.

What may be the most challenging aspect of researching Paganism is that the majority of adherents are anywhere between fairly discreet to downright secretive about their religious affiliations. As Shelley Rabinovitch wrote, “Researching the Neo-Pagan movement across Canada is much like searching for a needle in a haystack with one major addition: this needle has a conscious wish NOT to be found”<sup>19</sup>. This is because many Pagans fear that neighbours and relatives may misunderstand their religious affiliations and stigmatize them because of their beliefs. Secrecy and discretion are a strategy to avoid loss of employment, loss of custody of their children, “ostracism in small communities, physical violence, and so forth”<sup>20</sup>. Furthermore, in spite of its exponential growth in the last decade<sup>21</sup>, Paganism is still very much a minority religion when compared to the rest of the population.

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<sup>17</sup> Magliocco, Sabina. *Witching Culture: Folklore and Neo-Paganism in America*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. 2004: 58-59.

<sup>18</sup> Berger et al., 2003:15.

<sup>19</sup> Rabinovitch, 1992: 19. See also Berger et al. (2003) with regards to the methodological difficulties in researching a “hidden” population.

<sup>20</sup> Rabinovitch, 1992: 19.

<sup>21</sup> According to the latest Statistics Canada Census on Religion, the number of people who self-identify as Pagans in Canada has increased 281.2 % from 1991 to 2001. See “Selected Religions, for Canada, Provinces & Territories –20% Sample Data”, from Statistics Canada:

<http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census01/products/highlight/Religion/Page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo=PR&View=1a&Code=01&Table=1&StartRec=1&Sort=2&B1=Canada&B2=1> accessed August 24, 2005.

The small number of people involved in these religious practices, combined with their lack of formal organization, has probably contributed to the fact that they have been largely ignored by those surveying the Canadian religious scene.<sup>22</sup>

There is also much debate within Paganism as to whether there exists such a thing as a “Pagan community”. Margot Adler has often been credited with inventing the notion of a Pagan community when she began researching Paganism in the United States in the 1970s *as if* such a community already existed<sup>23</sup>. As Sabina Magliocco observed, the Pagan community today would be more accurately described as a *subculture*:

To the extent that it exists as a community at all, it is a collection of dense national and international networks of communication whose principal focus is the creation of a new religious culture. It is also a socially imagined community that both distinguishes itself from the surrounding non-Pagan culture, and creates boundaries and borders within itself. From these distinctions, individual Neo-Pagans may fashion an identity which often emerges in the context of performance: that is, at public rituals, festivals, celebrations, Neo-Pagan conferences, and online forums.<sup>24</sup>

In spite of the myriad challenges to academic research caused by the uniquely evasive and radically individualistic nature of Paganism, from the early 1990s onward the number of popular books and academic studies on the movement multiplied. This once-obscure collectivity of religious traditions became more visible mainly as a result of the trend in the popular North American entertainment media of the time to portray a number of Wiccan and Pagan fictional characters in a positive, or at least morally neutral, light<sup>25</sup>. Shifts in the popular cultural depictions of Witchcraft and Paganism in that decade inspired many people – especially teenage girls<sup>26</sup> – to experiment with religious forms

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<sup>22</sup> Reid, Sian L. “Disorganized Religion: An Exploration of the Neo-Pagan Craft in Canada”. Doctoral Thesis. 2001: 2.

<sup>23</sup> Adler, 1979, 1986.

<sup>24</sup> Magliocco, 2004: 58.

<sup>25</sup> This trend has declined since 2001. However, it would be difficult for any North American who came of age in the 1990s to forget how often some movies such as *The Craft* and many popular television shows of the era – such as *Charmed*, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *Angel*, and the like – featured Witches and/or occultists as regular characters.

<sup>26</sup> This is often referred to as the “Teen Witch” phenomenon in the Pagan community. One of the best-selling Pagan books addressed to a non-academic popular audience in the last decade has been Silver RavenWolf’s *Teen Witch: Wicca for a New Generation*. St. Paul: Llewellyn Publications. 1998.

and to self-identify as Witches and/or Pagans, with varying degrees of commitment to Paganism as a religious culture. As a result, the already porous boundaries of Paganism were shifted even further than they had been in previous decades.

It should be noted that the great shifts in membership and consensual group boundaries within North American Paganism in the 1990s were far from constituting a new phenomenon. In the 1960s, the movement experienced its first growing pains when Witchcraft officially migrated from Britain to North America. According to journalist and Gardnerian witch Margot Adler, whose classic study of Paganism in America in the 1970s was one of the first texts to take the movement seriously, the arrival of Wicca in the United States had mixed results among unrelated practitioners of Witchcraft:

As we have seen, until a few years ago most scholars dismissed all segments of the modern Craft as a hoax. Some Witches said they were of very old traditions that existed long before the time of Gardner. Others said that Gardner's version of the Craft was a "pure" tradition. And in America descendants of European immigrants insisted that they were Witches through family tradition, and that their Witchcraft didn't resemble Gardner's in the least. What's more, many of them said that Witchcraft was first and foremost a *craft* and only secondarily a *religion*.<sup>27</sup>

Gardner's popularization of Wicca had another unexpected effect: "At the same time, covens sprang up in many places, and coven leaders declared themselves to be heirs of traditions that were thousands of years old. Many of these were soon discovered to be liars"<sup>28</sup>. Adler also noted that debates over claims of legitimacy abated since then, as many people came to the realization that the revival of Witchcraft and Paganism originated from a multiplicity of sources. Writing in the late 1970s, she said that "Today, most revivalist Witches in North America accept the universal Old Religion more as a metaphor than as literal reality – a spiritual truth more than a geographic one"<sup>29</sup>.

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<sup>27</sup> Adler, 1979, 1986: 66. Italics in original text.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid. pp. 66-67.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid. p.86.

In the 1970s, Paganism faced an even more significant existential crisis when the movement cross-fertilized with Second Wave Feminism. According to historian Ronald Hutton, the assimilation of Witchcraft to the women's spirituality movement has been the most important contribution of American culture to Paganism<sup>30</sup>. This was largely based upon the Feminist movement's re-mythologizing of the image of the witch as "one of the very few images of independent female power which historic European cultures have bequeathed"<sup>31</sup>.

Throughout the 1960s, prominent American feminist authors such as Mary Daly repeatedly used the image of the "witch" as a strategy to challenge the status quo of patriarchy, asserting that "... the witch trials [of the early modern period] had represented both the suppression of the Old Religion and the control of women, who might now regain their old power by identifying with witches"<sup>32</sup>. In doing so, these authors were unconsciously drawing upon a variety of late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century notions pertaining to the nature of Witchcraft as the survival of an ancient, pre-Christian Pagan religion rooted in a utopian, prehistoric, matriarchal society<sup>33</sup>. They were also engaged in a radical deconstruction of patriarchal Christianity and a search for models of female divinity and power.

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<sup>30</sup> Hutton, 1999: 341. See also Eller, Cynthia. *Living in the Lap of the Goddess: The Feminist Spirituality Movement in America*. New York: Crossroad. 1993.

<sup>31</sup> Hutton, 1999:341. For an insider's critical look at the Women's Spirituality movement, see Eller, Cynthia. *Living in the Lap of the Goddess: The Feminist Spirituality Movement in America*. New York: Crossroad. 1993.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid. See also Christ, Carol P, and Judith Plaskow (eds). *WomanSpirit Rising: A Feminist Reader in Religion*. San Francisco: Harper & Row. 1979, 1992.; Christ, Carol P. "Why Women Need the Goddess: Phenomenological, Psychological, and Political Reflections". In Christ and Plaskow. 1979, 1992: 273-286; and Plaskow, Judith, and Carol P. Christ (eds). *Weaving the Visions: New Patterns in Feminist Spirituality*. San Francisco: Harper & Row. 1989.

<sup>33</sup> See Hutton, 1999. See also Magliocco, 2004, and Eller, 1993.

According to Adler, the appropriation of the image of Witchcraft by radical feminists for political ends greatly annoyed many traditional-minded practitioners of the religion, as “many feminist Witches have purposely rejected some principles, norms, and structures of the modern Craft”<sup>34</sup>. Nonetheless, Feminist Witchcraft took on a decidedly religious dimension with the founding of the Susan B. Anthony Coven Number One in Los Angeles in 1972 by Hungarian immigrant and Witch Zsuzsanna Budapest<sup>35</sup>.

Another major shift in the growth of Paganism in North America occurred later in the same decade when Feminist Witchcraft and the rising environmental awareness movement cross-fertilized ideologically around the notion of “Gaia” as Mother Earth. In 1979, Pagan author Starhawk (née Miriam Simos) published her first book *The Spiral Dance*, in which she re-interpreted Pagan Witchcraft as a human potential movement<sup>36</sup>. Using the imagery of the radical feminist version of the European witch persecutions, Starhawk popularized a gender-inclusive, Goddess-centered, and politically and environmentally activist tradition, which had as its purpose to challenge environmentally destructive and oppressive political structures:

Ultimately, the reemergence of the Goddess religion is a conscious attempt to reshape culture. In the past, culture has been reshaped by force. The Witch persecutions of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are themselves one example [...].

But *we* cannot reshape consciousness by force or through fear, for to do so would only reinforce what we are trying to change. We must bring about change through non-violence, physical and spiritual. We are called to take a radical leap of faith, to believe that people, given the opening to dream of new possibilities, with tools and visions will create a living future.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Adler, 1979, 1986:178.

<sup>35</sup> These women in Z. Budapest’s coven “proclaimed religious separatism, with women-only space and an autonomous female deity. Calling themselves Dianic Witches, after the Goddess of the Witches from Charles Leland’s *Aradia*, they celebrated the Wiccan Sabbats and incorporated many Wiccan symbols and practices, including a focus on ritual and magic”. (Griffin, Wendy. “Feminist Spirituality and Neo-Paganism”, in Rabinovitch & Lewis, 2002: 98). In the same era, in New York City and Boston, feminist groups such as WITCH (Women’s International Terrorist Conspiracy from Hell) were also using the imagery of witchcraft as women’s power in their political demonstrations (see Adler, 1979, 1986).

<sup>36</sup> Hutton, 1999:346. *The Spiral Dance* was based on Simos’ thesis for her Master’s in psychology, entitled “New Moon Rising” (Lucie Marie-Mai DuFresne, personal communication 2008-04-26).

<sup>37</sup> Starhawk, 1979, 1989:11. Italics in original text.

Starhawk wrote several subsequent books<sup>38</sup> that, as noted by Hutton, took on a more socially activist tone<sup>39</sup>. The eco-feminist model of Paganism remained prominent in North America and elsewhere until the mid-1990s when great numbers of young people suddenly became interested in Witchcraft and Paganism. This resulted in the movement becoming more visible and accessible to non-Pagans than it had ever been. The faddish nature of this particularly recent development in Paganism led many Pagans and academics alike to question what actually constitutes a Pagan identity. This research focuses in part on the processes involved in the formation of a specific putative Pagan identity, and in how Pagans in Montreal build their real and imagined communities.

## **1.2 LITERATURE REVIEW**

This current study expands upon the growing body of research on Paganism produced by American, British and Canadian scholars. Journalists have also made important contributions to the popularization and demystification of the contemporary Pagan movement. The latter include Margot Adler, whose seminal work *Drawing Down the Moon: Witches, Druids, Goddess-Worshippers, and Other Pagans in America Today* was the first longitudinal study of Paganism in the United States. Originally published in 1979, this pivotal work has since gone through three editions, the most recent in 2006.

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<sup>38</sup> Starhawk's subsequent books include the following: *Dreaming the Dark: Magic, Sex, and Politics*. Boston, Beacon. 1982, 1988, 1997; *Truth or Dare: Encounters with Power, Authority, and Mystery*. San Francisco, HarperSanFrancisco. 1988; *The Fifth Sacred Thing*. New York, Bantam. 1993; *Walking to Mercury*. New York, Bantam. 1997; *The Pagan Book of Living and Dying*, co-written with M. Macha NightMare and the Reclaiming Collective. San Francisco, HarperSanFrancisco. 1997; *Circle Round: Raising Children in the Goddess Tradition*. Cowritten with Anne Hill and Diane Baker. New York, Bantam. 1998; *The Twelve Wild Swans: A Journey to the Realm of Magic, Healing, and Action*, co-written with Hilary Valentine. San Francisco, HarperSanFrancisco. 2000; *Webs of Power: Notes from the Global Uprising*. Victoria, Canada; New Society Publishers. 2002; *The Earth Path: Grounding Your Spirit in the Rhythms of Nature*. San Francisco, HarperSanFrancisco. 2004.

<sup>39</sup> Hutton, 1999: 347.

Adler was also first to study Paganism as a religious movement in the United States, and to speak of the disparate traditions of witchcraft and paganism as constituting a religious community. On a related note, Canadian journalist Kevin Marron conducted a smaller-scale and lesser-known survey of Paganism in Canada in the 1980s. His book *Witches, Pagans and Magic in the New Age* is now out of print<sup>40</sup>.

American academic studies of Paganism include those of Helen A. Berger, who in the 1990s conducted a sociological study among self-identified Witches in New England<sup>41</sup>. In this work, Berger identifies some of the most salient ways in which the American cultural context influenced the development of Wicca and Paganism in the United States: “Mysticism, ecological concerns, women’s rights, and anti-authoritarianism have all been incorporated into this new religion”<sup>42</sup>. She also discusses how the diffusion of information about Wicca and related forms of Paganism through chants, songs, books and other elements of Pagan material culture, as well as the need for greater legitimacy as a religion, have caused the religious movement to begin the process of routinization into a recognizable, hegemonic form in the United States:

Standardization, nonetheless, has been increasing. The uncertainty of dealing with the problems that arise in creating a new religion combined with the need for legitimacy results in the development of isomorphism. Mimetic isomorphism occurs when specific chants, artwork, or other aspects of rituals spread among individual practitioners or groups. Festivals are an important avenue for the dissemination of information about practices among the adherents of this new religion. Chants and songs are frequently collected and distributed over computer networks. [...] Normative isomorphism is the result of growing professionalism. Although Wicca has no one standard training for high priestesses and high priests, a network [EarthSpirit Community] is attempting to establish standards of practice. These standards remain loose and are at best only partially defined, but the process has begun.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Marron, Kevin. *Witches, Pagans and Magic in the New Age*. Toronto: Seal Books. 1989.

<sup>41</sup> Berger, Helen A. *A Community of Witches: Contemporary Neo-Paganism and Witchcraft in the United States*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press. 1999.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid. p. 12.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid. p. 103.

In the same decade, Berger and her colleagues Evan A. Leach and Leigh S. Shaffer collaborated in the compilation of statistical data on Paganism across the United States<sup>44</sup>. *Voices from the Pagan Census* is one of the most ambitious and wide-ranging projects of this nature to date. In this study, Berger et al. identify many salient characteristics of American Pagans, as compared to their non-Pagan compatriots. This detailed portrait of American Paganism further suggests that the religious movement is becoming increasingly normalized and routinized, and that the current Pagan emphasis on feminism, mysticism, political activism, the liberalization of sexual mores and gender roles, radical individualism and so on will become more normative among American Pagans in years to come. My own research aims to determine whether Paganism in the predominantly Francophone province of Quebec challenges the hegemony of the American model of Paganism, as described by Berger and her colleagues.

Other recent anthropological studies of Paganism in the United States include Sarah Pike's *Earthy Bodies, Magical Selves*<sup>45</sup>, a long-term research among Pagan festival-goers in the 1990s. Sabina Magliocco's ethnographic survey *Witching Culture* discusses the role of folklore and anthropology in the development of Paganism in the United States, and in Northern California in particular<sup>46</sup>. *Enchanted Feminism*<sup>47</sup> is Jone Salomonsen's study of the Reclaiming Collective, a well-known, well-defined eco-feminist Witchcraft tradition popularized by Starhawk. Swedish anthropologist Mattias Gardell investigated the close ties between the White Supremacist movement and a fringe

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<sup>44</sup> Berger et al., 2003.

<sup>45</sup> Pike, Sarah M. *Earthy Bodies, Magical Selves: Contemporary Pagans and the Search for Community*. Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press. 2001.

<sup>46</sup> Magliocco, 2004.

<sup>47</sup> Salomonsen, Jone. *Enchanted Feminism: the Reclaiming Witches of San Francisco*. London and New York: Routledge. 2002.

minority of racist Odinists, Heathens and Asatrúars<sup>48</sup> in the United States and in Canada in his book *Gods of the Blood: The Pagan Revival and White Separatism*<sup>49</sup>.

British studies on Paganism include the works of Graham Harvey, who catalogued the diversity of traditions within the religious movement in Britain<sup>50</sup>. Ronald Hutton has produced much material on the history and development of the occult and Pagan revivals in Britain<sup>51</sup>, which were precursors to the rise in popularity of Witchcraft and Paganism in Britain in the 1950s, and later in North America. Marion Bowman has written about how British Pagans tend to incorporate a “Celtic” ethnic focus in the construction of their Pagan identities<sup>52</sup>, while Ann-Marie Gallagher further discusses the problematic implications of ethnic affiliations within British Paganism<sup>53</sup>.

Similar studies were also conducted in Canada starting in the late 1980s and early 1990s. In 1992, Shelley Rabinovitch wrote her ethnographic survey on Canadian Pagans in her Master’s thesis ‘An Ye Harm None, Do What Ye Will’: Neo-Pagans and Witches in Canada”. Her most significant findings were that a great number of Pagans were attracted to the religious movement for its healing aspect, as the majority of her informants were self-defined survivors of childhood abuse and/or parental neglect<sup>54</sup>. In the same decade, Sían Reid conducted sociological research with and collected statistical

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<sup>48</sup> These are Pagans who follow the reconstructed religions of pre-Christian Scandinavian peoples.

<sup>49</sup> Gardell, Mattias. *Gods of the Blood: The Pagan Revival and White Separatism*. Durham and London: Duke University Press. 2003.

<sup>50</sup> Harvey, 1997. See also Harvey, Graham and Charlotte Hardman (eds). *Pagan Pathways*. London: Thorsons. 1996.

<sup>51</sup> Hutton, 1999. See also Hutton’s article “The Roots of Modern Paganism” in Harvey and Hardman. 1996: 3-15.

<sup>52</sup> Bowman, Marion. “Cardiac Celts: Images of the Celts in Paganism”, in Harvey, Graham and Charlotte Hardman (eds). *Pagan Pathways*. London: Thorsons. 1996: 242-251.

<sup>53</sup> Gallagher, Ann-Marie. “Weaving a Tangled Web? Pagan Ethics and Issues of History, “Race” and Ethnicity in Pagan Identity”. In Reid, Sían (ed). *Between the Worlds: Readings in Contemporary Neopaganism*. Toronto: Canadian Scholars’ Press Inc. 2006: 267-283.

<sup>54</sup> Rabinovitch, 1992. See also Rabinovitch, Shelley TSivia. “Heal the Universe and Heal the Self: Bateson’s Double-Bind and North American Wiccan Practice”. *Diskus*, Vol. 6 (2000).

<http://www.uni-marburg.de/religionswissenschaft/journal/diskus/rabinovitch.html>

data from a large sample of Canadian Pagans. Her results were presented in her Doctoral thesis “Disorganized Religion: An Exploration of the Neopagan Craft in Canada” in 2001. Maryanne Pearce’s Master’s thesis “Something New, Something Old: “The Old Religion” in the Modern World” (2000) discusses the theoretical links between the rise of contemporary Paganism and post-modern thought.

Academic studies on Paganism in Quebec are few and far between. These include Eve Gaboury’s 1989 Master’s thesis on Feminist Francophone Witches<sup>55</sup>, and a subsequent article about self-definition among Québécois Feminist Witches<sup>56</sup>. Mireille Gagnon conducted the first large-scale ethnographic research among Francophone and Anglophone Wiccans exclusively in the Province of Quebec<sup>57</sup>. Her research is especially relevant to my own, in that I intend to further investigate her observation that the overwhelming majority of Wiccans and Pagans are Anglophones, even in the predominantly Francophone province of Quebec. On a related note, Lucie Marie-Mai DuFresne has also written various scholarly articles pertaining to contemporary Paganism in a Canadian, and most notably French Canadian, context. DuFresne’s research revealed that the pervasiveness of the English language within Paganism has caused many French-speaking Pagans to use English as a liturgical language<sup>58</sup>. Her writings also discuss some aspects of gender politics in Paganism as reflected most notably in Goddess-imagery<sup>59</sup>. Her most significant contribution to the feminist study of Canadian Paganism is her long-

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<sup>55</sup> Gaboury, Eve. “Confluence du néo-paganisme et du féminisme chez les québécoises : le discours de quelques sorcières”. Master’s Thesis, University of Ottawa, 1989.

<sup>56</sup> Gaboury, Eve. “Ou à défaut, invente: La sorcellerie néo-païenne comme lieu d’épanouissement du processus créateur gynocentrique”. Veillette, Denise (dir.). *Femmes et religions*. Corporation canadienne des sciences religieuses. Les Presses de l’Université Laval. 1995 : 237-248.

<sup>57</sup> Gagnon, 2003.

<sup>58</sup> DuFresne, Lucie Marie-Mai. “A la recherche des mots pour le vivre” *Ethnologies : Wicca*. The Folklore Studies Association of Canada. Vol. 20, No. 1. 1998: 203-209.

<sup>59</sup> DuFresne, Lucie Marie-Mai. “Mother and Goddess – The Ideological Force of Symbols”. *Canadian Women’s Studies / Les Cahiers de la femme*. York University. Vol.17, No. 1. 1997:101-102.

term ethnography of Goddess-worshipping women in Ottawa and the Canadian National Capital Region<sup>60</sup>.

On a more personal note, this current study expands upon research I have been conducting among Pagans in Montreal since 1997. My first publication on Montreal Pagans consisted of a brief article on how the construction of gender and sexuality in some Witchcraft traditions emphasize gender stereotypes instead of presenting women and men with alternatives to confining gender roles, as much of Paganism claims to do<sup>61</sup>.

My second publication<sup>62</sup> tackled the thorny subject of ethnicity within Paganism. Like many researchers before me<sup>63</sup>, I noticed early on in my interactions with Pagans that the overwhelming majority among them was of European descent, and in this publication I attempted to provide an explanation as to why people of non-European ancestry rarely join the Pagan movement. Like Magliocco before me, I observed that Pagans in North America attempt to reconnect with their ancestral cultures by adopting the pre-Christian religious beliefs and practices of their real and/or imagined ancestors. As Magliocco noted,

Creating connections to a historical past presents special problems for North American Neo-Pagans. In North America, historical links are often shallow compared to other parts of the world; written history goes back four hundred years or so at most, to the time of European colonization, leaving no more connection to the pre-Reformation European world Pagans idealize. Much of North America lacks the historical depth of other cultures, where the past has not been obliterated by commercial development and the ever compelling search for the new. Even personal histories are often lost as families splinter and relocate. The mobility and rootlessness of American society mean that many Pagans did not grow up in the same place as their families, and may live thousands of miles away from where they were born. Others have chosen to distance themselves

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<sup>60</sup> DuFresne, Lucie Marie-Mai. "The Goddess Incarnate: A Discourse on the Body Within One Community of Contemporary North American Goddess Worshipers". Doctoral Thesis, University of Ottawa, 2004.

<sup>61</sup> Charbonneau, Marisol. "Mother Earth, Father Sky? The Sexual Politics of Contemporary Wicca and Paganism", in Saxton, Tammy, Crystal Leger and Karoline Truchon (eds). *Stories from Montreal 2: Ethnographic Accounts of Life in North America's Francophone Metropolis*. Montreal: Armchair Academic Publications/Concordia. 2002: 1- 19.

<sup>62</sup> Charbonneau, Marisol. "The Melting Cauldron: Ethnicity, Diversity and Identity in a Contemporary Pagan Subculture". *The Pomegranate*. Vol. 9.1. 2007: 5-21.

<sup>63</sup> See Adler 1979, 1986, Magliocco 2004, Rabinovitch 1992, Berger et al. 2003, Reid 2001, DuFresne 2004, Gallagher 2000, Pike 2001, among others.

from families they perceive as dysfunctional or dogmatic in their religious and moral views. In cases where roots have been severed or lost, the invention of links to the past becomes a way to compensate for their loss.<sup>64</sup>

In my 2007 study, I argued that Magliocco's observations on Pagans in the United States apply to Canadian Pagans, but to a lesser degree. Furthermore, I argued that this discrepancy was due to major cultural differences between Canada and the United States, especially in the way each nation integrates immigrants into their national culture. As Magliocco observed, a great number of Americans still believe in the assimilationist model of the melting pot, which "emphasizes the transformation of the immigrant in the crucible of the new nation into an essentially new man, completely separated from the customs and worldviews of the old world"<sup>65</sup>. On the other hand, the Canadian model of multiculturalism within a bilingual framework<sup>66</sup> encourages immigrants and members of minority cultural groups to maintain ties to their culture of origin "while participating as full-fledged members in Canadian society"<sup>67</sup>.

I concluded that new immigrants and members of minority ethnic groups in Canada had little need to rediscover their cultural and ancestral heritage in the context of a Pagan spirituality because they had government-sanctioned access to their cultures of origin. For this reason, and the lack of availability of printed material on contemporary Paganism in languages other than English<sup>68</sup>, it is understandable that the majority of Pagans in Canada, and even in the Province of Quebec, would be both white and Anglophone.

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<sup>64</sup> Magliocco, 2004: 128-129.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid. pp. 210-211.

<sup>66</sup> See the "Canadian Multiculturalism Act", R.S., 1985, c. 24 (4<sup>th</sup> Supp.)  
[http://www.canadianheritage.gc.ca/progs/multi/policy/act\\_e.cfm](http://www.canadianheritage.gc.ca/progs/multi/policy/act_e.cfm) Accessed 2008-04-26.

<sup>67</sup> Charbonneau, 2007: 18.

<sup>68</sup> See also Gagnon 2003 and DuFresne 1998.

Since writing this essay, I came to the realization that I had lumped together Anglophone and Francophone Pagans into a single, ethnically-defined category of “people of European descent”. I only marginally discussed the possible existence of cultural differences between the two groups based on language, ethnicity and history. I was also vague about the fact that although many Francophone Pagans may identify their practices as part of the contemporary Witchcraft and Pagan revival that originated in Britain, others follow a pattern of practice and belief that is closer to Québécois cultural forms than English or American ones. This current research is my attempt to redeem this oversight by exploring the roles that language, culture, ethnicity and other factors play in the shaping of a Pagan identity and, to some extent, a Pagan community or culture.

### **1.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The symbolic nature of the opposition means that people can ‘think themselves into difference’. The boundaries consist essentially in the contrivance of distinctive meanings within the community’s social discourse. They provide people with a referent for their personal identities.  
- Anthony P. Cohen<sup>69</sup>

This study pays particular attention to the ways Montreal Pagans set themselves apart from mainstream culture when they construct a Pagan religious or spiritual identity. It also examines how Pagans build community by creating organizations and institutions, and by sharing common symbols and worldviews. For these purposes, I draw inspiration from a variety of fields. The two most significant fields are symbolic anthropology, especially as developed by Victor and Edith Turner, and ethnicity theories.

Symbolic anthropology focuses on the use of symbols as vehicles for shared meaning within a culture or group. Victor and Edith Turner studied at great length the

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<sup>69</sup> Cohen, Anthony P. *The Symbolic Construction of Community*. Chichester & London & New York: Ellis Harwood Ltd. and Tavistock Publications Ltd. 1985: 117.

roles of symbols during ritual performances, and how such performances bring participants to a *liminal* state, where ritualized enactments, including role reversals, often occur in order to strengthen *communitas* among members of a group: “In hierarchical societies *communitas* is symbolically affirmed by periodic rituals in which the lowly and the mighty reverse social roles”<sup>70</sup>. *Communitas* is the feeling of unity and of dissolution of boundaries one experiences when engaged in a ritual process at the margins of the normative social order. Edith Turner adds:

It is the sense people have when they relate to each other in full direct connectedness. Then they recognize it as a special occasion and talk about it with delight. People feel their own lowliness in it and are aware of the gift that is flowering between them, and are often aware of where it comes from. *Communitas*, if it is present even in the dullest jobs, is richly charged with emotion and pleasure, and it gives people strength to go on as if by magic.<sup>71</sup>

*Communitas* is the general term for love, community, fellow feeling, compassion, sympathy, and the search for the benefit and response of another soul.<sup>72</sup>

According to the model of symbolic anthropology developed by Turner and Turner, there are three types of *communitas*. Spontaneous, existential *communitas*, “which defies deliberate cognitive and volitional construction”<sup>73</sup>, is the opposite of social structure. Normative *communitas* consists of “the attempt to capture and preserve spontaneous *communitas* in a system of ethical precepts and legal rules”<sup>74</sup>. Ideological *communitas* is “the formulation of remembered attributes of the *communitas* experience in the form of a utopian blue-print for the reform of society”<sup>75</sup>.

In the Montreal Pagan community, spontaneous, existential *communitas* manifests in how Pagans come to experience the numinous under the most ordinary circumstances,

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<sup>70</sup> Turner, Victor and Edith Turner. *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture: Anthropological Perspectives*. New York: Columbia University Press. 1978: 253.

<sup>71</sup> Turner, Edith. *Among the Healers: Stories of Spiritual and Ritual Healing Around the World*. Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers. 2006: 123.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid. p. 141.

<sup>73</sup> Turner, Victor and Edith Turner, 1978: 252.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

as Graham Harvey suggested<sup>76</sup>. Such experiences would engender a major paradigm shift, leading individuals onto a path of spiritual questioning and discovery, which would in turn lead them to perceive the world in such a manner that they would grow to feel at home somewhere in the vast kaleidoscope of traditions that fit under the aegis of Paganism. As other observers noted, spontaneous, existential *communitas* appears to be a common, even normal experience among Pagans, in that many claim to have experienced feelings of being part of a community, or being “at home” within Paganism. Mystical experiences, while not equivalent to the notion of *communitas*, may enhance it when shared in the group.

Mysticism is a pervasive aspect in most forms of Paganism, and many Pagans report mystical, oceanic, ecstatic states at least once in their lives<sup>77</sup>. Most Pagans believe that gods and goddesses, spirits and other-than-human persons of a similar order can communicate with humans, and that this communication is part of a normal, self-aware, human existence<sup>78</sup>. Pagans also believe that human beings can access the Divine forces around them through a collective effort, which is why many of them perform rituals in a group setting. In my research, to determine the importance of experiences of spontaneous, existential *communitas* in creating a Pagan community, I asked participants about their spiritual and religious itineraries, and how these contributed to their self-definition as Pagans.

Normative *communitas*, on the other hand, has a much more mundane origin. Pagans attempt to fix their insights into the nature of the universe by creating

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<sup>76</sup> See Footnote 1 in the Introduction.

<sup>77</sup> For further discussion on Pagans’ experiences with religious ecstasy, see Magliocco, 2004: 152-181.

<sup>78</sup> See Harvey 1997 for a discussion on how various Pagan traditions conceptualize Deity and the relationship of human beings to the other-than-human world.

organizations and institutions, a process Berger and her colleagues have documented at length in the context of American Paganism<sup>79</sup>. I have been particularly interested in how Pagans in Montreal engage in normative *communitas* by creating institutions and organizations tailored to a population whose historical, cultural, religious and linguistic contexts differ markedly from those of other North American localities. Whereas in the United States religion is a right under the Constitution, in Canada religion is defined as a liberty under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms<sup>80</sup>. This in itself changes the need, means and form of institutionalization that affect each country. Canada, including Quebec, cannot and will not follow the American model because of these fundamental differences.

In spite of mundane differences, it appears that Pagans everywhere generally perceive the universe as alive and composed of an interconnected web of human beings and other sentient other-than-human beings and life forms. Pagans also tend to agree that the Divine is immanent, and that material reality is the physical manifestation of Divinity. My research takes a closer look at how Pagans in Montreal engage in ideological *communitas*, a process that involves for the most part the sharing of common myths of origin.

It should be noted that these myths of origin are not historically accurate, and they often refer to a distant, prehistoric past, of which little is known, and even less can be proven. As Cohen remarks, “History is wonderfully malleable, whether in the hands of academic historians or of laymen. Even without the intention to distort, its recollection

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<sup>79</sup> See Berger 1999 and Berger et al. 2003.

<sup>80</sup> According to the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, “Everyone has the following fundamental freedoms: a) freedom of conscience and religion [...]”. <http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/charter/> Accessed 2008-04-26.

always rests upon interpretive reconstructions”<sup>81</sup>. One of the best-known Pagan myths of origin is what Margot Adler has called the ‘Myth of Wicca’<sup>82</sup>. This elaborate narrative explains the perceived relationship between pre-Christian Western religions, the early modern witch craze and the re-emergence of Pagan Witchcraft – and subsequently, contemporary Paganism – in the latter half of the twentieth century. This myth is so widespread that it deserves to be retold here, in Adler’s own words:

It goes something like this: Witchcraft is a religion that dates back to Paleolithic times, to the worship of the god of the hunt and the goddess of fertility. One can see remnants of it in cave paintings and in the figurines of goddesses that are many thousands of years old. This early religion was universal. The names changed from place to place but the basic deities were the same.

When Christianity came to Europe, its inroads were slow. Kings and nobles were converted first, but many folk continued to worship in both religions. Dwellers in rural areas, the “Pagans” and “Heathens”, kept to the old ways. Churches were built on the sacred sites of the Old Religion. The names of the festivals were changed but the dates were kept. The old rites continued in folk festivals, and for many centuries Christian policy was one of slow cooptation.

During the times of persecution the Church took the god of the Old Religion and – as is the habit with conquerors – turned him into the Christian devil. The Old Religion was forced underground, its only records set forth, in distorted form, by its enemies. Small families kept the religion alive and, in 1951, after the Witchcraft Laws in England were repealed, it began to surface again.<sup>83</sup>

Depending on which tradition or spiritual path one follows, the Myth of Wicca may be complemented and enriched with another well-known origin myth, that of prehistoric matriarchy. The latter stipulates that the Paleolithic worshippers of the god of the hunt and the goddess of fertility lived in peace loving, egalitarian societies ruled by priestesses of the Great Goddess. These utopian societies were subsequently suppressed by waves of patriarchal invaders in Europe and Asia Minor. This myth is particularly widespread among groups embracing Feminist Spirituality and Goddess-centered Paganism, and can be summarized as follows:

Goddess worship was universal; whenever people created a community they established the female principle to watch over them and each had had their own name and significant meaning for

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<sup>81</sup> Cohen, 1985: 101.

<sup>82</sup> Magliocco refers to this as the myth of the Burning Times (2004: 185-204).

<sup>83</sup> Adler, 1979, 1986: 45-46.

her; based within their individual culture and need. With the rise of dualistic religious concepts, i.e. religions which propose two opposing forces – god and devil – there is increased evidence of weaponry and colonisation, with societies changing their value systems from those grounded within female ones to male ones. Authoritarian values are more in evidence when ideas about living in natural harmony with Earth Mother no longer underpin religious thought.<sup>84</sup>

The first formulations of the myth of prehistoric matriarchy emerged in academe in the late nineteenth century. Developed by J.J. Bachofen<sup>85</sup>, Friedrich Engels<sup>86</sup>, Sir Arthur Evans<sup>87</sup>, Jane Ellen Harrison<sup>88</sup>, Sir James Frazer<sup>89</sup> and many other influential authors, this myth saw its apogee in the first decades of the twentieth century<sup>90</sup>. According to Hutton, notions of prehistoric matriarchy and the belief in the universality of the cult of the Great Goddess were instrumental in the shaping of precursor movements to the Witchcraft revival of the last one and a half centuries<sup>91</sup>. Since the 1960s, Second Wave feminists as well as feminist Witches and Pagans appropriated the myth of prehistoric matriarchy as a model for a more egalitarian society, even though its historical accuracy is still strongly questioned. As Sarah Pomeroy argues,

Modern feminists find the theory of female dominance in religion as well as in other areas of prehistoric culture attractive, as though what had happened in the past could be repeated in the future. This popular view is understandable, since, if women were not subordinate in the past, we have *ipso facto* proof that they are not so by nature. Therefore, the question of the role of females both divine and mortal has become an emotional issue with political implications as well as a topic of scholarly debate.<sup>92</sup>

The vast majority of Pagans do not take these myths literally. As Magliocco remarked, “Today most well-read Pagans and Witches realize the symbolic nature of their origin stories, and no longer accept them as fact. Yet these stories continue to have a

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<sup>84</sup> Morgan, Lynne. “Women and the Goddess Today”. In Harvey, Graham and Charlotte Hardman (eds). *Pagan Pathways*. London: Thorsons. 1996: 96.

<sup>85</sup> Bachofen, J.J. *Myth, Religion, and Mother Right*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. 1973.

<sup>86</sup> Engels, Friedrich. *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*. New York: International Publishers. 1967.

<sup>87</sup> Evans, Sir Arthur. *The Palace of Minos*. London: Macmillan. 1921.

<sup>88</sup> Harrison, Jane Ellen. *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*. Cambridge. 1903.

<sup>89</sup> Frazer, Sir James. *The Golden Bough*. London: Macmillan. 1923.

<sup>90</sup> See Hutton, 1999. See also Adler, 1979, 1986 and Eller, 1993.

<sup>91</sup> See Hutton, 1999.

<sup>92</sup> Pomeroy, Sarah B. *Goddesses, Whores, Wives and Slaves: Women in Classical Antiquity*. New York: Schocken Books. 1975: 15.

powerful effect on individuals, even when they understand their metaphorical nature”<sup>93</sup>. By embracing a shared body of origin myths and other symbols, Pagans create a liminal intellectual and spiritual culture in which pre-Enlightenment ways of knowing are reclaimed:

While the sacred narratives of the Burning Times and the Paleolithic Origins of Matriarchy are not literally true, like all myths they have a kernel of metaphorical truth: experiences and ways of knowing that belonged to a pre-Enlightenment, interconnected view of the universe have been banished from modern Western consciousness. In conjuring an oppositional culture, contemporary Pagans seek to reclaim that worldview.<sup>94</sup>

My research results reveal to some degree the extent to which Pagans in Montreal adopt the myths of origin common to contemporary Paganism. The use of shared myths and symbols in the crafting of a Pagan religious worldview and identity greatly resembles the ways such elements are used in ethnogenesis and other processes of group differentiation.

Ethnicity theorists such as Fredrik Barth argued in the past that cultural differences emerge as a consequence of how people interact with one another. Differences between people are socially constructed and must be maintained by enforcing artificial group boundaries. In other words, “ethnic” differences are ultimately the result of inter-group interaction and boundary maintenance<sup>95</sup>. Ethnic differentiation can be situational; in many societies, there are dominant groups that determine other groups’ status by controlling and structuring their interactions. Ethnic differentiation can also be based upon ecology, government policy, and language, as is the case in the province of

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<sup>93</sup> Magliocco, 2004: 193.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid. p. 204.

<sup>95</sup> Barth, Fredrik (ed). *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference*. London: Allen & Unwin.1969.

Quebec<sup>96</sup>. Although ethnic differentiation may be imposed as the result of unequal group relations, it can also be a voluntary process, as is ethnogenesis.

Ethnogenesis, in the words of anthropologist Helena Wulff, is “the process through which an ethnic group develops among people of disparate origin who find themselves in the same situation and who come to identify with one another”<sup>97</sup>. This simple definition stipulates that any mutual identification of individuals with diverse cultural backgrounds, ages, genders, sexual orientations, occupational interests, religious affiliations and so on may take on the form of ethnogenesis. According to Wulff, ethnogenesis usually occurs through the span of several lifetimes:

Ethnogenesis [...] can be said to have two phases. In the first, individuals who are already well into maturity have to begin developing a new sense of ethnic identity with its organizational and symbolic forms, but the management of ethnicity remains a somewhat alien and uncertain experience to them. In the second phase, their children, who are born into the ethnic identity, are more able to take it for granted, although they are constantly aware that it is a more familiar situation to them than to their predecessors. By the third generation, composed of individuals reared by people with no discrepant memories, ethnogenesis could conceivably be completed.<sup>98</sup>

Though no one yet considers Paganism to be an ethnicity, I aim to determine to what degree its development can be likened to an emerging ethnic group, especially when taking into account the current voluntary nature of its membership and the arbitrariness of its boundaries. Although there is a growing number of children and grandchildren born into Pagan families<sup>99</sup>, the majority of Pagans today have joined the movement of their own volition after reaching maturity. Many researchers observed that Pagans often come to Paganism with a sense that they always had a spiritual perspective that was atypical of the Judeo-Christian and/or secular mainstream, and that they experienced becoming

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<sup>96</sup> See Amit-Talai, Vered, and Caroline Knowles (eds). *Re-Situating Identities: The Politics of Race, Ethnicity, and Culture*. Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press. 1996.

<sup>97</sup> Wulff, Helena. *Twenty Girls: Growing Up, Ethnicity and Excitement in a South London Microculture*. Stockholm Studies in Social Anthropology. Goteb, Stockholm. 1988: 7.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid. pp. 15-16.

<sup>99</sup> See Berger 1999 and Berger et al. 2003 for a discussion of the impact on the Pagan movement of the birth of children to Pagan parents.

Pagan more as a homecoming than a conversion. As Rabinovitch remarked, “Virtually all Canadian Witches indicated that they felt ‘pagan’ or ‘magical’ from an early age”<sup>100</sup>. Reid also observed that participants in her research “do not describe themselves as having ‘become’ Craft as much as they choose to underline that they found expressed in the Craft the essence of what they already understood and believed about themselves and their worlds”<sup>101</sup>.

In conducting ethnographic research among Canadian Pagans in the early 1990s, Rabinovitch found that most of her research participants reported having experienced a high degree of marginalization by their peers during childhood and in their teens. More significantly, they also reported having suffered a high incidence of abuse and/or neglect in their families of origin and from their peers at school<sup>102</sup>. Rabinovitch theorized that the marginal nature of Paganism, with its acceptance of a great diversity of people, provides survivors of childhood abuse and ostracism with a safe place to heal:

The entry into a “secret” family of Neo-Pagans, linked by belief and child-like wonderment is the start of the journey of re-empowerment by Neo-Pagans. They experience membership in a religion which perceives itself as threatened by the community at large, but which embraces the newcomer as family. Numerous Neo-Pagans across Canada referred to their co-religionists as “my real family”, “my family of choice”, or “my ONLY family”. Along with leaving behind the religion of origin, many Neo-Pagans choose to divest themselves of their dysfunctional families as well.<sup>103</sup>

In a more recent study, Magliocco observed a similar pattern of history of childhood marginalization among American Pagans:

many of my Pagan subjects described having been very imaginative children who constructed elaborate make-believe worlds for themselves based on books, and spent a great deal of time living in those imaginary worlds, spinning out plots and characters and interacting with their creations, which seemed, at times, more real to them than the everyday world of school and family. Sometimes these children were physically smaller than their peers, or younger than the rest of the children in their class; others reported suffering from illnesses or disabilities that made them different from other children. [...] For these “bookish children”, as I came to think of them, reading and imagination provided a refuge from the slings and arrows of childhood.

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<sup>100</sup> Rabinovitch, 1992: 39.

<sup>101</sup> Reid, 2001: 106.

<sup>102</sup> Rabinovitch 1992. See also Rabinovitch 2000.

<sup>103</sup> Rabinovitch, 1992: 105.

[...] Sometime during adolescence or young adulthood, these young people decided to capitalize on their difference. They began to construct identities that were oppositional in the cultural register of American high schools, where conformity is key to social acceptance, becoming punks, "Goths", Dungeons and Dragons players, artistic or theatrical types, musicians, or writers.<sup>104</sup>

Magliocco noted another facet to the liminality of Paganism, in that Pagans will deliberately identify "with two specific oppressed groups: indigenous peoples whose environment have been destroyed, and witches whose persecution is likened to Hitler's holocaust of the Jews"<sup>105</sup>. Like Rabinovitch, Magliocco concludes that Pagans' shared childhood "experience of rejection and difference is what lies at the core of the Neo-Pagan identification with subdominant Others"<sup>106</sup>. Many Pagans also integrate an additional ethnic or cultural component to their traditions, in spite of the fact that the overwhelming majority among them belongs to the dominant ethnic group within their national cultures. In doing so, Magliocco writes,

Many Pagans seek to disassociate themselves from what they perceive as an alienating cultural heritage, one that has exploited the environment, women, and native peoples, and produced a sterile and vapid mass culture. They do not see themselves as oppressors, but as victims of the same forces that have marginalized indigenous peoples.<sup>107</sup>

Not only do Pagans distance themselves from the dominant culture by identifying with specific pre-Christian ancestral cultures, they also identify with living, minority non-Western indigenous cultural groups. An example of the former would be the tendency among a great number of Pagans to claim a strong Celtic focus in their spirituality, irrespective of whether they have any actual ancestral ties to Celtic culture<sup>108</sup>. As Ann-Marie Gallagher remarked, the appropriation of idealized, "oppressed" cultures is highly

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<sup>104</sup> Magliocco, 2004: 200-201.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid. pp. 196-197.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid. p. 201.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid. p. 232.

<sup>108</sup> See Bowman, Marion. "Cardiac Celts: Images of the Celts in Paganism", in Harvey, Graham and Charlotte Hardman (eds). *Pagan Pathways*. London: Thorsons. 1996: 242-251.

See also Gallagher, Ann-Marie. "Weaving a Tangled Web? Pagan Ethics and Issues of History, "Race" and Ethnicity in Pagan Identity". In Reid, Sïan (ed). *Between the Worlds: Readings in Contemporary Neopaganism*. Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press Inc. 2006: 267-283.

problematic, as “Essentializing, romanticizing and imbuing with mysticism is, in fact, racist”<sup>109</sup> because these processes ignore the lived reality and material conditions of the people with whom one is claiming spiritual kinship. Magliocco concurs with Gallagher’s objection, with the caveat that most Pagans do not deliberately engage in perpetuating racism, but rather inform their efforts at building their spiritual identities with outdated folkloric and anthropological models:

Ironically, while Neo-Paganism likes to construct itself as critical of colonialism, racism, and ethnocentrism, its ideology is based on nineteenth-century notions of primitivism and cultural evolution. Authenticity is located in the cultures of the ancient past or of marginalized peoples, who are interpreted as the precursors of contemporary Pagans. Many Neo-Pagans believe marginalized peoples have spiritual wisdom and a relationship with the earth that the dominant culture has lost. In an effort to recapture the lost ethos of the past, Neo-Pagans may appropriate elements of their expressive culture and spiritual practice.<sup>110</sup>

These romantic notions are the very same ideologies that informed the emergence of nationalistic sentiments in the Western world in the nineteenth century, and still do to this day. Gardell writes:

Nationalists generally produce an imagined community by projecting the idea of a corporative nation back into legendary or mythological time, often presented as a “golden age”, a time untainted by the ills of the modern world and liberated from whomever is designated the national enemy. Frequently, the nationalist intends to revert to the ideals of the glorious high culture, albeit adopted to suit current conditions.<sup>111</sup>

As many Canadian scholars of Paganism noted, Paganism is very much a marginal religious movement in Canada. Like Magliocco had done, I also observed in the course of many years of interacting with Pagans that many of them create a liminal community and identity by reconstructing a real or imagined cultural heritage in the context of a Pagan spiritual practice. However, for many years, I have also observed that there are significant differences in the ways Canadian Pagans construct their version of Paganism from how American Pagans do. These differences are most notable in the ways

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<sup>109</sup> Gallagher in Reid, *Between the Worlds*, 2006: 272.

<sup>110</sup> Magliocco, 2004: 233.

<sup>111</sup> Gardell, 2003: 5.

Anglophone and Francophone Pagans construct their own communities within the wider Canadian Pagan movement.

The following sections discuss the processes through which some Canadian Pagans construct their identities and communities, using the Pagan population in Montreal as a case study. It should be noted that the Pagan community in Montreal is by no means typical of Paganism in all Canadian cities. I have merely sought to illustrate the distinctness of Canadian Paganism in comparison to the dominant American model<sup>112</sup> by portraying the features of an equally unique Pagan subculture. In doing so I aimed to provide a counterpoint to the assertion of Berger et al. that Paganism in North America is well on its way to crystallization and normalization into a recognizable, “standard” Pagan cultural form<sup>113</sup>. The Pagan community in Montreal poses a potential challenge to the normativity of the American model of Paganism, in that its population contains a significant minority of people whose first language, culture of origin and models of belonging to their national culture differs significantly from those of the United States.

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<sup>112</sup> In the opening lines of his chapter “Uncle Sam and the Goddess”, Ronald Hutton has argued that “From the 1970s onward the United States, and not Britain, has been the world centre of modern paganism, exerting the greatest influence over its development, as over most forms of Western culture, and probably containing the largest number of its adherents” (1999: 340).

<sup>113</sup> See Berger, 1999 and Berger et al. 2003.

# CHAPTER TWO

## 2.1 PAGANISM IN MONTREAL

In recent years, academic researchers on Paganism in Canada have claimed that the growth of the movement in Quebec has been atypical when compared to its expansion in other provinces<sup>1</sup>. Some hypothesized that this was due to the predominance of the English language within Paganism, and a lack of availability of books and other information on Paganism in the French language. Writing in 1992, Rabinovitch observed:

Quebec is one of the anomalies on the Canadian Neo-Pagan map. Very few of the 'standard' texts on the new Witchcraft and Neo-Pagan movements have been translated into French to date, and this in itself creates a problem for a religion which is so heavily literature-oriented.<sup>2</sup>

Writing almost a decade later, Reid concurs:

As the Craft tends to be a primarily English-language phenomenon, possibly because of the lack of quality French-language materials, and as the majority of Quebec residents are francophone, it is not difficult to predict that the pagan population in Quebec would be lower than the overall population of Quebec would warrant.<sup>3</sup>

My own observations confirm that English language use is ubiquitous among Pagans in Quebec, a subject I have discussed in a previous publication<sup>4</sup>. However, I also observed like Mireille Gagnon had done in her ethnographic fieldwork that in spite of certain societal features peculiar to Québécois culture and history<sup>5</sup>, Wicca and contemporary Paganism have unequivocally taken root in this Francophone province.

In her search for the root causes of the recent growth in popularity of the Wiccan religion in Quebec, Gagnon found literary evidence pointing to the existence of a

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<sup>1</sup> See Rabinovitch, 1992, DuFresne, 1998, and Reid, 2001.

<sup>2</sup> Rabinovitch, 1992:41.

<sup>3</sup> Reid, 2001:65-66.

<sup>4</sup> Charbonneau, Marisol. "The Melting Cauldron: Ethnicity, Diversity and Identity in a Contemporary Pagan Subculture". *The Pomegranate*. Vol. 9.1. 2007: 5-21.

<sup>5</sup> Gagnon has identified these as the predominance of the French language, the Roman Catholic faith, and great distances between major urban centres within the Province of Quebec (2003: 1-2).

homegrown Québécois tradition of witchcraft and folk healing practices<sup>6</sup>. However, she found no evidence to suggest a historical link between these folkloric traditions and the emergence of Wicca and contemporary Paganism in Quebec. For the latter, she identified three significant points of origin: the British Isles, “English” Canada, and the United States of America<sup>7</sup>. According to Gagnon, Wicca originally spread to Quebec as the result of direct contact with initiates from various parts of the English-speaking world, namely England, Scotland, Ireland, the United States and other parts of Canada<sup>8</sup>.

In the course of her fieldwork, Gagnon made contact with Wiccans and Pagans in various parts of the province, such as Quebec City, the South Shore, Estrie, the Outaouais, and Montreal. According to Gagnon, Montreal is the hub of Wicca (and as a result, Paganism) in Quebec, and is the home of the majority of adherents. She also observed that the majority of Wiccans and Pagans in Quebec outside of Montreal form loosely related networks of mostly solitary practitioners, who came upon their religion through books, the Internet, or perhaps through contacts with Wiccans and other Pagans from Montreal<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid. pp. 6-9. These were not unlike the folk “cunning-craft” traditions Hutton has uncovered in his historical research on the revival of Witchcraft in Britain in the mid-twentieth century (see Hutton 1999). Unlike certain authors mentioned in her work, she believes these traditions may in fact still exist today, albeit in a modified form from the ones described in the works she consulted. For a history of witchcraft in Quebec before Confederation, see Séguin, Robert-Lionel. *La sorcellerie au Québec du XVIIe au XIXe siècle*. Ottawa : Léméac. 1971. For examples of contemporary folk magical beliefs and traditions in Quebec, see Des Ruisseaux, Pierre. *Croyances et pratiques populaires au Canada français*. Montréal: Éditions du Jour. 1973; and Des Ruisseaux, Pierre. *Magie et sorcellerie populaires au Québec*. Montréal: Triptyque. 1976.

<sup>7</sup> Gagnon, 2003: 49.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. p. 50. For a discussion on the diffusion of feminist Witchcraft among all-female groups in Quebec in the 1980s, see Gaboury 1989.

<sup>9</sup> “La principale porte d’entrée de la wicca au Québec est Montréal. C’est pour cette raison que nous allons concentrer nos efforts sur l’historique de l’implantation dans cette région. Le plus gros de la communauté wiccane s’y retrouve. Mis à part Montréal, les adeptes de la Wicca sont répartis un peu partout sur le territoire québécois. Pour le moment, toutefois, cela se résume à des développements individuels résultants soit du contact avec les livres et l’internet soit encore des déménagements de certains membres vers l’extérieur de Montréal.” (Ibid. p. 50).

Gagnon highlighted the historic importance of occult and esoteric bookstores in the creation of social networks between practitioners in Montreal. Some of the first influential occult bookstores opened in the city as early as the late 1960s. Gagnon mentions in particular *Cover to Cover*, *418 Books*, *Métamorphoses* and *The Witches' Cave*, *La Cave des sorcières*<sup>10</sup>, all of which have since gone out of business. According to Gagnon, these bookstores provided customers with the means to access information about different philosophies and ways of life, at a time when vast numbers of young Québécois began searching for alternative cultural and societal models<sup>11</sup>. These bookstores also provided adherents of very secretive religious traditions with a common meeting place, where they could exchange ideas and information in a semi-public forum while maintaining their relative anonymity<sup>12</sup>.

According to Gagnon, the Pagan community in Montreal began to emerge as such between the late 1980s and the early 1990s, when solitary practitioners and members of various covens began to produce newsletters and organize public Pagan rituals and other events<sup>13</sup>. In her work, Gagnon made an elaborate listing of the most significant protagonists in the emerging Pagan community in Montreal, and for this reason I will not repeat all of their names here. However, a few pivotal groups, publications and businesses must be mentioned, as they still play an active role in the creation and maintenance of ties between Montreal Pagans. These include the Open Circle<sup>14</sup>, which

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid. p. 51.

<sup>11</sup> The arrival of Wicca in North America also coincided with Quebec's Quiet Revolution, which was marked by great shifts in the relationship between the Catholic Church and provincial public institutions, politics and economics within the province. There has been no equivalent to the Quiet Revolution in other parts of Canada.

<sup>12</sup> Gagnon, 2003: 51-52.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. For a detailed listing of the Pagan newsletters, associations and other active groups in the Montreal Pagan community between 1991 and 2003, see Gagnon, 2003: 53-57.

<sup>14</sup> This group is also known as the "Montreal Grove".

was first created in 1991. This small group of volunteers has for the past seventeen years organized public rituals for Montreal Pagans, at times intermittently. The previously mentioned occult bookstore *Le Mélange Magique* also first opened in 1991, and has been in business ever since. As will be discussed In Chapters 3 and 4, *Le Mélange Magique* continues to be a crucial point of contact for many newcomers to Paganism in Montreal.

During one of our many interviews, Lucie Marie-Mai DuFresne related the significance of one particular group in the development of Pagan networking in the Toronto-Montreal corridor since the late 1960s. According to Lucie, Silverwheel Coven, which was still active at the time this research was completed, was born from the 1960s counter-culture and the Vietnam War Resistance movement.

In 1969 I left Ottawa but I had known for at least a year, maybe two, of the existence of something called the Farm North west of Ottawa. I later found out it was in Perth. It was a large commune based on the Farm in the USA. It had been founded in part by Vietnam [draft] refugees, by American soldiers that had come up to Canada, and Canadians. I probably knew about it because I was reading all the underground press available on campus at Ottawa at the time. The Farm is now called Plenty Canada and is an NGO working to end world hunger.

Silverwheel, a British Traditional Wiccan coven, was founded on the Farm in the late 60's early 70's and is the oldest, continuously operating coven in Ontario. Gina is its third High Priestess and I don't know where Alex is, fourth or fifth maybe. I think he's the third [High Priest] that she's worked with but I'm not sure. Silverwheel has always had French and English members and has had people from Perth to Montreal. It is initiatory and it uses degrees and it is closed. It does sponsor open rituals. It did have an outer-court teaching circle but I do not remember its name. Though they appeared eclectic in their public persona and rituals, Gina says that they are Welsh-Celtic Reconstructionists and Gardnerian in lineage. Gardnerian through Montreal and New York.

And for the Ottawa area they have been the primary non-WCC [Wiccan Church of Canada] influence in the Montreal – Ottawa – Toronto corridor. Gina's land became the home of the coven once the commune disbanded. That is where the first Kaleidoscope occurred [then known as "Mini-Fest"]. That is where all the Women's weekends happened the first ten years and some of the Men's as well.<sup>15</sup>

My field research confirmed that Silverwheel Coven currently has members who reside in Montreal and in parts of Ontario.

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<sup>15</sup> Lucie Marie-Mai DuFresne, interview 2008-02-24.

As Gagnon also noted, University-based Pagan associations were created in the 1990s to serve a growing number of Pagan students in the city of Montreal. The McGill Pagan Association (MPA) had a short life between 1993 and 1995, and then resumed its activities in 2002<sup>16</sup>. By then the MPA was teasingly referred to as “MUPS”, or “McGill University Pagan Society”, in reference to another well-known University-based Pagan association, the Concordia University Pagan Society (CUPS), of which I was a member in my first year as an undergraduate at Concordia in 1998-1999<sup>17</sup>.

Since it was founded in 1994 by Scarlet<sup>18</sup>, CUPS has organized several events for the Montreal Pagan community. CUPS officially began its existence in 1995 after a proposal had been successfully passed by to the Concordia Student Union (CSU) the year before. According to Scarlet, CUPS played a larger part in the Montreal Pagan community in its early years, when for about three to four years it ran public Esbat (Full Moon) rituals, hosted guest speakers, and held seminars on Witchcraft and Paganism for the general public<sup>19</sup>. CUPS also had a newsletter, *SpiralQuest*, which contained an insert, “Tidings”, listing the activities and workshops organized by CUPS. When Scarlet left CUPS, *SpiralQuest* came to an end, and “Tidings” became the newsletter for CUPS.

For many years, CUPS offered “Witchcraft 101” classes to new members, with a curriculum developed by the Montreal Area Teaching Coven. The latter was an initiative of the Greenwood community, a Montreal-based coven which disbanded in 2001<sup>20</sup>. CEGEP-based Pagan associations in Montreal include the Dawson College Pagan Club

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<sup>16</sup> Gagnon, 2003: 54-55.

<sup>17</sup> For a broad listing of University-based Pagan societies in the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Canada, New Zealand and Australia, see <http://pagantheologies.pbwiki.com/University-Pagan-societies>

<sup>18</sup> Scarlet is one of my key informants. I met Scarlet in 1997, and have interviewed her for several research projects on Paganism in Montreal since then. Scarlet is also one of Mireille Gagnon’s informants.

<sup>19</sup> Scarlet, personal communication, February 2002.

<sup>20</sup> See also Gagnon, 2003: 55. I took the “Witchcraft 101” class in the summer of 1998.

and the John Abbot Pagan Club. These are less active in the Montreal Pagan community than CUPS. Of these two CEGEP-based clubs, only the former is mentioned in the network-listing page of the Montreal Pagan newsletter *WynterGreene*<sup>21</sup>.

In 1996, Scarlet began to offer workshops publicly and founded her own school, which she originally called *Scarlet's School of Magic and Paganism*. At the time she had three students, two of which completed the first level of her course. By 1999, as the number of students in her school increased, Scarlet changed the name to *Crescent Moon School of Magic and Paganism* (CMS). By 2001, Scarlet modified the curriculum through which she taught principles of Wicca and Paganism from a nine-level outline to one with four levels, and officially structured her classes around a workbook<sup>22</sup>.

In 1997, Scarlet attempted to create a Pagan community centre in Montreal, and founded "Esoteria", which was located in a low-rent sub-basement. The attempt was short-lived<sup>23</sup>, as there had been little response from Pagans in Montreal. There was no other attempt at creating a Pagan resource centre in Montreal until the summer of 2000, when a woman named Ceri, who had read about Pagan libraries, decided to build a permanent place where people could go to find resources about Paganism. In August 2000, with the collaboration of several people who were active in the Montreal Pagan community (including Scarlet), and with the help of many volunteers<sup>24</sup>, the Montreal Pagan Resource Centre (MPRC) was founded. Originally located in the front room of *Le Mélange Magique*, the MPRC was the first successful resource centre of its kind in Canada. According to the MPRC website, "The Montreal Pagan Resource Centre

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<sup>21</sup> This issue was the latest at the time I conducted the bulk of my fieldwork in July-August 2007.

<sup>22</sup> Scarlet, personal communication, August 2003.

<sup>23</sup> It lasted from February until June of that same year. (Scarlet, personal communication, August 2003).

<sup>24</sup> Myself included; I helped with painting the walls in the original location, and until 2003 some of my artwork was featured at the MPRC.

(MPRC) is a volunteer-based drop-in centre where people (from any faith) can teach, share, and inform themselves on subjects related to alternative spirituality”<sup>25</sup>. The MPRC still exists to this day, although its current location is now in the back room of the *Mélange Magique*.

In 2000, one month after the founding of the MPRC, the very first Pagan Pride day was held in Montreal. This event was repeated the following year but, according to Gagnon, this has not occurred since<sup>26</sup>.

When the last issue of the Montreal Pagan newsletter *8Sabbats*<sup>27</sup> was produced for Samhain 1999, Scarlet decided that the Montreal Pagan community ought not to lose a medium through which it could interconnect in print, and in 2000 she founded the newsletter *Montreal’s Magical Circle*. In 2001, the name of the newsletter was changed to *WynterGreene*, and in 2003 Amanda<sup>28</sup> took over editing duties for the newsletter<sup>29</sup>.

In September 2000, Meri Fowler<sup>30</sup> created *Young Pagans’ Circle*<sup>31</sup>, a non-denominational group where children and teenagers can explore Pagan spirituality in a safe, supportive environment. As Meri told me during an interview,

We started the Young Pagans’ Circle to create a safe space for children to explore Paganism and Wicca. The creation of safe space is very important because children have access to the Internet and what they can learn can scare them, and they can have misconceptions about what Wicca and Paganism, really is [sic].<sup>32</sup>

She adds,

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<sup>25</sup> <http://www.paganuniverse.com/mprc/about.html>

<sup>26</sup> Gagnon, 2003: 56.

<sup>27</sup> Started by Gra-Auga in 1991, *8Sabbats* was one of the first Pagan newsletters in Montreal (Gra-Auga, interview 2007-08-11).

<sup>28</sup> Amanda is another one of my key informants for this research. I met Amanda in 2002 when she asked me to contribute articles for *WynterGreene*, which I did occasionally throughout that year.

<sup>29</sup> Scarlet, personal communication, August 2003.

<sup>30</sup> Meri Fowler is one of my key informants and survey respondents. I met Meri in 1997 through a mutual friend who directed me to her when I first became curious about Wicca at the age of eighteen. I have been friends with Meri ever since.

<sup>31</sup> The web page for *Young Pagans’ Circle* is <http://www.geocities.com/youngpagancircle/circle.html>

<sup>32</sup> Meri Fowler, interview July 29-30, 2007.

It's a way to help the children communicate their belief to their parents. It also helps the children to define their spirituality and philosophy. I've had children from every religion come to my class. [...] It also becomes a children's support group. Children that are interested in spirituality are different, they often feel like they don't fit into their peer group, especially children that are psychic or sensitive to energies feel like they don't fit in. [*Young Pagans' Circle* is a way for children to] meet children their own age that are just like them so they feel supported and it really helps their self-esteem.<sup>33</sup>

*Young Pagans' Circle* meets weekly in a rented hall in the Montreal area. Children under the age of sixteen are required to obtain parental consent to participate in the group's activities<sup>34</sup>.

Meri is also the founder of *Wiccan Sacred Circle*<sup>35</sup>. Started "three and a half years ago", this group was created "to network and teach classes"<sup>36</sup>. As Meri told me, "People read about Wicca and they think they might be Wiccan. The premise of both groups is to give people a chance to learn about Wicca and to experience what it's like to practice Wicca so they can decide if they are Wiccan and where they should go from there"<sup>37</sup>.

In early 2003, the eco-feminist Reclaiming tradition made inroads into the Montreal Pagan community<sup>38</sup>. By 2007 it had become an established tradition within the community, and it now organizes classes, workshops, and politically activist demonstrations and events<sup>39</sup>.

Also in 2003, Quebec actress and businesswoman Marie-Renée Patry opened the occult store *Charme et sortilège*, which serves a mostly Francophone clientele. Located on the Plateau-Mont-Royal, this store has become as crucial to the Francophone Pagan community in Montreal as other stores such as *Le Mélange Magique* have been for the predominantly Anglophone Pagan community within the city. *Charme et sortilège* has a

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Meri Fowler, *Young Pagans' Circle* panel, Montreal Pagan Conference (2007-11-17).

<sup>35</sup> The Website for *Wiccan Sacred Circle* is [www.wiccansacredcircle.com](http://www.wiccansacredcircle.com)

<sup>36</sup> Meri Fowler, interview July 29-30, 2007.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> See also Gaboury 1989 for a discussion on feminist Witchcraft in Quebec in the 1980s.

<sup>39</sup> The Montreal Reclaiming website is <http://www.cosmic-muse.com/reclaiming/home.html>

website<sup>40</sup> which includes a community web portal with links to other Francophone Pagan sites. As Gagnon noted, and Mme Patry and other interviewees confirmed throughout my fieldwork, Pagan stores have a very important function in Pagan networking and community building<sup>41</sup>. For this reason, Mme Patry kindly offered to advertise my research in her community-oriented website in the summer of 2007.

Other Pagan-oriented stores have opened and closed their doors in Montreal in recent years. These include the store *Tarot Soleil*, which was located near Place-des-Arts in the downtown area of Montreal, and *La Witcha*, a small esoteric boutique once located on Saint-Denis Street in the Plateau-Mont-Royal. These were no longer in business when I conducted my fieldwork. There have been very few Pagan stores in the City of Montreal addressed specifically to a Francophone customer-base. That is because the Pagan community in Montreal is predominantly Anglophone, as Gagnon confirmed in her research<sup>42</sup>.

The predominance of English as the *lingua franca* of Paganism has had visible effects on the religious practices of many Francophone Pagans. As Lucie Marie-Mai DuFresne noted in her 1998 article “*A la recherche des mots pour le vivre*”<sup>43</sup>, English has been used as a *de facto* liturgical language among many Francophone Wiccans and Pagans. She adds that many of the Wiccan concepts developed in the English language – such as “Green Man”, “maiden” and “crone” – are difficult to translate because they have no equivalent in French. As Gagnon also observed, the majority of Francophone Pagans

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<sup>40</sup> <http://www.charme-et-sortilege.com>

<sup>41</sup> See also Pike 2001 for a discussion on the importance of vendors at Pagan festivals in the creation of temporary Pagan communities.

<sup>42</sup> Among her survey respondents, Gagnon found that 64 % were Anglophone and 28 % were Francophone (2003: 58).

<sup>43</sup> DuFresne, Lucie Marie-Mai. “A la recherche des mots pour le vivre” *Ethnologies : Wicca*. The Folklore Studies Association of Canada. Vol. 20, No. 1. 1998: 203-209.

among whom she conducted her research compensated for the lack of availability of material on Wicca and Paganism in French by having an adequate command of the English language in their practice<sup>44</sup>.

At the time I was conducting the bulk of my fieldwork among Pagans in Montreal in the summer of 2007, the few books on Wicca available in French were mostly the translated works of Scott Cunningham, Kerr Cuhulain, and spell-books written by Quebec journalist Eric Pier Sperandio. Because of the dearth of quality literary references on Paganism in French, a number of Francophone Pagan individuals and groups have taken upon themselves the task of translating Wiccan and Pagan texts into French. In doing so, they hope to make Paganism accessible to unilingual Francophones who were previously unable to experience the religious movement because of the language barrier. Gagnon pondered whether the gradual francization of Wicca will ever result in a Francophone Pagan majority in the Province of Quebec: "Cette francisation de la Wicca nous amène à réfléchir sur l'éventualité que la pratique de la Wicca devienne un jour un fait majoritairement francophone au Québec"<sup>45</sup>.

In recent years, there has been an increasing number of French-language websites dedicated to networking and providing information and services to the Francophone Pagan community in Montreal and in other parts of Quebec. In 2004, the founders of Coven Yggdrasil<sup>46</sup> created the website *Racines Païennes*<sup>47</sup>, a non-profit networking tool for Francophone Pagans in Quebec. The website includes links to other groups and

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<sup>44</sup> "Nous pouvons donc conclure que pour avoir accès à l'information contenant la Wicca, il faut au moins la connaissance de l'anglais et que par ailleurs, les wiccans ne craignent pas les barrières linguistiques"(Gagnon, 2003: 58).

<sup>45</sup> Gagnon, 2003: 59.

<sup>46</sup> <http://www.coven-yggdrasil.org>

<sup>47</sup> <http://www.racinespaiennes.org>

organizations closely linked to Coven Yggdrasil. These include *Le Temple Sacré de la Déesse*<sup>48</sup>, *Neuf jours et neuf nuits – Paganisme de l'Europe du nord*<sup>49</sup>, *Le Temple du Serpent*<sup>50</sup>, *Magia Artemisia*<sup>51</sup> and *Stella Luna Terra*<sup>52</sup>.

Isis Shakti, one of the founders of Coven Yggdrasil, is also a member of the Fellowship of Isis, an international Pagan organization dedicated to the worship of the Goddess<sup>53</sup>. Isis Shakti opened the very first Francophone Iseum (Temple dedicated to Isis) affiliated with the Fellowship of Isis<sup>54</sup>, and is active in networking in the Francophone Pagan community in Montreal and in the Province of Quebec.

Finding Francophone Pagans to answer my survey questionnaires and to participate in the interview process proved to be quite a challenge throughout my research. For years, I was told by my primarily Anglophone Pagan friends and acquaintances that Francophone Pagans tend to be more private, traditional-minded and reclusive than their Anglophone counterparts. I was also told that there are subtle differences between Francophone and Anglophone Pagans, such as the tendency among Francophones to base their practices on the Western occult ceremonial tradition, and to incorporate New Age concepts in their Pagan cosmology.

The latter assumption is easy to attest in light of the fact that Francophone bookstores in Quebec, whether they be located in large urban centres or small towns, abound with “New Age” literature to such an extent that this form of spirituality has

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<sup>48</sup> <http://temple-deesse.racinespaiennes.org>

<sup>49</sup> <http://www.neufjours-neufnuits.org>

<sup>50</sup> <http://www.temple-serpent.com>

<sup>51</sup> <http://www.magia-artemis.com>

<sup>52</sup> <http://stella-luna-terra.net>

<sup>53</sup> The Fellowship of Isis was founded in 1976 by siblings Olivia Robertson and Lord Lawrence Durden-Robertson at Clonegal Castle, Ireland, For more information see <http://www.fellowshipofisis.com>

<sup>54</sup> Iseum de la Déesse du Lotus <http://www.iseum-lotus.org>

become part of the Québécois cultural register in recent years<sup>55</sup>. The former assumption is more challenging to observe directly, as members of esoteric, ceremonial lodges tend to avoid advertising their occult proclivities and membership to outsiders. Gagnon confirmed the significance of ceremonial lodges in the development of the early Wiccan and Pagan community in the city of Montreal. She mentioned in particular the Ordo Templi Orientis Caliphate (cO.T.O.), a group that established itself in the city in the early 1980s and opened the Café Thélème<sup>56</sup>. On a related note, Ronald Hutton also discussed<sup>57</sup> how the ubiquitous ceremonial lodges and occult fraternities in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century British culture laid the foundations for the emergence of the Witchcraft and contemporary Pagan revivals in Britain in the 1950s.

Due to cultural factors peculiar to this Francophone province, Paganism had a late arrival in Quebec when compared to the rest of North America. Nonetheless, the religious movement made visible inroads within its largest and most diverse city, as evidenced by the growing number of Pagan groups and resources that have come into existence in the last decades. Chapter 3 now turns to the characteristics and peculiarities of Paganism in a predominantly Francophone province, using the Pagan community in Montreal as a case study.

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<sup>55</sup> Unlike most of the material on Wicca and Paganism, New Age literature has been widely translated into French. For a discussion of the pervasiveness of New Age thought and literature in Quebec popular culture, see Geoffroy, Martin. "Pour une typologie du nouvel âge". 1999. Accessed 29 August 2007; available online from

[http://classiques.uqac.ca/contemporains/geoffroy\\_martin/typologie\\_nouvel\\_age/typologie\\_NA.html](http://classiques.uqac.ca/contemporains/geoffroy_martin/typologie_nouvel_age/typologie_NA.html)

<sup>56</sup> Gagnon, 2003: 53.

<sup>57</sup> See Hutton, Ronald. *The Triumph of the Moon: A History of Modern Pagan Witchcraft*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1999. See also Hutton, Ronald. 1996. "The Roots of Modern Paganism", in Graham Harvey and Charlotte Hardman (eds.). *Pagan Pathways*. London: Thorsons. 1996: 3-15.

## CHAPTER THREE

The data gathered from survey questionnaires, interviews, and ethnographic fieldwork gives a glimpse of the differences among Montreal Pagans based on language and other accidents of history, such as culture of origin, ethnicity, and so on. It also becomes apparent how people from a variety of backgrounds and with differing life histories can successfully co-create a community based on shared values, symbols, and understandings of the nature of the universe.

### **3.1 RESEARCH DATA RESULTS – PAGAN AFFILIATION AND PERSONAL RELIGIOUS HISTORY**

By the end of my fieldwork, I had collected a total of 37 completed surveys<sup>1</sup>, and conducted 16 interviews<sup>2</sup> with survey respondents and key informants. Due to time constraints and my living in Gatineau during a large portion of the time I was conducting fieldwork, some interviews were done by telephone and two interviews were completed by e-mail. Nonetheless, I was able to gather data from a variety of informants with eventful and interesting personal religious histories. The survey respondents and interview participants are by no means a representative sample of Paganism in Montreal, or in Quebec for that matter. My survey sampling was limited to those participants who submitted the surveys within a limited time span while, as mentioned in Chapter 2, the interview participants were limited to people who made themselves available to meet with me when I conducted field research in Montreal.

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix A for a copy of the survey questionnaire in English and French.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix B for a copy of the interview questions in English and French.

In order to determine potential patterns of difference between respondents on the basis of cultural, linguistic and ethnic background, I divided the completed surveys into eight categories based on the respondents' first language, nationality and self-described ethnic origin. I gave each completed survey a letter or number coding based on the random order in which I collated the data, and to which category the survey belonged. The categories are: Francophone Québécois(es), Other Francophones, Canadian Bilingual, Foreigner Bilingual, Canadian Allophone, Foreigner Allophone, Foreigner Anglophone, and Canadian Anglophone. What follows is a breakdown of the survey results by category of survey respondents, with excerpts from interviews to further elucidate the possible patterns of difference. Some of these categories – Foreigner Bilingual, Canadian Allophone and Foreigner Allophone – include a single respondent. I chose to leave these respondents in their respective categories to provide control samples against which more numerous groups could be compared.

### **3.1.1 CATEGORIES OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS AND INTERVIEWEES**

#### **3.1.1.1 Francophone Québécois(es) (A, B, C, D, E, Q)**

This category includes all survey respondents who claimed French as their first language, were born in Quebec, and answered the French version of the survey questionnaire. Curiously, nearly all are female (Q is the only male in this category), and their age patterns show a higher incidence of older respondents than in most other categories in this research, with an age average second only to the Foreigner Anglophone category (see Table 2). Although two of the six respondents in this category live in the Rosemont – La Petite Patrie borough in Montreal, they have no discernible residence patterns (see Table 5). Respondents in this category have lived in Montreal for no less

than 11-15 years (see Table 6); three have lived in the city their whole lives, while the others lived previously in other Québécois cities (Saint-Eustache (A), Baie-Comeau (B) and Alma (Q)). All identified French as the language they use most commonly in their everyday lives, and all identified their ethnic background as solely French Québécois. Two survey respondents within this category (B and C) participated in the interviews.

#### 3.1.1.2 Other Francophones (F, G, H, I, N)

This category includes all other respondents who identified French as their first language, but for reasons unknown answered the English version of the questionnaire. I though this factor was significant enough to lump these respondents into a separate category, as a control group of Francophones to the former. This group also differs from the previous one in that it includes two males (see Table 1), and four of the five respondents list both English and French as the languages they use predominantly in their daily lives (see Table 7). Respondents in this category are only slightly younger than the Francophone Québécois(es) and the Foreigner Anglophones (see Table 2). Four were born in Quebec, and one was born in New Brunswick (see Table 4).

Two respondents within this category live in the borough of Côte-des-Neiges – Notre-Dame-de Grâce, which was a frequent selection among the other categories of respondents (see Table 5). Other than that, there are no outstanding residence patterns. Two respondents in this category have lived in Montreal their whole lives. The other three have lived in the city for no more than 11-15 years (see Table 6), two having lived previously in the Québécois cities of Jonquière (H) and Laval (N), and one hailing from Moncton, New Brunswick (I). The Other Francophones have more varied ethnic backgrounds than the Francophone Québécois(es): only H and N identify their ethnicity

as solely French Québécois; **F** is a second-generation immigrant born to Haitian parents, **G** has both French Québécois and Métis/Aboriginal ancestry<sup>3</sup>, and **I** is Acadian with Métis/Aboriginal ancestry<sup>4</sup>. Two survey participants in this category (**F** and **I**) were interviewed.

#### 3.1.1.3 Canadian Bilingual (J, P)

This category includes two male respondents who listed both English and French as their first languages (see Table 8), and who use English predominantly in their daily lives (see Table 7). Both men were born in Quebec, but neither are originally from Montreal (see Table 6); **J** has lived in the city 11-15 years, having lived previously in Quebec City, while **P** has lived in Montreal less than a year, having lived previously in the Québécois city of Gatineau. Both currently live in the borough of Côte-des-Neiges – Notre-Dame-de-Grâce. Their ages range between 28-32 (**P**) years to 38-42 years (**J**). Both men claim French Québécois ancestry, however **J** adds that he is also of Anglo-Canadian, and specifically Irish, descent. **J** and **P** both participated in the interviews.

#### 3.1.1.4 Foreigner Bilingual (K)

This category includes one male respondent, aged 18-22, who was born in France to a British family. He has listed both English and French as his first languages, with the comment: “I have been fluent in both since very young (my parents are British)”<sup>5</sup>. He lives in the borough of Villeray - Saint-Michel - Parc-Extension. He has lived in Montreal for 1-5 years, having lived prior in Lyon, France. He uses English predominantly in his daily life. He was not interviewed.

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<sup>3</sup> **G** wrote that he has a “Mohak grandmother” (survey questionnaire).

<sup>4</sup> **I**'s Acadian background was revealed not in the survey, but during the follow-up interview.

<sup>5</sup> **K**, survey questionnaire.

### 3.1.1.5 Canadian Allophone (L)

Includes a sole male respondent, aged 33-37. Born in Quebec to Greek immigrant parents<sup>6</sup>, L lists Greek as his first language, and uses English predominantly in his daily life. He has lived in Montreal his whole life, and now resides in Côte-des-Neiges – Notre-Dame-de Grâce. He was not interviewed.

### 3.1.1.6 Foreigner Allophone (M)<sup>7</sup>

Includes a sole male respondent, aged 28-32. Born in Poland, M lists Polish as his first language and ethnicity<sup>8</sup>, and uses English predominantly in his daily life. He has lived on the Island of Montreal for 6-10 years, and had lived before that in Mississauga, Ontario. He now resides in Westmount<sup>9</sup>. He was not interviewed.

### 3.1.1.7 Foreigner Anglophone (1, 2, 3, 4, 5)

Includes five respondents who were born outside of Canada (see Table 3), and listed English as their first language. All five use English predominantly in their daily lives. This category includes one male and four females, and shows an age pattern with a higher incidence of older respondents (see Table 2). Two of the five Foreigner Anglophones reside in the borough Le Sud-Ouest, however there are no other distinct residence patterns within this category (see Table 5). There is no discernible pattern with regards to how long they have lived in Montreal (see Table 6), however two among them

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<sup>6</sup> L actually described his ethnicity as “Greek Orthodox, Greece” in the survey.

<sup>7</sup> In order to save space, I have put both the Foreigner Bilingual (K) and the Foreigner Allophone (M) respondents in the same column in all tables.

<sup>8</sup> M describes himself in the survey as a second-generation immigrant, although by virtue of having been born outside of Canada to immigrant parents he is in fact a first-generation immigrant.

<sup>9</sup> Although Westmount was annexed to Montreal during the municipal mergers in 2002, it is no longer part of the City-Island of Montreal.

have listed other Canadian cities as former places of residence<sup>10</sup>. The others had previously lived in “Oregon & California” (1), “USA” (4) and Boston (5).

Their ethnic backgrounds are: American of “Anglo & Scandinavian descent”<sup>11</sup> (1), Anglo-Canadian (2, 5), and first-generation immigrant of “United Kingdom, English and Welsh descent”<sup>12</sup> (3). One respondent (4) listed her ethnic background as including French Québécois, Métis/Aboriginal (“Iroquois”), second-generation immigrant (“Quebec French”) and American (“Great-grandfather Scottish”) ancestry<sup>13</sup> (see Table 9). All respondents in this category, except (5), were interviewed.

#### 3.1.1.8 Canadian Anglophone (6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21)

This is the largest group, and includes all respondents who were born in Canada, listed English as their first language, and use English predominantly in their daily lives. This category includes four males and twelve females (see Table 1), and has an age pattern with a high incidence of younger respondents (see Table 2; six out of sixteen are aged between 18 to 22, while the two oldest respondents in this category are between 38 and 42 years old).

Nine of the sixteen Canadian Anglophones were born in Quebec, three were born in Ontario, while the others were born in British Columbia, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island (see Table 4). Five indicated that they have lived in Montreal their whole lives<sup>14</sup>, and another five have lived in the city between one and five years (see Table 6). Those not originally from Montreal have lived in cities across Canada, some

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<sup>10</sup> 2 had lived in Vancouver, BC, and 3 had previously resided in Terrasse-Vaudreuil (Ile-Perrot), Quebec.

<sup>11</sup> 1, survey questionnaire.

<sup>12</sup> 3, survey questionnaire.

<sup>13</sup> 4, survey questionnaire.

<sup>14</sup> Although 15 has indicated that she has lived in Montreal “21-25 years”, I consider her having lived in Montreal her whole life by virtue of the fact that she listed her age as “18-22” years and when asked where she had lived previously, she responded “No where”.

even in the United States<sup>15</sup>. Five live in Côte-des-Neiges – Notre-Dame-de Grâce, two live in Le Plateau Mont-Royal, two live in Pierrefonds-Roxboro, two live in Verdun, and another two live in Ville-Marie<sup>16</sup>. The other Canadian Anglophones live in different boroughs (see Table 5). The majority of Canadian Anglophones (twelve out of sixteen) are of Anglo-Canadian descent, listing combinations of “Irish”, “Scottish” and “English” most frequently. Only two respondents in this category claimed French Canadian ancestry of any kind (see Table 9). Three of the Canadian Anglophones (10, 12 and 13) were interviewed.

In addition to the survey respondents who agreed to participate in the interview process, three people were interviewed without having completed the survey questionnaire. These participants were interviewed because of their knowledge of the growth of Paganism in Quebec and Canada, and because of their role in Pagan networking and community building in the city of Montreal. All three asked to be referred to by their real names in this research project.

Marie-Renée Patry is the owner of the store *Charme et sortilège*, and was instrumental in my research as a primary point of contact for the Francophone component of the Pagan community in Montreal. The most significant result of the interview with Mme Patry is her insistence on the fundamental differences between Francophone and Anglophone Pagans in terms of their worldviews and practices.

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<sup>15</sup> These include St-Hubert, Quebec (7), Saint John, New Brunswick (9), Perth, Ontario (12), and London, Ontario (14). 11 has listed that she has lived in “New Brunswick” (city unspecified), 13 has lived in “Prince Edward Island” (city unspecified), 17 in “BC” (city unspecified), and 21 in “New Hampshire, USA” (city unspecified).

<sup>16</sup> 12 wrote that she lived “near Mélange Magique”, which is located in the Ville-Marie borough.

Lucie Marie-Mai DuFresne is a professor at the University of Ottawa Department of Classics and Religious Studies<sup>17</sup>, and has conducted academic research on Francophone Pagans and Goddess-Worshipping groups for many years. Her interview did not follow the typical format, as she is not a typical participant (she is not a resident of Montreal). Her involvement in Paganism in Montreal is marginal, however her involvement in Canadian Paganism is far-reaching. For instance, Lucie has played a crucial role in organizing the academic panels at the Gaia Gathering Canadian National Pagan Conference since 2005. Also, as she told me during the interview,

I guess I've reached elderhood. I've been a founding member of PFPC [Pagan Federation – Fédération Païenne Canada]. I am the only original member to be continuously on the Board... Also, I used to manage the *Occult Shop*, then [my husband] Michael and I managed the *Hungry Eye* so we're known as vendors. I've participated in some Yuletide celebrations in Montreal, I've been to the Montreal Pagan Conference two years and participated at both. I've given workshops at Terre-Eau and certainly the Montreal Community knows me at Kaleidoscope [Gathering]. I've given conference papers in Quebec and have been published in French in Quebec on Francophone Canadian Paganism. So in the Francophone community, I am the most senior academic and I have some Francophone initiates.

My role as a High Priestess is probably not my most important function. I feel more like a God/dess-mother than an elder! [laughs].<sup>18</sup>

Michael McCord is also an atypical interview participant, as he does not reside in Montreal, nor does he self-identify as a Pagan. He was interviewed because of his role in the importation of occult books into Canada in the 1970s and 1980s. Michael worked in specialized bookstores in Toronto and Vancouver before he and Lucie ran the stores *The Occult Shop* and subsequently *The Hungry Eye* in Ottawa.

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<sup>17</sup> I met Lucie in Toronto at the 2002 AAR convention, and have consulted her several times over the last five years about her knowledge of Paganism in Canada, and especially about Paganism among French Canadians.

<sup>18</sup> Lucie Marie-Mai DuFresne, interview 2007-08-08.

**Table 1 - Gender of survey respondents, by category**

	Francophones Québécois(es)	Other Francophones	Canadian Bilingual	Foreigner Bilingual / Allophone	Canadian Allophone	Canadian Anglophone	Foreigner Anglophone
Male	1 (Q)	2 (G, N)	2 (J, P)	2 (K, M)	1 (L)	4 (8, 17, 18, 20)	1 (5)
Female	5 (A - E)	3 (F, H, I)				12 (6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 19, 21)	4 (1, 2, 3, 4)

**Table 2 - Age of survey respondents, by category**

	Francophones Québécois(es)	Other Francophones	Canadian Bilingual	Foreigner Bilingual / Allophone	Canadian Allophone	Canadian Anglophone	Foreigner Anglophone
18-22				1 (K)		6 (9, 12, 15, 18, 19, 20)	
23-27	1 (E)	2 (I, N)				3 (6, 11, 14)	1 (1)
28-32	1 (Q)	1 (H)	1 (P)	1 (M)		3 (8, 13, 16)	
33-37		1 (F)			1 (L)	2 (7, 10)	1 (3)
38-42	1 (D)		1 (J)			2 (17, 21)	
43-47	1 (B)						
48-52	2 (A, C)	1 (G)					1 (2)
53-57							2 (4, 5)
58 and older							

**Table 3 - Country of origin of survey respondents, by category**

	Francophones Québécois(es)	Other Francophones	Canadian Bilingual	Foreigner Bilingual / Allophone	Canadian Allophone	Canadian Anglophone	Foreigner Anglophone
Canada	6 (A - E, Q)	5 (F - I, N)	2 (J, P)		1 (L)	16 (6 - 21)	
USA							2 (1, 4)
France				1 (K)			
England							1 (5)
Scotland							2 (2, 3)
Poland				1 (M)			

**Table 4 - Birth province of Canadian survey respondents, by category**

	Francophones Québécois(es)	Other Francophones	Canadian Bilingual	Canadian Allophone	Canadian Anglophone
British Columbia					1 (17)
Ontario					3 (12, 14, 21)
Quebec	6 (A - E, Q)	4 (F, G, H, N)	2 (J, P)	1 (L)	9 (6, 7, 8, 10, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20)
New Brunswick		1 (I)			1 (9)
Nova Scotia					1 (13)
Prince Edward Island					1 (11)

**Table 5 - Current place of residence (borough) of survey respondents, by category**

	Francophones Québécois(es)	Other Francophones	Canadian Bilingual	Foreigner Bilingual / Allophone	Canadian Allophone	Canadian Anglophone	Foreigner Anglophone
Ahuntsic – Cartierville						1 (7)	
Côte-des-Neiges – Notre-Dame-de-Grâce		2 (F, I)	2 (J, P)		1 (L)	5 (8, 9, 14, 15, 17)	
Lachine							1 (4)
LaSalle						1 (10)	1 (5)
Le Plateau Mont-Royal	1 (B)					2 (11, 13)	
Le Sud-Ouest							2 (2, 3)
L'Île-Bizard - Sainte-Geneviève						1 (20)	
Mercier – Hochelaga – Maisonneuve	1 (D)	1 (N)					
Outremont							
Pierrefonds – Roxboro						2 (18, 19)	
Rosemont – La Petite Patrie	2 (E, Q)						
Verdun	1 (A)	1 (H)				2 (6, 16)	
Ville-Marie		1 (G)				2 (12, 21)	
Villeray – Saint-Michel – Parc-Extension	1 (C)			1 (K)			1 (1)
Other : Westmount				1 (M)			

**Table 6 – Length of time survey respondents have resided in Montreal (including all merged boroughs), by category**

	Francophones Québécois(es)	Other Francophones	Canadian Bilingual	Foreigner Bilingual / Allophone	Canadian Allophone	Canadian Anglophone	Foreigner Anglophone
Less than 1 yr			1 (P)			1 (13)	
1-5 years		1 (I)		1 (K)		5 (7, 9, 11, 12, 14)	1 (1)
6-10 years		1 (H)		1 (M)		1 (21)	1 (5)
11-15 years	1 (Q)	1 (N)	1 (J)			1 (17)	1 (2)
16-20 years						1 (20)	1 (3)
21-25 years	2 (A, B)					2 (6, 15)	
26-30 years							
31-35 years						1 (8)	
36 years or more							1 (4)
Lived in Montreal their whole lives	3 (C, D, E)	2 (F, G)			1 (L)	4 (10, 16, 18, 19)	

**Table 7 – Language used predominantly in survey respondents’ daily lives, by category**

	Francophones Québécois(es)	Other Francophones	Canadian Bilingual	Foreigner Bilingual / Allophone	Canadian Allophone	Canadian Anglophone	Foreigner Anglophone
English			2 (J, P)	2 (K, M)	1 (L)	16 (6 – 21)	5 (1 – 5)
French	6 (A – E, Q)	1 (H)					
English and French		4 (F, G, I, N)					

**Table 8 - Survey respondents’ linguistic background, by category**

	Francophones Québécois(es)	Other Francophones	Canadian Bilingual	Foreigner Bilingual / Allophone	Canadian Allophone	Canadian Anglophone	Foreigner Anglophone
Francophone <sup>19</sup>	6 (A – E, Q)	5 (F – I, N)					
Anglophone <sup>20</sup>						16 (6 – 21)	5 (1 – 5)
Anglophone and Francophone			2 (J, P)	1 (K).			
Allophone <sup>21</sup>				1 (M)	1 (L)		

**Table 9 - Survey respondents’ ethnic backgrounds, by category**

	Francophones Québécois(es)	Other Francophones	Canadian Bilingual	Foreigner Bilingual / Allophone	Canadian Allophone	Canadian Anglophone	Foreigner Anglophone
French Québécois	6 (A – E, Q)	3 (G, H, N)	2 (J, P)			1 (20)	1 (4)
French Canadian other than Québécois		1 (I)				1 (21)	
Métis / Aboriginal / Inuit		2 (G, I)					1 (4)
First-Generation Immigrant							1 (3)
Second-Generation Immigrant		1 (F)		1 (M)	1 (L)	2 (8, 20)	1 (4)
Anglo-Canadian			1 (J)			12 (6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 21)	2 (2, 5)
English-Canadian other than						3 (12, 13, 15)	

<sup>19</sup> Their first language is French.

<sup>20</sup> Their first language is English.

<sup>21</sup> Their first language is neither French nor English.

Anglo							
American (USA)							2 (1, 4)
Other				1 (K)			

### 3.1.2 PAGAN AFFILIATIONS OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS

When asked to identify their current Pagan religious or spiritual path, the majority of survey respondents in all ethno-linguistic categories, except Canadian Bilingual and Foreigner Bilingual, elected British-derived and/or Eclectic traditions of Wicca, in conjunction with other choices of labels. The latter include other Witchcraft traditions, the second most popular selection (see Table 10).

Of the twenty respondents who self-identified as Wiccan, only eight chose this option as the sole descriptor for their religious path. These include two Francophone Québécois(es) (A “Gardnérienne”<sup>22</sup>, C “Edwardienne”<sup>23</sup>), one Other Francophone (G “Celtic Shamanic Wicca”<sup>24</sup>), the Canadian Allophone (L “Eclectic”<sup>25</sup>), one Foreigner Anglophone (5 “European Traditional”<sup>26</sup>) and three Canadian Anglophones (9 “Gardnerian / my own blend”<sup>27</sup>, 12 “Eclectic”<sup>28</sup>, 17 Welsh trad.”<sup>29</sup>). A greater number of respondents added other paths to their Wiccan identification: among the Francophone Québécois(es), B identifies as both an Eclectic Wiccan and a pantheist, while Q identifies simultaneously with Eclectic Wicca, Witchcraft (unspecified), Shamanism, and Tibetan Buddhism. The Other Francophone Wiccans also tend to hold multiple affiliations. Most

<sup>22</sup> A, survey questionnaire.

<sup>23</sup> C, survey questionnaire.

<sup>24</sup> G, survey questionnaire.

<sup>25</sup> L, survey questionnaire.

<sup>26</sup> 5, survey questionnaire.

<sup>27</sup> 9, survey questionnaire.

<sup>28</sup> 12, survey questionnaire.

<sup>29</sup> 17, survey questionnaire.

notable among this category is **F**, who is an Eclectic Wiccan, practices Green Witchcraft, Native and Celtic Shamanism, and is a member of the Fellowship of Isis, a group dedicated to the worship of the Goddess. **H** practices Celtic Shamanic Wicca of the Greenwood tradition, Asatru / Heathenism / Odinism and Celtic Shamanism; **N** is an Eclectic Wiccan who also practices a form of Witchcraft he describes as “natural magick”<sup>30</sup>.

The sole Foreigner Allophone (**M**) answered that he practices both Wicca and Witchcraft, although he did not specify which particular variety of Wicca and/or Witchcraft he practices. Among the Foreigner Anglophones, two respondents identify with Wicca in conjunction with other affiliations: **2** practices both Celtic Shamanic Wicca, and specified that she studies Shamanism through the Foundation for Shamanic Studies, a group founded by anthropologist Michael Harner<sup>31</sup>. On the other hand, **3** specified that her Wiccan label must be understood with the caveat that she is not initiated into any specific Wiccan tradition, but rather that her practice is Wiccan-influenced. **3** also identifies with Reclaiming Witchcraft, Deep Ecology, and the Anderson Feri tradition of Witchcraft, of which she is not an initiate.

The Canadian Anglophone Wiccans who hold multiple affiliations include **7**, who is Gardnerian and claims affinity with Thelema as a form of Witchcraft<sup>32</sup>. **10** is an initiate of the Black Forest Wiccan tradition, and also includes East-Asian influences (“Zen, Tao, Shinto, Buddhism”<sup>33</sup>) in her path. **14** is an Eclectic Wiccan and integrates Animism in her

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<sup>30</sup> **N**, survey questionnaire.

<sup>31</sup> <http://www.shamanism.org>

<sup>32</sup> Thelema is a school of Western esoteric philosophy founded by British occultist Aleister Crowley. Not all adherents of Thelema consider this to be a form of Witchcraft.

<sup>33</sup> **10**, survey questionnaire.

spirituality. 21 is also an Eclectic Wiccan, and identifies with Goddess Worship / Goddess Spirituality.

The San Francisco-based Reclaiming Tradition is the non-Wiccan form of Witchcraft most frequently selected by survey respondents. All those who identified with Reclaiming also enriched the description of their paths with other forms of Pagan spirituality. K added Deep Ecology, non-Native neo-Shamanism, as well as Eco-Feminism and Pantheism to his identification with Reclaiming. Similarly, 11 added Deep Ecology, Animism and Eco-Feminism to hers, while 1 included Goddess Worship / Goddess Spirituality, Eco-Feminism and Pantheism. As previously discussed, 3 also identifies with the Reclaiming tradition. Not surprisingly, only those who identify with Reclaiming selected Deep Ecology and Eco-feminism as part of their spirituality, as these terms are accurate descriptors for the socially activist tradition co-created by Starhawk. None of the Francophone Québécois(es), nor any of the Other Francophones indicated that they identify with this well-known American form of Witchcraft.

Shamanism is the third most popular selection in survey respondents' self-identification of their current religious paths. As discussed above, many chose this option in conjunction with other forms of spirituality, most notably Wicca. In addition to those previously mentioned, E, a Francophone Québécoise, selected Shamanism as one of her Pagan affiliations, along with Asatru / Heathenism / Odinism, Pantheism and Polytheism. Among the Other Francophones, I is the third respondent in her category to identify with Shamanism, which she does in conjunction with Druidism (she is the only survey respondent in my sample who identifies with Druidism). 13 is the only Canadian Anglophone who identified Shamanism specifically as part of her path (with the

comment “still discovering”<sup>34</sup>), in conjunction with Goddess Worship / Goddess Spirituality, Animism, Pantheism, and “Undefined / Unspecified / I have yet to find or experience my path”. **K** specified that the form of Shamanism he favors is non-Native. It is interesting to note that Shamanism, when merged with Wicca, tends to be especially popular among the Other Francophone category, while Shamanism alone seems favored by Francophones more so than Anglophones (see Table 10).

Other popular responses include Pantheism, which spans five ethno-linguistic categories, Goddess Worship / Goddess Spirituality, and Asatru/Heathenism/Odinism (see Table 10). The most numerous undefined responses (“Others”) were found among the Francophone Québécois(es), Canadian Bilingual and Canadian Anglophone categories. As mentioned above, **Q** is also involved in Tibetan Buddhism, while **D** wrote simply that her path is constantly evolving: “j’évolue toujours”<sup>35</sup>. In addition to describing his spirituality as Animism, Pantheism and Polytheism<sup>36</sup>, **J** also described his path as consisting of “Eclectic Paganism, Kabalist, God Worship”<sup>37</sup>, while **P** describes himself solely as a “Pagan ceremonial magician”<sup>38</sup>.

Among the Canadian Anglophones, **8** described his path as “Hinduism - Animism”<sup>39</sup>. This is congruent with his upbringing and previous religious affiliation (see Table 13). As previously mentioned, **10** includes East Asian religious traditions within her spirituality (as does **Q**, who includes Tibetan Buddhism in his). **15** describes herself as a “Jewish Reconstructionist” and a “Ceremonial magical, Jewitch, best amalgamation

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<sup>34</sup> **13**, survey questionnaire.

<sup>35</sup> **D**, survey questionnaire.

<sup>36</sup> Many introductory texts on Paganism will include Animism, Pantheism and Polytheism as necessary components in their definition of the religious movement. Many survey respondents have selected these three choices in their religious self-definition (see Table 10).

<sup>37</sup> **J**, survey questionnaire.

<sup>38</sup> **P**, survey questionnaire.

<sup>39</sup> **8**, survey questionnaire.

of both”<sup>40</sup>. Curiously, 15 did not opt for the response “Judeo-Paganism” in describing her religious or spiritual path. None of the survey respondents selected either Christo-Paganism or Judeo-Paganism as descriptors of their religious or spiritual paths. This could suggest that my sample is composed of individuals who consciously separate their Pagan identities from any remaining Christian or Jewish beliefs carried over from previous religious affiliations.

**Table 10 - Survey respondents self-described current Pagan religious or spiritual path, by category**

	Francophones Québécois(es)	Other Francophones	Canadian Bilingual	Foreigner Bilingual / Allophone	Canadian Allophone	Canadian Anglophone	Foreigner Anglophone
Wicca (Gardnerian, Alexandrian, etc.)	4 (A, B, C, Q)	4 (F, G, H, N)		1 (M)	1 (L)	7 (7, 9, 10, 12, 14, 17, 21)	3 (2, 3, 5)
Witchcraft	1 (Q)	2 (F, N)		2 (K, M)		2 (7, 11)	2 (1, 3)
Druid		1 (I)					
Goddess Worship / Spirituality	1 (D)	1 (F)				2 (13, 21)	1 (1)
Asatru / Heathenism / Odinism	1 (E)	1 (H)				1 (20)	1 (4)
Deep Ecology				1 (K)		1 (11)	1 (3)
Shamanism	2 (E, Q)	3 (F, H, I)		1 (K)		1 (13)	1 (2)
Animism			1 (J)			3 (11, 13, 14)	
Eco- Feminism				1 (K)		1 (11)	1 (1)
Pantheism	2 (B, E)		1 (J)	1 (K)		1 (13)	1 (1)
Polytheism	2 (D, E)		1 (J)				
Reconstructi onism	1 (D)					1 (15)	
Undefined / Unspecified / Don't know						5 (6, 13, 16, 18, 19)	
Others	2 (D, Q)		2 (J, P)			3 (8, 10, 15)	1 (3)

<sup>40</sup> 15, survey questionnaire.

The five survey respondents who admitted that their Pagan spirituality was as yet undefined all belonged to the Canadian Anglophone category. This is probably due to the large number of younger respondents in this category, many of whom are probably still young in their spiritual exploration as well. Indeed, as shown in Table 11, all but one of the Canadian Anglophones have considered themselves Pagan for twenty years or less, the majority among them having done so for ten years or less.

**Table 11 – Length of time survey respondents have considered themselves Pagan, by category**

	Francophones Québécois(es)	Other Francophones	Canadian Bilingual	Foreigner Bilingual / Allophone	Canadian Allophone	Canadian Anglophone	Foreigner Anglophone
Less than 1 year						1 (19)	
1-5 years	1 (Q)			1 (K)		5 (13, 15, 16, 18, 20)	1 (1)
6-10 years	1 (E)	3 (F, G, N)	1 (J)		1 (L)	5 (9, 11, 12, 14, 21)	
11-15 years	2 (A, B)	1 (I)	1 (P)	1 (M)		2 (7, 17)	
16-20 years	1 (D)	1 (H)				2 (8, 10)	1 (3)
21-25 years	1 (C)						
26-30 years							3 (2, 4, 5)
31-35 years							
36 years or more							
Have always considered themselves Pagan	1 (D)					1 (6)	

The Foreigner Anglophone category includes the only respondents who have considered themselves Pagan for twenty-six years or more. This is not surprising, as this category contains the oldest survey respondents, followed closely by the Francophone Québécois(es) and the Other Francophones (see Table 2). Although 6 has always considered herself a Pagan, her age range is still fairly low (23-27 years). As for D, Table 2 indicates that she is between 38 and 42 years old, yet she has indicated that she has considered herself a Pagan all her life *and* for 16 to 20 years. As will be discussed below,

such discrepancies are not infrequent when taking into account cultural differences in how Anglophones and Francophones define “Paganism”, and how these definitions fit into the participants’ self-described religious itineraries and life histories.

**Table 12 – Length of time survey respondents have practiced their current Pagan religion or spiritual path, by category**

	Francophones Québécois(es)	Other Francophones	Canadian Bilingual	Foreigner Bilingual / Allophone	Canadian Allophone	Anglophone Canadian	Anglophone Foreigner
Less than 1 year						3 (15, 19, 20)	
1-5 years	2 (D, E)	2 (H, I)		1 (K)		5 (11, 13, 16, 18, 21)	1 (1)
6-10 years	2 (B, Q)	3 (F, G, N)	1 (J)		1 (L)	3 (9, 12, 14)	1 (3)
11-15 years	1 (A)		1 (P)	1 (M)		4 (6, 7, 8, 17)	1 (4)
16-20 years						1 (10)	1 (2)
21-25 years	1 (C)						
26-30 years							1 (5)

Table 12 shows the span of time in five-year intervals that survey respondents have practiced their current Pagan religious or spiritual path. As can be expected, the Foreigner Anglophones have been practicing their paths the longest, followed closely by the Francophone Québécois(es). Remarkably, the Canadian Anglophones, the youngest and presumably the most inexperienced group, have practiced their religious or spiritual paths on average for a longer time span than the Other Francophones, the third-oldest group. One plausible explanation for this apparent discrepancy is that English-speaking participants are more likely to have had access to the mostly English-language published material on Paganism at an earlier age than the French-speaking participants. Also, considering that half of the Canadian Anglophone Pagans are aged between 23 to 37 years (see Table 2), these survey respondents would have been very likely exposed at a young age to the increase in popular media portrayal of Witchcraft and Paganism in North America in the mid-to-late 1990s. This could have precipitated their exploration of

Paganism and consequently the development of their Pagan identities. As will be discussed in Chapter 4, this process would have been slower among Francophones, for whom the language barrier delays exposure to and identification with Paganism.

Curiously, Tables 11 and 12 indicate that the Francophone Québécois(es) have been aware of Paganism and have practiced their spiritual paths for almost as long as the Foreigner Anglophones. This discrepant pattern can be explained by the high incidence of older respondents within this category, and the fact that my sample is not representative of the entire Pagan population in Montreal. Also, as the interviews and my own field observations have demonstrated, there are a variety of ways in which language and culture of origin affect how participants come to identify with Paganism. For instance, Francophone Pagans define Paganism in different ways than Anglophone Pagans do, which could in part explain the discrepancy shown in Tables 11 and 12. This aspect of my research findings will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4.

### **3.1.3 PERSONAL RELIGIOUS HISTORIES OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS**

When asked to identify the religion in which they were raised as children, the majority of survey respondents in all but two categories selected Roman Catholicism. The second most frequent choice was Protestantism, notably within the Canadian Anglophone and Foreigner Anglophone categories. Only Canadian Anglophones selected Judaism and Atheism (see Table 13).

It is hardly surprising that all but one of the Francophone survey respondents were raised Roman Catholic, as this pattern is entirely consistent with the traditional identification of Francophone culture with the Roman Catholic faith among the

Québécois and other French-Canadian populations. Indeed, prior to the 1960s Quiet Revolution, Roman Catholicism was an integral part of the French Canadian identity in Quebec, to the extent that the French Canadian people perceived themselves as a collectivity determined by religion (*Église-nation*) more so than by language or ethnicity<sup>41</sup>.

**Table 13 - Religions in which survey respondents were raised, by category**

	Francophones Québécois(es)	Other Francophones	Canadian Bilingual	Foreigner Bilingual / Allophone	Canadian Allophone	Canadian Anglophone	Foreigner Anglophone
Roman Catholicism	6 (A – E, Q)	4 (F, G, H, I)	2 (J, P)	1 (M)		7 (6, 10, 11, 12, 16, 19, 21)	2 (2, 4)
Protestantism						6 (7, 8, 11, 13, 18, 20)	2 (3, 5)
Other Christian						1 (9)	
Judaism						2 (8, 15)	
Hinduism						1 (8)	
Agnosticism		1 (N)		1 (K)		1 (14)	1 (1)
Humanism		1 (N)					
Atheism						2 (14, 17)	
Pagan						1 (6)	
Other					1 (L)		

This pattern of close association between ethno-linguistic identity and religion is also present among the Quebec-born Canadian Bilingual respondents, both of whom claim French Québécois ancestry, as well as the Other Francophones. As is the case with her Québécois and other French Canadian counterparts, F's Roman Catholic upbringing is consistent with her Haitian ethnicity. Similarly, there is a link between ethnicity and religious upbringing with the Canadian Allophone (L) and the Foreigner Allophone (M). L was born to Greek parents and was raised in the Greek Orthodox faith. M's Roman

<sup>41</sup> See Cook, Ramsay. *Canada, Quebec and the Uses of Nationalism*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Inc. 1986, 1995.

Catholic upbringing is also consistent with his ethnicity, which is Polish (see Tables 9 and 13).

The pattern of ethno-linguistic association with a particular religious tradition begins to dissolve among the Canadian Anglophones and Foreigner Anglophones. The seven Canadian Anglophones who were raised Roman Catholic have predominantly Anglo-Canadian (British Isles) ancestry, with the exception of **12** whose father hails from the Netherlands, and **21**, who was the only respondent within this category to have been raised Catholic and to have any French Canadian (other than Québécois) ancestry (see Tables 9 and 13). **2** and **4** are the only respondents in the Foreigner Anglophone category who were raised Roman Catholic. Of the latter two, **4** is the only one who has French Québécois ancestry (**2** is a Scottish-born Anglo-Canadian; see Tables 9 and 13).

Eight survey respondents within the Canadian Anglophone and Foreigner Anglophone categories were raised Protestant. Only one among the Foreigner Anglophones (**3**) did not specify in which denomination she was brought up. The other Foreigner Anglophone (**5**) was raised Baptist, as was **13**, a Canadian Anglophone. The other Protestant-raised Canadian Anglophones were brought up Anglican (**7, 8, 18, 20**), and in the United Church (**11**).

The remaining Canadian Anglophones who were given a religious upbringing were raised in a non-specified Christian denomination (**9**), Jewish (**8, 15** “reconstructionist”<sup>42</sup>), and Hindu (**8**). Among the Canadian Anglophones, **8** is the only survey respondent who selected three different religious traditions as part of his religious upbringing. His claim to have been raised Christian (Anglican), Jewish and Hindu at the

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<sup>42</sup> **15**, survey questionnaire.

same time is consistent with his ethnic background, as his parents are first-generation immigrants from the ethnically and religiously diverse nation of Guyana.

Five survey respondents in four categories were given an irreligious upbringing. **N**, an Other Francophone, was raised as an Agnostic and a Humanist. **K**, the sole Foreigner Bilingual, was also raised Agnostic, as was **14**, a Canadian Anglophone, and **1**, a Foreigner Anglophone. **14** and **17**, both Canadian Anglophones, were raised Atheist. Of all survey respondents, only one Canadian Anglophone (**6**) indicated that she was raised as a Pagan, in conjunction with her Roman Catholic upbringing. She explains this unusual pattern as follows:

I was raised Roman Catholic with strong Pagan over tones. Basically my mother sent me to church seeing that it would be a good base to start with and my whole family was Roman Catholic. When I was 13 I official[ly] told my mother that I was pagan and she told me she already knew and was proud of me. She basically wanted me to find my own path on my own.<sup>43</sup>

As shown in Table 14, **6** is not the only survey respondent who had her previous religious affiliation determined by family religion and/or parental choice<sup>44</sup>. This is also the case for all of the Francophone Québécois(es) except **D**, all the Other Francophones, both Canadian Bilingual respondents, the Foreigner Allophone, the Allophone Canadian, fifteen Canadian Anglophones and all five Foreigner Anglophones.

**E** added her private-school religious education as a factor determining her previous Roman Catholic religious affiliation<sup>45</sup>. **D** answered that her previous religious affiliation was determined by her own personal curiosity about other religious traditions, and a conversion due to a personal spiritual experience. Similarly, **N** indicated that his

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<sup>43</sup> **6**, survey questionnaire.

<sup>44</sup> In the survey questionnaire, "Family Tradition" meant that respondents were raised in the religious tradition in which their parents or guardians had been brought up, and "Parental Choice" meant that respondents were raised in the religion to which their parents or guardians had converted during respondents' childhood.

<sup>45</sup> **E**, survey questionnaire.

previous religious affiliation was determined by three factors: parental choice, a personal curiosity about other religious traditions and a conversion due to a personal spiritual experience. Not surprisingly, **K** indicated that his previous *irreligious* affiliation was determined by the fact that his parents didn't bring him up in any religion<sup>46</sup>, as did **1**, who specified that her family was "not religious"<sup>47</sup>. One Canadian Anglophone (**7**) indicated that in addition to family tradition, her previous religious affiliation was determined by her own initiative: "I asked to attend Church, so we went"<sup>48</sup>.

**Table 14 - How survey respondents' previous religious affiliations were determined, by category**

	Francophones Québécois(es)	Other Francophones	Canadian Bilingual	Foreigner Bilingual / Allophone	Canadian Allophone	Canadian Anglophone	Foreigner Anglophone
Family tradition	5 (A, B, C, E, Q)	4 (F, G, H, I)	2 (J, P)	1 (M)	1 (L)	14 (6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21)	4 (2, 3, 4, 5)
Parental choice		1 (N)				3 (6, 15, 17)	1 (3)
Personal curiosity about other religions	1 (D)	1 (N)					
Conversion due to personal spiritual experience	1 (D)	1 (N)					
Other	1 (E)			1 (K)		1 (7)	1 (1)

Regardless of how they came about their previous religious affiliations, the overwhelming majority of survey respondents acquired a Pagan religious affiliation after undergoing a "Coming Home" experience upon being exposed to Paganism. Sian Reid defines this very common experience among Pagans as follows:

*Coming Home* is a phrase frequently used by neo-Pagans of all varieties to describe the feelings they had when they first encountered neo-Pagan religious and spiritual practices. This is

<sup>46</sup> **K**, survey questionnaire.

<sup>47</sup> **1**, survey questionnaire.

<sup>48</sup> **7**, survey questionnaire.

distinguished by practitioners from “conversion”, which they conceptualize as involving a fundamental change in the root orientation of a passive self, acted upon by outside forces. Practitioners do not tend to describe their involvement in neo-Paganism as going from “being” something to “being” something else, although most have had at least one, and often several, religious identifications before that of Pagan. Their religious history narratives are organized around their unfolding understanding of themselves and their search for a spiritual context in which they could feel as if they belonged. Neo-Pagans describe a process of progressive “becoming, a personal evolution and refinement of their own spiritualities through the examination of other modes of religious life. The extent to which they experienced these other worldviews as illuminating or deficient with reference to their own biographies helped practitioners clarify their spiritual and philosophical priorities before they ever encountered neo-Paganism.

[...] The phrase *I felt like I had come home* reflects both the sense of belonging and the sense of relief that many practitioners feel upon finding a community that echoes back to them their often preexisting ideals.<sup>49</sup>

All six Francophone Québécois(es), three of the Other Francophones, both Canadian Bilingual respondents, the Foreigner Allophone, eleven Canadian Anglophones and three Foreigner Anglophones claimed that their “Coming Home” experiences solidified their identity as Pagans. The “Coming Home” experience was not the only determining factor in acquiring a Pagan identity for many of the participants in the research. Many of the respondents who indicated having experienced “Coming Home” to Paganism also answered that they “converted” due to a personal spiritual experience, and as the result of a personal curiosity about other religious traditions. Others indicated single determining factors in acquiring a Pagan affiliation (see Table 15).

**Table 15 - How survey respondents’ Pagan affiliation or identity was determined, by category**

	Francophones Québécois(es)	Other Francophones	Canadian Bilingual	Foreigner Bilingual / Allophone	Canadian Allophone	Canadian Anglophone	Foreigner Anglophone
Family tradition						2 (6, 8)	
Parental choice						1 (6)	
Peer/societal pressure						1 (12)	
Personal rebellion						1 (11)	
Personal curiosity about other religions	4 (C, D, E, Q)	3 (H, I, N)	2 (J, P)	1 (M)		7 (8, 9, 10, 13, 19, 20, 21)	1 (3)

<sup>49</sup> Reid, Sian. “Coming Home”, in Rabinovitch & Lewis, 2002: 54-55; italics in original text.

Conversion due to personal spiritual experience	3 (B, D, E)	4 (F, G, H, N)	1 (J)	1 (M)		3 (10, 16, 21)	
Coming Home experience	6 (A – E, Q)	3 (G, I, N)	2 (J, P)	1 (M)		11 (6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 13, 14, 14, 17, 18, 20)	3 (1, 2, 4)
Other				1 (K)	1 (L)		1 (5)

Curiously, only respondents within the Canadian Anglophone category indicated that they became Pagan through family tradition (6, 8), parental choice (6), peer or societal pressure (12), and personal rebellion (11). As discussed above, 6 claims that she was brought up both as a Roman Catholic and a Pagan. As for 8, he also claimed an association between his Hindu upbringing and the ethnic aspect of his current Pagan religious path (see Chapter 5). The remaining three respondents whose Pagan affiliation was acquired by other means include the Foreigner Bilingual respondent (K), the Canadian Allophone (L), and one Foreigner Anglophone (5). K became Pagan “After meeting someone who was Pagan”<sup>50</sup>, L acquired his Pagan identity from working at a Pagan store and interacting with Pagans on a daily basis<sup>51</sup>, and 5 wrote that he became Pagan by “growing up + finding myself”<sup>52</sup>.

Congruent with Reid’s findings, the survey results show that many of the participants in this research experimented with a variety of religious traditions before becoming Pagans. Many survey respondents also always felt that they were Pagan all along, but never had a label for their unusual philosophical and spiritual proclivities. This is the case even with survey respondents who were given an irreligious upbringing.

<sup>50</sup> K, survey questionnaire.

<sup>51</sup> L’s religious narrative reads as follows: “1) Raised Greek Orthodox 2) at 21 worked at a Pagan store for 10 years 3) interacted with other Pagans through the store” (L, survey questionnaire).

<sup>52</sup> 5, survey questionnaire.

Reid's definition of the Coming Home experience corresponds closely with most survey respondents' self-described spiritual evolution and/or religious itineraries, regardless of category. Their personal narratives are so rich and varied that I decided to include them here in their entirety.

Je suis passé [sic] du Catholicisme à la Wicca simplement car je suis persuadé [sic] d'avoir toujours pratiqué cette forme de philosophie depuis toujours et qu'elle répond mieux à mes besoins.<sup>53</sup>

Mon cheminement peut être qualifié de trajet 'naturel' sans 'coup de foudre' religieux à proprement parler. Étant été [sic] élevée dans une famille catholique non pratiquante j'ai pu alors avoir accès à l'étude de d'autres traditions religieuses (incluant la tradition occulte occidentale) grâce à la lecture de livres en bibliothèque. Suite à mon arrivée à Montréal, j'ai poursuivi cette démarche en fréquentant les librairies de la métropole, particulièrement Métamorphose sur la rue du Parc. Ce n'est que beaucoup plus tard que je me suis interrogée sur mes convictions religieuses pour finalement constater que j'étais devenue païenne sans le savoir.<sup>54</sup>

J'ai toujours contesté la religion des livres (catholiques et autres) qui étaient selon toute évidence écrite par des hommes. J'ai recherché des points communs. J'ai rencontré des magiciens cérémoniels et j'ai commencé à travailler intérieurement. Les synchronicités se sont alors précipitées [sic] dans ma vie: invitation à un groupe Wicca de la région, initiation et un sentiment de "retour chez soi" très fort. Je me trouve à ma place.<sup>55</sup>

Ayant fréquenté des écoles privées, j'ai reçu une éducation catholique encadrée: prières, messes et sacrements réguliers en plus des cours de cathéchèse. Assez jeune, j'ai eu le souci de développer une relation avec le Divin par la prière. Je cherchais à faire plus pour me rapprocher de « Dieu », mais je ne savais pas comment et je sentais que certains dogmes n'allaient pas dans le même sens que mes convictions personnelles. Je portais une grande attention à la cathéchèse (intérêt qui s'est plus tard développé en passion pour les mythes) et je prenais au sérieux les confessions ou sacrements auxquels je participais. Étant enfant unique et mes parents ayant une propriété à la campagne, j'ai passé de nombreuses heures seule dans la forêt, où je me suis construit un monde imaginaire. Je pense sincèrement que cela a participé à ma quête spirituelle et à mon appartenance païenne. Vers l'âge de 12 ans, j'ai été initiée brièvement au tarot par mon père. Son propre père était fort versé dans l'ésotérisme et bien que je ne l'ai jamais connu, j'ai toujours eu une fascination pour l'homme et ses mystérieuses pratiques. C'est probablement à partir de ce moment que j'ai introduit dans mon système de croyances que le subtil existait. C'est à 18 ans que je suis tombée sur mon premier livre de « Wicca 101 », qui s'est avéré une véritable révélation. A la même époque, j'étudiais en histoire de l'art au cégep où j'ai été initiée à la mythologie, dont la mythologie nordique, ce qui fut une deuxième révélation. A partir de ces deux trouvailles, tout s'est enclenché très rapidement.<sup>56</sup>

J'ai retrouvé le sens du sacré dans mes lectures et ma pratique des traditions chamaniste et bouddhiste tibétaine dès la fin de mon adolescence. Par la suite, je me suis intéressé à la magie en général durant quelques années avant de découvrir le paganisme qui rejoint autant mes croyances spirituelles que mes valeurs sociales.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> A, survey questionnaire.

<sup>54</sup> B, survey questionnaire.

<sup>55</sup> C, survey questionnaire.

<sup>56</sup> E, survey questionnaire.

<sup>57</sup> Q, survey questionnaire.

It all started after my father's death. I was searching for answers as to why I still felt his presence even though he was gone. I started searching Witchcraft and found Crescent Moon School. There I learned about Wicca. In my personal quest I came across the art of Witchcraft especially Green Witchcraft. This led me to study a bit of Shamanism. Now I study and practice the way of the Goddess through the Fellowship of Isis. I also study Celtic Shamanic Witchcraft.<sup>58</sup>

I detached myself from Roman Catholics as a teenager because I felt estranged with it and I felt other things. I was always interested [sic] in occultism and reading a lot about it and I had started feeling more in touch with the First Nations idealism that resonated [sic] a lot more with me until I met a friend who was Wiccan and it did feel like "coming home".<sup>59</sup>

Atheism, than exploring an old interest in the occult and pagan[ism].<sup>60</sup>

Started off curious about tarot [sic]. Then I started reading about the craft which made so much more sense [sic] to me than what I was told in church. From then, I have found my own beliefs that are very eclectic.<sup>61</sup>

Born-again Christian [to] Hindu – Wiccan.<sup>62</sup>

Baptised and confirmed as a Roman Catholic and became Pagan years later.<sup>63</sup>

I started out with an interest in dragon magic. This lasted about a year. I was lead from the start to believe in spirits / souls, and to base my practice on personal experience, not books or hearsay. I have always rejected more dogma / hearsay / protocol-based paths such as Wicca, and all things for which I do not see a purpose.<sup>64</sup>

Raised Greek Orthodox 2) at 21 worked at a Pagan store for 10 years 3) interacted with other Pagans through the store.<sup>65</sup>

Roman Catholic -> Double Baptism (one by parents because they were concerned that I'd die, second by priest). Wanted to be a priest as a young teen, lost virginity + faith; God-less for 4 years of severe depression; found Wicca / Neo-Paganism at the bottom of spiritual / psychological well.<sup>66</sup>

After my first exposure to paganism, I started reading all the "standard" books, mostly about Wicca, but then as I got more involved in Reclaiming and Eco-Feminist-based spirituality, I started to leave the more formal structures and concepts behind. Now, pagan spirituality to me is all about interconnectedness and relationships between bodies, between the body and the natural world, between different kinds of sentience.<sup>67</sup>

Started to study philosophy and Hinduism at age 16. At age 19 moved into Hare Krishna Ashrama until age 26. Studied and practiced Witchcraft until age 33. Officially became Wiccan at age 33. Studied with Reclaiming Tradition, Rowan Tree Church, joined 2 Eclectic Wiccan covens from 1992-1998, 1993-2002, and a Pagan Eclectic Circle from 2003-2005, and was involved in

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<sup>58</sup> F, survey questionnaire.

<sup>59</sup> G, survey questionnaire.

<sup>60</sup> H, survey questionnaire.

<sup>61</sup> I, survey questionnaire.

<sup>62</sup> N, survey questionnaire.

<sup>63</sup> P, survey questionnaire.

<sup>64</sup> K, survey questionnaire.

<sup>65</sup> L, survey questionnaire.

<sup>66</sup> M, survey questionnaire.

<sup>67</sup> I, survey questionnaire.

Montreal Pagan community. Started Young Pagan's Circle in 2000 which is still running. Started my own Tradition in 2006. Currently studying Shamanism with Foundation for Shamanic studies from 2003 until present day. Eight months study with Society for Celtic Shamanism, Faery Shaman program. One year study with Edwardian tradition (French Coven) Circle of High Oaks (a hived off coven from Silver Wheel). Will receive 1st degree initiation in this tradition in August 2007. Teaching to the community through Wiccan Sacred Circle for three years. Web site one year, [www.wiccansacredcircle.com](http://www.wiccansacredcircle.com)<sup>68</sup>

I was exposed to Hinduism as a child through my grandmother who lived in India. As a teenager I was involved in earth activism and explored earth-centred spirituality and to a small extent Reclaiming witchcraft. In my early 20s I explored deep ecology and was exposed to traditional Wicca and 1734 tradition Wicca. I practiced an earth-centred, non-denominational, mainly animistic, largely unceremonial pagan practice with Wiccan influence until my early 30s, when I started to incorporate more Reclaiming and Feri elements into my practice. I also explored Harner shamanism in my early 30s.<sup>69</sup>

Childhood fascination with mythology... brief interlude with fundamentalist Christian[ity] ... Frosts' Wicca ... Saxon Wicca ... Asatru ... Skertru.<sup>70</sup>

Protestantism; Golden Dawn (still active); Wicca (active).<sup>71</sup>

I was raised Roman Catholic with strong Pagan over tones. Basically my mother sent me to church seeing that it would be a good base to start with and my whole family was Roman Catholic. When I was 13 I official told my mother that I was pagan and she told me she already knew and was proud of me. She basically wanted me to find my own path on my own.<sup>72</sup>

Melting pot. Life is a learning process.<sup>73</sup>

Found myself dissatisfied w/ families [sic] tradition. Easter / Christmas Christians. Had an interest in other pathway and started looking elsewhere. Found Wicca. Move back & forth between practicing and philosophy.<sup>74</sup>

@ 14 was directed (by a teacher who noted my different spiritual perception) to look into my roots or women's spirituality; @ 17 was dedicated; @ 29 joined a coven.<sup>75</sup>

I was raised Catholic until the age of 12, when my mom grew frustrated with the Catholic church, and they decided to go to the United Church. At the age of 16 I discovered Paganism and abandoned Xianity.<sup>76</sup>

Baptist; Buddhism; (briefly – Trinity United Church); Buddhism; Nature-oriented; Paganism.<sup>77</sup>

Out of my parents Agnostic / Atheistic beliefs I came to Paganism.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> 2, survey questionnaire.

<sup>69</sup> 3, survey questionnaire.

<sup>70</sup> 4, survey questionnaire.

<sup>71</sup> 5, survey questionnaire.

<sup>72</sup> 6, survey questionnaire.

<sup>73</sup> 8, survey questionnaire.

<sup>74</sup> 9, survey questionnaire.

<sup>75</sup> 10, survey questionnaire.

<sup>76</sup> 11, survey questionnaire.

<sup>77</sup> 13, survey questionnaire.

<sup>78</sup> 14, survey questionnaire.

Always had a spiritual inclination; had Bat Mitzvah & learned more about Judiasm [sic]; had Pagan friends, tried Paganism; discovered ceremonial [sic] magick & realized it held the best of Paganism & Judaism (Kabbalah).<sup>79</sup>

Catholic + Pagan.<sup>80</sup>

It was a process that developed due to strong inclination to do what is right, and strong feeling of honor.<sup>81</sup>

I was curious.<sup>82</sup>

I was raised Christian, but never felt a strong connection to the ideas. I became curious and through a friend was introduced to Goddess worship which I felt more at home in. Recently I have moved towards Odinism, and find it fits well with who I am.<sup>83</sup>

Roman Catholic – raised + bred until age of [approx.] 30 years. Spiritual experience led me to learn more of other religions (Buddhism, Taoism, Hinduism and pagans). Pagan [approx.] 7 yrs ago -> 5 yrs ago Wicca.<sup>84</sup>

When asked to rate their level of faith or intellectual involvement prior to becoming Pagans (see Table 16), and their previous levels of religious practice (see Table 17), survey respondents answered in ways that demonstrate minimal patterns of difference between categories. As shown in Table 16, none of the six Francophone Québécois(es) claim to have been devout believers in their previous religious affiliation, in this case Roman Catholicism. **F** and **N** are the only Other Francophones who chose this answer, while only one Canadian Anglophone (**21**), and the sole Foreigner Allophone (**M**) did the same (**M** also answered that he was a partial believer in his previous religious affiliation). **F** still believes in her previous religious affiliation, as do **Q**, a Francophone Québécois, and **8** and **12**, both Canadian Anglophones.

Thirteen respondents in six categories answered that they used to be partial believers in their previous religious affiliation, while seven responded that they were not

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<sup>79</sup> **15**, survey questionnaire.

<sup>80</sup> **16**, survey questionnaire.

<sup>81</sup> **18**, survey questionnaire.

<sup>82</sup> **19**, survey questionnaire.

<sup>83</sup> **20**, survey questionnaire.

<sup>84</sup> **21**, survey questionnaire.

believers. The vast majority among them belong to the Canadian Anglophone category. Another seven respondents in five categories answered that their own experiences simply did not fit with the tenets of their previous religious traditions. Eight respondents in five categories gave alternative answers to the ones that were featured in the survey questionnaire (see Table 16).

**Table 16 - Survey respondents' level of faith and/or intellectual religious involvement before becoming a Pagan, by category**

	Francophones Québécois(es)	Other Francophones	Canadian Bilingual	Foreigner Bilingual / Allophone	Canadian Allophone	Canadian Anglophone	Foreigner Anglophone
Was devout believer		2 (F, N)		1 (M)		1 (21)	
Was partial believer	3 (B, D, E)	1 (I)	1 (J)	1 (M)		6 (6, 7, 11, 13 – Buddhism, 15, 16)	1 (4)
Was not a believer		1 (H)				5 (9, 14, 17, 19, 20)	1 (3)
Is still a believer <sup>85</sup>	1 (Q)	1 (F)				2 (8, 12)	
Own experience did not fit with previous religion	2 (A, C)	1 (G)			1 (L)	2 (10, 11)	2 (3, 4)
Other <sup>86</sup>	1 (D)		1 (P)	1 (K)		3 (8, 14, 18)	3 (1, 2, 5)

<sup>85</sup> Q added the following comment to his answer: “Je crois que les fondements de toutes les religion[s] sont des systèmes véritables mais différents qui peuvent conduire vers les mystères et l'éveil spirituel”

<sup>86</sup> Some survey respondents who chose this option added the following comments:

**D:** Je crois qu'il y a du bon dans toutes les religions;

**P:** Was devout believer/practitioner when I was younger but left that behind as I got older;

**K:** not religious;

**1:** I was agnostic before; I still feel a certain amount of agnosticism [sic] but one that allows for more possibilities and experiences;

**2:** I believed in the Roman Catholic faith when I was a child because my Mother forced me too. Stopped being Catholic when I left home at age 16. When I joined the Hare Krishna it was to learn about the Goddess and search for a new religion that fit with me;

**5:** devout until age 14; then agnostic until 19 > Golden Dawn;

**8:** The religion hasn't changed, the separation of my parent's perspectives and traditions is what has occurred;

**14:** Agnostic, yes; but Atheist, never;

**18:** I find that I have become a culmination of all my experiences.

**Table 17 - Survey respondents' previous religious practice before becoming a Pagan, by category**

	Francophones Québécois(es)	Other Francophones	Canadian Bilingual	Foreigner Bilingual / Allophone	Canadian Allophone	Canadian Anglophone	Foreigner Anglophone
Used to practice regularly	1 (E)	2 (I – was an altar child; N)	1 (J)	1 (M)		3 (6, 11, 21)	1 (2)
Used to practice occasionally	4 (A, C, D, Q)	1 (F)		1 (M)		5 (7, 8, 9, 12, 16)	1 (4)
Seldom practiced	1 (B)	2 (G, H)			1 (L)	2 (18, 20)	
Never practiced	1 (D)					2 (17, 19)	1 (3)
Was not religious				1 (K)		2 (8, 10)	1 (1)
Still practices religion						1 (8)	
Managed own practice	1 (D)					1 (14)	
Other <sup>87</sup>			1 (P)			4 (8, 11, 13, 15)	1 (5)

Table 17 indicates that survey respondents' previous levels of faith or intellectual involvement do not necessarily correspond with their actual previous religious practice. Less than half of the survey respondents gave entirely consistent responses with regard to their levels of faith and/or intellectual involvement in their previous religious affiliations, and with their previous religious practice. For example, nine respondents in six categories said they used to practice their previous religion regularly. Among these, only three had been devout believers in their previous religious affiliation (N, M and 21; see Tables 16 and 17). M, who according to Table 16 claimed to have been both a devout believer and a partial believer of Roman Catholicism, answered that he used to both practice his religion regularly and occasionally. K, who was given a non-religious upbringing, gave the same

<sup>87</sup> Survey respondents who chose this option added the following comments:

P: see above.

5: practiced regularly until 14.

8: The sect of Hinduism I follow only really practices internally, with particular traditions on Holidays;

11: I was forced to attend Church until the age of 20, when I left home;

13: Buddhism – I held certain beliefs about life + spirituality based around Buddhist beliefs but was not strictly conformist and attended no services;

15: holidays & events plus irregular Saturday services, my understanding of my religion is now different & more personal.

answer in terms of previous religious practice, as did 1. Many respondents in the Canadian Allophone, Canadian Anglophone and Foreigner Anglophone categories, who indicated that they were partial believers or non-believers in their previous religious affiliations, or that their experiences did not fit with their previous religion, answered that they used to practice their religion either seldom or occasionally (see Tables 16 and 17).

The Francophone Québécois(es), the Other Francophones and the Canadian Bilingual respondents are among the least consistent with regards to corresponding levels of faith in and practice of their previous religion. In other words, they are the most likely to have practiced their previous religion regularly or occasionally without necessarily believing in the tenets of their previous faith. The only factors these respondents have in common is that they were heavily exposed to Francophone Québécois culture, and most notably, that most of them were raised Roman Catholic. As previously discussed, a high number of Québécois and other French Canadians acquire a cultural Roman Catholic identity by virtue of the historical association between Roman Catholicism and French culture in Canada. However, as will be discussed further in Chapter 4, as a result of the 1960s Quiet Revolution in Quebec, many Québécois born after 1960 have been strongly discouraged by their baby-boomer parents and by Quebec secular mainstream culture from associating with Roman Catholic cultural and religious institutions.

Of all survey respondents, 8, a Canadian Anglophone, appears to be the most inconsistent in terms of his faith and intellectual involvement with and practice of his previous religion. However, as he explains it, “the religion hasn’t changed, the separation of my parent’s perspectives and traditions is what has occurred”<sup>88</sup>. Also, “The sect of Hinduism I follow only really practices internally, with particular traditions on

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<sup>88</sup> 8, survey questionnaire.

Holidays”<sup>89</sup>. Like many survey respondents, **8** believes there is a degree of continuity between his previous religious affiliations and his Pagan beliefs.

When asked whether they still believed in their previous religious affiliations after becoming Pagans, survey respondents answered in ways that show marked patterns of difference between ethno-linguistic categories. As shown in table 18, all Francophone Québécois(es), one Other Francophone (**F**), one Canadian Bilingual (**P**) and six of the Canadian Anglophones still believe in the tenets of their previous religious affiliations.

**Table 18 – Whether survey respondents still believe in previous religious affiliations after becoming Pagans, by category**

	Francophones Québécois(es)	Other Francophones	Canadian Bilingual	Foreigner Bilingual / Allophone	Canadian Allophone	Canadian Anglophone	Foreigner Anglophone
Yes	<b>6</b> (A – E, Q)	<b>1</b> (F)	<b>1</b> (P)			<b>6</b> (8, 12, 14, 15, 18; somewhat 13)	
No		<b>4</b> (G, H, I, N)	<b>1</b> (J)	<b>1</b> (M)	<b>1</b> (L)	<b>10</b> (6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 16, 19, 20, 21, mostly not 17)	<b>3</b> (3, 4, 5)

It is unclear at this point why the majority of Other Francophones answered in the negative while the totality of Francophone Québécois(es) said otherwise.

When asked how their previous religious affiliations fit within their current Pagan beliefs and practices, respondents answered in ways that demonstrate a high level of tolerance and acceptance of the validity of other religious traditions, which, as discussed in Chapter 1, is one of the central features of Paganism:

Dieu pour moi existe toujours les prières sont toujours bonne & efficace [sic]. Ce sont les façon [sic] de pratiqué [sic] les Rituel [sic] qui me concernent mieux.<sup>90</sup>

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> A, survey questionnaire.

J'ai conservé quelques croyances issues du Catholicisme dont la croyance en certaines vertus spirituelles des saints, l'angéologie. Cependant, je crois à la divinité du Christ puisqu'il possède la même essence divine partagée par d'autres représentations du Divin. Ex : Osiris-Cernunos-Shiva etc., en somme le Christ est un aspect de la totalité de la nature Divine. Enfin dans un même ordre d'idées la Vierge Marie est selon moi la représentation de la Déesse.<sup>91</sup>

Je pense que toutes les religions ont une base de vérité. C'est certain que le pape ne serait pas d'accord avec moi mais je ne crois pas à l'église plutôt à une divinité qui peut se manifester en plusieurs dieux et déesses incluant le dieu des chrétiens. Les saints sont les anciens dieux et déesses dans la plupart des cas. Ce n'est qu'une simple façon d'exprimer la même vérité même si les prêtres catholiques ne sont pas nécessairement en accord avec ce que je dis. Je ne crois pas au dogme je pense que la vraie religion se trouve en nous.<sup>92</sup>

Au risque de me répéter, je crois qu'il y a du bon dans tout. L'amour est la plus grande loi de toutes les religions, je crois que c'est la clé de toutes les croyances.<sup>93</sup>

Je n'intègre pas les dogmes chrétiens dans ma spiritualité païenne, mais je ne rejette pas les concepts de Dieu, Jésus, Marie, etc. Je ne suis pas en opposition avec le catholicisme.<sup>94</sup>

Je crois en les vérités exprimées dans le christianisme et au prophète qui ont donné les écrits et la gnose de cette tradition mais cette tradition ne me parle pas dans les symboles et la pratique et surtout les valeurs véhiculées par ses institutions.<sup>95</sup>

I believe that all faith come from the one source. That source is like a diamond. It may have many facets but it is still one diamond. We may have many religions and beliefs in this world but it all come[s] from the same well.<sup>96</sup>

I've learned to separate faith from practice and the teachings of Christianity still hold value even if the teachings of the Church does [sic] not. God names, Archangels, and angelic choirs factor into my practice.<sup>97</sup>

I believe all versions of deity are from one omnipresent being. Therefor[e] Catholicism is not wrong, just a different version of beliefs. The teachings are good, the people are (sometimes) bad.<sup>98</sup>

The idea of karma and multiple lifetimes / incarnations fits in well with my pagan beliefs and I believe there is much wisdom in the Buddhist path. I hold no Christian beliefs.<sup>99</sup>

Agnostic: one should always be exploring if seeking out the divine with an open mind.<sup>100</sup>

I believe in most of the esoteric beliefs of Judaism (i.e. Kabbalistic) but not necessarily [sic] the literal interpretations. I also believe that most Pagan pantheons can be understood from this point of view.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> B, survey questionnaire.

<sup>92</sup> C, survey questionnaire.

<sup>93</sup> D, survey questionnaire.

<sup>94</sup> E, survey questionnaire.

<sup>95</sup> Q, survey questionnaire.

<sup>96</sup> F, survey questionnaire.

<sup>97</sup> P, survey questionnaire.

<sup>98</sup> 12, survey questionnaire.

<sup>99</sup> 13, survey questionnaire.

<sup>100</sup> 14, survey questionnaire.

<sup>101</sup> 15, survey questionnaire.

My previous affiliations built in me a moral compass which I take with me into Paganism.<sup>102</sup>

Some respondents who had answered the question in the negative offered their own explanations:

I choose not to follow the Roman Catholic spiritual model, but I believe it is as valid a spirituality as any other. I simply choose not to use it as a form of my spiritual expression.<sup>103</sup>

I don't believe in Christianity, but I do believe in many aspects of Hinduism that I learned in the Hare Krishna temple where I received 2nd degree Brahmana initiation (priestess).<sup>104</sup>

The research data results discussed in sections 3.1.2 demonstrate minimal patterns of difference between categories in terms of survey respondents' current Pagan affiliations. Most survey respondents identify with Wicca, and many among them hold multiple Pagan affiliations. The most notable differences between categories include findings that Shamanism tends to be favoured by Francophones more so than Anglophones, and that none of the Francophones identify with the socially activist, eco-feminist Reclaiming tradition of Witchcraft. The latter is perhaps due to the fact that only two of Starhawk's many books have been translated into French<sup>105</sup>.

Similarly, the few patterns of difference apparent in section 3.1.3 indicate that differences between categories are due mostly to cultural differences between the survey respondents. For example, the Francophone Québécois(es), whom were mostly raised Roman Catholic, tend to be more likely to still believe in their previous religious affiliation, yet in many cases their previous religious involvement does not correspond with their level of belief or intellectual involvement with their previous religion.

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<sup>102</sup> 18, survey questionnaire.

<sup>103</sup> J, survey questionnaire.

<sup>104</sup> 2, survey questionnaire.

<sup>105</sup> According to Starhawk's website, her books *Dreaming the Dark: Magic, Sex and Politics* and *Webs of Power: Notes from the Global Uprising* have been translated into French (<http://www.starhawk.org/starhawk/bio.html>). At the date this research was completed (2008), the French versions of these books were not available in Canada.

Conversely, a high number of survey respondents in all but two categories reported having experienced a sense of “Coming Home” upon encountering Paganism. This occurred regardless of survey respondents’ religious backgrounds, or how their previous religious affiliations were determined. It is highly significant that this frequently reported experience appears to transcend linguistic and cultural barriers among Pagans in Montreal. As will be discussed further in Chapter 4, the most visible facet of the Montreal Pagan community is predominantly Anglophone, which means that Francophone Pagans must often compromise with the primacy of their language in order to access resources that enable them to better understand their religion<sup>106</sup>.

The notion that “coming home” may involve setting aside one’s language in order to experience that sense of all-encompassing *communitas* and belonging alluded to earlier raises a few questions as to what constitutes the “home” to which people refer when they find Paganism, and what people are willing to give up in order to come home. It also puts into question the validity of anthropological models that stipulate that culture is primarily determined by and transmitted through language. These issues and related aspects of the Montreal Pagan community will be discussed in greater depth in Chapters 4 and 5. This research now turns to a discussion on how survey respondents and interviewees have come into contact with Paganism in Montreal, and on the importance of external factors such as community, books and other printed sources, entertainment media and the Internet in many people’s discovery of and identification with Paganism.

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<sup>106</sup> See also Gagnon, 2003.

### **3.2 RESEARCH DATA RESULTS – PAGANISM AND COMMUNITY**

Table 19 indicates the time span in five-year intervals of how long survey respondents have known about the existence of other Pagans. As Reid observed, it is not unusual for people to have considered themselves Pagan or as having corresponding philosophical and spiritual inclinations long before they became exposed to other Pagans or to Paganism in general. The survey results confirm this: seven survey respondents have known about other Pagans for a shorter period of time than they have considered themselves Pagan (see also Table 11). This occurs predominantly within the Canadian Anglophone category (6, 8, 12, 18), followed by the Foreigner Anglophones (2, 4), and the Other Francophones (H). Conversely, a greater number of respondents have known about Paganism longer than they have self-identified as Pagans. This occurs in six categories, with a higher frequency among the Canadian Anglophones (7, 9, 13, 14, 17), followed by the Foreigner Anglophones (3, 5), the Allophone Canadian (L), a Canadian Bilingual (J), an Other Francophone (N), and a Francophone Québécoise (B). All other survey respondents have known about Paganism and other Pagans for roughly as long as they have considered themselves Pagan.

The observation that a greater number of Anglophones were exposed to Pagans and Paganism before identifying as such can be explained by the fact that, as English-speakers, they have greater access to the predominantly English-language Pagan literature and portrayals of Paganism in the popular media than their Francophone counterparts. In a similar vein, the lack of visibility of the Francophone component of the Montreal Pagan community at the time this research was completed could also explain

why fewer Francophone survey respondents had been exposed to other Pagans years prior to identifying with Paganism.

**Table 19 – Length of time survey respondents have been aware of the existence of other contemporary Pagans, by category**

	Francophones Québécois(es)	Other Francophones	Canadian Bilingual	Foreigner Bilingual / Allophone	Canadian Allophone	Canadian Anglophone	Foreigner Anglophone
Less than 1 year						1 (18)	
1-5 years	1 (Q)			1 (K)		5 (12, 15, 16, 19, 20)	1 (1)
6-10 years	1 (E)	3 (F, G, H)				3 (11, 13, 21)	
11-15 years	1 (A)	2 (I, N)	2 (J, P)	1 (M)	1 (L)	4 (6, 8, 9, 14)	2 (2, 4)
16-20 years						3 (7, 10, 17)	
21-25 years	2 (B, C)						1 (3)
31-35 years							1 (5)
Have always known about other Pagans	1 (D)						

**Table 20 – Length of time survey respondents have been aware of the existence of other Pagans in Montreal, by category**

	Francophones Québécois(es)	Other Francophones	Canadian Bilingual	Foreigner Bilingual / Allophone	Canadian Allophone	Canadian Anglophone	Foreigner Anglophone
Less than 1 year						2 (13, 18)	
1-5 years	1 (Q)	2 (H, I)		1 (K)		8 (9, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 19, 20)	1 (1)
6-10 years	1 (E)	3 (F, G, N)	1 (J)			1 (21)	
11-15 years	1 (A)		1 (P)	1 (M)	1 (L)	3 (6, 7, 17)	
16-20 years						2 (8, 10)	2 (2, 4)
21-25 years	2 (B, C)						1 (3)
31-35 years							1 (5)
Have always known about other Pagans in Montreal	1 (D)						

Table 20 demonstrates that there are definite patterns of difference between categories with regards to how long survey respondents have known about the existence of other Pagans in Montreal. All of the Francophone Québécois(es), two of the Other

Francophones (F, G), one Canadian Bilingual (P), the Foreigner Bilingual (K), the Foreigner Allophone (M), the Allophone Canadian (L), half of the Canadian Anglophones (6, 10, 12, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20) and three of the Foreigner Anglophones (1, 3, 5) have known about the existence of Pagans in Montreal for roughly as long as they have known about Pagans generally (see also Table 19). The data in Table 20 confirms Mireille Gagnon's observation that Montreal is the hub of Paganism in Quebec and its primary locus of contact for outsiders<sup>107</sup>. This observation applies especially to Francophone Pagans.

**Table 21 – Length of time survey respondents have been aware of the existence of fellow practitioners of specific Pagan path, by category**

	Francophones Québécois(es)	Other Francophones	Canadian Bilingual	Foreigner Bilingual / Allophone	Canadian Allophone	Canadian Anglophone	Foreigner Anglophone
Less than 1 year							
1-5 years		3 (G, I, N)		1 (K)		7 (11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 20, 21)	1 (1)
6-10 years	2 (E, Q)	2 (F, H)	1 (J)		1 (L)	2 (9, 10)	2 (3, 4)
11-15 years	1 (A)		1 (P)	1 (M)		4 (6, 7, 14, 17)	
16-20 years							1 (2)
21-25 years	1 (B)						
26-30 years	1 (C)						1 (5)
31-35 years							
36 years or more							
Have always known about fellow practitioners	1 (D)						
Doesn't know fellow practitioners						3 (8, 18, 19)	

Table 21 indicates the length of time in five-year intervals that survey respondents have known about other Pagans who practice their specific traditions or paths. Survey

<sup>107</sup> See Gagnon, 2003: 50.

results demonstrate that only slightly more than half of survey respondents in all categories have known about fellow practitioners for approximately as long as they have known about Pagans in Montreal (see also Table 20). There is not enough conclusive evidence to suggest that a definite relationship exists between survey respondents' ethno-linguistic category, their type of Pagan spirituality, and the length of time they have been exposed to fellow practitioners.

Although knowing fellow practitioners may be of marginal importance to survey respondents in terms of their Pagan identification, Tables 22 and 23 show that broad social networks are instrumental in most participants' discovery of Paganism. Indeed, the importance of friends and social networks in survey respondents' initial discovery of Paganism is second only to that of books and other printed media. Twenty-six survey respondents in all categories except Foreigner Bilingual<sup>108</sup> discovered Paganism through books; seven among these twenty-six also learned about Paganism through newsletters, magazines and other literature (see Table 22).

Twenty-one survey respondents in all but one category noted the importance of friends and social networks in their exposure to Paganism. On the other hand, only a very small proportion of Francophones claim to have learned about Paganism through people. Once again, this could be caused by the fact that the Francophone component of the Montreal Pagan community is at the present time less visible and accessible to outsiders than its Anglophone component. Remarkably, a slightly higher proportion of Francophones Québécois(es), Other Francophones, Canadian Bilingual respondents and Foreigner Anglophones got an early exposure to Paganism through the Internet than did the Canadian Anglophones (see Table 22). As previously noted, a growing number of

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<sup>108</sup> **K** discovered Paganism after “a chance encounter with a Pagan” (underlined in survey questionnaire).

French-language websites provide newcomers with a remedy to the lack of visibility of Francophone Pagan networks and community resources in Montreal and other parts of Quebec.

**Table 22 - How survey respondents became aware of the existence and nature of contemporary Paganism, by category**

	Francophones Québécois(es)	Other Francophones	Canadian Bilingual	Foreigner Bilingual / Allophone	Canadian Allophone	Canadian Anglophone	Foreigner Anglophone
Through books	5 (A, B, C, E, Q)	4 (F, H, I, N)	2 (J, P)	1 (M)	1 (L)	11 (6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 19, 20)	2 (2, 4)
Newsletters, magazines and other literature	3 (B, C, Q)			1 (M)		3 (6, 10, 13)	
Friends & social networks	1 (Q)	2 (F, I)	2 (J, P)	1 (M)	1 (L)	11 (6, 7, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20)	3 (1, 3, 4)
Internet	3 (D, E, Q)	3 (F, H, N)	2 (J, P)	1 (M)		9 (6, 7, 9, 11, 13, 14, 18, 20, 21)	1 (4)
Movies / TV with Pagan characters					1 (L)	2 (9, 19)	
Nonfiction TV, video documentaries		1 (H)			1 (L)	1 (18)	
Coincidence / serendipity	2 (B, D)	4 (G, H, I, N)		2 (K, M)		4 (6, 12, 14, 16)	3 (3, 4, 5)
Other <sup>109</sup>	1 (D)				1 (L)	5 (6, 8, 10, 15, 21)	

Fifteen survey respondents in six categories claimed that coincidence and/or serendipity played a significant role in their discovery of Paganism. This is congruent with the widespread Pagan belief that if a person is meant to become a Pagan, fortuitous

<sup>109</sup> Survey respondents who selected this option added the following comments:

**D:** en prenant des cours ou en lisant des livres, je me suis rendu compte que j'avais toujours su.

**L:** Pagan store that I worked at;

**6:** My mother would often take me to Mélange Magique;

**8:** I am still becoming aware;

**10:** Courses @ CEGEP;

**15:** Mélange Magique (occult bookstore);

**21:** Internet search led to Mélange Magique which led to workshops advertised there.

events will occur to point the individual towards their path. In addition to a non-dogmatic ethos and the belief in individual freedom and agency in interacting with the Divine, belief in fate or that “everything happens for a reason” is a primary reason why Pagans do not engage in proselytizing<sup>110</sup>. For reasons that are still unclear, a higher proportion of Other Francophones and Foreigner Anglophones selected this option in the survey questionnaire than other categories of respondents (see Table 22).

On a related note, seven respondents in three categories claimed that other factors have led them to find out about Paganism than the ones listed in the questionnaire. Five of these respondents (L, 6, 10, 15, 21) indicated these factors to be some kind of chance encounter or random occurrences. Four mentioned finding a Pagan store (6, 15 and 21 mentioned *Le Mélange Magique* specifically; see Table 22) as a significant event in their discovery of Paganism. Three respondents in two categories answered that they first became aware of Paganism through films and television programs with strong Pagan content; one among them is the Canadian Allophone (L), and two are Canadian Anglophones (9, 19). L also indicated that he learned about Paganism through nonfiction television shows and documentaries, as did one Canadian Anglophone (18) and one Other Francophone (H).

When asked to list which books, movies, Internet websites and other available resources have led them to find out about the existence of Paganism, only three survey respondents mentioned French-language sources. Two among them are Francophone Québécois(es) (E, Q) and one is an Other Francophone (F). E is the only one who mentioned a French-language book (Eric Pier Sperandio’s *La magie blanche*) as a

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<sup>110</sup> This aspect of Paganism is especially evident in interview participants’ responses when asked if they wished to have their values and ways of thinking transmitted to others (see Chapter 5).

significant catalyst in her discovery of Paganism. **Q** listed a French-language website (*Le grimoire de la lune*<sup>111</sup>), and both he and **F** mentioned the Montreal-based Francophone occult store *Charme et sortilège*.

All other books, media and resources mentioned by survey respondents are implicitly aimed at English-speakers. This is the case even with the remaining selections mentioned by the Francophone Québécois(es) and the Other Francophones. These include books by Scott Cunningham, who was especially popular among Canadian-born survey respondents (**B, E, Q, F, N, 10, 11, 12**). Incidentally, Cunningham is one of the very few widely read Pagan authors whose books have been translated into French. This explains why he is most popular among the Francophone Québécois(es) and the Other Francophone survey respondents.

The two second-most popular authors mentioned by survey respondents in multiple categories are Silver RavenWolf (**G, H, N, 11, 13**), who wrote such books for beginners as *To Ride a Silver Broomstick* and the previously mentioned *Teen Witch*, and Margot Adler (**B, N, 4, 14, 17**), author of the groundbreaking study *Drawing Down the Moon*. Other frequently mentioned writers include Stewart Farrar and Janet Farrar (**B, F, 4, 5**), Vivianne Crowley (**F, 13**), Kerr Cuhulain<sup>112</sup>, author of *The Law Enforcement Guide to Wicca* (**F, 10**), Amber K (**Q, F**), Sybil Leek, who was most popular among older Foreigner Anglophones (**2, 5**), and the late Canadian author Robin Skelton (**P, 10**). Survey respondents also listed other printed sources such as magazines and newsletters:

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<sup>111</sup> **Q** did not list the web address for this source. A Google search revealed several possibilities for finding this website, including <http://grimoiredelalune.centerblog.net/> and <http://membres.lycos.fr/grimoiredelalune/index.html>. See also <http://stella-luna-terra.net/>

<sup>112</sup> Charles Ennis (a.k.a. Kerr Cuhulain) is a Canadian police officer who has written books about Wicca for law enforcement officers as well as for a more general Pagan audience.

**B** mentioned *Harvest, Fireheart, and Green Egg*<sup>113</sup>. **B** and **C** both listed *Circle*<sup>114</sup>, **10** included *Dragon's Breath*, and **Q** added the Montreal Pagan newsletter *WynterGreene*.

Only one survey respondent, a Francophone Québécoise (**A**), mentioned having been introduced to Paganism by reading Gerald Gardner's works, but she did not mention which particular titles led to her discovery of the religious movement. Although Gardner's written works triggered the contemporary Pagan revival in Britain and North America in the latter half of the twentieth century, his books were mostly out of print at the time of this research, and thus very difficult to obtain through major distributors. Curiously, only two Francophone Québécois(es) mentioned Starhawk's hugely popular books as catalysts for their discovery of Paganism (**B, Q**). This is surprising because unlike Gardner's books, Starhawk's writings are widely available in North American bookstores and through online distributors.

Another unexpected finding is that only two survey respondents mentioned movies or other popular entertainment media as having provided them with their first exposure to Paganism. **L** mentioned the 1996 movie *The Craft*<sup>115</sup>, and **12** listed *Practical Magic*<sup>116</sup>. Both movies were successful releases in the late 1990s, at a time when popular media portrayal of Pagans and Witches increased dramatically in North America. It is especially surprising that so few respondents mentioned these movies, since the majority of Pagans I have encountered in Montreal and in other cities admit to having seen either or both movies at least once<sup>117</sup>.

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<sup>113</sup> See <http://www.greeneggzine.com/>

<sup>114</sup> See <http://www.circlesanctuary.org/circle/>

<sup>115</sup> *The Craft*. 1996. Columbia Pictures. Directed by Andrew Fleming.

<sup>116</sup> *Practical Magic*. 1998. Warner Bros. Pictures. Directed by Griffin Dunne.

<sup>117</sup> Many Pagans who were long-established practitioners in the late 1990s have often complained to me about how these films had raised the mainstream profile of Witchcraft and Paganism by presenting an unrealistic, "Hollywood" image of practitioners. Also, I've often heard many people complain that the

Other factors mentioned by survey respondents as catalysts in their discovery of Paganism include Montreal-based community resources such as the store *Le Mélange Magique* (F, 12, 21), Scarlet’s Crescent Moon School (F, 21), the Montreal Pagan Resource Centre (12), and the Francophone public coven Yggdrasil (F), whose members have created a number of websites aimed at a French-speaking audience since 2003 (see Chapter 2). Another notable website mentioned by survey respondents is WitchVox (H, 7), a wide-encompassing networking resource with an international audience<sup>118</sup>.

**Table 23 - How survey respondents became aware of the existence of other Pagans in the Montreal area, by category**

	Francophones Québécois(es)	Other Francophones	Canadian Bilingual	Foreigner Bilingual / Allophone	Canadian Allophone	Canadian Anglophone	Foreigner Anglophone
Mention in books, newsletters, magazines and other literature				1 (M)		2 (9, 19)	1 (3)
Friends & social networks <sup>119</sup>	4 (A, C, E, Q)	4 (F, G, H, I)	2 (J, P)	2 (K, M)	1 (L)	11 (7, 8, 9, 11, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21)	2 (3, 4)
Internet <sup>120</sup>	2 (D, Q)	1 (I)	1 (J)	1 (M)		5 (6, 11, 13, 14, 19)	2 (1, 3)
Coincidence / serendipity	2 (B, D)	1 (N)				3 (8, 12, 14)	1 (5)
Other			1 (P)		1 (L)	4 (10, 12, 15, 21)	2 (2,3)

When asked to list the means through which they found out about Paganism in Montreal, survey respondents in all categories answered almost unanimously that they

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popularity of the movie *The Craft* in particular had attracted a vast number of teenage girls to the subculture in the 1990s, and that many of these young girls had only been interested in replicating what they had seen in the movie instead of undertaking serious study of the religion. Ironically, at the time this film was one of the few Hollywood productions to portray Witches as something other than devil-worshipping deviants.

<sup>118</sup> <http://www.witchvox.com>

<sup>119</sup> **K** underlined the selection “University-based Pagan associations” in the survey questionnaire.

<sup>120</sup> **I** mentioned the social networking site “Facebook” in the survey questionnaire.

learned about the local Pagan community through friends and social networks. Internet sources were also significant, as was coincidence and/or serendipity (see Table 23).

Eight survey respondents in the Canadian Bilingual (P), Canadian Allophone (L), Canadian Anglophone (10, 12, 15, 21) and Foreigner Anglophone (2, 3) categories noted other means of discovering Paganism in Montreal. These include a “common sense assumption” that Pagans exist in Montreal<sup>121</sup> (P), seeking them out upon moving to the city (11), working at a local Pagan store (L), finding *Le Mélange Magique* (2, 3, 15), volunteering at the Montreal Pagan Resource Centre (12), taking a class at Crescent Moon School then joining a coven (21), and meeting a Pagan in a CEGEP course on Magic and Religion (10).

Friends and social networks are of crucial importance to the majority of survey respondents in terms of finding and maintaining their Pagan belief and practice. As shown in Table 24, twenty-six survey respondents in six categories noted the importance of other Pagans in maintaining their own Pagan affiliations. As K put it, “I had complete trust in the person who introduced me to Paganism and without this I would not have become Pagan or would have given up”<sup>122</sup>. It is especially striking that all but one of the Canadian Anglophones selected this option in the survey questionnaire, while only half of the Francophone Québécois(es) and three out of five Other Francophones chose this answer. Similarly, a high number of Canadian Anglophones noted the importance of the Pagan community in Montreal in the maintenance of their Pagan belief and practice, while only one Francophone Québécoise (E), one Other Francophone (I), one Canadian Bilingual (J) and two Foreigner Anglophones (2, 4) answered the same.

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<sup>121</sup> P, survey questionnaire.

<sup>122</sup> K, survey questionnaire.

On a related note, five Canadian Anglophones (8, 10, 11, 13, 21) and one Canadian Bilingual (J) mentioned the importance of Pagan communities in other cities and provinces; these include Pagan communities in Ottawa (J, 8), Toronto (J, 21), Ontario and parts of the USA (10), New Brunswick (11), and Prince Edward Island (13).

**Table 24 - What has influenced survey respondents most in finding and maintaining current Pagan belief and practice, by category**

	Francophones Québécois(es)	Other Francophones	Canadian Bilingual	Foreigner Bilingual / Allophone	Canadian Allophone	Canadian Anglophone	Foreigner Anglophone
Books, newsletters, magazines and other literature	3 (A, B, E)	2 (I, N)	2 (J, P)			8 (6, 7, 9, 10, 13, 14, 17, 21)	2 (2, 3)
Films / TV with Pagan content	2 (B, Q)	1 (I)					
Internet websites / forum with Pagan content	2 (E, Q)	2 (I, N)				4 (7, 11, 14, 20)	1 (3)
Pagan friends & acquaintances	3 (A, E, Q)	3 (G, H, I)	2 (J, P)	1 (K)		15 (6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21)	2 (3, 4)
Supportive friends & acquaintances	2 (D, Q)	1 (H)				5 (6, 8, 10, 12, 14)	2 (2, 3)
Pagan family members	1 (D)	1 (N)					1 (3)
Supportive family members	1 (D)	1 (I)				2 (8, 14)	
The local Pagan community in Montreal	1 (E)	1 (I)	1 (J)			11 (7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 19, 21)	2 (2, 4)
Pagan community in another city			1 (J)			5 (8, 10, 11, 13, 21)	
Sense of calling from the Gods...	3 (B, E, Q)	2 (F, G)		1 (M)		8 (7, 8, 10, 14, 17, 18, 20, 21)	2 (2, 4)
Other factors	3 (B, C, E)	1 (H)		1 (M)	1 (L)	4 (11, 13, 15, 16)	3 (1, 3, 5)

Once again, these findings suggest that Pagan social networks are either less important to Francophone Pagans than they are to Anglophones, or, as interview

participant Brigid suggested<sup>123</sup>, Francophone Pagan resources and networks are still as yet underdeveloped when compared to those of the Anglophone Pagan community.

Seventeen survey respondents in five categories highlighted the significance of books, magazines and newsletters in maintaining their Pagan belief and practice. The printed material mentioned as most inspiring to survey respondents includes some sources that had been catalysts in their discovery of Paganism. These include books by Scott Cunningham and Silver RavenWolf (A), magazines such as *Fireheart* (B), *Circle* (B), and the Montreal-based newsletter *WynterGreene* (N, J, 3, 21). Other significant publications include magazines such as *New Witch*<sup>124</sup> (N), *PanGaia*<sup>125</sup> (N, 3, 14), *Yoga Journal*<sup>126</sup> (N), and *Witch Eye*<sup>127</sup> (3). Some survey respondents claimed to read books about Paganism almost exclusively:

Je lis presque exclusivement du matériel littéraire païen/spirituel.<sup>128</sup>

Continually I am buying more books and most of the books I read are about Paganism<sup>129</sup>

Survey respondents also highlighted the importance of academic literature on Paganism, and on their specific paths in particular, as contributing to the maintenance of their Pagan belief and practice:

[A]ny books which build upon my knowledge of ceremonial magick.<sup>130</sup>

Many Pagan books with a strong 'mystery' or 'earth' element are influential to me and I am constantly discovering new ones. Academic and scholarly texts are particularly appealing.<sup>131</sup>

Mostly books on the history of Paganism.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> Brigid, interview 2007-08-11.

<sup>124</sup> See <http://www.newwitch.com/>

<sup>125</sup> See <http://www.pangaia.com/>

<sup>126</sup> See <http://www.yogajournal.com/>. This publication is not necessarily a Pagan-themed magazine.

<sup>127</sup> See <http://www.feritradition.org/witcheye/index2.html>

<sup>128</sup> E, survey questionnaire.

<sup>129</sup> 6, survey questionnaire.

<sup>130</sup> P, survey questionnaire.

<sup>131</sup> 3, survey questionnaire.

<sup>132</sup> 7, survey questionnaire.

Far [...] too many to mention. All books and academic journals, good and bad, help my growth.<sup>133</sup>

Internet websites, e-mail lists and online forums with a strong Pagan content were also significant to nine survey respondents in four categories in maintaining their Pagan belief and practice. The online sources identified by survey respondents include the previously mentioned WitchVox, as well as some tradition-specific web pages and blogs:

Les sites et groupes de discussion que mon groupe a mis sur pied.<sup>134</sup>

Racines paiennes, Witch's vox, grimoire de la lune, etc.<sup>135</sup>

Father Oak (Druid).<sup>136</sup>

Shakti Wicca Website, Fellowship of Isis, Correllian tradition website, [www.witchvox.com](http://www.witchvox.com)<sup>137</sup>

Access to various blogs and lists that reinforce the earth-spirit connection, including those of my friends. Also trad-specific lists like the NorEast Web for Reclaiming and the Feri LJ [LiveJournal] community.<sup>138</sup>

[T]he CUPS e-list, the Montreal Pagan e-list [...].<sup>139</sup>

Mailing lists, e-lists.<sup>140</sup>

witchvox.com<sup>141</sup>

I can't recall specific names, I just bookmarked them.<sup>142</sup>

For reasons that are still unclear, the three survey respondents who mentioned films, television shows and other popular media entertainment as significant in maintaining their Pagan belief and practice are Francophones (**B**, **Q**, **I**). Only one among them selected the previously mentioned shows that were popular when media exposure to Paganism grew exponentially in the late 1990s<sup>143</sup>.

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<sup>133</sup> **10**, survey questionnaire.

<sup>134</sup> **E**, survey questionnaire.

<sup>135</sup> **Q**, survey questionnaire.

<sup>136</sup> **I**, survey questionnaire.

<sup>137</sup> **N**, survey questionnaire.

<sup>138</sup> **3**, survey questionnaire.

<sup>139</sup> **7**, survey questionnaire.

<sup>140</sup> **11**, survey questionnaire.

<sup>141</sup> **14**, survey questionnaire.

<sup>142</sup> **20**, survey questionnaire.

<sup>143</sup> The three survey respondents listed these popular entertainment media productions as follows:

Sixteen survey respondents in five categories answered that their Pagan belief and practice was maintained by their own personal sense of calling from the Gods, Goddesses and spiritual entities with whom they feel a special connection. This is not surprising when considering that many Pagan traditions place a high emphasis on mysticism and the belief in a direct, unmediated connection with the Divine. Thirteen survey respondents mentioned other factors than the ones listed in the questionnaire. These vary widely, however a high number among these respondents mentioned their coven-mates, fellow practitioners, finding like-minded people at Pagan stores and the guidance and company of others:

[F]réquentes visites à la librairie ésotérique Métamorphoses situé [sic] sur la rue du Parc, près de Sherbrooke et qui appartenait à un couple de païens.<sup>144</sup>

Tout simplement le fait d'être à ma place.<sup>145</sup>

Pratiquer en groupe est également une immense source d'inspiration et d'énergie.<sup>146</sup>

Highland Coven.<sup>147</sup>

Having worked at a Pagan store.<sup>148</sup>

Dreams.<sup>149</sup>

I don't see my pagan beliefs as being "maintained" at all, but rather, as constantly evolving. This has been influenced by many factors [...] including books, friends and community [...].<sup>150</sup>

A daily practice and having various spiritual mentors.<sup>151</sup>

[E]xample of my teachers.<sup>152</sup>

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**B:** "Robin Hood" Série réalisée par John R. Carpenter à la fin des années 1970, "Cat Weazle" (Temporel) aussi réalisée par Carpenter (1974?).

**I:** The DaVinci Code.

**Q:** Buffy, Charmes, Practical magic, etc.

<sup>144</sup> **B:** survey questionnaire.

<sup>145</sup> **C,** survey questionnaire.

<sup>146</sup> **E,** survey questionnaire.

<sup>147</sup> **H,** survey questionnaire.

<sup>148</sup> **L,** survey questionnaire.

<sup>149</sup> **M,** survey questionnaire.

<sup>150</sup> **1,** survey questionnaire.

<sup>151</sup> **3,** survey questionnaire.

<sup>152</sup> **5,** survey questionnaire.

My sense of social justice.<sup>153</sup>

My affinity to Nature and her cycles has also been extremely important in my life and path.<sup>154</sup>

Through the organization.<sup>155</sup>

CMS [Crescent Moon School]<sup>156</sup>

Coven members. Participating in variety of public rites as a point of ref.<sup>157</sup>

Survey respondents were also more likely to mention that non-Pagan friends and acquaintances were more significant in the maintenance of their Pagan affiliation and identity than supportive, non-Pagan family members. Three survey respondents, including two Francophones (D, N, 3), claimed to have Pagan family members.

**Table 25 - Social aspect of survey respondents' Pagan religious / spiritual practice, by category**

	Francophones Québécois(es)	Other Francophones	Canadian Bilingual	Foreigner Bilingual / Allophone	Canadian Allophone	Canadian Anglophone	Foreigner Anglophone
Solitary practitioner					1 (L)	5 (8, 9, 14, 19, 20)	
Mostly solitary	3 (A, B, D)	3 (H, I, N)	2 (J, P)	1 (M)		7 (6, 7, 13, 14, 16, 18, 21)	2 (3, 4)
Mostly practices in group	3 (C, E, Q)	2 (F, G)		1 (K)		5 (7, 11, 12, 15, 17)	2 (2, 5)
Always practices in group						1 (10)	

Although friendships with other Pagans and being part of social networks is certainly important to many survey respondents, this does not necessarily mean that most Pagans must practice their religion with other people. According to Table 25, only one Canadian Anglophone (10) answered that she always practices her religion in a group setting. On the other hand, six survey respondents claim to always practice their religion alone. The majority of survey respondents practice their religion mostly by themselves,

<sup>153</sup> 11, survey questionnaire.

<sup>154</sup> 13, survey questionnaire.

<sup>155</sup> 15, survey questionnaire.

<sup>156</sup> 16, survey questionnaire.

<sup>157</sup> 17, survey questionnaire.

but sometimes in the company of others, while a slightly lower number practice mostly in a group, but sometimes alone. The data in Table 25 indicate no specific relationship between ethno-linguistic category and the social aspect of religious practice among survey respondents.

When asked how they joined the Pagan groups to which they belong, many survey respondents answered in ways that highlight the importance of social networks not only as catalysts for their early exposure to Paganism, but also as channels of standardization and routinization of the local Pagan community. As Berger observed, covens and other close-knit Pagan groups provide a locus of socialization for the individual “into a world of mysticism, ecological concerns, and feminism. The closeness of the group helps to foster changes in individuals’ lives and perspectives”<sup>158</sup>. Berger also noted that the dissemination of Paganism through social networks and umbrella organizations fosters the routinization of the religious movement in the United States<sup>159</sup>.

The survey respondents who wrote about how they joined covens or Pagan affinity groups often hinted at the developing standardization and routinization of Paganism in the city of Montreal, albeit according to local norms and emerging institutions. Survey respondents also emphasized their own agency in setting the standards according to which Paganism develops within the city:

Par des amis communs qui m’ont présentés [sic] puis j’ai fondé mon propre groupe en 1986 avec des amis que nous avons appelé le Cercle des Hauts Chênes. Nous avons reçu une invitation à se joindre à eux un jour d’automne et seule je suis allé [sic] au rituel de Samhain en 1984.<sup>160</sup>

J’ai co-fondé ce coven en août 2003.<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> Berger, 1999: 55.

<sup>159</sup> Berger, 1999; see also Berger et al. 2003.

<sup>160</sup> C, survey questionnaire.

<sup>161</sup> E, survey questionnaire

J'ai une pratique solitaire très structur[e] e[t] stable et je pratique régulièrement en groupe. [J]e me suis joint au coven Yggdrasil, il y a 4 ans en rencontrant les fondatrices dans un atelier chez Charme et Sortilège. Mes autres groupes de pratique sont des gens que j'ai rencontré chez Charme ou ailleurs comme au centre bouddhiste ou à l'École Ho, rites de passage.<sup>162</sup>

I belong to Coven of Yggdrasil. It is a french [sic] coven in Montreal. I was recruited to join them. It is a closed circle. Were [sic] an eclectic group [of] practitioners. We serve the french [sic] community. With the guidance of my high priestess I also joined the Fellowship of Isis which provide with the priestess training I need to become a priestess and legal clergy.<sup>163</sup>

T[h]ere was a few of us worshipping together and eventually [sic] decided to form a coven mostly dedicated to study, worshipping and healing.<sup>164</sup>

Chance meeting with Meri Fowler in a Ninjitsu class.<sup>165</sup>

I have been approached several times by friends and other acquaintances that I respect in the local community to join study groups or covens. In some cases, the study groups fell apart after a time and coven-life doesn't agree with me.<sup>166</sup>

I joined CUPS after arriving at Concordia in 2005, but left shortly after due to disagreements with some members and a loss of interest / disillusionment about the group's activities. I joined the Reclaiming Community after going to Witchcamp in 2006.<sup>167</sup>

Periodically organized temporary covens that get together for one cycle of the year (8 Sabbats).<sup>168</sup>

When I moved to Montreal 2 years ago, I was looking for a Reclaiming group; I eventually found one but they were pretty much inactive. I have been active in helping to organize events and ritual for this group during the past year, to try to get it going again.<sup>169</sup>

The current group I belong to is the Wiccan Sacred Circle. I am the High Priestess of the Highland Coven, Greenwood tradition which I started with my husband in 2003.<sup>170</sup>

I currently work (3 years) in a closed, non-hierarchical, non-denominational circle. We were all friends before forming the circle. I also work in open circles with the Reclaiming community in Montreal. Prior to that I worked in a closed circle (2 years) which I was invited to join. Prior to that I worked with a closed study group (2 years) formed collectively out of a community need.<sup>171</sup>

Originally, I was part of the MATC (Montreal Area Teaching Coven). Ever since it was shut down a number of years ago, I have practiced alone, but I do get together now with a group of friends to share the Sabbats.<sup>172</sup>

Wicca is my religion. It is the Path that I live. As for my coven, a guest speaker in Montreal invited me. I investigated the group and the people I would practice with, then accepted dedication – later took vows with each initiation.<sup>173</sup>

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<sup>162</sup> Q, survey questionnaire.

<sup>163</sup> F, survey questionnaire.

<sup>164</sup> G, survey questionnaire.

<sup>165</sup> H, survey questionnaire.

<sup>166</sup> J, survey questionnaire.

<sup>167</sup> K, survey questionnaire.

<sup>168</sup> M, survey questionnaire.

<sup>169</sup> 1, survey questionnaire.

<sup>170</sup> 2, survey questionnaire.

<sup>171</sup> 3, survey questionnaire.

<sup>172</sup> 7, survey questionnaire.

I started EROS, a University Pagan society @ my undergrad University in NB with some friends. In Montreal I belong to the Montreal Reclaiming group.<sup>174</sup>

On the Island I joined both a community group that I found out about online as well as a small circle of 4 that met on the Sabbats. Here in Mtl I found out about the group I am involved in online.<sup>175</sup>

Concordia Pagan Society -> as a student (although we are NOT considered to be a coven).<sup>176</sup>

Through friends who were members of an organization.<sup>177</sup>

Started volunteering at public rites and was invited to bequest – then coven member. Became editor of local Pagan magazine (*8Sabbats*).<sup>178</sup>

I had joined a coven [approx.] 3 yrs ago but left. I still have contact with some members and sometime we, and others get together and practice.<sup>179</sup>

The tendency toward routinization in the Montreal Pagan community is most evident in how books and other printed media are used as means of transmitting Pagan culture to newcomers. Survey respondents were asked to list the books and other written references that had been instrumental in shaping their Pagan worldview. As can be expected, many of them included the references that had been catalysts in their exposure to Paganism, as well as the ones that helped them maintain their Pagan belief and practice:

Gardner et Cunningham<sup>180</sup>

*Wicca: A Guide for the Solitary Practitioner* de John [sic] Cunningham, *Drawing Down the Moon* de Margot Adler, *The Spiral Dance* de Starhawk, *Quand Dieu était femme* de Merlin Stone, *The Witches' God, The Witches' Goddess, The Witches' Bible* de Stewart & Janet Farrar.<sup>181</sup>

*Witches Bible*, the *White Goddess*, les livres de Dion Fortune, Denning & Philips ont été à la base de mon entraînement de même que Franz Bardon.<sup>182</sup>

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<sup>173</sup> 10, survey questionnaire.

<sup>174</sup> 11, survey questionnaire.

<sup>175</sup> 13, survey questionnaire.

<sup>176</sup> 14, survey questionnaire.

<sup>177</sup> 15, survey questionnaire.

<sup>178</sup> 17, survey questionnaire.

<sup>179</sup> 21, survey questionnaire.

<sup>180</sup> A, survey questionnaire.

<sup>181</sup> B, survey questionnaire

*Drawing Down the Moon* de Margot Adler, *Book of Shadows* de Phyllis Curott, *Northern Mysteries and Magick* de Freya Aswynn.<sup>183</sup>

Les livres de Scott Cunningham, les livres de Penczak, Starhawk, Ravenwolf, A-J Drew, le guerrier wicca.<sup>184</sup>

*Solitary Wicca for Life* by Arin Murphy-Hiscock, *Inner Temple of Witchcraft* by Christopher Penczak, *The Witch's Shield* by Christopher Penczak, *Spirit Allies* by Christopher Penczak.<sup>185</sup>

None specific. Lots of Cunningham. I loke [sic] his no nonsense approach. However since I do a certain amount of Shamanism, Michael Harner's *the Way of the Shaman* provide me with information even if fairly limited.<sup>186</sup>

D.J. Conway, Silver RavenWolf, Eddas, Mabinogion, Celtic Myths.<sup>187</sup>

*Which Witch is Which?* Patricia Telesco.<sup>188</sup>

Writings of Aleister Crowley, Israel Regardie, Dion Fortune, Z'ev ben Shimon Halevi, Gareth Knight, W.E. Butler, Doreen Valiente, the Farrars, Starhawk, Vivianne Crowley, Scott Cunningham, Carl Jung, Joseph Campbell, Ginette Paris, and general books on mythology with focus on classical and Egyptian lore.<sup>189</sup>

David Abram's *The Spell of the Sensuous* and to a lesser extent Michael Harner's *The Way of the Shaman*.<sup>190</sup>

*The Spell of the Sensuous* by David Abram; *Dreaming the Dark* and *The Earth Path* by Starhawk.<sup>191</sup>

Books by the Farrar's and Silver Ravenwolf, also books by D.J. Conway and Starhawk.<sup>192</sup>

*Witchcraft Today* by Gerald Gardner, *Sea Priestess* by Dion Fortune, *A Witch Alone* by Marian Green; *Witchcraft for Tomorrow* by Doreen Valiente, *Wicca* by Viviane Crowley, *Drawing Down the Moon* by Margot Adler, *Earth Path* by Starhawk, *Triumph of the Moon* by Ronald Hutton, *Stations of the Sun* by Ronald Hutton, *The Veil's Edge* by Willow Polson, *Witching Culture* by Sabina Magliocco, *Devoted to You* by Judy Harrow, *Spiritual Mentoring* by Judy Harrow, *Evolutionary Witchcraft* by Thorn Coyle, *Magick without Peers* by Ariadne Rainbird, *Witchcraft Today* series edited by Chas Clifton, *Grimoire of Shadows* by Ed Fitch, *Heart of Wicca* by Ellen Canon Reed, *WitchEye* magazine, Amber and Jet e-list, Feri community Livejournal.<sup>193</sup>

Books by Buckland, Gundarsson, Thorsson, Farrars.<sup>194</sup>

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<sup>182</sup> C, survey questionnaire.

<sup>183</sup> E, survey questionnaire.

<sup>184</sup> Q, survey questionnaire.

<sup>185</sup> F, survey questionnaire.

<sup>186</sup> G, survey questionnaire.

<sup>187</sup> H, survey questionnaire.

<sup>188</sup> N, survey questionnaire.

<sup>189</sup> P, survey questionnaire.

<sup>190</sup> K, survey questionnaire.

<sup>191</sup> I, survey questionnaire.

<sup>192</sup> 2, survey questionnaire.

<sup>193</sup> 3, survey questionnaire

<sup>194</sup> 4, survey questionnaire.

Stewart Farrar's early works, *Wicca: the Ancient Way*, Sybil Leek, Golden Dawn + Thelema.<sup>195</sup>

Books by Alister Crowley, Isaac Bonewits, historical works, books by A. E. Waite, Israel Regardie, and many others involved in the early development of the Magical/Pagan communities of the 19th and 20th centuries.<sup>196</sup>

Various religious "Bibles"; Books on nature.<sup>197</sup>

*21<sup>st</sup> Century Wicca; Teen Witch Series; Everyday Witchcraft.*<sup>198</sup>

Books by Starhawk, especially *Earth Path*, at this time, although perhaps this simply affirmed my Pagan worldview. Also, *Spell of the Sensuous*, by David Abram.<sup>199</sup>

Scott Cunningham's *Wicca for the Solitary Practitioner; Stone Magic, The Gem Bible + Illustrated Guide to Healing Stones*; Neil Gaiman's *American Gods*.<sup>200</sup>

*Solitary Witch* by Silver RavenWolf; the things that I consider important in my BOS.<sup>201</sup>

*Philosophy of Wicca*, Amber Laine Fisher.<sup>202</sup>

*The Kybalion* by Three Initiates, *the Chicken Kaballah* by Lou Milo Duquette, *The Fairies' Oracle* by Brian Froud & Jessica MacBeth, *Ritual Magic: What it is & how to do it* by Donald Tyson.<sup>203</sup>

Nietzsche & other philosophical works; Adler, Music, Various academic collections (eg. Graham Harvey).<sup>204</sup>

Began with Cunningham & Silver RavenWolf, moved to Christopher Penczak, Judy Harrow and specific books on topics that interest me -> trance work, Shamanism, divination, magic, historical background (Celtic).<sup>205</sup>

Survey respondents were also asked to list the books and written references they believed should be consulted by people who were interested in becoming Pagans. Many respondents listed recurring references, the majority of which have been previously mentioned:

*Solitary Witch* de Ravenwolf<sup>206</sup>

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<sup>195</sup> 5, survey questionnaire.

<sup>196</sup> 7, survey questionnaire.

<sup>197</sup> 8, survey questionnaire.

<sup>198</sup> 9, survey questionnaire.

<sup>199</sup> 11, survey questionnaire.

<sup>200</sup> 12, survey questionnaire.

<sup>201</sup> 13, survey questionnaire.

<sup>202</sup> 14, survey questionnaire.

<sup>203</sup> 15, survey questionnaire.

<sup>204</sup> 17, survey questionnaire.

<sup>205</sup> 21, survey questionnaire.

<sup>206</sup> A, survey questionnaire.

*Wicca: A Guide for the Solitary Practitioner* de John [sic] Cunningham ou sa traduction française, *The Witches Bible* de Stewart et Janet Farrar. NB – (Il est dommage qu'il n'existe pas de traduction [en] français de cet excellent ouvrage).<sup>207</sup>

*Drawing Down the Moon* de Margot Adler, *Spirit Allies* de Christopher Penczak, *Wicca: A Guide for the Solitary Practitioner* de Scott Cunningham, *Inner Temple of Witchcraft* de Christopher Penczak.<sup>208</sup>

Je crois que les livres que j'ai consulté sont de très bons points de départ pour une pratique sincère et responsable. Chaque praticien doit ensuite parfaire ses connaissances magiques et occultes selon ses intérêts et inspirations personnels.<sup>209</sup>

*Inner Temple of Witchcraft* by Christopher Penczak, *Outer Temple of Witchcraft* by Christopher Penczak, *The Temple of Shamanic Witchcraft* [...] by Christopher Penczak, *Wicca* by Scott Cunningham, *Law Enforcement Guide to Wicca* by Curr Cuhulain.<sup>210</sup>

Silver RavenWolf, and the ancient texts of their chosen paths.<sup>211</sup>

*Introduction to Paganism*.<sup>212</sup>

*Drawing Down the Moon*, Cunningham's books.<sup>213</sup>

*Wicca for the Solitary Practitioner*.<sup>214</sup>

Cunningham's *Guide for the Solitary Practitioner* and *Living Wicca*, Amber Laine Fisher's *Philosophy of Wicca*, Donald Tyson's *Ritual Magic*, Starhawk's *Spiral Dance*, W.E. Butler's *Apprenticed to Magic*, *Techniques of High Magic* by Francis King & Stephen Skinner.<sup>215</sup>

David Abram's *The Spell of the Sensuous* and Starhawk's *The Earth Path*.<sup>216</sup>

Gardner's *Solitary Practitioner of Witchcraft*.<sup>217</sup>

I recommend *To Ride a Sliver Broomstick* by Silver Raven Wolf as a good beginner book or anything by Marion Greene.<sup>218</sup>

*Pagans and Christians* by Gus DiZerega, *Drawing Down the Moon* by Margot Adler, *Her Hidden Children* by Chas Clifton, *A Witch Alone* by Marian Greene, *Wicca* by Vivianne Crowley, *A Magickal Life* by Vivianne Crowley, *Circles of Power* by John Michael Greer, *Inner Temple of Witchcraft* by Christopher Penczak, *Witchcraft for Tomorrow* by Doreen Valiente, *Devoted to You* by Judy Harrow, *The World of Myth* by David Leeming, *Practice of Magic* by Draja Mickaharic, *The Second Circle* by Venecia Rauls, *Why Religion Matters* by Huston Smith. ( There are probably also some very good basic books on Druidry and Heathenism/Odinism and other Pagan

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<sup>207</sup> B, survey questionnaire.

<sup>208</sup> E, survey questionnaire.

<sup>209</sup> Q, survey questionnaire.

<sup>210</sup> F, survey questionnaire.

<sup>211</sup> H, survey questionnaire.

<sup>212</sup> I, survey questionnaire.

<sup>213</sup> N, survey questionnaire.

<sup>214</sup> J, survey questionnaire.

<sup>215</sup> P, survey questionnaire.

<sup>216</sup> K, survey questionnaire.

<sup>217</sup> L, survey questionnaire.

<sup>218</sup> 2, survey questionnaire.

paths that should be recommended to Pagan seekers, unfortunately they are outside my own area of Paganism).<sup>219</sup>

*Drawing Down the Moon*; Buckland's *Complete Book of Witchcraft*; the *8 Sabbats*.<sup>220</sup>

*Wicca – the Ancient Way*<sup>221</sup>

Any book on the TRUE history of Neo-Paganism and the Craft, books about the pioneers in our field, books by Bonewitz, Crowley (at a later date). Books that don't throw around the fluffy garbage, but tell it like it is.<sup>222</sup>

Anything by Scott Cunningham.<sup>223</sup>

*Spiral Dance, Earth Path*.<sup>224</sup>

All Cunningham books; *Instant Magic* by Penczak; books that “call” to them.<sup>225</sup>

*Solitary Witch. Wicca*. These were both great starter books for me.<sup>226</sup>

*Drawing Down the Moon*, Adler.<sup>227</sup>

*Ritual Magic: what it is & how to do it* by Donald Tyson.<sup>228</sup>

Starhawk (*Spiral Dance*), Adler (DDTM), some academic (myth busting books) eg. Graham Harvey.<sup>229</sup>

Others were adamant that these selections should be left to the individual:

Tous les livres qui existent sur la Wicca et la magie afin de se faire une idée à soi de ce que c'est et de pouvoir comparer. Lors de l'entraînement je réfère au début à Barden et *the White Goddess* et le livre de Joel Farrar: *la Wicca*.<sup>230</sup>

There is such a variety of books and a variety of pagan paths, that it really depends. The books that have influenced me I would recommend to anyone, but they might not be the right thing for other people.<sup>231</sup>

Really depends on kind of Paganism. Different books for different traditions.<sup>232</sup>

Whatever they feel drawn to that's non-fictional.<sup>233</sup>

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<sup>219</sup> 3, survey questionnaire.

<sup>220</sup> 4, survey questionnaire.

<sup>221</sup> 5, survey questionnaire.

<sup>222</sup> 7, survey questionnaire.

<sup>223</sup> 10, survey questionnaire.

<sup>224</sup> 11, survey questionnaire.

<sup>225</sup> 12, survey questionnaire.

<sup>226</sup> 13, survey questionnaire.

<sup>227</sup> 14, survey questionnaire.

<sup>228</sup> 15, survey questionnaire.

<sup>229</sup> 17, survey questionnaire.

<sup>230</sup> C, survey questionnaire.

<sup>231</sup> 1, survey questionnaire.

<sup>232</sup> 9, survey questionnaire.

I don't think there are set books for people to read as it varies so much about their interests and backgrounds. I do think the basics should be read at one point – Gardner, Starhawk, Leland, Adler.<sup>234</sup>

The research data results discussed in section 3.2 reveal that Anglophone Pagans generally tend to place more importance upon social networks and peer support systems in building and maintaining their Pagan affiliation and community than Francophone Pagans. Also, the recurring publications mentioned in this section demonstrate the degree to which Pagans in Montreal engage in normative *communitas* by using common source materials in crafting their religious paths and identities.

The predominance of the English language within Paganism, and the slow start the religious movement had in Quebec when compared to the United States and the rest of Canada explain in part why the Francophone component of the Pagan community in Montreal is still small. The Anglophone component, on the other hand, has matured enough in the last three decades to currently possess numerous institutions and elaborate social networks that ensure the transmission of information on Paganism to novices and to Pagans who are new to the city of Montreal.

Because of obstacles generated by the social, political and cultural peculiarities of life in Quebec, the Francophone component of the Montreal Pagan community has yet to match the degree to which Anglophone Pagans within the city have undertaken the process of normative *communitas*. This research now turns to an in-depth discussion of how the peculiarities of life in Quebec in the latter half of the twentieth century have impacted the growth of Paganism in Montreal.

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<sup>233</sup> 16, survey questionnaire.

<sup>234</sup> 21, survey questionnaire.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### 4.1 RESEARCH DATA RESULTS – PAGANISM AND THE QUEBEC CULTURAL CONTEXT

In order to better understand the underlying factors causing the marked differences between Anglophone and Francophone Pagans in Montreal, it is necessary to explore the major historical and cultural processes that have shaped Quebec society in recent decades. Among these, the aftermath of the 1960s Quiet Revolution, a phenomenon that has known no counterpart elsewhere in North America, needs to be further discussed.

#### 4.1.1 PAGANISM AND THE AFTERMATH OF THE QUIET REVOLUTION IN QUEBEC

At the time when Gerald Gardner published his first non-fiction books on Wicca in Britain, the people in Quebec, the majority of whom were of French descent, were living under the pro-clerical, socially conservative provincial government of Maurice Duplessis whose power lay, “at least superficially, in its unlimited use of patronage and its willingness to practise corruption and intimidation during elections”<sup>1</sup>. According to Ramsay Cook, the right-wing Duplessis government stayed in power not solely through sheer force or political intimidation, but also because of the French Canadian cultural tendency to abide by the concept of power carried over from the colonial French *Ancien Régime*: “The French Canadians’ traditional concept of authority was hierarchical, from the top down, not egalitarian or democratic”<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Cook, 1986, 1995:111.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 112.

The Duplessis government also supported the hegemonic dominance of the Roman Catholic clergy within the province. For more than a century, the Church had played a major role in defining French Canadian society in Quebec.

After 1840, the Church, led by the energetic ultramontane prelate, Mgr. Ignace Bourget of Montreal, began a recruitment and re-organization drive that would gradually give the Church dominant place in Quebec society. As the Church extended and consolidated its control over education and other social institutions in Quebec, so, too, it redefined that society's ideology.<sup>3</sup>

As discussed briefly in Chapter 3, prior to the 1960s Quiet Revolution, the primary determining factor of French Canadian cultural identity in Quebec was its association with the Roman Catholic faith:

There are, perhaps, two important points that need emphasis about the dominant clerico-nationalist ideology that permeated Quebec's traditional elites before the Quiet Revolution. The first is that it was nationalist in a religious and cultural sense, but rarely in a political or economic manner. [...] The second and equally important observation to be made is that what clerico-nationalists described was an ideal, not a real nation.<sup>4</sup>

The Quiet Revolution refers to the era in Quebec history when Jean Lesage's provincial Liberal government ushered in sweeping reforms to ensure the rapid secularization and modernization of the Quebec political infrastructure. These reforms caused the once all-powerful Roman Catholic Church to lose its dominion over public institutions such as education and health care by putting these under the tutelage of a secular government. As a consequence, the Church lost nearly all of its power over the public and private lives of French Canadians in Quebec.

The Quiet Revolution also created an ethnic and cultural revival among the once economically and culturally disadvantaged French Canadian majority in Quebec. It should be noted at this point that *La Survivance*, the quest for survival of the French Canadian people within a predominantly Anglophone and Protestant North American continent, pre-dates the Quiet Revolution by two centuries. Indeed, the Conquest of New

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 89.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., pp. 90-91.

France by British military forces in 1760, which put an end to colonial ties between France and its North American territories<sup>5</sup>, is often depicted by Quebec nationalists as a defining, albeit traumatic, moment in the formation of French Canadian identity<sup>6</sup>. In the 1960s, when the Church rapidly lost its former power within the province, French Canadian people in Quebec had to redefine themselves not as a religious collectivity (*Église-Nation*), but rather as an ethnic and political entity:

[...] French Canadian distinctiveness was founded on an interpretation of the past that made the collectivity unique: the struggle for survival in North America made this *petit peuple* North American but not Anglo-Saxon, French-speaking but not French. From that sense of uniqueness grew a sense of mission that assigned French Canadians the task of continuing their quest for survival and fulfillment as a distinct “race”, “people”, or “nation”.<sup>7</sup>

In the 1970s, the drive for cultural survival took on a decidedly alarming aspect when separatist sentiments began to emerge among the increasingly politically self-aware French Québécois people. In order to counter these sentiments within his native Quebec, Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau implemented the policy of multiculturalism within a bilingual framework across Canada: “Behind the strive to spread bilingualism in the federation lay the notion that all of Canada, not just Quebec, should be the home of French Canadians”<sup>8</sup>. As will be discussed below, although the province of Quebec remains a part of the Canadian federation<sup>9</sup>, the linguistic divide between Anglophones and Francophones continues within the province, and is reflected to a diminished extent within the Pagan community in Montreal.

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<sup>5</sup> With the exception of the islands Saint-Pierre and Miquelon, located off the coast of Newfoundland, which remain French territory to this day.

<sup>6</sup> See Lundberg, Svante. “Quebec: Nationalism and Cultural Diversity”. In Bauhn, Per et al. *Multiculturalism and Nationhood in Canada: The Cases of First Nations and Quebec*. Lund: Lund University Press. 1995: 47.

<sup>7</sup> Cook, 1986, 1995:160; italics in original text.

<sup>8</sup> Lundberg, 1995:60.

<sup>9</sup> At least this was still the case at the time this research was completed.

Although monumental changes have occurred within Quebec society in the last five decades as a result of the Quiet Revolution, the traditional French Canadian tendency to associate religion with culture persists to this day among many Québécois and other Canadian Francophones. My research participants are no exception to this. When asked to rate the degree to which she identified with her culture of origin, Brigid, a Francophone Québécoise, identified this culture primarily as Roman Catholic, and only secondarily as Québécois, French and Celtic (Breton and Gaul):

Je suis d'origine catholique romaine, des québécois de bonne souche... Ma mère vient du nord du Nouveau-Brunswick... mon arrière-grand-père était acadien ... mon arrière-grand-mère [était] d'origine irlandaise ou britannique [venue au Canada à bord d'un "coffin ship", adoptée par la suite dans une famille canadienne-française]. On a des liens anglo-saxons [dans ma famille]. Je me sens proche mais plus du côté français que religieux... Mes parents étaient un peu tannés de l'influence de l'Église, ma famille était critique des prêtres. [Ma famille] n'était pas très catholique!

Sur le plan ethnique francophone, [le sentiment d'appartenance s'apparente]... Nous avons des origines celtes, des racines bretonnes, gauloises... Du côté de ma mère on a pu remonter à un forgeron qui faisait des épées pour les croisés.<sup>10</sup>

Brigid is not the only Francophone who identified her culture of origin primarily in religious terms. Izzy, an Other Francophone, told me during an interview that she did not identify with her Roman Catholic culture, although she identifies strongly with being Acadian<sup>11</sup>. Rhiannon and Mme Patry, both Francophone Québécoises, also told me that they were raised in strict Roman Catholic families before either mentioned their French Québécois culture of origin<sup>12</sup>. Similarly, when asked what he had in common with Pagans who shared his ethnic background (in this case French Canadian), Patrick, a Canadian Bilingual participant, also demonstrated a tendency to merge his ethnicity with his Roman Catholic upbringing:

Maybe a sense of trying to better define oneself. I suppose that many Pagans who come from a Christian religious background, and in particular a Roman Catholic one, has to somehow come to

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<sup>10</sup> Brigid, interview 2007-08-11.

<sup>11</sup> Izzy, interview 2007-07-29.

<sup>12</sup> Rhiannon, interview 2007-08-15, Marie-Renée Patry, interview 2007-08-21.

terms on how to integrate their religious past with their current Pagan practices. How they choose to do this will vary from person to person.<sup>13</sup>

Scarlet was the only Canadian Anglophone I interviewed who described her culture of origin in both ethnic *and* religious terms. Born in Quebec to an Anglo-Canadian family, Scarlet told me that she identified “Barely with the religious aspect [Roman Catholicism]. The cultural aspect [Irish], much more strongly”<sup>14</sup>. She adds,

I was involved in Irish dancing, Irish lore... I was raised as a non-practicing Roman Catholic who was taught a reverence of nature. My mom and I used to stand on the balcony and howl at the full moon when I was little. Way back then I learned that the moon influences you, we're made of water. If it can pull the tides it can pull you. Animals and the land were sacred. You don't put your garbage there, ever. You take care of it and it takes care of you. Always give back to Mother Nature and don't anger Her.<sup>15</sup>

Although Scarlet does not identify as a Québécoise, the identification of her culture of origin with a Roman Catholic identity probably results from the influence of the French Québécois culture.

The close association between Roman Catholicism and a French Québécois ethnic and cultural identity provides a plausible explanation as to why all of the survey respondents in the Francophone Québécois(es) category stated that they still believed in their previous religious affiliations after becoming Pagan. This pattern of response is not repeated as consistently in any of the other categories of survey respondents, including the Other Francophones (see Table 18).

According to several interview participants, the 1960s Quiet Revolution has had a marked effect on the development of the Pagan movement in Quebec. Most significantly, the modernist and anticlerical impulse carried over from this era has hindered some people from possibly exploring their pre-Christian cultural and religious roots through a Pagan spirituality. Lucie Marie-Mai DuFresne has observed and participated in the

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<sup>13</sup> Patrick, interview 2008-01-20.

<sup>14</sup> Scarlet, interview 2007-08-4/5.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

development of Paganism in Canada for many years. Having watched the Pagan communities in Montreal and in other French-speaking parts of the country, she had this to say about the impact of the Quiet Revolution on Québécois culture and on the development of Paganism in Quebec:

Quebec Francophones are still too actively anti-clerical and pro-modern to be nostalgic about their folkloric past. And so in some ways feminist [witchcraft] and Goddess Worship has gone much further in Quebec than in other parts of Canada; Quebec women are light-years ahead of other Canadian women as far as feminist theology or feminist Christianity [are concerned], but both [Québécois] men and women seem to just not get Paganism in the same way as a religion. But as a lifestyle, they understand it better. They're much closer to their physical senses – [they enjoy] good food, good wine, colours, textures, fashion, hand-made things... there's pride in that part of our heritage. Real food, but also good music. The physicality of our culture, and a very physical aesthetic based on the pleasure of the human senses, that's the part of Paganism that Anglophones have trouble with, but Francophones get it. To me, Francophone Quebeckers' houses read Pagan to me because there's so little plastic and there's so much light and wood and greenery. Like if they could cross-fertilize, the French and the English, they could have something very strong. The English have gone further with the theology and the ethics [of Paganism] but the French have gone further with the physical living of it.<sup>16</sup>

Fabiola concurs with Lucie DuFresne's observation that Francophone Québécois Pagans are more likely to comprehend Paganism as a lifestyle rather than a purely intellectual pursuit:

C'est plus comme ça que je perçois la communauté anglophone. Je la perçois très intellectuelle, très traditionnelle, 'by the book' un peu... Je trouve que dans la communauté francophone les gens travaillent plus à ressentir ce qu'ils apprennent et il y a une plus grande flexibilité sur le plan de comment vivre sa spiritualité.<sup>17</sup>

The tendency among Francophone Québécois Pagans to express their religious affiliations as a lifestyle probably stems from the contemporary Québécois cultural mistrust toward religion of any kind, as a result of anticlerical impulses carried over from the Quiet Revolution. Rose, an American-born interview participant, has also observed a certain degree of reserve among many Québécois with regards to religion and religiosity.

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<sup>16</sup> Lucie Marie-Mai DuFresne, interview 2007-08-08. For more information on Feminist Witchcraft in Quebec, see Gaboury, Eve. "Confluence du néo-paganisme et du féminisme chez les québécoises : le discours de quelques sorcières". Master's Thesis, University of Ottawa, 1989 ; and Gaboury, Eve. "Ou à défaut, invente: La sorcellerie néo-païenne comme lieu d'épanouissement du processus créateur gynocentrique". Veillette, Denise (dir.). *Femmes et religions*. Corporation canadienne des sciences religieuses. Les Presses de l'Université Laval. 1995 : 237-248.

<sup>17</sup> Fabiola, interview 2007-08-11.

When I asked her whether she believed it was possible for Paganism to grow in the province of Quebec, she answered the following:

I think it's possible for Paganism to grow anywhere. I found from doing interviews with Francophone Pagans [that] there's more reluctance towards religion coming from the Francophone Pagans, coming from their religious / linguistic / political / historical point of view. Since I haven't experienced this on a personal level, I am aware of it.<sup>18</sup>

Other interview participants have noted that the Québécois are generally becoming more open towards alternative, non Abrahamic forms of spirituality.

Oh, définitivement, oui. Je le vois beaucoup chez *Charme et sortilège*. Je travaille là toutes les fins de semaine, le dimanche de midi à cinq. Je vois une soif pour la spiritualité. Je vois aussi un retour vers une spiritualité pré-chrétienne. C'est étrange parce que c'est typiquement québécois. Parce qu'autant que la société québécoise a un aspect très judéo-chrétien, autant qu'elle est anti-judéo-chrétienne, sauf que ça n'empêche pas la quête de la spiritualité et la croyance en quelque chose plus grand que soi.<sup>19</sup>

Certainement, parce que de plus en plus [les québécois(es)] ont une ouverture d'esprit [face à la religion]. Les religions traditionnelles ne répondent plus à leurs besoins de "spiritualité" et de "mysticisme". Le retour aux sources [ne correspond pas au] monothéisme. Les religions païennes étaient des religions basées sur les besoins locaux, générationnels ou ethniques, reliées à la nature, aux ressources intérieures et extérieures... Le paganisme va refaire surface.<sup>20</sup>

Participants were also optimistic about the possibility for Paganism to grow in Quebec in spite of the current Québécois cultural mistrust towards religion. As Hobbes put it,

Oh yes, because the Québécois are a very spiritual people. It's a part of their identity. Once they get past their fear of Paganism, I think a lot of people will be interested in following that path<sup>21</sup>.

Amanda agrees: "Absolutely. It's a very tolerant society with strong religious roots"<sup>22</sup>.

Despite many research participants' sunny outlook on the future of Paganism in Quebec, Pagans in Montreal are by no means sheltered from the realities of living in a predominantly Francophone province, where language politics still cause a deep divide between the Francophone majority and the historically powerful Anglophone minority. Nevertheless, my research findings show that Pagans in Montreal appear to be mostly

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<sup>18</sup> Rose, interview 2007-07-07.

<sup>19</sup> Fabiola, interview 2007-08-11.

<sup>20</sup> Marie-Renée Patry, interview 2007-08-21.

<sup>21</sup> Hobbes, interview 2007-07-29.

<sup>22</sup> Amanda, interview 2007-08-11.

impervious to these antagonisms when dealing with one another<sup>23</sup>. Meri Fowler, who teaches her classes for the *Young Pagans' Circle* in English, told me she noticed that the children make efforts to accommodate one another when language becomes an obstacle to understanding. In her words, there is definitely “no English-French rift” within this group<sup>24</sup>.

Pagans in Montreal and in other parts of Quebec are also more likely to sidestep the cultural insularity and xenophobia that have been the most insidious consequences of *La Survivance* within the Province. As Lucie DuFresne relates, this particular kind of xenophobia even extends to non-Québécois French Canadians:

I didn't find out until I was almost forty that I was actually Métis and not just French-Canadian. Since I had never lived in Quebec, and had never lived in a Francophone community, I was finding out that I was a very strange French-Canadian, according to other French-Canadians. So I actually don't know what I am. I know I am not an Anglophone, so I'm exploring what I am. [...] I don't understand the xenophobia I perceive in Quebec. [The] Francophone culture, I've seen it all my life but I didn't understand to what extent it was what it was until recently as I find out that I'm not French enough for them, among other things.<sup>25</sup>

On the other hand, Lucie finds that Pagans are collectively far less likely to engage in xenophobia and intolerance of any kind:

What I find most special about Paganism, and I really hope it continues, is the supported freedom that we have to explore our own identities and spiritualities and our abilities to share our discoveries with others. There is little generalized intolerance, [and by that I mean] abusive behavior, grossness, non-respect of others, etc. Individualized intolerance exists, and is itself not tolerated by the group.<sup>26</sup>

Other research participants agree with Lucie in that they perceive Pagans to be fairly optimistic about building bridges between linguistic and cultural groups in order to create

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<sup>23</sup> See also Gagnon, 2003: 58.

<sup>24</sup> Meri Fowler, interview 2007-07-29/30.

<sup>25</sup> Lucie Marie-Mai DuFresne, interview 2007-08-08.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

a viable community. As Brighid said, “Le Pagan Grove<sup>27</sup> a aussi fait beaucoup d’efforts pour unir les deux communautés [linguistiques] en offrant des rituels bilingues”<sup>28</sup>.

Although Anglophone and Francophone Pagans are generally willing to accommodate one another within public ritual settings or during private gatherings, this does not mean that language is a completely unproblematic issue for Pagans in Montreal. As it turns out, the hegemonic dominance of the English language within the broad Pagan movement is definitely problematic for Francophone Pagans in Montreal.

#### 4.1.2 PAGANISM, POLITICS AND THE “LANGUAGE BARRIER”

While conducting fieldwork at the 2007 Kaleidoscope Gathering, I became painfully aware of the degree to which I internalized the notion of the dominance of the English language within Paganism. On a sunny Saturday afternoon in August, Scarlet told me during an interview that until about a decade prior, Paganism in Montreal was predominantly a Francophone phenomenon.

Fifteen to twenty years ago the Quebec and Montreal Pagan movement was mostly Francophone. It has since shifted to mostly Anglophone starting about ten years ago. That, I think, is due to the availability of information (people, books, internet, media, shops) in English.<sup>29</sup>

At that moment, all academic decorum was thrown to the wind as I experienced sheer, unadulterated, cognitive dissonance. The notion that the Montreal Pagan community was once mostly Francophone went against everything I had ever heard, known or read about Paganism in Canada. Sitting with Scarlet in the *Mélange Magique* vending tent by the beach, I asked her how this could be, since I had been well acquainted with Montreal

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<sup>27</sup> Also known as the Montreal Grove or the Open Circle.

<sup>28</sup> Brighid, interview 2007-08-11. In the last ten years, I have also observed many instances where Pagans at public rituals will volunteer to translate the performance for participants who do not speak the language in use at the time.

<sup>29</sup> Scarlet, interview 2007-08-4/5.

Pagans for at least a decade, yet I had never experienced this before. She told me that this shift had occurred shortly before I had “discovered” the Montreal Pagan community, which coincided almost exactly with the time when Paganism suddenly grew in popularity in North America in the late 1990s.

My strong reaction of surprise during this exchange reflected mostly my own beliefs about what I thought to be true of the Montreal Pagan community until I began this research project. Since 1997, most of the conversations, rituals, festivals, gatherings and other social encounters I had with Montreal Pagans were done primarily in the English language. For sure, I also met a few Francophone Pagans in Montreal in the course of several years, but these were always in the minority as far as I could tell. I only met a significant number of Francophone Pagans after I moved to the Canadian National Capital Region, which appeared to have a smaller and more linguistically integrated local Pagan community than that within Montreal. As it turned out, the latter also conducted most of their public activities in English<sup>30</sup>.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, several ethnographers of Canadian Paganism also observed that this religious movement is predominantly Anglophone, to the extent that some even doubted that Paganism could ever make significant inroads within the province of Quebec for this very reason<sup>31</sup>. Furthermore, the few academics that disagreed observed that Francophone Pagans often practice their religion in the English language to compensate for the lack of available resources on Paganism in their mother tongue<sup>32</sup>. My own research data results both confirm and challenge many of the

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<sup>30</sup> See also DuFresne 2004.

<sup>31</sup> See Rabinovitch 1992 and Reid 2001.

<sup>32</sup> See DuFresne 1998 and Gagnon 2003.

observations of Rabinovitch, Reid, DuFresne and Gagnon regarding the primacy of the English language as the *lingua franca* of Paganism.

**Table 26 - Language in which survey respondents practice their Pagan religion or spiritual path, by category**

	Francophones Québécois(es)	Other Francophones	Canadian Bilingual	Foreigner Bilingual / Allophone	Canadian Allophone	Canadian Anglophone	Foreigner Anglophone
English		2 (H, I)	1 (P)	2 (K, M)	1 (L)	15 (6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21)	4 (1, 2, 3, 5)
French	4 (B, C, D, Q)						
English and French	2 (A, E)	3 (F, G, N)	1 (J)				
Other	1 (E)					1 (8)	1 (4)

As shown in Table 26, none of the Francophone Québécois(es) survey respondents claim to practice their religion using the English language exclusively. Four among them answered that they practice in French (**B, C, D, Q**), and two answered that they practice in both English and French (**A, E**). **E** added that she integrates Icelandic words in her liturgy<sup>33</sup>. Conversely, none of the Other Francophones answered that they practice their Pagan religion exclusively in French. Two among them answered that they practice in English (**H, I**), and three answered that they practice in both English and French (**F, G, N**). The same pattern occurs among the Canadian bilingual respondents: **P** practices in English, and **J** practices in both English and French. All the remaining survey respondents practice exclusively in English, except for one Canadian Anglophone (**8**), who answered that the language in which he practices is “instinct”<sup>34</sup>, and **4**, a Foreigner Anglophone who practices in English and Norse<sup>35</sup>.

<sup>33</sup> **E**, survey questionnaire.

<sup>34</sup> **8**, survey questionnaire.

<sup>35</sup> **4**, survey questionnaire.

As mentioned at the beginning of Chapter 3, I split the Francophone survey respondents into two categories based on whether they answered the French-language or the English-language survey questionnaire. Both versions were made available to research participants on the research website, at fixed locations and wherever I happened to conduct fieldwork. It is still unclear why five Francophone survey respondents answered the survey questionnaire in English while six answered it in French. A possible explanation is that it was easier for the former to understand the terms and concepts of their respective Pagan paths in English than in French. This is most likely to be the case given that all but one of the thirty-seven survey respondents answered that the majority of their reference material on Paganism was in English. **D**, a Francophone Québécoise, was alone in answering that her Pagan reference material was in both English and French (see table 27).

**Table 27 - Language of the majority of survey respondents' Pagan reference material, by category**

	Francophones Québécois(es)	Other Francophones	Canadian Bilingual	Foreigner Bilingual / Allophone	Canadian Allophone	Canadian Anglophone	Foreigner Anglophone
English	5 (A, B, C, E, Q)	5 (F – I, N)	2 (J, P)	2 (K, M)	1 (L)	15 (6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21)	5 (1 – 5)
English and French	1 (D)						

Furthermore, as shown in Table 28, two Francophone Québécoises (**B**, **D**) and one Other Francophone (**G**) answered that they have difficulty translating some basic concepts of Paganism into their first language, in this case French. **B** added that this was the case even though she is bilingual<sup>36</sup>. The sole Canadian Allophone (**L**) answered that

<sup>36</sup> “Malgré que je sois bilingue” **B**, survey questionnaire.

he also encountered this difficulty, with the following caveat: “My first language is Greek, but for these questions I consider my first language English since I speak English more than Greek”<sup>37</sup>. The remaining survey respondents answered that this was not the case, or that this issue did not apply to their practice (see Table 28).

**Table 28 - On whether survey respondents have difficulty translating some basic concepts of their Pagan religious or spiritual path into their first language, by category**

	Francophones Québécois(es)	Other Francophones	Canadian Bilingual	Foreigner Bilingual / Allophone	Canadian Allophone	Canadian Anglophone	Foreigner Anglophone
Yes	2 (B, D)	1 (G)			1 (L)		
No	4 (A, C, E, Q)	4 (G, H, I, N)	2 (J, P)	1 (K)		9 (9, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21)	3 (1, 2, 5)
Doesn't apply				1 (M)		7 (6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 16)	2 (3, 4)

Most significantly, all of the Francophone Québécois(es), three of the Other Francophones (F, G, N) as well as the sole Canadian Allophone (L) answered that they have difficulty accessing Pagan material in their first language. The remaining survey respondents answered either that this was not the case, or that this issue did not apply to their practice (see Table 29)<sup>38</sup>.

**Table 29 - On whether survey respondents have difficulty accessing Pagan reference texts in their first language, by category**

	Francophones Québécois(es)	Other Francophones	Canadian Bilingual	Foreigner Bilingual / Allophone	Canadian Allophone	Canadian Anglophone	Foreigner Anglophone
Yes	6 (A – E, Q)	3 (F, G, N)			1 (L)		
No		2 (H, I)	2 (J, P)	1 (K)		12 (8, 9, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21)	4 (1, 2, 3, 5)
Doesn't apply				1 (M)		4 (6, 7, 10, 11)	1 (4)

<sup>37</sup> L, survey questionnaire.

<sup>38</sup> 21 added the following comment: “Generally no but some Celtic material is in Gaelic” (21, survey questionnaire).

It is understandable that L should find it difficult to find Pagan reference material in Greek within Quebec. However, explaining the dearth of French-language Pagan reference material in a province where the French language possesses such a high degree of importance in public life proves far less self-evident.

As discussed previously in Chapter 3, most publications on the topic of Paganism are written solely in English, as the majority of prominent Pagan authors worldwide are from the United Kingdom and/or the United States of America. At the time this research was completed, Scott Cunningham and Kerr Cuhulain were some of the very few Anglophone Wiccan authors whose works had been translated into French, and very little original French-language material on Paganism was available to a mass audience within the province of Quebec. As Mireille Gagnon observed, most Francophone Pagans compensate for the lack of available French-language resources on Paganism in Quebec by learning English or by improving their existing English-language skills<sup>39</sup>.

During the course of my research, I came across several possible explanations as to why some people experience difficulty in translating basic Pagan concepts into French, and why there are so few French-language resources on Paganism available in Quebec. One of these is that Francophone and Anglophone Pagans use different vocabularies to conceptualize and describe their Pagan practices. Mme Patry told me during our interview that some of the literal translations of Wiccan and Pagan concepts from English to French do not correspond with the reality of the practice of Witchcraft and Paganism among Francophones. French translations of words such as “Witch”, she said, were archaic and inaccurate: a “*sorcière*”, she told me, is a person condemned to burn at the stake. The majority of Witches she knew referred to themselves instead as “practitioners”

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<sup>39</sup> Mireille Gagnon, personal communication, 2007-11-17. See also Gagnon, 2003:58.

(*practiciennes*)<sup>40</sup>. Brigid, a Francophone Québécoise, admits that the awkwardness resulting from literal translations of some Pagan concepts is reason enough to worship in one's second language:

Souvent si je vais faire des prières, ça va être en anglais parce que malheureusement, il n'existe que très peu de livres publiés en français. Le côté de l'impact [d'une expression anglophone telle que] « so mote it be », en français « qu'il en soit ainsi », il y a une résonance différente. « Salut et bienvenue » [Hail and welcome] semble un trop familier, ça semble plus « Québécois », mais moins formel... ça fait trop familier... ça peut marcher, mais c'est un peu rigolo. S'adresser aux dieux de façon familière peut fonctionner, mais c'est un peu rigolo, un peu irrévérencieux, à moins que le dieu que vous invoquez soit par sa nature un dieu informel, comme Dionysos.<sup>41</sup>

Another factor compounding difficulties caused by the language barrier is the fact that Francophone Pagans have not developed elaborate community networks to the extent that Anglophone Pagans have in the last few decades. Brigid suggests that this could be caused by remnants of the cultural chasm between Francophones and Anglophones that persists in Quebec to this day:

La communauté païenne francophone est encore en formation... Nous n'avons pas la complexité, le développement des réseaux [des communautés païennes anglophones]. Les québécois ont peut-être tendance à se mettre à part des anglophones, mais d'après moi ce serait culturel. Pour beaucoup de québécois, l'anglo est toujours perçu comme l'ennemi, le colonisateur. Mais ce temps est fini!<sup>42</sup>

Other interview participants suggested that Francophone Pagans have an under-developed community because many among them deal with the dominance of the English language within their religion by not attending public events and by practicing privately in French, and/or by abiding to the traditional ceremonialist principle of secrecy. Indeed, when I first began discussing my research project with Mme Patry, she promptly warned me that I would find it difficult to get people to talk about their occult affiliations because many practitioners are oath-bound to keep their practices secret (*le secret de l'initié*). These anecdotal passages explain in part why it is so difficult to find Francophone Pagans

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<sup>40</sup> Marie-Renée Patry, interview 2007-08-21.

<sup>41</sup> Brigid, interview 2007-08-11.

<sup>42</sup> Brigid, interview 2007-08-11.

even through elaborate social networks. As Scarlet put it, this has been the case in

Montreal for decades:

Fifteen to twenty years ago the Francophone community was very strong, but they were closed covens... They went to public rituals but they kept to themselves and it was almost impossible to get involved unless you spoke French or knew someone. The only covens that were slightly open were *Chaudron de Cerridwen* or Silver Wheel [...] At this point in my life I feel I share more [with Francophone Pagans] because I'm in a traditional coven and I understand why they are private.<sup>43</sup>

Also, some interview participants suggested that many Pagan concepts and terms get lost in translation because Francophone and Anglophone Pagans tend to practice different kinds of Paganism. Mme Patry told me that in her experience as both a practitioner<sup>44</sup> and shopkeeper, Anglophone Pagans are more likely to practice Gardnerian and other British-derived traditions of Wicca, whereas Francophone practitioners keep to the Hermetic, ceremonial principles upon which the Western occult tradition is founded. Francophone Pagans, she said, were more likely to be Freemasons, Rosicrucians, Druids, and to practice some form of Celtic or Norse Reconstructionist spirituality. By her estimation, only about ten per cent of all Francophone Pagans are Wiccans<sup>45</sup>.

As seen in Table 10, a high number of Francophone survey participants claim to be Wiccans. There is indeed a marked discrepancy between Mme Patry's long-term observations and my own survey results. A likely explanation for this is that Francophone research participants who were most familiar with Wicca and other forms of Paganism commonly practiced by Anglophone Pagans (according to Mme Patry) were more likely to complete the survey questionnaire. At one point in the summer of 2007, when I

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<sup>43</sup> Scarlet, interview 2007-08-04/05

<sup>44</sup> Marie-Renée Patry has described her religious/spiritual itinerary as follows: she was a Rosicrucian seven years, a Freemason seven years, and has studied Hermetic magic and Vodoun. She describes herself as an Eclectic Pagan.

<sup>45</sup> Marie-Renée Patry, interview 2007-08-21

stepped into *Charme et sortilège* to collect completed surveys<sup>46</sup>, Mme Patry mentioned to me that some of her Francophone customers had shown great interest in participating in my research project, but could not complete the survey questionnaire. She added that they had failed to do so because they did not find that the definitions and concepts I had used in wording my questions fit well with their experience of Paganism. Mme Patry also pointed out during our interview that she considered the scope of my research inquiries to be perhaps too specific for me to properly grasp the distinctness of the forms of Paganism favoured by Francophones in Montreal<sup>47</sup>.

Another possible explanation for the differences in vocabulary between Anglophone and Francophone Pagans is the tendency for Francophone Pagans to reinterpret the meanings of English-language words to designate their religious traditions. For example, the word “Wicca” is often used to designate contemporary Paganism generally among Francophones in Quebec, whereas in English the word refers specifically to certain types of contemporary, usually British-derived, traditions of Witchcraft. During the “Anglophone and Francophone Open Dialogue” panel at the Montreal Pagan Conference in November 2007, one of the Francophone Pagan participants suggested that Francophone Pagans also choose to use English words in their religious practice because these provide them with a religious vocabulary that differs markedly from the Roman Catholic liturgy. This may indicate once again the degree to which Quebec culture and history continues to influence the growth and development of alternative forms of spirituality within the province. It must be stated that this same

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<sup>46</sup> Completed surveys were kept at this location and at the Montreal Pagan Resource Centre (MPRC) in large envelopes that were accessible only to the staff of the occult stores *Charme et sortilège* and *Le Mélange Magique* (adjacent to the MPRC). I visited the stores periodically throughout the summer of 2007 to collect completed surveys.

<sup>47</sup> Marie-Renée Patry, interview 2007-08-21.

person, who did not participate otherwise in this research project, also told me that Francophone Pagans often choose to practice in the English language because they use whatever resources that are available to them, as mentioned previously.

Looking back at my fieldwork experience, I must agree with Mme Patry's criticisms with regards to the narrowness of my line of inquiry. Throughout my fieldwork I found it very difficult to locate Francophone Pagans in Montreal on my own. In one particularly amusing instance, a Francophone elder in the Montreal Pagan community, who had declined my repeated invitations to participate in the research project, convinced other, younger, Francophone Pagans to fill out the survey questionnaire as a consolation for his own refusal<sup>48</sup>. My own experience supports in part Scarlet's and Mme Patry's assertion that Francophone Pagans tend to be more private, traditional minded and Hermetic in their practices than their Anglophone counterparts.

Rhiannon confirmed Scarlet's depiction of the Francophone component of the Montreal Pagan community as a collection of unrelated, secretive groups and solitary practitioners who enforce their privacy. When I asked her in what ways the Montreal Pagan community contributed to her identity, she answered: "Je ne pense pas qu'elle contribue fort. Ce sont des petits groupes non reliés les uns aux autres..."<sup>49</sup>. Mme Patry also stated that the Montreal Pagan community had very little impact on her practice and identity as a solitary practitioner. On the other hand, as the owner and manager of a Pagan occult store, she has taken on the role of community and networking resource among Francophone Pagans in Montreal: "En tant que praticienne solitaire, ça ne contribue pas beaucoup. En tant que directrice d'une boutique, inévitablement ça

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<sup>48</sup> This occurred at Kaleidoscope Gathering and at the Montreal Pagan Conference alluded to in the Introduction.

<sup>49</sup> Rhiannon, interview 2007-08-15.

influence beaucoup. Il y a deux aspects [selon votre position]”<sup>50</sup>. She also told me that she keeps both aspects separate in her daily life.

This is in marked contrast to what many Anglophone (and one Bilingual) interview participants told me when asked in what ways the Montreal Pagan community contributed to their identity. Most of them said that interacting with other Pagans in Montreal played a large role in the formation of their Pagan identity and worldview, both positively and negatively.

The Pagan community in Montreal, the visible part of it, the part that is easy to find... I was very much involved in it when I first moved here, but I found after a while that it wasn't what I was looking for. In a way it has contributed to my identity in opposition to these things.<sup>51</sup>

I guess it gives me a chance to get together with like-minded people, and it's very fulfilling.<sup>52</sup>

Dealing with the local community has brought out a more assertive quality to my personality. I'm less intimidated to take a stand or defend a person or opinion. I'm more vocal about my opinions.<sup>53</sup>

I've just moved here about three weeks [ago], so I guess it's really good to have found a really awesome community right away. I guess being part of a community is beneficial to your sense of self. Mutual learning is an important part of the community. I've learned a lot since I've been here.<sup>54</sup>

I'm a Montrealer, therefore I am. They allowed me the opportunity, the resources, to actually learn, to practice, to participate, to share. In Montreal, it's so easy to find Pagans, we have a Pagan shop, schools, clubs, public rituals, there is so much you can get involved in. You can always connect... That is a strong influence. I embraced it, and the community embraced me. This is one of the reasons I do so much community work, to give back. I like to pay it forward.<sup>55</sup>

The people I encounter in the Pagan community in Montreal and the friendships I forged as a result of meeting people in the Pagan community help me reinforce and develop my spiritual path as a Pagan. In other words, meeting and discussing Paganism with people who are also Pagan

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<sup>50</sup> Marie-Renée Patry, interview 2007-08-21.

<sup>51</sup> Rose, interview 2007-07-07.

<sup>52</sup> Izzy, interview 2007-07-29.

<sup>53</sup> Hobbes, interview 2007-07-29.

<sup>54</sup> Chloe, interview 2007-07-29.

<sup>55</sup> Scarlet, interview 2007-08-04/05. In her own words, Scarlet's long-term involvement in the Montreal Pagan community includes the following:

1994: Founded CUPS (Concordia University Pagan Society)

1994: Founded Crescent Moon School

2000: Was one of the founders of the MPRC (Montreal Pagan Resource Centre)

2000: Was an inspiration behind the founding of John Abbot Pagan Club (JAP)

2001: Joined the Black Forest Clan

2003-2004: Was the Manager of *Le Mélange Magique*

2006-2007: Black Forest Clan goes public

deepens my Pagan spirituality. It also exposes me to new ideas and traditions and often challenges my own perceptions and conceptions of Paganism and my general worldview.<sup>56</sup>

It has shown me both negative and positive aspects of human nature, as a microcosm, a reflection of the rest of the world. Pagans are no better or worse than the rest of humanity. But at the same time I have come to know some extraordinary people who never cease to amaze me with how they stretch themselves to help others.<sup>57</sup>

The pagan community in Montreal started my identity with community concerning my pagan beliefs. Before living here, I was a solitary practitioner. Now, the majority of my close friends here are part of the pagan community of Montreal, Ottawa, and Toronto.<sup>58</sup>

Not all Francophone Pagans were in favour of segregating themselves and their practices from other members of the Montreal Pagan community and from the rest of society. Brighid told me she believes that the Montreal Pagan community has greatly contributed to her own identity as a Pagan, and that she yearns for a more unified Francophone Pagan community:

Oui, elle contribue beaucoup, surtout depuis que la boutique *Charme et sortilège* est ouverte. Je me sens plus à l'aise avec cette boutique francophone, car l'autre boutique, le *Mélange Magique* est plus anglophone. Dans les communautés païennes, les boutiques ésotériques ont un très grand rôle, c'est comme le perron de l'Église catholique!

[...]

Oui, j'aimerais ça qu'il y ait un groupe de païens plus unis, plus développé, comme aux États-Unis. [Brighid cite comme exemples Circle Sanctuary, et EarthSpirit Community aux Massachussetts]. Ou même à Toronto. [Brighid mentionne le groupe Wiccan Church of Canada avec mon aide, mais avoue que] ... "Church" a une connotation chrétienne.<sup>59</sup>

In order to create some of that desired unity, some Francophone Pagans have begun translating English-language texts and rituals in order to make Paganism, and Wicca in particular, more accessible to unilingual Francophones. Fabiola, a member of the public Francophone Coven Yggdrasil, related how she and her coven-mates were engaged in community building by making English-language Pagan texts available to Francophones. When asked what she shared with Francophone Pagans, she replied: "Je dirais le partage de la spiritualité. Je dirais aussi l'entraide parce que beaucoup ne parlent

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<sup>56</sup> Amanda, interview 2007-08-11.

<sup>57</sup> Gra-Auga, interview 2007-08-11.

<sup>58</sup> Amber, interview 2007-08-29.

<sup>59</sup> Brighid, interview 2007-08-11.

pas anglais donc on s'entraide pour les aider à faire la traduction de certains textes anglais vers le français”<sup>60</sup>. Fabiola and the members of Coven Yggdrasil are not alone in doing this. Rhiannon, who was initiated into an Anglophone Wiccan tradition in 1985, is now a High Priestess with her own coven. She has begun translating her Book of Shadows into French for the benefit of her unilingual Francophone students<sup>61</sup>.

Meri Fowler also provided examples of how some Francophone Pagans attempt to build bridges and reach out to Anglophone Pagans. She told me that while she was taking classes on Paganism with Francophone women, they accepted her in spite of her being an Anglophone<sup>62</sup>. These interview excerpts, as well as my own long-term observations, demonstrate once again that Francophone and Anglophone Pagans in Montreal go to great lengths to accommodate one another in order to minimize the divisions caused by the language barrier within Quebec society.

Interview results also indicate that although Anglophone Pagans in Quebec tend to have a neutral or even supportive attitude towards their Francophone neighbours, they do not necessarily identify with the Québécois people. As Scarlet put it,

I do not identify with being Québécois. That is a Francophone political, cultural stance that I do not identify with. I am an Anglo-Quebecker. I support them [the Québécois] in their wish to have an identity, but that is not my identity.<sup>63</sup>

Then again, Francophone Pagans are also unlikely to identify with the struggle for Québécois cultural survival most characteristic of *La Survivance* alluded to earlier. Rhiannon told me that although her parents raised her to have a Quebec separatist political inclination, her Wiccan religious affiliation caused her to perceive herself as part of a greater whole that is unaffected by political divisions: “ça me donne un sentiment

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<sup>60</sup> Fabiola, interview 2007-08-11.

<sup>61</sup> Rhiannon, interview 2007-08-15.

<sup>62</sup> Meri Fowler, interview 2007-07-29/30.

<sup>63</sup> Scarlet, interview 007-08-4/5.

d'appartenance à l'univers, pas à une ethnie, pas à une culture, à l'univers entier".<sup>64</sup> Mme

Patry concurs:

Non, au contraire, ma spiritualité me fait voir à quel point les religions [...] ont un point commun [tels que] la recherche de devenir un meilleur humain, [de] se rapprocher de la perfection divine. [La] spiritualité globalise les intentions éthiques ou religieuses. [...]. Il y a un lien commun et une démarche commune.<sup>65</sup>

Rhiannon and Mme Patry are not alone in feeling that their identities as Pagans transcend political divisions within their home province. When asked about their political inclinations, only one Francophone Québécois survey respondent claimed to be a Quebec sovereigntist (Q), and only one Other Francophone answered that he was a Quebec separatist (N), while six survey respondents in three categories answered that they were federalists or in favour of Canadian political unity. Seventeen survey respondents in five categories answered that they were socially liberal, while twelve people in four categories claimed to be apolitical (see Table 30).

**Table 30 - Survey respondents' political inclinations, by category**

	Francophones Québécois(es)	Other Francophones	Canadian Bilingual	Foreigner Bilingual / Allophone	Canadian Allophone	Canadian Anglophone	Foreigner Anglophone
Socially liberal (left of center)	2 (E, Q)	3 (F, I, N)	1 (P)			7 (8, 9, 11, 13, 14, 15, 17)	4 (1, 3, 4, 5)
Socially conservative (right of center)							
Moderate	2 (B, D)		1 (J)	1 (M)	1 (L)		1 (2)
Federalist		2 (F, G)	1 (P)			3 (7, 8, 14)	
Quebec separatist		1 (N)					
Quebec sovereigntist	1 (Q)						
Neutral / apolitical	3 (A, C, D)	1 (H)	1 (J)			7 (6, 7, 10, 12, 13, 16, 19)	
Other <sup>66</sup>				1 (K)		4 (11, 14, 18, 20)	

<sup>64</sup> Rhiannon, interview 2007-08-15.

<sup>65</sup> Marie-Renée Patry, interview 2007-08-21.

<sup>66</sup> Survey respondents who chose this option added the following comments:

**Table 31 - On whether survey respondents' Pagan religious or spiritual paths reflect their political views and inclinations, by category**

	Francophones Québécois(es)	Other Francophones	Canadian Bilingual	Foreigner Bilingual / Allophone	Canadian Allophone	Canadian Anglophone	Foreigner Anglophone
Yes	3 (D, E, Q)	2 (F, N)	1 (J)	2 (K, M)		9 (8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18)	4 (1, 3, 4, 5)
No	3 (A, B, C)	3 (G, H, I)	1 (P)		1 (L)	6 (6, 7, 12, 16, 19, 20)	1 (2)

Beyond the findings that the survey respondents who claimed to be either Quebec separatists or sovereignists were male and Francophone, there are no obvious patterns of difference between ethno-linguistic categories in terms of survey respondents' political inclinations. Nevertheless, a slight majority of survey respondents believe that their Pagan paths reflect their political views (see Table 31). When asked to describe how their Pagan paths reflect their political views and inclinations, many survey respondents expressed a concern for social justice, feminism, environmentalism and balance, all of which are prevalent values within most Pagan traditions:

Richesse de l'individu au sein d'une communauté, chacun peut apporter son grain de sel pour un bien commun.<sup>67</sup>

Égalitaire, alter-mondialiste, écologiste et développement durable tout en honorant nos ancêtres.<sup>68</sup>

My Pagan beliefs dictate my political views. I am more careful in voting for a party that has a good environmental program, social program for fairness for all the children of the Goddess.<sup>69</sup>

Pagan values (ecology, freedom, liberal...)<sup>70</sup>

How I think of my spiritual expression reflects how I live my life.<sup>71</sup>

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**K:** Anarchist

**11:** anarchist

**14:** green

**18:** Communist

**20:** Communist

<sup>67</sup> E, survey questionnaire.

<sup>68</sup> Q, survey questionnaire.

<sup>69</sup> F, survey questionnaire.

<sup>70</sup> N, survey questionnaire.

<sup>71</sup> J, survey questionnaire.

Reclaiming has always been close to the anarchist movement and is very activist-based. Spirituality and activism are very important to me, and they come together naturally.<sup>72</sup>

I vote for balance in ways that I think / feel / sense the Gods want me to.<sup>73</sup>

Being a part of an activism-based earth centered spirituality, in which environmentalism, feminism, anarchism and other leftist philosophies and practices are emphasized and explored through a spiritual context, these two things go together seamlessly for me.<sup>74</sup>

For me, Paganism re-inforces my existing views on the environment and social justice. It is impossible to separate body, mind and spirit.<sup>75</sup>

Work ethic but help others in need (but not slackers).<sup>76</sup>

general kindness – tolerance.<sup>77</sup>

Politics is a manner of governing, not controlling. Wisdom can be shared from our leaders across a nation, if only we had wise leaders.<sup>78</sup>

My politics are “greener” as a result and reflect the NRM rather than the usual Catholic & Jewish affiliations.<sup>79</sup>

Unity & respect for all creatures -> whether they are different from oneself or not.<sup>80</sup>

Pagans are tolerant [sic] of all cultures while respecting their individuality.<sup>81</sup>

Green politics; inclusive politics.<sup>82</sup>

I feel that every part of myself is related and intertwined, that my spirituality is an extension [of] my myself + my political beliefs.<sup>83</sup>

Other survey respondents expressed their apolitical stance as follows:

[L]a politique, pour moi, ne sers [sic] aucun engagement politique. C'est un choix personnel.<sup>84</sup>

[Paganism] has influenced me to be a-political because no political group seems to be just, honorable, or balanced as my path encourages me to be.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> K, survey questionnaire.

<sup>73</sup> M, survey questionnaire.

<sup>74</sup> 1, survey questionnaire.

<sup>75</sup> 3, survey questionnaire.

<sup>76</sup> 4, survey questionnaire.

<sup>77</sup> 5, survey questionnaire.

<sup>78</sup> 8, survey questionnaire.

<sup>79</sup> 9, survey questionnaire.

<sup>80</sup> 14, survey questionnaire.

<sup>81</sup> 15, survey questionnaire.

<sup>82</sup> 17, survey questionnaire.

<sup>83</sup> 18, survey questionnaire.

<sup>84</sup> D, survey questionnaire.

<sup>85</sup> 10, survey questionnaire.

I feel environmentally and generally the two coincide fairly well but being not very politically minded and also given that I feel politics is very far from sacred I don't feel the two need to be connected as my Pagan practice / beliefs are very sacred to me.<sup>86</sup>

When asked how their Pagan affiliations inform their political views, interview participants often echoed the concerns listed above, but with more emphasis on environmental issues and “green” politics:

They affect my political views on environmentalism; if you view the Earth as sacred, then you have to try to be more environmentally conscious.<sup>87</sup>

Because I believe balance is important in a spiritual view, I believe in political balance, but it's difficult to achieve.<sup>88</sup>

For me, the two are separate. I believe in treating the Earth well but politicians can't be trusted... My spirituality is something sacred, politics is not sacred and I have trouble finding a bridge between the two. I try to vote for the lesser evil [laughs].<sup>89</sup>

My religious perspective enlightens me to perceive that my political people are all assholes and don't really care about their people and their environment. Therefore I either do not get involved in politics or I vote marginally. Like, for example, I voted for the Green Party, the lesser of many evils, and they are all evil. They don't meet our needs, and I can't justify getting involved because my involvement means very little to them. None of the political parties meet the needs of Pagans. So when something has to be done, it doesn't [get done].

I don't feel I can be involved because I am unable to be political, to make change myself. I refuse to become a political activist like Starhawk. Getting arrested to prove a point is not on my list of ways to make change. I prefer to try to make change more subtly by changing my lifestyle and helping individuals change theirs.<sup>90</sup>

Oui. Avec les principes de la Wicca, je suis devenue très environnementaliste. Je suis aussi devenue beaucoup en faveur de la cause des femmes ici et ailleurs dans le monde. Je peux dire que ça affecte aussi ma façon de voter, tout dépendant du député.<sup>91</sup>

One informs the other, it works both ways. Often my politics manifest in my spiritual worldview. For example, I am an environmentalist, so it's natural to me that I would pursue a spiritual worldview that honors the Earth. But having such a spiritual outlook, it's natural that I'm an environmentalist. It's impossible to tell whether the chicken or the egg came first. It's all part of the wholeness of being and not conveniently segmenting one's life.<sup>92</sup>

They reflect my political views. They reflect each other, actually. My political views reflect my Pagan views, my religious views reflect my political views.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> 13, survey questionnaire.

<sup>87</sup> Meri Fowler, interview 2007-07-29/30.

<sup>88</sup> Hobbes, interview 2007-07-29.

<sup>89</sup> Chloe, interview 2007-07-29.

<sup>90</sup> Scarlet, interview 2007-08-04/05.

<sup>91</sup> Fabiola, interview 2007-08-11.

<sup>92</sup> Amanda, interview 2007-08-11.

<sup>93</sup> Gra-Augá, interview 2007-08-11.

Euh, oui, ça doit être parce qu'en fait avant j'étais séparatiste comme mes parents [...]. Maintenant je suis plus pour une politique globale. Je ne crois pas que la religion influence la politique énormément mais la nature va influencer nos choix politiques. [Rhiannon m'explique qu'elle est d'orientation écologique].<sup>94</sup>

Non, sauf pour l'intolérance. [Ma spiritualité] influence mon écoute [indirectement].<sup>95</sup>

I am not knowledgeable on the specific views of politics, however, one view I am keen on is having religious rights. Since my morals and values are affected by and affect my spirituality, other factors of my political views are influenced as well. Examples of these views would be to preserve the environment and to support several equality rights.<sup>96</sup>

I suppose that it gives me a different viewpoint when certain issues come up like those that have to do with the environment. Perhaps, one could say that I'm more conscious of certain issues like the environment.<sup>97</sup>

**Table 32 - On whether survey respondents feel that their Pagan religious / spiritual paths influence their ecological views, by category**

	Francophones Québécois(es)	Other Francophones	Canadian Bilingual	Foreigner Bilingual / Allophone	Canadian Allophone	Canadian Anglophone	Foreigner Anglophone
Yes	3 (B, D, Q)	5 (F – I, N)	1 (P)	2 (K, M)	1 (L)	10 (6, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19)	5 (1 – 5)
No	1 (A)		2 (J)			5 (7, 8, 12, 18, 20)	

Concern for environmental issues was almost universal among the Pagans in my sample. As shown in Table 32, the majority of survey respondents in all categories answered that their Pagan paths influence their views on the environment. This is entirely consistent with the Pagan understanding of the Earth as sacred and the notion that humans have a duty to ensure the health and well being of the planet. This opinion was also voiced many times when the topic was brought up during interviews:

The environment is important. We do recycling and organic gardening, and so on.<sup>98</sup>

I guess it makes me more aware, to be more eco-friendly, in a way.<sup>99</sup>

<sup>94</sup> Rhiannon, interview 2007-08-15.

<sup>95</sup> Marie-Renée Patry, interview 2007-08-21.

<sup>96</sup> Amber, interview 2007-08-29.

<sup>97</sup> Patrick, interview 2008-01-20.

<sup>98</sup> Meri Fowler, interview 2007-07-29/30.

<sup>99</sup> Izzy, interview 2007-07-29.

Through my spirituality I've discovered a deeper love and understanding of the sacredness of the Earth and the importance of taking care of Her.<sup>100</sup>

Respect the environment, damn it! [laughs] Reduce, reuse, recycle, refuse, compost, don't litter, just be aware. We have to live on this Earth, we don't own it, we borrow it. If we deplete it, we have nothing left to survive with. In other words, don't shit where you eat. Don't create a mess in the places where you need to survive.<sup>101</sup>

Oui. Je me sens terriblement coupable si j'achète un produit qui n'est pas écologique, de ne pas recycler. Si Dieu est immanent, alors je lui manque de respect si je pollue ou je prends un produit qui va nuire à l'environnement, comme la lessive ou les produits pour laver la vaisselle. Le papier vierge est une aberration.<sup>102</sup>

Oui. Pour moi, je crois beaucoup au principe de la Terre-Mère, au principe de Gaia comme être vivant. Depuis que j'ai commencé, ce principe s'est beaucoup renforcé.<sup>103</sup>

One informs the other. It's hard to separate the chicken and the egg. If anything I would say that my political and scientific views on the environment inform my Paganism more than the other way around. I am currently teaching workshops that teach science, ecology and the environment in the context of a Pagan and magical worldview.<sup>104</sup>

They [my Pagan views] make me want to take care of the environment a lot better than many of my fellow human beings.<sup>105</sup>

Oui, c'est sûr! Si je fais un rituel pour que les moissons poussent ou que tout fleurisse au printemps [...]. [Une vision environnementaliste] attire l'attention sur les effets néfastes sur la nature...<sup>106</sup>

Définitivement. C'est sûr que ça change la conscience que j'ai de l'environnement. Parce que je suis praticienne, j'ai plus conscience qu'il faut faire attention à la planète, surtout si l'on pratique la magie élémentale.<sup>107</sup>

Wicca focuses on worship of the Earth, and I believe that as a society, we should attempt to preserve the environment and treat it with respect. However, I was taught this as a young age, whereas I began associating with Wicca when I was thirteen.<sup>108</sup>

I'm more conscious of environmental issues and the responsibilities that one has to the environment.<sup>109</sup>

This ethos of concern for the environment, social justice and other issues affecting society as a whole stems most likely from Pagans' widespread adoption of the eco-feminist model of Paganism made popular by Starhawk in the 1980s, and the ethical

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<sup>100</sup> Chloe, interview 2007-07-29.

<sup>101</sup> Scarlet, 2007-08-04/05.

<sup>102</sup> Brigid, interview 2007-08-11.

<sup>103</sup> Fabiola, interview 2007-08-11.

<sup>104</sup> Amanda, interview 2007-08-11.

<sup>105</sup> Gra-Auga, interview 2007-08-08.

<sup>106</sup> Rhiannon, interview 2007-08-15.

<sup>107</sup> Marie-Renée Patry, interview 2007-08-21.

<sup>108</sup> Amber, interview 2007-08-29.

<sup>109</sup> Patrick, interview 2008-01-20.

principles promulgated through the Wiccan Rede. The Wiccan Rede is a set of guidelines best summarized by the maxim: “An it harm none, do what you will”, and has its origins within British traditions of Wicca, but its principles are well known and widely integrated within the larger Pagan movement. This principle of radical freedom comes with the caveat that although human beings have the right to act according to their Will, they have ultimate responsibility for their deeds, and are answerable to karmic laws and other unseen mechanisms of cause and effect. This ethical principle also reinforces the widespread Pagan worldview that all things within the universe are interconnected. In this respect, Pagan ethics concur with the principle in Newtonian physics stipulating that every action has an equal and opposite reaction. Furthermore, some Witches and Pagans also believe that any magical action operates under the Threefold Law (or the Law of Return). This principle dictates that every deed of a magical nature returns to its originator with an effect that is three times greater than what was originally sent out, regardless of the originator’s intentions.

When asked how their Pagan affiliations informed their ethics, the interview participants almost unanimously reiterated the principles promulgated by the Wiccan Rede, with all the ethical implications stated above. This occurred even among participants who did not identify with Wicca:

Even though I don’t identify as Wiccan, I feel that the Wiccan Rede is common sense, and that everyone should do what they want as long as they don’t hurt anyone else. That’s something I’ve always believed and I think that’s part of the reason why I identify with Paganism. I’d like to turn this around and say, I’d rather say that my ethics I already had inform my religious choices / affiliations.<sup>110</sup>

They’re the basis of my ethics because we follow the Wiccan Rede.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> Rose, interview 2007-07-07.

<sup>111</sup> Meri Fowler, interview 2007-07-29/30.

I guess it strengthens them because I'm a strong believer in karma. The way I live my life, I try to be careful of what I do because of karma.<sup>112</sup>

They've taught me that because everything is connected, our actions really do change our environment. By contributing positively to your community you strengthen your own life.<sup>113</sup>

Just in being more aware in trying to do things for the highest and greatest good, and asking Spirit for guidance on the way as I travel down my path.<sup>114</sup>

An it harm none, do what you will. Lest in your self defense it be... My spirituality influences a lot of my ethical views. We have a Threefold Law to go with that quote. It's a simple set of rules. It asks you to think about what you do before you do it. Everything has a consequence. No small act goes unnoticed in the universe. It's going to affect one change or another, subtly, or majorly, so we try to just be aware. But it doesn't mean we turn the other cheek either or turn a blind eye. Because to let a wrong happen is to advocate that wrong. That is specific to my path, not specific to Wicca. A lot of Wicca is about "don't harm anyone". They might as well be Jains.<sup>115</sup>

Oui, comme c'est une religion égalitaire, qui respecte les croyances [des autres], je ne supporte pas de voir un groupe persécuter un autre. Je suis hostile à des gens qui persécutent d'autres gens pour des raisons religieuses; je vais employer des moyens non-violents... je suis contre la bigoterie, la tyrannie...<sup>116</sup>

Oui, surtout le principe "My word is my bond". Depuis que j'ai entendu ce principe-là, je fais beaucoup plus attention à mes engagements afin d'être sûre de pouvoir les respecter. Les principes d'éthique dans la Wicca et le paganisme ont beaucoup changé ma façon d'agir depuis ces dernières années. Je fais beaucoup plus attention à comment je traite les gens.<sup>117</sup>

Both come from the soul, and my sense of true self or true will. My Pagan spiritual practice helps me access my true self and my ethics naturally spring forth from that. I feel that ethics is not something that can be set down in a list of laws. Ethics and morality are individualistic. My Pagan spiritual path supports this worldview. Others may not.<sup>118</sup>

They make me want to live my life responsibly.<sup>119</sup>

Ça n'a pas changé ma façon d'être... Sans blesser autrui, fais ce que tu veux... ça a toujours eu une connotation en dedans de moi... Ça a toujours été comme ça pour moi.<sup>120</sup>

Aussi, ne serait-ce à la loi du retour, la loi karmique [...]. S'il y avait une loi qui ressort, c'est ne fais pas à autrui ce que tu ne veux pas que l'on fasse à toi... on ne se met pas dans une position karmique ou énergétique où l'on fait du tort.<sup>121</sup>

I chose to follow Wicca because my morals, values, and beliefs followed the beliefs and guidelines of the religion. Since most Wiccans share the same ethics, it helps to strengthen my own ethics.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> Izzy, interview 2007-07-29.

<sup>113</sup> Hobbes, interview 2007-07-29.

<sup>114</sup> Chloe, interview 2007-07-29.

<sup>115</sup> Scarlet, interview 2007-08-04/05.

<sup>116</sup> Brighid, interview 2007-08-11.

<sup>117</sup> Fabiola, interview 2007-08-11.

<sup>118</sup> Amanda, interview 2007-08-11.

<sup>119</sup> Gra-Auga, interview 2007-08-11.

<sup>120</sup> Rhiannon, interview 2007-08-15.

<sup>121</sup> Marie-Renée Patry, interview 2007-08-21.

<sup>122</sup> Amber, interview 2007-08-29.

My personal faith has given me my own moral compass to live by. I have an understanding that there is a consequence to everything I do and I try to make my choices carefully.<sup>123</sup>

In order to determine the degree to which research participants integrated the ethical principles promulgated by Paganism within their religious worldviews, I asked survey respondents whether they believed that Black Magic had anything to offer Paganism. I did not define the concept of Black Magic in the survey questionnaire, as I fully expected that respondents would interpret this term in its vernacular meaning of destructive magic used for purely egoistical ends. Surprisingly, the majority of survey respondents answered that Black Magic could indeed be useful to Pagans (see Table 33).

**Table 33 - On whether survey respondents think Black Magic has anything to offer Paganism, by category**

	Francophones Québécois(es)	Other Francophones	Canadian Bilingual	Foreigner Bilingual / Allophone	Canadian Allophone	Canadian Anglophone	Foreigner Anglophone
Yes		3 (F, I, N)	2 (J, P)	1 (M)	1 (L)	9 (6, 7, 8, 12, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21)	3 (1, 3, 4)
No	6 (A – E, Q)	2 (G, H)				2 (14, 15)	1 (2)
Still on fence						1 (9)	

A definite pattern of difference between categories emerges when taking into account that all of the Francophone Québécois(es) survey respondents answered that Black Magic had nothing to offer Paganism, while only two Other Francophones, two Canadian Anglophones and one Foreigner Anglophone answered the same. **D**, a Francophone Québécoise, qualified her answer with the comment: “La loi du retour”<sup>124</sup>.

<sup>123</sup> Patrick, interview 2008-01-20.

<sup>124</sup> **D**, survey questionnaire.

**K**, the sole Foreigner bilingual survey respondent, answered instead: “I don’t believe there is such a thing as Black / White magic. The world isn’t that simple”<sup>125</sup>.

As a follow-up question, I asked the survey respondents to elaborate why they believed that Black Magic had something to offer Paganism. The answers reveal that although most Pagans in my sample acknowledge the existence of Black Magic within a Pagan worldview, they also agreed with **K** in that they perceived magic to be in itself a neutral force, and that what truly matters is the intent of the magician:

You need to know about Black Magic to recognize it and be able to defend yourself. But Magic has no color it all depends on your intentions.<sup>126</sup>

[A]ll aspects need to be known to understand them.<sup>127</sup>

With the notion of karma, protection, psychic self-defense & The Rede.<sup>128</sup>

It’s important to learn what encompasses destructive magic and how to use it responsibly.<sup>129</sup>

It teaches us boundaries or, at least, helps define them.<sup>130</sup>

To be aware at protecting oneself and defense.<sup>131</sup>

Recycled, egoistic self-centred ceremonial look at me magic.<sup>132</sup>

I don’t like the terms “black magic” and “white magic”; I think they are an unnecessary dichotomy that has been set up and does not reflect the full spectrum of magical possibilities nor the actual ways in which magic is practiced.<sup>133</sup>

What is Black Magic? I see it as confronting the dark, so yes, you need to balance the light with the dark. If black magic refers to 'hurtful' magic, then still yes. If I would be willing to take mundane action that might be 'hurtful', like hitting an attacker with a bat, then I should be able to do this magically as well. If Black magic means 'harmful', as in a desire to willfully cause harm and injury out o spite or entertainment, then no. It ahs no more place in magic as that behaviour has in mundane society.<sup>134</sup>

Revenge, retribution (if justified).<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> **K**, survey questionnaire.

<sup>126</sup> **F**, survey questionnaire.

<sup>127</sup> **I**, survey questionnaire.

<sup>128</sup> **N**, survey questionnaire.

<sup>129</sup> **J**, survey questionnaire.

<sup>130</sup> **P**, survey questionnaire.

<sup>131</sup> **L**, survey questionnaire.

<sup>132</sup> **M**, survey questionnaire.

<sup>133</sup> **1**, survey questionnaire.

<sup>134</sup> **3**, survey questionnaire.

<sup>135</sup> **4**, survey questionnaire.

Paganism is about duality and balance if everything was "White Magic" then it would throw everything off balance. It's funny to compare it this way but it's kind of like the Jedi Force.<sup>136</sup>

There is no "black magic" or "white magic." It's all about how you use the power.<sup>137</sup>

If it is there, there is a reason.<sup>138</sup>

People learn from experience.<sup>139</sup>

To learn to shield oneself from harm + the negative.<sup>140</sup>

Does magic really have color? Magic fits a situation – color / white / black / fushia – are pretty abstract.<sup>141</sup>

To me, everything has something to offer.<sup>142</sup>

Everything has something to offer, no matter how small.<sup>143</sup>

I don't see magic as black or white. Magic is activating change using your will. Your will is not colored. Nor is your intent.<sup>144</sup>

Furthermore, though some survey respondents related that they believe it is appropriate to use Black Magic for self-defense purposes and to help protect others from harm, they also added the caveat that one must be willing to face the consequences of using Black Magic in every case. Many survey respondents answered that it is never appropriate to use Black Magic.

[S]ous aucune considération. Cela pourrait avoir des conséquences désastreuses pour tout [sic] ceux et celles qui s'y risqueraient.<sup>145</sup>

Jamais. En fait la magie n'est ni noire ni blanche elle est neutre c'est l'utilisateur et ses intentions qui sont noires.<sup>146</sup>

Si elle est vu[e] comme une magie qui prend le contrôle sur les autres sans leur consentement: JAMAIS.<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> 6, survey questionnaire.

<sup>137</sup> 7, survey questionnaire.

<sup>138</sup> 8, survey questionnaire.

<sup>139</sup> 12, survey questionnaire.

<sup>140</sup> 16, survey questionnaire.

<sup>141</sup> 17, survey questionnaire.

<sup>142</sup> 18, survey questionnaire.

<sup>143</sup> 20, survey questionnaire.

<sup>144</sup> 21, survey questionnaire.

<sup>145</sup> B, survey questionnaire.

<sup>146</sup> C, survey questionnaire.

<sup>147</sup> Q, survey questionnaire.

[T]o defend yourself.<sup>148</sup>

At no times, other means are better to solve possible conflict.<sup>149</sup>

When the Witch is in great danger and is ready to face the consequences.<sup>150</sup>

It is a last resort and it comes with a price to the practitioner. The practitioner must be aware of that price and accept it.<sup>151</sup>

On the extremely rare occasion when it is appropriate & when the gods give permission.<sup>152</sup>

In defence or when you're experienced enough.<sup>153</sup>

To help those in need, to catch a criminal, to stop someone from hurting others or themselves.<sup>154</sup>

[T]o create a balance.<sup>155</sup>

Very very rarely, in extreme circumstances, if you know what you are doing & can protect yourself properly. I don't suggest it.<sup>156</sup>

There is no black magic per say [sic]. It is all about intention. But in the traditional sense, no.<sup>157</sup>

In the most dire circumstances. Harm to others should be avoided in most cases.<sup>158</sup>

Any time you perform magic you must be certain of your goal and will – as soon as you are certain you can do the magic.<sup>159</sup>

In contrast, when asked if they believed that White Magic had something to offer Paganism, survey respondents were unanimous in answering that it did (see Table 34). Once again, I left the definition of White Magic open to the interpretation of the survey respondents, and assumed that they would understand the notion by its vernacular meaning of altruistic, positive redirection of energy.

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<sup>148</sup> F, survey questionnaire.

<sup>149</sup> H, survey questionnaire.

<sup>150</sup> N, survey questionnaire.

<sup>151</sup> J, survey questionnaire.

<sup>152</sup> M, survey questionnaire.

<sup>153</sup> 6, survey questionnaire.

<sup>154</sup> 7, survey questionnaire.

<sup>155</sup> 9, survey questionnaire.

<sup>156</sup> 15, survey questionnaire.

<sup>157</sup> 16, survey questionnaire.

<sup>158</sup> 18, survey questionnaire.

<sup>159</sup> 21, survey questionnaire.

**Table 34 - On whether survey respondents think White Magic has anything to offer Paganism, by category**

	Francophones Québécois(es)	Other Francophones	Canadian Bilingual	Foreigner Bilingual / Allophone	Canadian Allophone	Canadian Anglophone	Foreigner ANglophone
Yes	6 (A – E, Q)	5 (F – I, N)	2 (J, P)	1 (M)	1 (L)	11 (6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21)	5 (1 – 5)
No							

When asked to elaborate upon their answers, many of the survey respondents mentioned that White Magic was useful for its purported healing and altruistic attributes:

La magie blanche apporte de bonne[s] énergie[s].<sup>160</sup>

Les rituels permettent de mieux “focaliser” son intention et à atteindre ses objectifs en contrôlant les pensées négatives.<sup>161</sup>

Je pense que les intentions bénéfiques peuvent aider dans tout travail spirituel.<sup>162</sup>

[M]agie d’amour universel et de guérison.<sup>163</sup>

Pureté, lumière, illumination.<sup>164</sup>

Je crois que les deux sont très reliés et que les écoles des mystères qui existaient dans les sociétés antiques ont côtoyé [sic] les cultures païennes et se sont influencées beaucoup l’une et l’autre. Pour moi les deux sont reliées et font partie de mes pratiques et des mêmes systèmes de croyances.<sup>165</sup>

I think white magic is about healing and enlightenment. After all that is why we embark on any spiritual path.<sup>166</sup>

To me white magic is part of Paganism even if some Pagans never really use Magic but only the spiritual aspects.<sup>167</sup>

Healing, the understanding of each other.<sup>168</sup>

All aspects need to be known to understand them.<sup>169</sup>

<sup>160</sup> A, survey questionnaire.

<sup>161</sup> B, survey questionnaire.

<sup>162</sup> C, survey questionnaire.

<sup>163</sup> D, survey questionnaire.

<sup>164</sup> E, survey questionnaire.

<sup>165</sup> Q, survey questionnaire.

<sup>166</sup> F, survey questionnaire.

<sup>167</sup> G, survey questionnaire.

<sup>168</sup> H, survey questionnaire.

<sup>169</sup> I, survey questionnaire.

White Magick is linked with Mother Earth as well as Her cycles. Magick is a spiritual technology of Paganism.<sup>170</sup>

The use of constructive, empowering magic can only serve to better our community and its members.<sup>171</sup>

To know how to heal and grow and be positive in one's life in Paganism.<sup>172</sup>

Healing, protection, self development.<sup>173</sup>

Spells for healing, protection, shielding etc.<sup>174</sup>

What is white magic? If it is the use of spells and shifts of consciousness to bring about healing and empowerment or personal gain. Sure! Ultimately it all comes down to empowerment.<sup>175</sup>

Healing, growth.<sup>176</sup>

White magic involves compassionate, responsible use of power, respects everyone's personal process.<sup>177</sup>

Healing and negativity eliminating are two very important flavors of magic to me.<sup>178</sup>

White magic is generally good & strengthens the will, spirituality & your link to the divine.<sup>179</sup>

Only one survey respondent answered this question with some measure of sarcasm:

It helps comfort those Pagans with outmoded views of right and wrong.<sup>180</sup>

These results demonstrate that although most Pagans in my sample claim to believe that magic is a neutral force when asked about Black Magic, many among them entertain the notion that there is such a thing as "White" Magic. It is interesting to note that the Francophone Québécois(es) survey respondents were the most adamant in denying the putative usefulness of Black Magic within a Pagan ethical framework. This cultural difference may be a reflection of the traditional value attributed to the black

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<sup>170</sup> N, survey questionnaire.

<sup>171</sup> J, survey questionnaire.

<sup>172</sup> L, survey questionnaire.

<sup>173</sup> M, survey questionnaire.

<sup>174</sup> 2, survey questionnaire.

<sup>175</sup> 3, survey questionnaire.

<sup>176</sup> 4, survey questionnaire.

<sup>177</sup> 5, survey questionnaire.

<sup>178</sup> 9, survey questionnaire.

<sup>179</sup> 15, survey questionnaire.

<sup>180</sup> P, survey questionnaire.

colour in French Canadian religious folklore. In French Canadian folk Catholicism, black is associated with the Devil and the threatening forces of the unknown and the unfamiliar. As seen in Chapter 3, the Francophone Québécois(es) survey respondents were the most likely to still believe in their previous religious affiliations after becoming Pagans, perhaps due to the traditional association of a French Canadian identity with the Roman Catholic faith. These research data results illustrate in part the degree to which survey respondents in this category remain true to their cultural roots after becoming Pagans.

Survey results also debunk the widespread belief among many Anglophone Pagans that Francophone Pagans are more likely to use New Age concepts and beliefs in their spirituality than Anglophones. As shown in Table 35, only half of the Francophone Québécois(es) believe that the New Age movement has anything to offer Paganism, in contrast to the majority of Other Francophones, Canadian Anglophones and Foreigner Anglophones. One of the Francophone Québécoises who answered that New Age spirituality has nothing to offer Paganism added the following comment: “Le nouvel âge est un mélange d’à peu près n’importe quoi... OVNI”<sup>181</sup>. 11, a Canadian Anglophone, also expressed her view of the New Age movement as being “too flakey!”<sup>182</sup>.

**Table 35 - On whether survey respondents think the New Age has anything to offer Paganism, by category**

	Francophones Québécois(es)	Other Francophones	Canadian Bilingual	Foreigner Bilingual / Allophone	Canadian Allophone	Canadian Anglophone	Foreigner Anglophone
Yes	3 (B, C, Q)	4 (F, G, I, N)		2 (K, M)		11 (7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21)	4 (1, 2, 3, 4)
No	3 (A, D, E)	1 (H)	2 (J, P)		1 (L)	4 (6, 11, 14, 15)	1 (5)

<sup>181</sup> D, survey questionnaire.

<sup>182</sup> 11, survey questionnaire.

For unknown reasons, the Canadian Bilingual and Canadian Allophone survey respondents do not believe that New Age spirituality has anything to offer Paganism, while the Foreigner Bilingual and the Foreigner Allophone survey respondents do.

Among those who believed that New Age spirituality could be useful to Paganism, a few chose to qualify their answers with somewhat derogatory remarks about the movement, or with warnings about what some would consider its excesses:

Oui. 1- en autant que les valeurs qu'on y enseigne [sic] ne soient pas utilisées pour offrir des services à des fins purement mercantiles. 2- Oui, mais il faut se méfier de certaines croyances sectaires qui n'ont rien à voir avec la doctrine de Marilyn Ferguson.<sup>183</sup>

A fluffy cover; somewhere to send the fluffy bunnies.<sup>184</sup>

Paganism has something to offer New Age, not vice versa.<sup>185</sup>

Others saw in the New Age movement a parallel religious movement that had much more positive elements to offer Paganism.

En fait, je pense que depuis les années 1960 on a début[é] l'âge du Verseau. Le Nouvel Âge permet de trouver des accessoires utiles dans les cercles.<sup>186</sup>

Il a créer [sic] un contexte d'ouverture favorable à l'émergence de nouvelles pratiques spirituelles dont [le] paganisme. Certains auteurs sont plus sincères que d'autre[s] et explorent les rites païens.<sup>187</sup>

We already incorporate some of the New Age practice in Pagan practice.<sup>188</sup>

Up to a point. Properties of crystals and herbs are part of Pagan practices as is meditation and a lot of other facets.<sup>189</sup>

a more open tradition<sup>190</sup>

As we evolve to the Age of Aquarius, our spiritual practices have to be adapted to our particular time.<sup>191</sup>

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<sup>183</sup> B, survey questionnaire.

<sup>184</sup> M, survey questionnaire.

<sup>185</sup> 15, survey questionnaire.

<sup>186</sup> C, survey questionnaire.

<sup>187</sup> Q, survey questionnaire.

<sup>188</sup> F, survey questionnaire.

<sup>189</sup> G, survey questionnaire.

<sup>190</sup> I, survey questionnaire.

<sup>191</sup> N, survey questionnaire.

I don't know where to draw the line between the two but I think that every movement has something to teach.<sup>192</sup>

Today the boundaries between "New Age" spirituality and contemporary Paganism are often very fuzzy. Many Pagans incorporate elements from other sources into their spirituality [...].<sup>193</sup>

An openness to explore and evolve spiritually.<sup>194</sup>

Open-mindedness and similarity in openness to the 'unseen'.<sup>195</sup>

Helps make spirituality better known.<sup>196</sup>

I really have no idea, but I'm sure there is something.<sup>197</sup>

Every movement happens for a purpose.<sup>198</sup>

If nothing else, the current popularity makes it easier for Pagans to become accepted.<sup>199</sup>

New ideas can always offer different ways of seeing things.<sup>200</sup>

Being sometimes uncertain of the boundaries due to the way I have come to my spiritual beliefs I can't define this more clearly.<sup>201</sup>

Spirituality [sic] must adapt to the times.<sup>202</sup>

In my opinion religion should evolve, at least to a certain extent.<sup>203</sup>

New Age has expanded information on trance work, yoga, charkas, ESP, etc.<sup>204</sup>

These survey results suggest that contrary to what many Anglophone Pagans believe, Anglophones are by far more likely than Francophones to perceive the New Age movement as being of any use to Paganism. On the other hand, as stated previously, my research sample probably included a non-representative sub-sample of Francophone Pagans. This, in turn, could possibly have compromised the accuracy of my research

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<sup>192</sup> K, survey questionnaire.

<sup>193</sup> 1, survey questionnaire.

<sup>194</sup> 2, survey questionnaire.

<sup>195</sup> 3, survey questionnaire.

<sup>196</sup> 4, survey questionnaire.

<sup>197</sup> 7, survey questionnaire.

<sup>198</sup> 8, survey questionnaire.

<sup>199</sup> 9, survey questionnaire.

<sup>200</sup> 12, survey questionnaire.

<sup>201</sup> 13, survey questionnaire.

<sup>202</sup> 18, survey questionnaire.

<sup>203</sup> 20, survey questionnaire.

<sup>204</sup> 21, survey questionnaire.

results pertaining to the purported affinity of Francophone Pagans with the New Age movement. If anything, my research results prove that the Francophone Pagans who identify with the Pagan forms of spirituality most common among Anglophones are not as fond of the New Age movement as many Anglophone Pagans believe them to be.

As is the case with environmental concerns and ethical principles, Paganism also influences many research participants' views on gender. My research results prove this to be the case even though only slightly more than half of survey respondents answered that their Pagan spiritual paths influence their views on gender. The division occurs within most categories (see Table 36). For reasons that are still unknown, a significant number of Other Francophones answered that their Pagans paths do not influence their views on gender, while a high proportion of Foreigner Anglophones answered otherwise. Follow-up questions in the survey questionnaire and the interviews revealed that Paganism has influenced participants' views on gender in a variety of ways. When asked to elaborate upon the subject, many survey respondents answered in three discernible patterns, which had no apparent relationship to category.

**Table 36 - On whether survey respondents feel that their Pagan religious / spiritual paths influence their views on gender, by category**

	Francophones Québécois(es)	Other Francophones	Canadian Bilingual	Foreigner Bilingual / Allophone	Canadian Allophone	Canadian Anglophone	Foreigner Anglophone
Yes	3 (B, D, E)	1 (N)	1 (J)	1 (M)	1 (L)	7 (8, 9, 11, 13, 14, 15, 17)	4 (1, 3, 4, 5)
No	2 (A, Q)	4 (F, G, H, I)	1 (P)	1 (K)		8 (6, 7, 10, 12, 16, 18, 19, 20)	1 (2)

The majority of survey respondents who opted to explain how Paganism influenced their views on gender voiced their adherence to the principle of the gendered

duality of the Divine, a concept most prevalent within Wicca and other Witchcraft traditions. This principle stipulates that Divinity consist of both male and female aspects, which are often referred to as the God and Goddess, or as the Lord and Lady. In most British-derived traditions of Wicca, the Female principle is imaged as the Mother Goddess who gives birth to the God. The Male principle is in turn imaged as the Goddess' Son and Consort, who dies and is reborn every year. In some Feminist Witchcraft traditions, the Goddess is given the highest degree of primacy, to the extent that some groups will omit the element of God-worship from their traditions altogether.

Many Wiccans and other Pagans believe that this dual gendered Divinity is reflected in the material world. An example of this notion is the prevailing belief that women are the embodiment of the Goddess and that men embody the God. Adherence to the principle of the gendered duality of Divinity often has the effect of essentializing gender, and in some Wiccan and Pagan traditions it suggests a rather conservative and limiting view of male and female roles<sup>205</sup>. However, many of the participants who claimed to abide by this principle often emphasized the notion that men and women should be seen as equals in all things, since both sexes are physical manifestations of the Divine:

Comme le paganisme honore à la fois le dieu et la déesse, les croyants du paganisme considère [sic] que les hommes et les femmes sont égaux non seulement devant le dieu/la déesse, mais aussi dans la société humaine et dans la célébration du culte. L'homme ne peut pas revendiquer de statut privilégié face à la femme et vice versa en matière de religion.<sup>206</sup>

Chaque sexe détient son propre pouvoir et exerce des fonctions selon ses capacités et non son sexe. Chaque fonction est valorisée et jugée essentielle.<sup>207</sup>

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<sup>205</sup> For a discussion on the pervasiveness of gender stereotyping within some Witchcraft and Pagan traditions, see Charbonneau, Marisol. "Mother Earth, Father Sky? The Sexual Politics of Contemporary Wicca and Paganism", in Saxton, Tammy, Crystal Leger and Karoline Truchon (eds). *Stories from Montreal 2: Ethnographic Accounts of Life in North America's Francophone Metropolis*. Montreal: Armchair Academic Publications/Concordia. 2002: 1-19.

<sup>206</sup> B, survey questionnaire.

<sup>207</sup> E, survey questionnaire.

Je crois depuis toujours à l'égalité des sexes et au féminin et masculin sacré.<sup>208</sup>

It has exposed me to more positive male role models and empowers my masculine identity.<sup>209</sup>

The social gender roles in Paganism are on the basis of trying to be seen equal and not one gender superior than the other.<sup>210</sup>

Very important [to] have comfort with one's gender or sexual identity.<sup>211</sup>

Gender is more conservative in my faith compared to most Pagans, yet more liberal than "standard" society.<sup>212</sup>

My specific path puts lots of emphasis on balance & this includes balance of male & female.<sup>213</sup>

Balance of gender in spirituality – the dual nature of divinity – life.<sup>214</sup>

Equality of respect for all individuals.<sup>215</sup>

Another pattern, which was most frequent amongst survey respondents who espoused Goddess Spirituality and Feminist Witchcraft, was the tendency to emphasize the importance of the Goddess as a symbol representing the power of women. Some survey respondents also noted that the gendered duality of the God and Goddess was a purely symbolic construct, as the dual aspects of Divinity are found within all individuals, regardless of their gender.

Nous faisons partie d'une même énergie: mâle, femelle. Dans la globalité aucun sexe n'existe.<sup>216</sup>

Spectrum of Divinity; Spectrum of existence; Spectrum of gender.<sup>217</sup>

I feel that as a woman a Goddess / Nature based religion is very empowering for me.<sup>218</sup>

The Lord & Lady are both within each of us. It's important for me to let each side reflect out of me.<sup>219</sup>

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<sup>208</sup> **Q**, survey questionnaire.

<sup>209</sup> **J**, survey questionnaire.

<sup>210</sup> **L**, survey questionnaire.

<sup>211</sup> **5**, survey questionnaire.

<sup>212</sup> **8**, survey questionnaire.

<sup>213</sup> **15**, survey questionnaire.

<sup>214</sup> **17**, survey questionnaire.

<sup>215</sup> **14**, survey questionnaire.

<sup>216</sup> **D**, survey questionnaire.

<sup>217</sup> **M**, survey questionnaire.

<sup>218</sup> **13**, survey questionnaire.

<sup>219</sup> **9**, survey questionnaire.

Conversely, a third common pattern was for survey respondents to depict Paganism as an opportunity to challenge existing gender paradigms and to conceptualize the Divine and the other-than-human dimensions of existence in ways that make human constructs of gender irrelevant. This view was especially prevalent among those who identified with Reclaiming Witchcraft:

Gender is not something that is necessary defined [sic].<sup>220</sup>

Well, it's more like it has influenced my experiences with gender.<sup>221</sup>

What attracted me to the Feri tradition and Shaivite Hindu influences is the openness [sic] on gender, that gender is not necessarily male or female or determined by sex organs. That we all possess some of both genders and that there may be more than two genders or perhaps all genders are aspects of one gender. We are limited by the 'illusions' created by this world.<sup>222</sup>

Live + let live as long as nothing is forced on me.<sup>223</sup>

I like to deconstruct ideas of gender, and I like the Radical Faerie and Reclaiming approaches to this.<sup>224</sup>

When asked about their views on gender, the interview participants, many of whom also answered the survey questionnaire, often echoed the patterns listed above. Of the fourteen interviewees who followed the regular interview format, five answered that their Pagan affiliations did not influence their views on gender. Among these five, Fabiola and Patrick were fairly specific as to why this was the case.

Non. C'est plus mon identité culturelle qui fait ça, mon côté haïtien<sup>225</sup>.

I typically, stay away from gender stereotypes and this has only become reinforced by my Pagan practices and studies. For example, Force and Form, Light and Darkness, Active and Passive are concepts that can denote polarity without resorting to the typically sexualized view of Male and Female.<sup>226</sup>

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<sup>220</sup> N, survey questionnaire.

<sup>221</sup> 1, survey questionnaire.

<sup>222</sup> 3, survey questionnaire.

<sup>223</sup> 4, survey questionnaire.

<sup>224</sup> 11, survey questionnaire.

<sup>225</sup> Fabiola, interview 2007-08-11.

<sup>226</sup> Patrick, interview 2008-01-20.

The other interview participants explained how their religious affiliations inform their views on gender in ways that reflect conservative, feminist, egalitarian and/or gender radical opinions:

I think it's a very interesting question, and that's actually another one of the main reasons why I feel drawn to Reclaiming and not to traditional Wicca, because I think that gender in itself is very fluid and 1) I don't believe that male / female polarity, that it necessarily exists as a concrete thing, and 2) I don't believe that it is necessary for ritual and magical work.

I think that someone who is a biological man can be a priestess, and a biological woman can be a priest and take on whichever role they feel like. I think that because of that it's not that important to have gender roles within any sort of magical work. An extension of that I feel for general life outside of Paganism is that traditional gender roles are useless.<sup>227</sup>

We tend to see women as the stronger gender, and that can be a problem [laughs] because it's at odds with the patriarchal idea that men are stronger. But the basis of our religion is that both genders are equal and respected equally.<sup>228</sup>

It puts men and women more as equals, even though back in ancient times Druids were mostly men. In time women became just as important.<sup>229</sup>

It has challenged me to understand that there is something to be learned in striking a balance between traditional gender roles and modern society's views on gender. Traditional gender roles are not something to be discarded as patriarchal or controlling.<sup>230</sup>

My specific path expects women to have very strong roles in [the] family and outside of [the] family. We tend to be community leaders. We tend to be heads of our households. We are expected to stand equal with our men. There are no meek women in my specific tradition. Some traditions expect you to have a sense of delicate femininity, the Maiden aspect. Definitely not my path. [We are] Warrior women, [like] the Morrigan.

Men are expected to be providers, warriors in their own way, but equally capable of doing what some people consider traditional female roles like caring for the kids, cooking for the meals, cleaning the house. Essentially, our gender roles are extremely egalitarian.<sup>231</sup>

Oui, énormément. Pour moi, l'homme et la femme sont égaux en tout, sur le plan religieux et spirituel. Une femme peut être prêtre, elle peut diriger sa tribu spirituelle. C'est pour cela que j'ai quitté l'Église catholique, étant donné qu'ils interdisent le sacerdoce aux femmes et imposent le célibat aux prêtres.<sup>232</sup>

They make me aware of how narrowly society defines gender and how society, including roles within many Pagan traditions, are polarized to reflect male and female opposites and stereotypes. I think through my Pagan affiliations and specifically with my ties with Reclaiming and Anderson Feri traditions, I feel I see more clearly than non-Pagans how false and unnecessary those divisions are. Both those traditions are extremely gender-inclusive, gender bending and gender neutral, or gender radical. In some ways similar to some Shivite sects in India.<sup>233</sup>

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<sup>227</sup> Rose, interview 2007-07-07.

<sup>228</sup> Meri Fowler, interview 2007-07-29/30.

<sup>229</sup> Izzy, interview 2007-07-29.

<sup>230</sup> Hobbes, interview 2007-07-29.

<sup>231</sup> Scarlet, interview 2007-08-04/05.

<sup>232</sup> Brigid, interview 2007-08-11.

<sup>233</sup> Amanda, interview 2007-08-11.

My views on gender roles are interchangeable with my religious views on gender roles. This is that there is balance between the roles by having specific duties for each gender. For example, men are seen as protectors and women are seen as nurturers, or hunters and gatherers respectively. To myself, equal does not mean that they both can and should perform a duty, but each have an equivalent duty to perform.<sup>234</sup>

Interview excerpts also reveal that many interviewees, including some whom had claimed that their Pagan affiliations did not influence their views on gender, often abided by stereotypical, socially constructed definitions of manhood and womanhood, which were carried through in their Pagan paths. When asked what they shared with Pagan men, a minority of male and female interview participants included stereotypically male gender attributes in their responses.

A sense of seeking a male spiritual identity, which has been lost in the modern age. Many men feel uncomfortable with the traditional role of men in society, which in the worst cases, makes them ashamed to be men, and in the best cases makes them feel the need to apologize for who they are. As a community resource, I feel it's important to have positive dialogue about seeking and finding a positive and balanced spiritual identity that resonates with the true realities of being male.<sup>235</sup>

I find most men are strongly into the duality concept of deity, [which involves a] sense of balance [between] male and female [energies], god/goddess [duality] and that is probably the most common thing I have with male practitioners. People have told me that I have a strongly masculine spirituality because I focus strongly on balance whereas a lot of Wicca is about the Goddess. Beyond that, general practice is the same.<sup>236</sup>

La même fascination pour la forêt, le bois... Les gars vont aller à la forêt pour retrouver leur "homme sauvage"... La chasse, la relation avec l'animal que l'on chasse, que l'on pêche.<sup>237</sup>

Warrior spirit.<sup>238</sup>

The majority of interview participants, however, insisted that they shared instead a religious philosophy and an overall common understanding of the world with Pagan men:

That's a tough question. I wouldn't say that there's anything I have in common with them that's specifically male. One of my partners is a Pagan male but he's not like any other Pagan men I know and that's probably why he's my partner.<sup>239</sup>

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<sup>234</sup> Amber, interview 2007-08-29.

<sup>235</sup> Hobbes, interview 2007-07-29.

<sup>236</sup> Scarlet, interview 2007-08-04/05.

<sup>237</sup> Brighid, interview 2007-08-11.

<sup>238</sup> Gra-Auga, interview 2007-08-11.

<sup>239</sup> Rose, interview 2007-07-07.

We have Pagan men in our tradition – Wiccan. So we share the tradition.<sup>240</sup>

A stronger spiritual connection. I've dated non-Pagans, and there was usually more conflict.<sup>241</sup>

I don't think I've had any in-depth discussions about this with a lot of Pagan men... Probably a love of the Goddess.<sup>242</sup>

Je n'en connais pas beaucoup, mais ceux que je connais, ils sont dans mon coven ou des amis du coven. Ce qu'on a en commun, c'est vraiment la spiritualité et la fraternité.<sup>243</sup>

I very rarely actually think in terms of gender when interacting with people. But I guess I share a sense of being Pagan without the understanding of what it is to be a man. On the whole, I see very little difference between what I have in common with Pagan men than with Pagan women. We are all part of humanity.<sup>244</sup>

Au point de vue du paganisme [et du côté de la] religion, ils ne voient pas les choses de la même façon. [Le masculin et le féminin, ce sont] deux côtés de la même médaille... Je pense que le point de vue des hommes est différent... à part la religion... [ils doivent avoir une] vision différente.<sup>245</sup>

[Il y a] toujours la même base. [Le fait d'être homme ou femme] n'a peu ou pas d'influence [dans la pratique de la magie].<sup>246</sup>

I share some of my beliefs, values, and my sense of community.<sup>247</sup>

Aside from a biology and the understanding that comes with it, nothing that I don't also share with other Pagan women.<sup>248</sup>

On the other hand, male and female interview participants were more willing to engage in gender stereotyping when asked what they shared with Pagan women. This occurred even among those who had answered the previous question in gender-neutral terms.

I think that in our tradition we share a sisterhood and we feel very close to each other. And we share the tradition.<sup>249</sup>

A sisterhood, and not having any sisters, I find it rather nice.<sup>250</sup>

Probably an appreciation and love of the feminine divine.<sup>251</sup>

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<sup>240</sup> Meri Fowler, interview 2007-07-29/30.

<sup>241</sup> Izzy, interview 2007-07-29.

<sup>242</sup> Chloe, interview 2007-07-29.

<sup>243</sup> Fabiola, interview 2007-07-11.

<sup>244</sup> Amanda, interview 2007-08-11.

<sup>245</sup> Rhiannon, interview 2007-08-15.

<sup>246</sup> Marie-Renée Patry, interview 2007-08-21.

<sup>247</sup> Amber, interview 2007-08-29.

<sup>248</sup> Patrick, interview 2008-01-20.

<sup>249</sup> Meri Fowler, interview 2007-07-29/30.

<sup>250</sup> Izzy, interview 2007-07-29.

<sup>251</sup> Chloe, interview 2007-07-29.

I am of the same gender, therefore I am going to have a stronger connection with lunar ritual, as most women do. Other than that, remarkably I don't share a lot with average Wiccan women. I am more warrior-oriented. I am more comfortable with men.<sup>252</sup>

La relation de la femme avec la Déesse, les médecines traditionnelles, l'herboristerie, les cycles lunaires et menstruels, l'instinct, l'intuition.<sup>253</sup>

See above [previous response]... and women's mysteries. There is a lot of Pagan traditions that focus on the rites of passage between Maiden and Crone, including menstruation and childbirth, which are experiences unique to those of the female sex.<sup>254</sup>

Nurturing spirit.<sup>255</sup>

Avec les femmes païennes, on sait représenter la Déesse. [Il y a] Mystères féminins, changements d'hormones, changements de cycles, [cela] sera reflété dans la religion comme dans la vie de tous les jours.<sup>256</sup>

I share some of my beliefs, values, experiences, and my sense of community. I also share a connection with the feminine energies of other women and of deity.<sup>257</sup>

Other interview participants answered this question in more gender-neutral terms.

I think it's very individual[istic]. I don't think it's something every man has in common or every woman has in common. I think it's very individual[istic]. But I do think that to a certain extent there is a kinship between women and [this is] probably stemming from our socialization as women and that's something that is interesting to explore within Paganism.

My other partner is a Pagan woman so on a more specific individual level I share a lot with her. I share a lot with my partners but that's because of their individuality more than them being a man or a woman.<sup>258</sup>

[This is] related to the last question. With Pagan women I share support and understanding in seeking that male spiritual identity, and when I don't get support, there's always a healthy debate.<sup>259</sup>

La même chose, la spiritualité, la fraternité.<sup>260</sup>

Aside from biological differences and an understanding that only other women could appreciate, nothing that I don't also share with other Pagan men.<sup>261</sup>

Although there is strong evidence that even the most gender liberal Pagans engage at times in some form of gender stereotyping, survey results indicate that the vast

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<sup>252</sup> Scarlet, interview 2007-08-04/05.

<sup>253</sup> Brigid, interview 2007-08-11.

<sup>254</sup> Amanda, interview 2007-08-11.

<sup>255</sup> Gra-Auga, interview 2007-08-11.

<sup>256</sup> Rhiannon, interview 2007-08-15.

<sup>257</sup> Amber, interview 2007-08-29.

<sup>258</sup> Rose, interview 2007-07-07.

<sup>259</sup> Hobbes, interview 2007-07-29.

<sup>260</sup> Fabiola, interview 2007-08-11.

<sup>261</sup> Patrick, interview 2008-01-20.

majority of survey respondents (twenty-seven people in seven categories) do not believe that their Pagan religious views and spiritual practices are shaped by their gender (see Table 37). Aside from the higher proportion of Foreigner Anglophones who answered in the affirmative (1, 5), there is insufficient evidence to link conclusively the category of survey respondents with the belief that gender shapes one's Pagan views and practices.

**Table 37 - On whether survey respondents' Pagan religious or spiritual practice are shaped by their gender, by category**

	Francophones Québécois(es)	Other Francophones	Canadian Bilingual	Foreigner Bilingual / Allophone	Canadian Allophone	Canadian Anglophone	Foreigner Anglophone
Yes	1 (B)	1 (F)	1 (J)		1 (L)	3 (9, 11, 17)	2 (1, 5)
No	5 (A, C, D, E, Q)	4 (G, H, I, N)	1 (P)	2 (K, M)		12 (6, 7, 8, 10, 12, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21)	3 (2, 3, 4)
Probably						1 (13)	

**Table 38 - On whether survey respondents believe that a Pagan practice transmitted through a male gender line differs from a Pagan practice transmitted through a female gender line, by category**

	Francophones Québécois(es)	Other Francophones	Canadian Bilingual	Foreigner Bilingual / Allophone	Canadian Allophone	Canadian Anglophone	Foreigner Anglophone
Yes	2 (D, E)	5 (F – I, N)	2 (J, P)	2 (K, M)	1 (L)	7 (6, 8, 9, 11, 17, 18, 20)	2 (1, 5)
No	4 (A, B, C, Q)					7 (7, 10, 12, 14, 15, 19, 21)	3 (2, 3, 4)
Maybe						2 (13, 16)	

In light of these findings, it is rather surprising that the majority of survey respondents would believe that a Pagan practice transmitted through a male gender line differs fundamentally from a practice transmitted through a female line (see Table 38). It is also unclear why the majority of Francophones (seven out of eleven, including all of the Other Francophones), both Canadian Bilingual respondents, the Foreigner Bilingual and the Foreigner Allophone, as well as almost half of the Canadian Anglophones and the

Foreigner Anglophones would answer this question in the affirmative when many among them had previously demonstrated different patterns of opinions on gender within a Pagan context.

An interesting observation about Pagans is that although the majority among them perceive themselves as progressive, and even gender neutral or gender radical, many do engage in gender stereotyping<sup>262</sup>. Whether this tendency is deliberate or not is an interesting question, which in itself deserves further study. On a related note, the majority of interview participants demonstrated that their Pagan affiliations also influence their views on sexuality. Those who did so often mentioned as core factors the more liberal and progressive views on sex and sexuality promulgated by most Pagan traditions. Other participants underlined the fact that their Pagan affiliations only provided a context for their already established liberal views on sex and sexuality.

Being a part of a Pagan community is what brought me to find out about polyamory. It was within that context that I began to explore it. I've always had a very open view of sexuality because of the way I was raised, I guess. But like the other things I've said about my progressive views, this has helped me put them into a context. This is the same with sexuality.

I've learned more about different sexualities since being part of this community. For instance, I've known some transgendered people in this community [whereas] I didn't know any before.

I didn't start identifying as a bisexual before being part of the Pagan community, so while I think it was something that was always with me, it wasn't something that I expressed until I was in this context.<sup>263</sup>

It makes us more accepting of other people's sexuality. As long as it doesn't hurt somebody, we are quite liberal.<sup>264</sup>

It makes me feel more comfortable with sexuality in general. It's not so taboo.<sup>265</sup>

It's forced me to be a lot more open-minded and it's changed my view that sexuality is something to be feared to something that should be celebrated.<sup>266</sup>

I think I figured out my views on sexuality before I figured out my views on religion. I think I'm very open-minded, and this religion is very open-minded about sexuality.<sup>267</sup>

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<sup>262</sup> I had come to a similar conclusion in a previous study of Paganism in Montreal (see Charbonneau, 2002). See also Berger 1999, Pike 2001.

<sup>263</sup> Rose, interview 2007-07-07.

<sup>264</sup> Meri Fowler, interview 2007-07-29/30.

<sup>265</sup> Izzy, interview 2007-07-29.

<sup>266</sup> Hobbes, interview 2007-07-29.

My very specific narrow path of Paganism does not inform or influence my view of sexuality. However, Paganism in general provides a more open and welcoming awareness of sexuality. I have strong leanings towards bi-sexuality, but I don't cross that line, and I am polyamorous, both of which are not necessarily acceptable in most monotheistic religions. Paganism celebrates sexuality and doesn't try to bury it in the closet. It embraces it. Sex does not have to be taboo.<sup>268</sup>

Oui. [Le paganisme n'a pas] L'obsession de la vertu au sens judéo-chrétien... [L'attitude du paganisme envers la sexualité], c'est plus naturel, plus relax. Il n'y a pas ces dogmes anti-sexualité de la femme comme dans les religions monothéistes.<sup>269</sup>

Each one informs the other. I suspect my already liberal views on sexuality have become more liberal the more Pagan people and traditions I encounter.<sup>270</sup>

Ça dépend, oui [en ce qui a trait à la pratique de la magie rouge ou du tantrisme, sinon] pas d'une façon spécifique. Tout est intégré au niveau de ma pratique.<sup>271</sup>

My religious views on sexuality are that there should be equality between every form in order to form a natural balance. My personal view is reflective of this in that there is no "right way" to be. I accept all forms of sexuality and gender as equal.<sup>272</sup>

I suppose it promotes a healthy and genuinely positive view unlike other religions that tend to view it as sinful.<sup>273</sup>

To summarize, subtle differences do exist between Anglophone and Francophone Pagans in Montreal, and these are often the result of historical, cultural and linguistic barriers that have, for the last few centuries, divided Anglophones and Francophones within the province of Quebec. That most of the written sources of information on Paganism are available exclusively in English reinforces the cultural and linguistic barrier many Francophones encounter when attempting to access information on the religious movement. Nevertheless, research results demonstrate that Pagans in Montreal make conscious and concerted efforts to minimize the cultural and linguistic chasm that divides Anglophones and Francophones in Quebec, and that they have done so with moderate success. Indeed, most Pagans in Montreal have proven willing to bridge the gap between

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<sup>267</sup> Chloe, interview 2007-07-29.

<sup>268</sup> Scarlet, interview 2007-08-04/05.

<sup>269</sup> Brigid, interview 2007-08-11.

<sup>270</sup> Amanda, interview 2007-08-11.

<sup>271</sup> Marie-Renée Patry, interview 2007-08-21.

<sup>272</sup> Amber, interview 2007-08-29.

<sup>273</sup> Patrick, interview 2008-01-20.

Anglophones and Francophones, as evidenced by many Pagans' attempts to accommodate each other within the context of their religious culture.

Also, historical processes unique to Quebec, such as the Quiet Revolution, have had a direct impact on the growth of the Pagan movement within the province. In particular, the pro-modern and anticlerical sentiments characteristic of that formative era in contemporary Quebec history continue to foster marked cultural differences between the ways that English and French Canadians interpret and integrate notions of religion and religiosity.

An unexpected result of my inquiries into the degree to which Paganism in Montreal is influenced by Québécois culture is the lack of awareness of research participants with regards to their own folklore around the history of witchcraft and magic within their own province. Not one research participant mentioned specific and well-known elements of Québécois folklore, such as the French Canadian witch and murder suspect Marie-Josephte Corriveau (*La Corriveau*), as being an integral part of their Pagan register<sup>274</sup>. Yet *La Corriveau* was known to the Québécois feminist witches Gaboury interviewed in the 1980s<sup>275</sup>. This shows a significant memory gap concerning Quebec history and folklore among the contemporary generation.

Though it is made up of diverse religious expressions, Paganism is the product of a consensual and evolving worldview. As seen in section 4.1.2, Paganism as an overarching worldview influences how research participants perceive political issues,

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<sup>274</sup> Marie-Josephte Corriveau was the first French Canadian to have been tried and executed for murder under the British Regime. *La Corriveau* was later portrayed as a witch in Quebec folklore. See Lacoursière, Luc. "Le destin posthume de la Corriveau". *Les Cahiers des Dix*, No. 34. 1969:239-271; and Lacoursière, Luc. "Marie-Josephte Corriveau". *Les Cahiers des Dix*, No. 38. 1973: 229-264. For a glimpse of the imagery concerning *La Corriveau* in French Canadian folklore, see the tale *Les Anciens Canadiens* by Philippe Aubert de Gaspé. (Québec, 1863). See also Séguin, 1971.

<sup>275</sup> See Gaboury, 1989.

ethics, the environment, gender and sexuality. The degree to which participants integrate their Pagan religious or spiritual values into their lives depends greatly on their personality and their affiliation to a specific Pagan tradition. However, Paganism as a religious movement allows great room for these individual choices.

# CHAPTER FIVE

## 5.1 RESEARCH DATA RESULTS – PAGANISM AND CULTURAL, HISTORICAL AND ETHNIC AFFINITY

The final chapter in this study further explores how the cultivation of personal philosophical idiosyncrasies within a Pagan spiritual and/or religious framework constructs the parameters of a Pagan identity. As seen in Chapters 1 and 2, in crafting their spiritualities, many Pagans construct a link with ancestral cultures or ways of living with which they find the greatest affinity. Doing so, they create an imaginary link between their spiritual beliefs and practices and their chosen historical cultures and ethnic groups. As shown in Table 39, the vast majority of survey respondents include within their Pagan identity a sense of involvement with a reconstructed, or even imagined, pre-Christian culture. It is important to note that this includes the totality of the Francophone survey respondents, but only slightly more than half of the Anglophones. The choice of the Francophones to include pre-Christian traditions among their religious register is in stark contrast to their rejection or ignorance of Quebec folklore and magical traditions.

**Table 39 - On whether survey respondents' Pagan identities are linked with a sense of involvement or affinity with a reconstructed pre-Christian culture, by category**

	Francophones Québécois(es)	Other Francophones	Canadian Bilingual	Foreigner Bilingual / Allophone	Canadian Allophone	Canadian Anglophone	Foreigner Anglophone
Yes	6 (A – E, Q)	5 (F - I, N)	1 (J)			9 (8, 9, 13, 14, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21)	2 (2, 4)
No			1 (P)	2 (K, M)	1 (L)	7 (6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 15, 16)	3 (1, 3, 5)

Foreign-born and Allophone survey respondents were the least likely to idealize other cultures within the context of a Pagan spirituality. This was perhaps because of already existing ties with their cultures of origin<sup>1</sup>, or because of a conscious choice to keep their Pagan identities separate from their cultural roots. As one foreign-born interview participant explained,

[I identify with] the culture in which I was raised as a child [British], somewhat. I mean it's [my] roots but it's not my identity. I don't go out of my way to find my British roots or Welsh roots. It's just there. No. One is a cultural thing, cultural roots and the Pagan affiliation is just who I am. It's like nature versus nurture. I was born British but I choose to live as a Pagan.<sup>2</sup>

When asked to name the pre-Christian cultures with which they feel a sense of involvement and affinity, sixteen survey respondents in five categories claimed to identify with Celtic culture; nine respondents in four categories selected pre-Islamic Egyptian culture; seven in as many categories selected Classical Greek / Hellenic culture, while six selected Roman culture. Another six chose Norse culture, three chose a mixture of cultures, and three selected other options than the ones mentioned in the survey questionnaire (see Table 40).

Among the four who selected pre-contact Aboriginal / Native American cultures, E, a Francophone Québécoise, specified that her selection indicated a sense of affinity with the Sami people, who are indigenous to Northern Scandinavia and not to North America. G commented that he identifies with Aboriginal culture “before Christian influence”<sup>3</sup>, while 4 specified that she identifies with Iroquois culture<sup>4</sup>. The two survey respondents who answered that they identify with post-contact Native American culture

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<sup>1</sup> For a discussion on Paganism as a form of ethnogenesis among Anglophone Canadians, see Charbonneau, Marisol. “The Melting Cauldron: Ethnicity, Diversity and Identity in a Contemporary Pagan Subculture”. *The Pomegranate*. Vol. 9.1. 2007: 5-21.

<sup>2</sup> Amanda, interview 2007-08-11.

<sup>3</sup> G, survey questionnaire.

<sup>4</sup> 4, survey questionnaire.

(M, 13) specified that they do so in terms of “generalized totems [and] myths”<sup>5</sup>, and “loosely in terms of rites like smudging, etc.”<sup>6</sup>. The three survey respondents who mentioned other selections than the ones listed in the survey questionnaire often noted that they felt an affinity with Vedic culture and Hindu culture. This occurs in three different categories<sup>7</sup>.

**Table 40 – The pre-Christian cultures with which survey respondents feel a sense of involvement, by category**

	Francophones Québécois(es)	Other Francophones	Canadian Bilingual	Foreigner Bilingual / Allophone	Canadian Allophone	Canadian Anglophone	Foreigner Anglophone
Celtic culture	4 (A, B, C, D)	4 (F, G, H, I)	1 (J)			6 (13, 14, 17, 18, 19, 21)	1 (2)
Norse culture	2 (D, E)			1 (M)		2 (18, 20)	1 (4)
Classical Greek / Hellenic	2 (B, D)	1 (F)		1 (M)		3 (9, 18, 19)	
Roman culture	2 (B, D)	1 (F)		1 (M)		2 (9, 18)	
Egyptian (pre-Islamic) culture	3 (A, B, D)	1 (F)		1 (M)		4 (9, 13, 18, 19)	
Prehistorical matriarchal culture	1 (D)						
Native American pre-contact culture	1 (E)	2 (G, I)					1 (4)
Native American post-contact culture				1 (M)		1 (13)	
A mixture of cultures <sup>8</sup>	2 (D, Q)					1 (8)	
Other	1 (Q)	1 (N)		1 (M)			

Interestingly, in Table 39 M answered that his Pagan identity did not entail a sense of involvement with a reconstructed pre-Christian culture. However, he also answered that he associates his Pagan identity with the Norse, Classical Greek / Hellenic,

<sup>5</sup> M, survey questionnaire.

<sup>6</sup> 13, survey questionnaire.

<sup>7</sup> Q: société brahmanique, védique et chamaniste beon; N: Vedic; M: Slavic culture, Hinduism.

<sup>8</sup> Survey respondents who selected this option included the following comments:

D: le matriarcat;

Q: Égyptienne, grec et nordique m'inspirent le plus;

8: Whatever I've come across, primarily Hinduism.

Roman, Egyptian, post-contact Native American, Slavic and Hindu cultures. These irregularities probably indicate that he either misunderstood the questions in the survey questionnaire, or that he draws influence from these cultures without identifying these as paramount to the formation of his Pagan identity.

Slightly fewer survey respondents than those who answered “yes” in Table 39 indicated that their Pagan spirituality also included a sense of personal involvement with the history of a culture other than their own (see Table 41). Eight survey respondents among the sixteen who indicated an affinity with the “Celtic” culture in Table 40 answered that they identified with the history of specific Celtic cultures. Three of the Francophone Québécoises identified with Brittany (A, B, C), or Gaul (C), among other “Celtic” regions such as Ireland (B), Scotland (A), and Wales (C). C also mentioned that she identifies with England/Albion under the “Celtic” qualifier<sup>9</sup>.

**Table 41 - On whether survey respondents’ Pagan identities are linked with a sense of personal identification with the history of a culture that is not their national culture, by category**

	Francophones Québécois(es)	Other Francophones	Canadian Bilingual	Foreigner Bilingual / Allophone	Canadian Allophone	Canadian Anglophone	Foreigner Anglophone
Yes	5 (A – E)	4 (F, H, I, N)	2 (J, P)			9 (6, 9, 10, 12, 14, 18, 19, 20, 21)	1 (3)
No	1 (Q)	1 (G)		2 (K, M)	1 (L)	7 (7, 8, 11, 13, 15, 16, 17)	4 (1, 2, 4, 5)

None of the Other Francophones who previously selected “Celtic” cultures mentioned that they felt an involvement with the history of specifically French Celtic cultures, nor did any other respondent in the remaining categories (see Tables 40 and 41). Most of them indicated that they felt an involvement with Scottish (F, J, 6, 14, 21) and Irish (I, J,

<sup>9</sup> C, survey questionnaire.

14, 21) history more specifically. Some among them even added that they felt an affinity with the history of these cultures because of an actual ancestral connection. As F put it, “I feel an affinity with Scottish culture because my maternal great-grandfather was Scottish”<sup>10</sup>. Similarly, 6 wrote that she felt connected to “Scottish lore because I’m Scottish Canadian and [the] Celtic path interested me the most”<sup>11</sup>. H and 10 also noted that their Pagan identities involve a sense of connection with Celtic culture, although they did not specify which ones. 2, who answered the question in the negative, commented: “I was born in Scotland and I feel the Celtic path is part of my heritage”<sup>12</sup>.

E, H and 20 answered that they felt a connection with Norse / Ancient Germanic culture and history. E also noted her affinity with Russia. N and 3 indicated that they identified with the history of India (N added the qualifier “Vedic”<sup>13</sup>, while 3 wrote “Hinduism – Gods and Goddesses of India”<sup>14</sup>). P indicated an affinity with Classical Greek / Hellenic history, as did 9, 18 and 19. 9 and 18 also claimed to identify with Roman history, while 12, 18 and 19 indicated an additional affinity for Egyptian history. Only 12 indicated that her Pagan identity involved a sense of personal identification with Native American or Gypsy history. D, on the other hand, wrote that she is a citizen of the world: “Je suis citoyenne du monde”<sup>15</sup>.

When asked whether their Pagan identities were linked with a sense of personal identification with a specific ethnic group, the majority of survey respondents answered in the negative (see Table 42). Most striking is the fact that all but three Canadian

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<sup>10</sup> F, survey questionnaire.

<sup>11</sup> 6, survey questionnaire.

<sup>12</sup> 2, survey questionnaire.

<sup>13</sup> N, survey questionnaire.

<sup>14</sup> 3, survey questionnaire.

<sup>15</sup> D, survey questionnaire.

Anglophones, the most populous category of survey respondents, selected this answer. Among the latter, 11 commented: “I feel that being Pagan allows me to step outside of the religious traditions of Western culture without stepping on the toes of traditions and peoples who have been oppressed by Western imperialism”<sup>16</sup>.

**Table 42 - On whether survey respondents’ Pagan identities are linked with a sense of personal identification with a specific ethnic group, by category**

	Francophones Québécois(es)	Other Francophones	Canadian Bilingual	Foreigner Bilingual / Allophone	Canadian Allophone	Canadian Anglophone	Foreigner Anglophone
Yes <sup>17</sup>	3 (A, B, E)	2 (H, N)				3 (6, 10, 21)	2 (2, 4)
No	3 (C, D, Q)	3 (F, G, I)	2 (J, P)	2 (K, M)	1 (L)	13 (7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20)	3 (1, 3, 5)

Conversely, as previously noted, some respondents who identified a connection with a non-Western pre-Christian culture, history or ethnicity claimed to have an actual ancestral connection to the cultures they selected. For example, among the six who claimed spiritual affinity with Native American cultures, three listed an actual ancestral connection with these cultures in their ethnic backgrounds (G, I, 4). One of the respondents who answered that they feel a connection with “Hindu” culture and/or ethnicity is a second-generation immigrant whose parents hail from Guyana (8), while 3, who is British, feels that her grandmother’s exposure to Hindu culture as a child fostered in her a strong connection with the same cultural complex<sup>18</sup>.

<sup>16</sup> 11, survey questionnaire.

<sup>17</sup> When asked to identify the ethnic groups they associate with their Pagan identities, the survey respondents gave the following answers: A: Écossais & Breton; B: Celtes (Irlande), Anciens Gaulois; E: Les Germains, les Finnois, les Slaves; H: Celtic; N: Indian (India); 2: I feel connected to my ancestors when I practice; 4: Norse; 6: Celtic; 10: Celtic, East-Asian; 21: Celtic – Scottish + Irish Background.

<sup>18</sup> 3, survey questionnaire.

Many research participants also emphasized the connection between ancestry and Pagan affiliation during interviews. Meri Fowler, a Scottish-born Anglophone, was most insistent upon this connection within her own Wiccan practice:

I was born in Scotland and I was raised in England, so my family is from the British Isles. The Wiccan tradition I follow is from the British Isles, so this is the path I follow. I find that our tradition of Wicca is based on my culture of origin. [...]

[I base my] Wiccan practices on stories from the British Isles, such as the Mabinogion and the Irish myth cycle. I think some of the music and Celtic shamanic practices are integrated into our Wiccan practices so there's a strong connection to our ancestors.<sup>19</sup>

Fabiola, who was born in Quebec to Haitian parents, was rather eloquent in explaining how she integrates her multiple ethnic and cultural identities with her Pagan identity:

J'ai ma culture haïtienne, j'ai ma culture québécoise. Ma culture haïtienne est de naissance, ma culture québécoise est parce que je suis née à Montréal. Ce qui fait que je suis partagée entre deux cultures, puis je peux dire que c'est moitié-moitié. Je ne me sens pas 100 % haïtienne mais je ne me sens pas 100 % québécoise non plus. Là où je sens que mon identité païenne vient solidifier ça un peu, c'est un peu au niveau de ma culture haïtienne où le côté magique, le côté vaudou, c'est là qu'il y a vraiment un rapprochement. Récemment, j'ai commencé à étudier un peu plus le vaudou, qui est [de] la culture haïtienne. J'associerais plus ma culture wiccane à mon côté québécois, dans le sens que quand j'ai commencé à étudier la Wicca, ça faisait appel à mon côté celtique... Une fois que je me sentais à l'aise avec la Wicca et ses principes ... je me suis lancée dans la culture du vaudou.

[...] Oui, parce que la Wicca vient chercher un peu mon côté ancestral. Mon arrière-grand-père était écossais. Parce que j'ai beaucoup d'intérêt pour les cheminements magiques et [les] différentes spiritualités, ça m'a aidé à prendre connaissance et rechercher mon côté haïtien.<sup>20</sup>

Unlike Fabiola, not all Quebec-born research participants merged their Pagan affiliations with their Québécois ethnic and cultural identities. When I asked Hobbes, a Canadian Bilingual, to what degree he identified with his culture of origin, and whether this sense of identity was similar to his Pagan affiliation, he answered the following: "I do identify as from a Franco-Irish-Canadian [background], and I suppose it is similar, but to a lesser degree"<sup>21</sup>. However, he later told me, "They're very separate identities. There's nothing Québécois about being a Pagan"<sup>22</sup>. Similarly, Patrick, who was born in

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<sup>19</sup> Meri Fowler, interview 2007-07-29/30.

<sup>20</sup> Fabiola, interview 2007-08-11.

<sup>21</sup> Hobbes, interview 2007-07-29.

<sup>22</sup> Hobbes, interview 2007-07-29.

Quebec to a Francophone family, related that he keeps his ethnic identity separate from his Pagan identity:

I identify myself, culturally speaking, as French Canadian as opposed to Québécois. The same goes for my immediate family. It bears no connection in my mind to my Pagan religious affiliation.<sup>23</sup>

These research data results partially confirm my own observations<sup>24</sup> and those of others<sup>25</sup> that Pagans often perceive their spiritual identities as vehicles through which they forge a sense of connection to an alternative, or redefined, ancestry. However, these results are also surprising when considering the insistence of some Francophone interview participants, namely Rhiannon and Marie-Renée Patry, that culture and ethnicity played a negligible role in their choice of Pagan affiliation.

Mme Patry told me during our interview that among the fundamental differences she noticed between Francophone and Anglophone Pagans, the most significant was that a large number of her mostly Francophone clientele studies and practices some form of non-Western spirituality, such as Aboriginal Shamanism, and/or syncretized Afro-Caribbean traditions such as Vodoun. She told me in no uncertain terms that Francophone Pagans are more likely to craft their individual spiritual traditions without making self-conscious assumptions with regards to cultural boundaries. Anglophone Pagans, she added, tend to avoid borrowing from cultural traditions that are not their own<sup>26</sup>. My research data confirms Mme Patry's observation.

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<sup>23</sup> Patrick, interview 2008-01-20.

<sup>24</sup> Charbonneau, Marisol. "The Melting Cauldron: Ethnicity, Diversity and Identity in a Contemporary Pagan Subculture". *The Pomegranate*. Vol. 9.1. 2007: 5-21.

<sup>25</sup> See Magliocco, 2004. See also Gallagher in Reid, Siân (ed). *Between the Worlds*. 2006: 267-283, and Bowman, Marion. "Cardiac Celts: Images of the Celts in Paganism", in Graham Harvey and Charlotte Hardman (eds). *Pagan Pathways*. London: Thorsons. 1996: 242-251.

<sup>26</sup> Marie-Renée Patry, interview 2007-08-21.

Mme Patry's comments also fit in part with my own observations and experience in that many of the Anglophone Pagans I met in the course of this research project, and in the years prior, also told me that Anglophones are drawn to Paganism, and Wicca in particular, because of its "Celtic" ancestral component. Table 40 shows that many Francophone Pagan survey respondents are also rather fond of the imagined connection between Paganism and Celtic culture and history.

These observations bring up interesting lines of inquiry about the motivations behind the private religious choices of Francophone Pagans. First, most of the Wiccan and Pagan literature is in English, and there is an abundance of references in French to non-Western magico-religious traditions, including those mentioned by Mme Patry. One uses what one can find. That Francophone Pagans engage in non-Western magico-religious practices because of their relative accessibility is an unexpected line of inquiry that I had not anticipated when conducting my field research. It would be interesting to address this particular issue in a later project.

Another line of inquiry concerns people's perceptions of religious traditions as components of a universal quest available to all seekers or, conversely, as parts of specific cultural identities that could or should not be appropriated by outsiders. This perception may be different in Francophones and Anglophones, or perhaps in former Catholics or Protestant believers.

Finally, the research data results discussed in section 5.1 demonstrate that both Anglophone and Francophone Pagans in Montreal usually do construct their spiritual beliefs and practices by drawing inspiration from pre-Christian Western and non-Western cultural and religious traditions; this process sometimes involves a sense of personal

identification with the cultures from which one draws inspiration. Nonetheless, the Pagans in my sample do not always perceive their religious and/or spiritual paths as having an ethnic component per se, nor as necessarily deriving from their ethnic backgrounds. This unexpected finding points to the possibility that Paganism provides adherents with new ways of developing a sense of identity and belonging to society. The final section in this study discusses in greater depth the identification of Paganism as a vehicle for cultural renewal.

## **5.2 RESEARCH DATA RESULTS – THE DEGREE OF SOCIAL INTEGRATION OF PAGANS WITHIN QUEBEC SOCIETY**

The idea of the subculture concept, as I would like to use it, is rather to depict relatively distinctive organizations of meaning and their expressions, and their distribution among certain people and social relationships in a society, as parts of the more complex culture of the whole society.

- Helena Wulff<sup>27</sup>

Currently, Paganism as a North American phenomenon shows every characteristic of being a subculture. Many academics and observers have noted that in many locales, and especially in North America, Paganism is best described as a counter-cultural, or cultural resistance, movement<sup>28</sup>. Indeed, given Paganism's strong emphasis on feminism, environmental activism, social liberal or left-of-centre politics, the belief in the reality and effectiveness of magic, polytheism and so on, it is easy to understand why some might consider Paganism counter-cultural. As Magliocco observed, Paganism poses a special challenge to a purely secular worldview:

Neo-Pagan subculture reveals specific values and patterns which suggest that what is being resisted is a dominant discourse about the nature of reality, which marginalizes certain kinds of

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<sup>27</sup> Wulff, Helena. *Twenty Girls: Growing Up, Ethnicity and Excitement in a South London Microculture*. Gotab, Stockholm Studies in Social Anthropology. 1988: 22.

<sup>28</sup> See Magliocco 2004, Pike 2001, Salomonsen 2002, Hutton 1999, Adler 1979, 1986, among others. All these locales, it should be noted, are Anglophone and/or Anglo-derived.

spiritual and imaginative experiences as irrational and irrelevant. This construction of reality, rooted in the Enlightenment, contradicts the embodied experience of many, if not most, Neo-Pagans and Witches...<sup>29</sup>

However, perhaps due to the historical and cultural realities of life in Quebec, including the Quiet Revolution aftermath, Paganism in *La Belle Province* appears far less subversive and counter-cultural than it does in other parts of North America. When I asked her whether the cultural differences between Anglophone and Francophone Pagans in Quebec were the result of the Quiet Revolution, Lucie DuFresne said:

Yes and no. I'm old enough to know. The anticlericalism, the modernism, the feminism are part of the Quiet Revolution. The yumminess of the experience of living [which is integral to Quebec Francophone culture] dates two hundred years old. It's what the *Canadiens* did when they stopped being French, it's because they married in [with North American Aboriginal cultures and became] the Métis. The *joie de vivre* is *Canadien* [Lucie pronounces this word "Cana-yen"], not European. You find this with French-Canadians everywhere in Canada, not just Quebec.<sup>30</sup>

This is not to say that Paganism does not contain elements that can be considered subversive, or even counter-cultural, from the standpoint of Quebec culture. Indeed, the pervasiveness of the English language within the Montreal Pagan community is enough to raise a few eyebrows within Francophone-dominated Québécois mainstream society, even though this particular characteristic of Paganism would be considered completely unproblematic elsewhere in North America. Although some of the values and beliefs prevalent within most Pagan traditions are ideologically marginal to a post-Catholic secular society, the Pagans I have encountered during the course of this research, and over the last decade, were fully integrated within Quebec society.

In order to measure qualitatively their degree of integration within Quebec society, I asked interview participants whether they felt that their religious affiliations created a distance between them and other Québécois(es), or between them and society in

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<sup>29</sup> Magliocco, 2004: 197.

<sup>30</sup> Lucie Marie-Mai DuFresne, interview 2007-08-08.

general. A minority of interview participants felt that their uncommon religious beliefs and practices did somewhat alienate them from mainstream society.

I suppose, yes, because there's always the fear... I'm afraid of meeting someone who is violently opposed to it. I sometimes have to hide a part of who I am to the public.<sup>31</sup>

Oui, la Wicca et la sorcellerie et les spiritualités autres que judéo-chrétienne ne sont pas bien perçues. Les gens en général ne prennent pas cela au sérieux, on pense que ce sont des sectes.<sup>32</sup>

Yes. Many people don't share the philosophy that I do, that my religion embraces.<sup>33</sup>

Yes, my religious and spiritual choices sometimes create a distance between others of society and myself because there are still stereotypes and misconceptions about paganism present in society. This even goes to the extent of my own family. There are some concepts that people are not open-minded about, such as polytheism or mass consciousness.<sup>34</sup>

In contrast, a high number of interview participants did not feel that belonging to a highly idiosyncratic religious movement was an obstacle to being accepted by others within Quebec society. Many participants even praised the high level of tolerance within the province, and the eclecticism for which the city of Montreal is well known.

No, I don't think so. I think Montreal is a very eclectic place.<sup>35</sup>

Not at all. I find society is a lot more accepting than it must have been... and the people that do surround me are generally curious about it and that makes me feel connected.<sup>36</sup>

No, mostly because everybody is fairly familiar with it ... they know what I practice and what I do. My mom has more fits about me being a Pagan openly than the schools I teach in.<sup>37</sup>

No. In general I find that Quebec is such a liberal society that even when I expect alienation or hostility for being an out-of-the-closet Pagan it never manifests. Sometimes I wonder whether it is the same or different in other provinces.<sup>38</sup>

Non. Moi, parce que je suis à mon compte et j'ai mes employés, ils le savent tous que je suis sorcière... [Rhiannon m'explique qu'elle ne subit pas de discrimination au travail à cause de ses affiliations religieuses. Elle me dit que même ses employés lui demandent parfois de leur "tirer les cartes"].<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Hobbes, interview 2007-07-29.

<sup>32</sup> Fabiola, interview 2007-08-11.

<sup>33</sup> Gra-Auga, interview 2007-08-11.

<sup>34</sup> Amber, interview 2007-08-29.

<sup>35</sup> Meri Fowler, interview 2007-07-29/30.

<sup>36</sup> Izzy, interview 2007-07-29.

<sup>37</sup> Scarlet, interview 2007-08-04/05. Scarlet is a very public figure within the Montreal Pagan community and has been interviewed by various respected forms of media about Paganism over the past ten years.

<sup>38</sup> Amanda, interview 2007-08-11.

<sup>39</sup> Rhiannon, interview 2007-08-15.

Since I keep my religious choices pretty much to myself, I don't see it as creating any distance between me and society. However, I suppose I can better 'connect' to other fellow Pagan practitioners.<sup>40</sup>

Rose told me that her sense of being different was not necessarily due to her Pagan affiliation, but rather to her own ideological alienation from specific societal structures and institutions.

I don't think so. Maybe to them it does but not to me necessarily. Maybe it depends on the level you want to take this. I do feel alienated from society as an institution, capitalism as an institution, dominant patriarchal Judeo-Christian normativity as an institution. In this context, yes. But I wouldn't necessarily say that I feel alienated from specific people, from specific subcultures that necessarily fit into these structures.<sup>41</sup>

In a similar vein, I also asked the interview participants about how their Pagan affiliations informed their sense of being Canadian and North American. Although a few of the interview participants were foreign-born, only the American-born interviewees (Rose and Gra-Augia) were vocal about the fact that they were not Canadian. In spite of this, Rose added an interesting caveat to her answer:

But at Gaia Gathering [in Winnipeg, 2007] at the opening ritual, we all went around saying, 'I am a Canadian Pagan' and I didn't know what to say. So I said, 'I am a Pagan in Canada' but it's funny because I don't feel like an 'American' Pagan either. Since I have never really been involved in a community before, I have grown as a Pagan since moving to Canada so I feel tied to Canadian Paganism, possibly more than to American Paganism. But again, that gets back to my dislike of nationalism. Even if I became a Canadian citizen, I wouldn't like to identify exclusively as a Canadian Pagan, just like I wouldn't like to identify as an American Pagan.<sup>42</sup>

All the other interview participants stated that their national identity had no bearing on their sense of being Pagan. However, some among them praised Canada for being a tolerant nation, which in itself encouraged their self-expression as Pagans.

I don't think there's any association. However, I am proud to be Pagan in Canada because our sociopolitical climate is much more tolerant than South of the border. As a Canadian, you can be who you are ... Woo-hoo! Canada! [laughs]<sup>43</sup>

Rather than my being pagan affecting my sense of being Canadian, I find that my sense of being Canadian affects my being pagan. This is because, as a Canadian, I have the opportunity to be

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<sup>40</sup> Patrick, interview 2008-01-20.

<sup>41</sup> Rose, interview 2007-07-07.

<sup>42</sup> Rose, interview 2007-07-07.

<sup>43</sup> Amanda, interview 2007-08-11.

close to nature. I also have the opportunity to share my beliefs with a community of like-minded people. But most importantly, I have the right to practice my spiritual and religious belief.<sup>44</sup>

Correspondingly, most interview participants also felt that being North American informed their Pagan affiliations only to the extent that according to them North America was one of the few places on Earth other than Western Europe where Paganism is tolerated, and where freedom of religion is protected by law. Others felt that cultural similarities between North American nations fostered the development of a more regional kind of Paganism as compared to other places in the world.

It doesn't. I think it's the reverse. I am exceptionally grateful that I am a North American, especially a North American Canadian because I have the freedom to practice my religion. You don't have that freedom in many places. I am grateful that I can do what I'm doing. Nobody's going to shoot me for being a Pagan.<sup>45</sup>

Bien, on a des liens avec les américains, les publications sont [surtout] des États-Unis... Ce serait plutôt sur le plan culturel québécois, la façon de voir les choses serait nord-américaine, mais non.<sup>46</sup>

Un peu, dans le sens que je vois que ce que je vis est très nord-américain, je dirais plus occidental, pas juste nord-américain.<sup>47</sup>

There I don't think there's any relationship. Actually, I am well aware of differences of definitions and practice of Paganism and specifically Wicca between North America and Europe. I'm aware that my Pagan practices have North American foundations therefore when I travel to Britain the language I use to talk around Paganism changes. In other words, I'm aware that I'm a North American Pagan and not a European Pagan.<sup>48</sup>

Similarly to the previous question, my religious affiliation is affected by being North American in the sense that I have the opportunity to expand the community to which I belong. Also, I have the ability to easily travel and adopt new ideas to mold into my own beliefs.<sup>49</sup>

As evidenced by the comments made by some interview participants, there is still some apprehension among Canadian and Québécois Pagans with regards to sharing their spiritual proclivities with non-Pagans, for fear that their religion might be misunderstood and/or that their beliefs might be met with hostility. It is perhaps for this reason, and the

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<sup>44</sup> Amber, interview 2007-08-29.

<sup>45</sup> Scarlet, interview 2007-08-04/05.

<sup>46</sup> Brigid, interview 2007-08-11.

<sup>47</sup> Fabiola, interview 2007-08-11.

<sup>48</sup> Amanda, interview 2007-08-11.

<sup>49</sup> Amber, interview 2007-08-29.

fact that most Pagans belong to majority ethno-linguistic groups within Quebec society, such as Francophone Québécois and Anglophones of British descent, that the vast majority of Pagans in Montreal are nearly indistinguishable from their fellow citizens. Indeed, Pagans are often recognizable as Pagans only when they wear specific symbols such as pentagrams and Goddess pendants (see Appendix C).

In the survey questionnaire, I asked participants whether they believed it was useful or harmful for Pagans to wear recognizable symbols that depicted their religious affiliations. Only two survey respondents in as many categories answered that such a thing would have undesirable effects (see Table 43).

**Table 43 - On whether survey respondents think it is useful or harmful for Pagans to wear recognizable symbols of their religion, by category**

	Francophones Québécois(es)	Other Francophones	Canadian Bilingual	Foreigner Bilingual / Allophone	Canadian Allophone	Canadian Anglophone	Foreigner Anglophone
Useful	2 (E, Q)		1 (J)	1 (M)	1 (L)	5 (9, 11, 13, 18, 20)	2 (2, 4)
Harmful				1 (M)			1 (4)
Doesn't matter	3 (A, B, D)	5 (F - I, N)	1 (P)	2 (K, M)		10 (6, 7, 8, 10, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19)	3 (1, 3, 5)

Among the two who believed that wearing recognizable Pagan symbols was potentially harmful, 4, a Foreigner Anglophone, added that this depended on the situation<sup>50</sup>. Twelve survey respondents in six categories answered that wearing recognizable Pagan symbols was useful, and twenty-four survey respondents in all but one category answered that it did not matter. Among the former, 13, a Canadian Anglophone added that wearing recognizable Pagan symbols was a good thing “if we need to recognize each other in public places – but generally it should be a matter of choice”<sup>51</sup>. Similarly, 10, a Canadian

<sup>50</sup> 4, survey questionnaire.

<sup>51</sup> 13, survey questionnaire.

Anglophone who answered that wearing recognizable Pagan symbols was neither useful nor harmful, also added that this should be a matter of personal choice<sup>52</sup>.

When asked whether they wear any symbols reflecting their Pagan religious identity, the majority of survey respondents answered in the affirmative. These include all of the Francophones, the Canadian Bilingual respondents, the Canadian Allophone and most of the Canadian Anglophones and Foreigner Anglophones (see Table 44).

**Table 44 - On whether survey respondents wear any symbols reflecting their Pagan religious identity, by category**

	Francophones Québécois(es)	Other Francophones	Canadian Bilingual	Foreigner Bilingual / Allophone	Canadian Allophone	Canadian Anglophone	Foreigner Anglophone
Yes	5 (A, B, D, E, Q)	5 (F – I, N)	2 (J, P)		1 (L)	10 (6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 19)	3 (2, 3, 4)
No				2 (K, M)		5 (8, 9, 17, 18, 20)	1 (5)

When asked which symbols they wear, twenty-two survey respondents mentioned that they wear pentacles or pentagrams, which are five-pointed stars representing the unity of the elements of Earth, Air, Fire, Water and Spirit, among other things<sup>53</sup>. Unfortunately for most Pagans, these symbols are also associated in popular culture with Satanism. For this reason, one survey respondent who answered that she wears a pentacle added the following comment: “I can become weary of having to constantly defend myself though”<sup>54</sup>. Other symbols frequently mentioned by survey respondents included the Ankh<sup>55</sup>, an Egyptian symbol representing eternal life, Goddess pendants<sup>56</sup>, Moons<sup>57</sup>,

<sup>52</sup> 10, survey questionnaire.

<sup>53</sup> A, B, D, E, Q, F, G, H, I, N, J, 2, 3, 6, 7, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 19.

<sup>54</sup> 14, survey questionnaire.

<sup>55</sup> B, P, L, 12, 15.

<sup>56</sup> A, 1, 16 (“Isis pendant”).

<sup>57</sup> B, 1, 10.

the “Om” symbol<sup>58</sup>, the hexagram<sup>59</sup>, the Hammer of Thor<sup>60</sup>, the Tree of Life / Yggdrasil<sup>61</sup>, the Spiral<sup>62</sup>, and the solar cross<sup>63</sup>, among many others<sup>64</sup>.

Those who answered that they do not wear recognizable Pagan symbols were asked if they would like to wear such symbols. Only five survey respondents who had answered “no” to the previous question answered in the affirmative (**M, 8, 9, 18, 20**), while **K** answered “no” once again. On a related note, survey respondents were also asked about what made them recognizable as Pagans to other Pagans. Many of the participants who answered this question mentioned external Pagan symbols as well as distinctive personality traits:

My pentacle and when I speak about my practice and spiritual beliefs.<sup>65</sup>

The pentacle mostly but I do think some people wear it without being really aware of the meaning.<sup>66</sup>

Witchy aura!<sup>67</sup>

My open personality.<sup>68</sup>

My lifestyle & beliefs.<sup>69</sup>

The jewelry [sic] is an obvious signal, but also conversation about spiritual expression and our relationship with our environment (living, working, ecological).<sup>70</sup>

Energy, vibe, intellect, presence<sup>71</sup>

Talking with them about it.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> **N**, 3.

<sup>59</sup> **J**, 15.

<sup>60</sup> **E**, 4.

<sup>61</sup> **A**, **J**.

<sup>62</sup> **11**, **13**.

<sup>63</sup> **3**.

<sup>64</sup> See Appendix C for images of the common Pagan symbols mentioned above.

<sup>65</sup> **F**, survey questionnaire.

<sup>66</sup> **G**, survey questionnaire.

<sup>67</sup> **H**, survey questionnaire. **H** then added a “smiley face” next to her answer.

<sup>68</sup> **I**, survey questionnaire.

<sup>69</sup> **N**, survey questionnaire.

<sup>70</sup> **J**, survey questionnaire.

<sup>71</sup> **M**, survey questionnaire.

<sup>72</sup> **1**, survey questionnaire.

Attitudes and worldview, and probably jewellery if I'm wearing something like a pentacle.<sup>73</sup>

Pendant.<sup>74</sup>

[M]y conviction.<sup>75</sup>

My attitude ... sometimes. Most people don't recognize me as a Pagan.<sup>76</sup>

Discussion of affiliation w/Pagan friends & community.<sup>77</sup>

The tattoos I have on my body when they can be seen, my pendant, my spiritual practices, my academic slant.<sup>78</sup>

My pendants, energy, and when I tell them.<sup>79</sup>

A connecting of like beliefs (if you are speaking to them) although a pentagram or a spiral or goddess pendant is often a good identifier [sic].<sup>80</sup>

My actions & speech (topics, discussion).<sup>81</sup>

How you speak about spirituality.<sup>82</sup>

Spiritual belief.<sup>83</sup>

[The] Way you live your life.<sup>84</sup>

Pentacles mainly.<sup>85</sup>

Others mentioned that aside from wearing specific external symbols, it would be nearly impossible to tell whether or not they were Pagans:

Nous n'avons pas grands moyen [sic] de se reconnaître à part un bijou quelconque.<sup>86</sup>

Non, car je ne porte pas toujours mes symboles.<sup>87</sup>

Nothing which is obvious.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> 3, survey questionnaire.

<sup>74</sup> 4, survey questionnaire.

<sup>75</sup> 5, survey questionnaire.

<sup>76</sup> 8, survey questionnaire.

<sup>77</sup> 9, survey questionnaire.

<sup>78</sup> 10, survey questionnaire.

<sup>79</sup> 12, survey questionnaire.

<sup>80</sup> 13, survey questionnaire.

<sup>81</sup> 14, survey questionnaire.

<sup>82</sup> 15, survey questionnaire.

<sup>83</sup> 16, survey questionnaire.

<sup>84</sup> 17, survey questionnaire.

<sup>85</sup> 19, survey questionnaire.

<sup>86</sup> D, survey questionnaire.

<sup>87</sup> E, survey questionnaire.

<sup>88</sup> P, survey questionnaire.

Nothing from the outside!<sup>89</sup>

Not sure.<sup>90</sup>

If they are not wearing a pentacle, then they are not recognizable, we look like everyone else.<sup>91</sup>

The way they think and express their ideas. There is no outward way to know if someone is Pagan or not. You probably wouldn't know I was a Pagan unless you asked or knew me.<sup>92</sup>

Very little, I dress as an ordinary college student.<sup>93</sup>

Symbols help, but otherwise not much.<sup>94</sup>

One Francophone Québécoise survey respondent was adamant that making one's affinity with Paganism visible to non-Pagans could be potentially detrimental, especially when faced with ignorant people or with others who are likely to misunderstand the nature of Paganism:

*Non. Cela peut avoir certaines conséquences non-désirées comme de la discrimination en matière d'emploi, ou dans certains milieux académiques où on retrouve des membres pratiquants des Trois grandes religions monothéistes révélées.*<sup>95</sup>

These findings confirm that although many Pagans in Montreal feel that they live within a tolerant society, there is still apprehension about the level of openness one should display when revealing one's Pagan affiliation with others. Also, symbols and other visible markers mostly serve the purpose of identification within the Pagan community, as non-Pagans might not be aware of the meaning of specific Pagan symbols, as is often the case with the pentagram or pentacle.

Nevertheless, the Pagans in my sample also demonstrated the degree to which they felt integrated within Quebec culture and society in the ways they answered various questions about the perceived relationship between their religious affiliations and Quebec

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<sup>89</sup> **K**, survey questionnaire.

<sup>90</sup> **L**, survey questionnaire.

<sup>91</sup> **2**, survey questionnaire.

<sup>92</sup> **7**, survey questionnaire.

<sup>93</sup> **18**, survey questionnaire.

<sup>94</sup> **20**, survey questionnaire.

<sup>95</sup> **B**, survey questionnaire.

culture and history. As mentioned previously, some of my Francophone key informants, namely Mme Patry and Lucie Marie-Mai DuFresne, strongly believe that Francophone Pagans are more open to the notion of borrowing religious and cultural motifs from Native cultures, as most French Canadians have Aboriginal ancestry. Speaking of her own spiritual practice, Lucie said:

The more I've experimented with religious modalities available to us as Pagans, the more I realize that for me working as a solitaire, that certain Native modalities are easier to work with. And for want of a better term I call them Neo-Shamanic. So it's important to me to know the Eastern Woodlands' culture complex because that's where I live, that's where I grew up, and those are my Native ancestral roots [Lucie is Métis as well as Franco-Ontarian]. So it's as important to me to speak to the Manitous as it is to address the Gods.  
[...] I agree with you that I think Paganism is harder to develop in Quebec. I think you're right that Quebec has a long history of ceremonial magic and what most Anglophones would consider Pagan, many French-Canadian Quebecers would consider Native or peasant folklore.<sup>96</sup>

Survey results confirm in part Lucie's statement that Francophones are more comfortable with cross-fertilizing Paganism with Aboriginal spirituality than Anglophones. When asked whether they knew something about Shamanic<sup>97</sup> practices, the majority of survey respondents answered in the affirmative. Furthermore, there is a definite pattern of difference between ethno-linguistic categories when considering that all of the Francophone, Bilingual, Allophone and most of the foreign-born survey respondents answered that they knew something about Shamanic practices, while exactly half of the Canadian Anglophones answered the same (see Table 45). Also, the Pagans in my sample believe almost unanimously that Shamanic practices do fit within Paganism (see Table 46), although K, the sole Foreigner Bilingual survey respondent, added the qualifier "Not Native Shamanism, though"<sup>98</sup>.

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<sup>96</sup> Lucie Marie-Mai DuFresne, interview 2007-08-08.

<sup>97</sup> I did not define the term "Shamanism" in the survey questionnaire, leaving it open to the interpretation of research participants. Most Pagans understand the concept of Shamanism as a body of spiritual techniques of communicating with the unseen world of spirits, and as an integral component of Aboriginal traditional religion. However, the use of Shamanistic techniques is not limited to Native North American religions.

<sup>98</sup> K, survey questionnaire.

**Table 45 - On whether survey respondents know something about Shamanic practices, by category**

	Francophones Québécois(es)	Other Francophones	Canadian Bilingual	Foreigner Bilingual / Allophone	Canadian Allophone	Canadian Anglophone	Foreigner Anglophone
Yes	6 (A – E, Q)	5 (F – I, N)	2 (J, P)	2 (K, M)	1 (L)	8 (10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 18, 20, 21)	4 (1, 2, 3, 4)
No						8 (6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 16, 17, 19)	1 (5)

**Table 46 - On whether survey respondents believe that Shamanic practices fit within Paganism, by category**

	Francophones Québécois(es)	Other Francophones	Canadian Bilingual	Foreigner Bilingual / Allophone	Canadian Allophone	Canadian Anglophone	Foreigner Anglophone
Yes	6 (A – E, Q)	5 (F – I, N)	2 (J, P)	2 (K, M)	1 (L)	14 (6, 7, 9-18, 20, 21)	4 (1, 2, 3, 4)
Possibly						1 (19)	

Another pattern emerges with regards to whether survey respondents know something about Aboriginal/Native American spirituality. As shown in Table 47, all survey respondents in every category, with the exception of six Canadian Anglophones and one Foreigner Anglophone, claim to know something about Native American spirituality. Furthermore, the majority of survey respondents in all categories believe that what they have learned about Native American spirituality has contributed to their own Pagan views (see Table 48).

**Table 47 - On whether survey respondents know something about Amerindian / Native American spirituality, by category**

	Francophones Québécois(es)	Other Francophones	Canadian Bilingual	Foreigner Bilingual / Allophone	Canadian Allophone	Canadian Anglophone	Foreigner Anglophone
Yes	6 (A – E, Q)	5 (F – I, N)	2 (J, P)	2 (K, M)	1 (L)	10 (9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 21)	4 (1, 2, 3, 4)
No						6 (6, 7, 8, 17, 19, 20)	1 (5)

**Table 48 – On whether what survey respondents had learned about Amerindian / Native American spirituality has contributed to their own Pagan views, by category**

	Francophones Québécois(es)	Other Francophones	Canadian Bilingual	Foreigner Bilingual / Allophone	Canadian Allophone	Canadian Anglophone	Foreigner Anglophone
Yes	5 (A, C, D, E, Q)	5 (F – I, N)	2 (J, P)	2 (K, M)	1 (L)	9 (9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 18, 21)	3 (1, 2, 4)
No	1 (B)					2 (6, 15)	1 (3)
N / A						1 (20)	

Once again, the majority of those who answered that this was not the case belong to the Canadian Anglophone and Foreigner Anglophone categories. The only exception to this pattern was **B**, a Francophone Québécoise.

When asked about whether they would like to know more about Native American spirituality, survey respondents in all categories answered in the affirmative. Those who answered “no” belong to the Canadian Anglophone and Foreigner Anglophone categories (see Table 49). These results demonstrate that to some degree Canadian Anglophone and foreign-born Pagans are less comfortable with borrowing cultural and religious motifs from Aboriginal/Native American cultures than Francophone Pagans.

**Table 49 – On whether survey respondents would like to learn more about Amerindian / Native American spirituality, by category**

	Francophones Québécois(es)	Other Francophones	Canadian Bilingual	Foreigner Bilingual / Allophone	Canadian Allophone	Canadian Anglophone	Foreigner Anglophone
Yes	2 (B, D)	2 (G, H)	1 (J)	1 (M)		11 (6, 7, 8, 9, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21)	2 (1, 5)
No						2 (13, 19)	1 (3)

Not surprisingly, Francophone Pagans are also slightly more likely than Anglophones to claim to know something about Quebec folk traditions (see Table 50), and to find these useful in their Pagan practices (see Table 51).

**Table 50 - On whether survey respondents know something about Quebec folk traditions, by category**

	Francophones Québécois(es)	Other Francophones	Canadian Bilingual	Foreigner Bilingual / Allophone	Canadian Allophone	Canadian Anglophone	Foreigner Anglophone
Yes	3 (A, B, D)	3 (F, H, N)	2 (J, P)	1 (M)	1 (L)	3 (8, 10, 15)	
No	3 (C, E, Q)	2 (G, I)		1 (K)		12 (6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21)	5 (1 – 5)
N / A						2 (13, 14)	

**Table 51 - On whether survey respondents find Quebec folk traditions useful in their Pagan practice, by category**

	Francophones Québécois(es)	Other Francophones	Canadian Bilingual	Foreigner Bilingual / Allophone	Canadian Allophone	Canadian Anglophone	Foreigner Anglophone
Yes	4 (A, B, D, Q)	3 (F, H, N)			1 (L)	2 (8, 16)	
No	1 (E)	1 (G)	2 (J, P)	1 (M)		7 (6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 15, 21)	3 (2, 3, 5)
N / A						3 (12, 17, 20)	

**Table 52 - On whether survey respondents use any Quebecois folk spells or rituals, by category**

	Francophones Québécois(es)	Other Francophones	Canadian Bilingual	Foreigner Bilingual / Allophone	Canadian Allophone	Canadian Anglophone	Foreigner Anglophone
Yes	2 (A, D)	1 (N)					
No	4 (B, C, E, Q)	4 (F, G, H, I)	2 (J, P)	2 (K, M)	1 (L)	16 (6 – 21)	5 (1 – 5)

**Table 53 - On whether survey respondents think there is a link between folk Quebecois magical traditions and contemporary Paganism, by category**

	Francophones Québécois(es)	Other Francophones	Canadian Bilingual	Foreigner Bilingual / Allophone	Canadian Allophone	Canadian Anglophone	Foreigner Anglophone
Yes	4 (A, B, D, E)	4 (F, G, H, N)	1 (J)		1 (L)	3 (7, 8, 14)	2 (1, 5)
No	1 (Q)		1 (P)	1 (M)		3 (6, 15, 20)	2 (2, 3)
Don't know		1 (I)				3 (9, 13, 21)	1 (4)
Maybe						2 (16, 18)	
Depends on practice						1 (10)	

More surprising is that the survey respondents unanimously claim to not use Québécois folk spells or rituals in their Pagan practices, with the exception of two Francophone Québécoises and one Other Francophone (see Table 52). For reasons

unknown, the majority of survey respondents believe that there is a definite link between the Quebec folk magical tradition and the Pagan revival (see Table 53). As can be expected, most of the survey respondents who believe this to be the case are Francophones.

In 1989, Eve Gaboury had found among the lesbian feminist Pagan women strong references to Quebec's own pre-Christian and folkloric traditions<sup>99</sup>. These references are gone from my 2007-2008 data. As mentioned earlier, writing in 2003 Mireille Gagnon had not found enough evidence to link the Quebec folk magical tradition with the emergence of Paganism within the Province<sup>100</sup>. This points to a rapid evolution of the situation in Quebec with regards to the Québécois and their relationship with their folkloric past.

However, some of my research data hint at the fact that Quebec folk traditions may indeed play a role in some participants' Pagan identity formation. Mme Patry and one of the Francophone Québécoise survey respondents mentioned that they had been taught some aspect of the magical arts by a relative during their respective childhoods. Most strikingly, both women mentioned that the family members in question were male, which is consistent with Gagnon's observation that Quebec folk magic has traditionally been a male pursuit<sup>101</sup>. Mme Patry told me during the interview that her grandfather had been a "white Witch" (*un sorcier blanc*) who had worked with elemental magic and herb magic. He taught her his Craft when she was seven years old<sup>102</sup>. Similarly, when asked to

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<sup>99</sup> Gaboury, 1989.

<sup>100</sup> See Gagnon, 2003. For a look at gender and witchcraft in Quebec from colonial times until the nineteenth century, see also Séguin, Robert-Lionel. *La sorcellerie au Québec du XVIIe au XIXe siècle*. Ottawa : Léméac. 1971.

<sup>101</sup> Gagnon, 2003: 7. See also Séguin, 1971.

<sup>102</sup> Marie-Renée Patry, interview 2007-08-21.

describe her religious itinerary and spiritual evolution, E, a Francophone Québécoise, answered that she had been taught tarot at age twelve by her father, in spite of having been brought up as a devout Roman Catholic. She also mentioned that her paternal grandfather had been well versed in esotericism as well:

Ayant fréquenté des écoles privées, j'ai reçu une éducation catholique encadrée: prières, messes et sacrements réguliers en plus des cours de catéchèse. Assez jeune, j'ai eu le souci de développer une relation avec le Divin par la prière. Je cherchais à faire plus pour me rapprocher de « Dieu », mais je ne savais pas comment et je sentais que certains dogmes n'allaient pas dans le même sens que mes convictions personnelles. Je portais une grande attention à la catéchèse (intérêt qui s'est plus tard développé en passion pour les mythes) et je prenais au sérieux les confessions ou sacrements auxquels je participais. Étant enfant unique et mes parents ayant une propriété à la campagne, j'ai passé de nombreuses heures seule dans la forêt, où je me suis construit un monde imaginaire. Je pense sincèrement que cela a participé à ma quête spirituelle et à mon appartenance païenne. Vers l'âge de 12 ans, j'ai été initiée brièvement au tarot par mon père. Son propre père était fort versé dans l'ésotérisme et bien que je ne l'ai jamais connu, j'ai toujours eu une fascination pour l'homme et ses mystérieuses pratiques. C'est probablement à partir de ce moment que j'ai introduit dans mon système de croyances que le subtil existait. C'est à 18 ans que je suis tombée sur mon premier livre de « Wicca 101 », qui s'est avéré une véritable révélation. A la même époque, j'étudiais en histoire de l'art au cégep où j'ai été initiée à la mythologie, dont la mythologie nordique, ce qui fut une deuxième révélation. A partir de ces deux trouvailles, tout s'est enclenché très rapidement.<sup>103</sup>

These women's responses indicate that there is some evidence of a marginal link between some forms of Quebec folk magical traditions and the crafting of a Pagan identity later in life. As Gagnon stated in her research, the folk magical traditions mentioned here do not necessarily include a religious dimension, as these have traditionally been considered as a complement to religious acts such as prayer and sacraments<sup>104</sup>. For this reason, although Mme Patry and E received their knowledge of the magical arts through a family lineage, it would be inaccurate to call their family traditions Pagan, as the knowledge was transmitted within the context of a Roman Catholic upbringing.

What makes Mme Patry and E's narratives most interesting is the fact that their family traditions point to the existence of genuine, hereditary traditions of folk magic

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<sup>103</sup> E, survey questionnaire.

<sup>104</sup> Gagnon, 2003: 7-8.

within Quebec Francophone culture<sup>105</sup>. As noted in Chapter 1, in the 1960s and 1970s, many Witches and Pagans in North America sought to legitimize their traditions with claims of ancestry and transmission of knowledge through a family line. Although such claims have become less relevant to the legitimacy of Witchcraft and Paganism as religious traditions<sup>106</sup>, being an heir to a family tradition of the Craft is a notion that still carries some form of prestige within contemporary Paganism to this day. As shown in Table 54, survey respondents are divided almost equally in their belief that a Pagan identity acquired through a biological family lineage differs fundamentally from a Pagan identity transmitted through teaching and/or initiation.

**Table 54 - On whether survey respondents believe that a Pagan identity acquired through biological (familial) lineage differs fundamentally from a Pagan identity acquired through teaching and/or initiation, by category**

	Francophones Québécois(es)	Other Francophones	Canadian Bilingual	Foreigner Bilingual / Allophone	Canadian Allophone	Canadian Anglophone	Foreigner Anglophone
Yes	3 (C, D, E)	2 (G, H)	1 (P)	2 (K, M)	1 (L)	7 (6, 9, 10, 11, 13, 17, 19)	3 (2, 3, 4)
No	3 (A, B, Q)	3 (F, I, N)	1 (J)			9 (7, 8, 12, 14, 15, 16, 18, 20, 21)	2 (1, 5)

Regardless of how family lineages are perceived within Paganism, very few people acquire their Pagan religious identification through family tradition. As noted in Chapter 3, all of the research participants in my sample, with the probable exception of **6** and **8**, found out about Paganism on their own, often during adolescence or early adulthood. The fact that few people are born into Paganism, even five decades after the popularization of Wicca in Britain and its subsequent arrival in North America, begs the

<sup>105</sup> See Séguin 1971. See also Des Ruisseaux, Pierre. *Croyances et pratiques populaires au Canada français*. Montréal: Éditions du Jour. 1973; and Des Ruisseaux, Pierre. *Magie et sorcellerie populaires au Québec*. Montréal: Triptyque. 1976.

<sup>106</sup> See Adler, 1979, 1986.

question as to how Pagans plan to ensure the continuity of their religion. The cherished Pagan values of freedom of choice, the absence of proselytizing and the abhorrence for imposing one's religious views on others pose an even greater challenge to the continuity of the religious movement.

In order to determine how research participants intended to secure the continuity of Paganism, I asked the interview participants whether they wished for their values and their way of thinking to be transmitted to their children. All of the interview respondents who had children, or who claimed to want to have children in the future, answered in the affirmative, with the almost unanimous caveat that the decision to become Pagan should ultimately be left to the children.

I do plan on having children at some point. Yeah, I do plan on bringing them up in this context, but being open if they want to go a different direction ideologically or religiously.<sup>107</sup>

Yes, I do.<sup>108</sup>

Yes, but only if he or she wants to, because essentially it's their choice as well.<sup>109</sup>

Yes, but I want my children to be open-minded, to make an informed choice when they're ready.<sup>110</sup>

Yes. I am raising my children Pagan when I have them. I'm not going to enforce initiation on them. That is their choice [for] when they are old enough to make that decision on their own. I will also teach them about other religions and encourage acceptance and tolerance of all faiths, for they are all valid.<sup>111</sup>

Oh, oui. Je veux avoir des enfants. C'est certain que je vais les élever de cette façon-là. Le choix va rester le leur. Je vais leur donner la base de mes connaissances, mais s'ils choisissent autre chose quelque part dans leur vie, je vais l'accepter.<sup>112</sup>

Absolutely, although ultimately the decision would be theirs.<sup>113</sup>

J'ai deux enfants qui ont eu des enfants. Je suis grand-mère quatre fois... On prêche par l'exemple. À cause de ma pratique [elle n'a pas poussé ses enfants à devenir praticiens]. On a un meilleur contrôle de notre vie [grâce à la pratique]. Maintenant mes deux enfants songent à être

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<sup>107</sup> Rose, interview 2007-07-07.

<sup>108</sup> Meri Fowler, interview 2007-07-29/30.

<sup>109</sup> Izzy, interview 2007-07-29.

<sup>110</sup> Hobbes, interview 2007-07-29.

<sup>111</sup> Scarlet, interview 2007-08-04/05.

<sup>112</sup> Fabiola, interview 2007-08-11.

<sup>113</sup> Amanda, interview 2007-08-11.

des praticiens débutants... Socialement, c'est plus facile maintenant qu'il y a vingt-cinq ans [car il y a une plus grande] ouverture de la société.<sup>114</sup>

I do not necessarily want my values and ideas “transmitted”, but I do want them taught to my future children so that they may develop their values and ideas in an informed manner rather than being told only one way.<sup>115</sup>

This corresponds exactly with Berger's research findings among a community of Wiccans in New England in the 1990s: “Although parents may hope that their path is followed by their children, most Neo-Pagan parents are willing, at least in principle, to accept that their children will grow to adulthood and choose either another religion or secularism”<sup>116</sup>. Berger also concluded that the inclusion of children in Wicca and Paganism would lead to the routinization and standardization of the religious movement. Routinization and standardization are integral components to the process of normative *communitas*, and are inevitable within any religious movement that lasts more than a single generation<sup>117</sup>. Although Berger provided much evidence for the increasing of routinization and standardization of Wicca and Paganism in the United States, it is difficult to gauge the rate at which Paganism will become standardized in Montreal and in Quebec more broadly. As discussed previously, Paganism started later in Quebec than in other places in North America due to the linguistic and cultural barriers that have rendered the religious movement nearly inaccessible to many unilingual Francophones within the province. This has meant a slower growth and development for the Francophone component of the Pagan community in the provinces's largest city, which is also home to the majority of Pagans in *La Belle Province*.

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<sup>114</sup> Marie-Renée Patry, interview 2007-08-21.

<sup>115</sup> Amber, interview 2007-08-29.

<sup>116</sup> Berger, 1999:85.

<sup>117</sup> See Bibby, Reginald. *Restless Gods: The Renaissance of Religion in Canada*. Toronto: Stoddart. 2002.

Also, if Pagans are prudent about transmitting their values and religious beliefs to their own children, they are even more cautious about doing the same to other people's children. When I asked the interview participants whether they wished for their values and way of thinking to be transmitted to the next generation, most of them answered once again that they would like this to happen only if no one imposed their religion on others against their will.

Yes. Everybody thinks that their way of thinking will benefit humanity the most, and I do think that [as well]. I think our society would be a better place if we were more in tune with the Earth and everything on it.<sup>118</sup>

It's important for other generations to learn our way of thinking, but not to impose it. So I wish that my grandchildren would be Wiccan and I'd like for other children to be Wiccan and Pagan, but I think it's important to have respect for other religions and traditions, and that respect is part of our tradition.<sup>119</sup>

Yes, because like any other religious views, it shouldn't stop with us, it should continue on.<sup>120</sup>

Yes, but only if they come looking for it.<sup>121</sup>

Oui, mais il faut laisser la liberté aux jeunes. Dans l'adolescence, il faut que le jeune soit bien informé avant qu'il devienne païen, ou de s'engager dans une autre religion, ou de même devenir athé.<sup>122</sup>

Oui. Je veux voir le paganisme et la Wicca évoluer. Je veux que ça continue de grandir.<sup>123</sup>

Yes, I hope that the next generation inherits a sense of responsibility, honor, virtue, a sense of care for the environment.<sup>124</sup>

Oui, j'aimerais bien, sauf que je ne forcerais personne à suivre ma religion.<sup>125</sup>

Je pense que c'est souhaitable. Tôt ou tard on va y venir. On a chacun nos vérités, ce n'est pas normal de suivre des religions toutes faites. [...] Il y a autant de religions que d'individus sur la terre. Je souhaite que chaque être humain devienne un païen [au sens d'une spiritualité profonde].<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> Rose, interview 2007-07-07.

<sup>119</sup> Meri Fowler, interview 2007-07-29/30.

<sup>120</sup> Izzy, interview 2007-07-29.

<sup>121</sup> Hobbes, interview 2007-07-29.

<sup>122</sup> Brighid, interview 2007-08-11.

<sup>123</sup> Fabiola, interview 2007-08-11.

<sup>124</sup> Gra-Auga, interview 2007-08-11.

<sup>125</sup> Rhiannon, interview 2007-08-15.

<sup>126</sup> Marie-Renée Patry, interview 2007-08-21.

I hope that the next generation shares similar values and ideas to the majority of pagans, and if not then I hope that they at least have equally positive values and ideas that can correspond with those of pagans.<sup>127</sup>

As before, I would be in favor for these to be passed on.<sup>128</sup>

In most cases, interview participants were more likely to answer that they would rather share their religion and values with those who come looking for guidance than flatly dictate them to other people. This pattern of response was also apparent in how they answered the question as to whether they wished for their values and way of thinking to be shared by a community of believers.

I think everyone should believe in what feels right to them, and who am I to tell people that I'm right.<sup>129</sup>

No, I don't. I want to contribute my views and let them be heard, and in turn hear other people's views.<sup>130</sup>

I think everybody should be free to believe what they choose to believe, as long as it doesn't harm anybody. Everyone's personal path, spiritually, is a road only they can travel to learn the things they need to learn. Therefore I don't believe my beliefs should be imposed on anyone. In terms of sharing we can all learn from each other and lend insight on one another's paths.<sup>131</sup>

I would hope that a community of believers would also value open-mindedness and independent thought.<sup>132</sup>

En fait, je désire ce qui est mieux pour la société. Je ne veux pas nécessairement partager [ma spiritualité].<sup>133</sup>

Toujours en gardant le libre arbitre et qu'il y a une vérité pour chaque personne, oui. Mais pas nécessairement ma spiritualité et mon cheminement.<sup>134</sup>

To an extent, yes... but I also believe that this would have to be adapted to the individual needs of the person or people in question.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> Amber, interview 2007-08-29.

<sup>128</sup> Patrick, interview 2008-01-20.

<sup>129</sup> Izzy, interview 2007-07-29.

<sup>130</sup> Hobbes, interview 2007-07-29.

<sup>131</sup> Chloe, interview 2007-07-29.

<sup>132</sup> Amanda, interview 2007-08-11.

<sup>133</sup> Rhiannon, interview 2007-08-15.

<sup>134</sup> Marie-Renée Patry, interview 2007-08-21.

<sup>135</sup> Patrick, interview 2008-01-20.

Others also hinted at the fact that resources should be made available to seekers who are sincerely looking to craft their own spirituality in a Pagan context. Scarlet, Meri Fowler and Fabiola mentioned that they either already transmitted Paganism to others through teaching, or that they hoped to be able to achieve this goal some day:

Yes, I do, and that's the reason why I think it's important for the community to have teachers. People don't only learn from books, but they need to have a teacher who lives the life [of the religion].<sup>136</sup>

Oui, c'est un de mes rêves. Avec la FOI [Fellowship of Isis] je vais être appelée à avoir un Iseum moi aussi. Un de mes rêves est d'ouvrir un temple à Montréal et enseigner.<sup>137</sup>

The remaining interview participants said that they hoped for such a community to exist in the future, or that such a community already exists in the form of the Pagan community:

Yes. I fantasize a lot about being part of a community of people, like an intentional community where we share beliefs and practices, particularly as a place to raise children, like an eco-village perhaps. I am very interested in eco-villages and would like to live in one perhaps.<sup>138</sup>

There's already a group that shares my values. It's the Pagan community.<sup>139</sup>

My values are similar to the values presented by the Wiccan religion and other pagan religions, and therefore I know that my values are shared with a community of believers of Wicca.<sup>140</sup>

When asked whether they thought that their spiritual values and religious practices *should* be transmitted to others, most interview participants answered once again that they would be willing to share their spirituality with others only as long as no one imposed their views on other people.

Not necessarily. I only share them with people who are interested in hearing about them. We don't go about preaching and converting people, so we have the website [<http://www.wiccansacredcircle.com>] so people come looking for us. We don't come looking for people.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> Meri Fowler, interview 2007-07-29/30.

<sup>137</sup> Fabiola, interview 2007-08-11.

<sup>138</sup> Rose, interview 2007-07-07.

<sup>139</sup> Gra-Auga, interview 2007-08-11

<sup>140</sup> Amber, interview 2007-08-29.

<sup>141</sup> Meri Fowler, interview 2007-07-29/30.

Yes because it's knowledge. You should never stop learning.<sup>142</sup>

We should have the freedom to choose to share them, but it is a choice.<sup>143</sup>

Oui, mais pas de prosélytisme. Il ne faut pas que ce soit perçu comme du prosélytisme.<sup>144</sup>

Oui, si c'est ça qu'elles veulent. Je ne crois pas à l'évangélisation. Si c'est ce que les gens veulent, je suis d'accord. Je ne crois pas au prosélytisme.<sup>145</sup>

I think spirituality and religion is [sic] very personal. There is nothing wrong with sharing them with others, but they don't necessarily need to be shared.<sup>146</sup>

Pas nécessairement. Ce n'est pas essentiel. Je pourrais être seule au monde à penser comme ça et ça serait correct.<sup>147</sup>

Pas telles qu'elles sont présentement. D'un côté plus global, les gens se porteront mieux lorsqu'ils auront trouvé leur vérité personnelle... Que l'ouverture se fasse et que le niveau de conscience s'élève.<sup>148</sup>

I share my spiritual values and practices with others when they show interest. I do not push my beliefs onto others.<sup>149</sup>

I already do share them to an extent ... to anyone who asks and is willing to listen.<sup>150</sup>

This reluctance to actively mold the religious perspectives of others, as well as the general *laissez-faire* attitude that is prevalent within Paganism, may well prove to become a major challenge to the process of normative *communitas* in the Montreal Pagan community and other loci of Pagan identity formation in the future. For this reason, Pagans in Montreal and elsewhere may find it more important to welcome seekers of all ages into the Pagan community than raising their own children as Pagans in the hope that the latter might eventually choose this path later in life. This issue became especially apparent during the *Young Pagans' Circle* panel at the Montreal Pagan conference that took place in November 2007.

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<sup>142</sup> Izzy, interview 2007-07-29.

<sup>143</sup> Hobbes, interview 2007-07-29.

<sup>144</sup> Brigid, interview 2007-08-11.

<sup>145</sup> Fabiola, interview 2007-08-11.

<sup>146</sup> Amanda, interview 2007-08-11.

<sup>147</sup> Rhiannon, interview 2007-08-15.

<sup>148</sup> Marie-Renée Patry, interview 2007-08-21.

<sup>149</sup> Amber, interview 2007-08-29.

<sup>150</sup> Patrick, interview 2008-01-20.

At that event, a half dozen young people in their teens and early twenties, all of whom were current or former members of Meri Fowler's support group for Pagan children and teenagers, recounted their experiences of learning about Paganism within the context of an adult-supervised peer group. The panel's most significant recurring topic was the importance of community and of providing young seekers with a context in which to safely explore their emerging spirituality. Meri Fowler also recounted several instances where parents of members of *Young Pagans' Circle* became Pagan after taking an active interest in their children's spirituality<sup>151</sup>. These instances, although anecdotal, are not isolated cases. As seen in Chapter 3, many research participants became exposed to Paganism through a process of mimetic isomorphism<sup>152</sup>, in that they acquired a Pagan identity after becoming familiar with the religious movement through their friends and other acquaintances. It would indeed be interesting to study the prevalence of this form socialization into Paganism through one's peers and/or children, and its effects on the growth of the movement overall. This specific line of inquiry, however, exceeds the scope of this study.

Nevertheless, for adults and youngsters alike, adopting a Pagan identity involves an active, self-reflective process of changing one's worldview and sense of self in relation to all that exists in the universe. As seen in Chapter 3, Pagans often speak of "Coming Home" when they encounter people who share their religious beliefs and practices. This occurs even across linguistic barriers, which suggests that religion and other cultural systems may only be minimally bound by language. In order to sketch and quantify the components of the Pagan identity to which people "come home", I included

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<sup>151</sup> Meri Fowler, Montreal Pagan Conference *Young Pagans' Circle* panel 2007-11-17.

<sup>152</sup> According to Berger, within Paganism "Mimetic isomorphism occurs when specific chants, artwork, or other aspects of rituals spread among individual practitioners or groups" (1999:103).

in the survey questionnaire a checklist of concepts that respondents were asked to mark whenever they felt these corresponded with their sense of a Pagan identity.

Not surprisingly, the vast majority of survey respondents agree that being Pagan involves a sense of belonging to an Earth-based or Nature-based religion. This occurs in six categories (see Table 55)

**Table 55 – Components of the survey respondents’ Pagan identities, by category**

	Franco. Québ.	Other Franco.	Can. Bilin.	Foreigner. Bilin./Allo.	Can. Allo.	Can. Anglo.	Foreigner Anglo.	TOTAL
A lineage tradition	1 (Q)	3 (G, H, N)				4 (7, 10, 15, 17)	4 (2, 3, 4, 5)	12
A family-based tradition (biological family)						1 (6)		1
An ancient tribe or clan	2 (C, Q)	1 (I)					1 (2)	4
A tribal community		1 (N)				1 (11)		2
A pre-historical matriarchal culture	1 (D)							1
An ancestral faith (pre-Christian)	5 (A, B, C, E, Q)	2 (H, I)	1 (J)			2 (13, 14)	2 (2, 4)	12
An extended family (biological family / family of choice)			1 (J)			4 (6, 7, 16, 17)	2 (2, 3)	7
A worldwide community of believers	3 (D, E, Q)	1 (N)	1 (J)	1 (K)		5 (7, 10, 13, 15, 20)		11
A North American community of believers	2 (D, E)		1 (J)			3 (10, 11, 12)		6
A Canadian community of believers	2 (D, E)	1 (I)	1 (J)			3 (10, 11, 14)	1 (5)	8
A provincial (Quebec-based) community of believers	2 (D, E)	2 (I, N)	1 (J)			2 (10, 11)		7
A municipally-based community of	2 (D, E)	1 (I)	1 (J)			4 (10, 11, 13, 21)	1 (2)	9

believers								
An ethnically-based community of believers	1 (D)					1 (14)		2
A linguistically-based community of believers	1 (E)							1
A karmically defined community of believers	2 (E, Q)	2 (G, H)				1 (9)		5
A community of like-minded people	2 (D, E)	3 (G, H, I)	2 (J, P)			8 (7, 9, 10, 14, 15, 16, 17, 21)	2 (2, 3)	17
A community of practitioners	2 (E, Q)	4 (F, G, H, N)	1 (J)	1 (M)		6 (7, 10, 15, 16, 17, 21)	2 (2, 3)	16
An empowering tradition	3 (A, D, Q)	2 (H, N)	1 (J)	1 (M)		8 (10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 21)	2 (2, 3)	17
A healing tradition	2 (D, Q)	4 (G, H, I, N)				4 (12, 13, 14, 16)	2 (2, 3)	12
A feminist tradition	1 (D)			1 (K)		1 (11)		3
An ancient tradition that I must rediscover as my birthright	1 (D)	1 (I)						2
A New Religious Movement (NRM)		1 (N)		1 (K)		3 (9, 10, 11)		5
An Earth-based / Nature-based tradition	5 (B, C, D, E, Q)	4 (G, H, I, N)	1 (J)	1 (K)		9 (7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17)	3 (1, 2, 3)	23
A socially activist tradition	1 (Q)			1 (K)		1 (11)		3
A human potential movement	2 (D, Q)	2 (G, H)			1 (L)	2 (13, 17)	1 (2)	8
Other(s)				1 (M)		2 (8, 17)		3

Beyond a generalized reverence for nature, seventeen survey respondents in five categories also believe that belonging to a community of like-minded people is an integral part of being a Pagan, while sixteen people in six categories believe that they are part of a community of practitioners. Twelve survey respondents in four categories, many

of whom practice Wicca or other forms of Witchcraft (except 4 and 15, see Table 10), believe that Paganism is a lineage tradition.

Survey results confirm Rabinovitch's findings that a high number of Pagans perceive their religion as empowering<sup>153</sup>, as seventeen survey respondents in six categories selected this response. Many among the latter also identified a healing component to Paganism. Pagans also define their sense of belonging to their religion in kinship terms. Twelve survey respondents, seven of whom are Francophones, believe that they are taking part in an ancestral pre-Christian faith, while seven people in three categories see Paganism as an extended family or family of choice. Curiously, none of the latter are Francophones. Four Pagans, three of whom are Francophones, see themselves as belonging to an ancient tribe or clan, and two survey respondents in different categories answered that they are part of a tribal community. Another two survey respondents, both Francophones, believe that Paganism constitutes an ancient tradition that they must rediscover as their birthright (**D, I**). Only one survey respondent, a Canadian Anglophone (**6**), answered that as a Pagan she belonged to a family-based tradition. This is not surprising, as she is the same survey respondent who claimed to have been brought up as both a Pagan and a Roman Catholic (see Table 13).

The Pagans in my sample also perceived themselves as taking part in a community that transcends geographical boundaries, as eleven survey respondents in five categories (including only one foreign-born participant) claimed to be part of a worldwide community of believers. Many among the latter also believe that they belong to a North American, a Canadian, a provincial (Quebec-based) and a municipal (Montreal-based) community of believers as well.

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<sup>153</sup> See Rabinovitch 1992, and Rabinovitch 2000.

Survey respondents were more likely to perceive Paganism as a community of believers defined by karmic bonds than one bound by ethnicity or language. Most of the respondents who chose these three selections were Francophones. This adds weight to Mme Patry's assertion that Francophone Pagans tend to not define their spirituality through specific cultural or ethnic criteria (see section 5.1).

On the other hand, eight survey respondents in five categories perceive their religion as a human potential movement, and five people in three categories acknowledge that Paganism is a new religious movement (NRM). Three survey respondents in as many categories see Paganism as a socially activist tradition. Not surprisingly, two among them (**K**, **11**) identify as Reclaiming Witches. What is genuinely surprising, and shows evidence that the Pagans in my sample differ markedly from the American norm of Paganism alluded to in Chapter 1, is that only three survey respondents in as many categories see Paganism as a feminist tradition. Again, two among the latter identify with Reclaiming Witchcraft (**K**, **11**), while the remaining respondent among this grouping, a Francophone Québécoise (**D**), is alone in perceiving Paganism as evoking a pre-historical matriarchal culture. Three survey respondents added components that were not featured in the checklist in the survey questionnaire. **M** wrote that his Pagan identity involves a sense of a "Strong, frequent connection to Deity"<sup>154</sup>, **17** added the component of "an ecstatic tradition"<sup>155</sup> and **8** answered "I don't have a sense of belonging"<sup>156</sup>.

As discussed in section 5.2, Pagans in Montreal belong to a religious movement that may be considered at times subversive or counter-cultural according to mainstream Quebec cultural norms. In spite of this, Montreal Pagans are for the most part fully

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<sup>154</sup> **M**, survey questionnaire.

<sup>155</sup> **17**, survey questionnaire.

<sup>156</sup> **8**, survey questionnaire.

integrated within Quebec society. They are also generally indistinguishable from their fellow citizens, unless they purposely show their allegiance to Paganism by wearing specific symbols reflecting their faith. Pagans in Montreal, whether Anglophone or Francophone, integrate elements of Quebec culture within their own beliefs and practices. However, it is hardly surprising that Francophone Pagans are far more likely than their Anglophone counterparts to believe in an imagined continuity between their chosen faith and their cultural heritage. Francophone Pagans also show a slightly higher tendency to integrate elements of Aboriginal spirituality and/or Shamanism in their practices than Anglophone Pagans. This shows that there is indeed some factual basis to the belief among some participants in this research project that Francophone Pagans are less apprehensive about borrowing religious motifs from cultures that are not their own than Anglophone Pagans.

In spite of a few marked cultural differences between ethno-linguistic categories among research participants, interviewees almost unanimously asserted that they would be willing to raise their children as Pagans, but would remain open to the possibility that their children may choose another path later in life. Anglophone and Francophone Pagans also gave similar responses when they identified the major distinguishing features that have become integral components to a shared Pagan identity. This suggests that Paganism may prove to be more than a set of loosely related, highly idiosyncratic, radically individualistic traditions, as it has proven to transcend cultural and national boundaries, in Montreal and elsewhere. Although Paganism is still in its infancy in the province of Quebec, this new religious movement may one day become a philosophical current with great potential for cultural renewal within post-Quiet Revolution Quebec.

What is significantly missing from the conversations with the respondents, in spite of its potential role in community building, is any reference to women's circles, women solidarity, or even the Goddess, as components of a Pagan identity<sup>157</sup>. Although twenty-four out of thirty-seven survey respondents were women, there does not appear to be any significant differences between genders. As noted, only two women and one man mentioned that Paganism is associated with feminism, and one woman among the latter refers to Paganism as evoking a matriarchal society. For all the other survey respondents, gender is not significant an issue to be mentioned as of primary importance in the construction of a Pagan identity.

In the Montreal Reclaiming circle, women and men participate equally and in equal numbers. The absence of gender specificity in the Montreal Pagan community is a surprising and completely unexpected finding.

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<sup>157</sup> Research done by Gaboury (1989), DuFresne (2004) and Rabinovitch (1992) shows that women's experiences and feminist issues are important in other Pagan communities. Following Elisabeth Lacelle, Monique Dumais, Denise Veillette, and Marie-Andrée Roy, among other feminist researchers working in Quebec in such networks as *L'Autre Parole*, there has been for several decades a strong theologian – or theologist – presence in Quebec but it has diverged from the Pagan stream and is now concentrated in the Catholic Church circles. See Lacelle, Elisabeth J. (éd.). *La femme et la religion au Canada français : Un fait socio-culturel*. Montréal : Les Éditions Bellarmin. 1979 ; Lacelle, Elisabeth J. (éd.). *La femme, son corps et la religion : Approches pluridisciplinaires*. Montréal : Les Éditions Bellarmin. 1983 ; Lacelle, Elisabeth J. « Les sciences religieuses féministes : Un état de la question ». Veillette, Denise (dir.). *Femmes et religions*. Corporation canadienne des sciences religieuses. Les Presses de l'Université Laval. 1995: 43-82.

## **CONCLUSION – PAGANISM AS ETHNOGENESIS**

When in the summer of 2007, I began ethnographic fieldwork among Pagans in Montreal, I assumed that Quebec culture and history influenced the growth of Paganism within the province. My first goal was to describe Paganism in Montreal, a Pagan community in North America that is atypical. Because of the unique bilingual and bicultural nature of Quebec society, I hypothesized that there could be marked differences between Anglophone and Francophone Pagans. This research provides a portrait of a particular Pagan community at a specific point in time: the emergence of the public facet of the Francophone Pagan community in Montreal and in Quebec. This is only a small self-portrait of what is already a rich and interesting field of inquiry for researchers of religion in Quebec.

Pagans in Montreal do share many features with other Pagans around the world, namely their internalization of a specific set of values, ethics and worldviews into their sense of self and in their daily lives; yet I was able to observe differences between Francophone and Anglophone Pagans, but these were not always the ones I had anticipated when I began my research.

Although I already knew through long-term observation and exhaustive literature research that Paganism had a later start in Quebec than in the rest of North America, I was faced with the fact that Paganism among Francophones is even more distinct and difficult to observe than the forms of Paganism favoured by Anglophones in Montreal. One of the most noticeable aspects of Paganism in Montreal is that although the majority

of the population within Quebec is Francophone, at this time Paganism in Montreal is a predominantly Anglophone phenomenon.

One must however distinguish between the influence of the English language and the role played by the Anglophone community. The language barrier, which to some academic observers is sufficient to cause much doubt as to whether Paganism could ever make significant inroads in Quebec, continues to play a significant role in the development of Paganism in Montreal and in other parts of the province.

The absence of the French language was most apparent by the fact that the majority of references, songs, chants, and other material used by the participants in my research and other Montreal Pagans were available almost exclusively in English. In spite of this, Pagans in Montreal hold fast to the ideal of harmonious and egalitarian relations between Anglophones and Francophones within their own community. For the most part, the majority of Pagans I have encountered are willing to go to great lengths to accommodate one another to offset the language barrier during public rituals and other events. Although the majority of public Pagan rituals in Montreal are conducted in English, most Anglophone Pagans are open to the idea of conducting bilingual public rituals so that language does not become an obstacle to understanding. For this reason, as most Anglophone Pagans assume that there will be Francophones attending public events, there will usually be at least one person present willing to translate the proceedings for unilingual Francophone Pagans.

The distinct roles and cultures of the Anglophone Pagans and of the Francophone Pagans form a complex context. For this reason, Francophone Pagans appeared to fall into two markedly different groups. This was best illustrated by the division of

Francophone survey respondents into two ethno-linguistic categories, as described in section 3.1.1. Some Francophones in my sample were able to internalize their Pagan path in their own language to the extent that they claimed to practice their religion predominantly in French. A number of other Francophones claimed to practice in both English and French, or in English exclusively. This suggests, as per DuFresne and Gagnon's observations<sup>1</sup>, that English has become a liturgical language for those who find it difficult to access elements of their spirituality in their mother tongue. I suspect this latter grouping represents the majority of Francophone Pagans who take part in the visible, public aspect of the Montreal Pagan community.

The Francophones who practice only or mostly in French in the Montreal Pagan community, a population I encountered very little as a researcher, exist at this point in time as a collection of unrelated groups and practitioners who worship privately and secretly. Finding large numbers of Francophone Pagans to participate in my research remains the most frustrating part of my field experience, and I suspect this will characterize research on Paganism in Quebec for years to come.

The Francophone Pagans who choose to participate in public events and rituals are confronted with the dominance of the English language within the Montreal Pagan community and deal with this situation by having an adequate command of the English language. This allows them to participate fully in public activities without having to interrupt the flow of rituals by requiring the voluntary services of a translator. According to the results of my research, Francophone Pagans who accept the pervasiveness of the English language in the Montreal Pagan community find that it is more important to build community than to champion linguistic rights for Francophone Pagans. Many find it also

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<sup>1</sup> See DuFresne, 1998, 2004, and Gagnon 2003.

important to foster spontaneous *communitas* during rituals and other group events. The importance placed upon community and *communitas* does therefore influence the ways Anglophone and Francophone Pagans build and experience community.

Pagans in Montreal engage in all three types of *communitas* discussed in the first Chapter of this study. Spontaneous *communitas* is most apparent in the ways Pagans celebrate their relationships with the world around them and with each other. The majority of Pagans believe that they are part of an interconnected, sentient universe, and that they can access the Divine reality around them through their own individual and collective spiritual practices. This corresponds to the frequent claim by Pagans that their religion has an ecstatic, mystical component, which allows people to develop unmediated relationships with the Divine, however imagined, through their own initiative and agency. Rituals expressing this component are understood as transcending language differences.

Pagans in Montreal engage in normative *communitas* through the creation of social networks, peer and affinity groups including University-based Pagan associations, and institutions such as the Montreal Pagan Resource Centre (MPRC), *Young Pagans' Circle*, *Wiccan Sacred Circle*, the Open Circle, and the like. Pagan stores and occult shops, namely the *Mélange Magique* and *Charme et sortilège*, also serve as community networking resources for both Anglophone and Francophone Pagans within the city. At this point in time, Pagans in Montreal have visibly begun the processes of standardization and routinization of their radically individualistic religious movement through the creation of newsletters, Internet-based information websites, discussion groups, blogs, schools for seekers such as Scarlet's *Crescent Moon School of Magic and Paganism*, and so on. One must note that, although ostensibly bilingual in nature, many of the public

Pagan resources and institutions in Montreal mentioned above operate predominantly in English.

Anglophone hegemony within the Montreal Pagan community was challenged in recent years with the creation in 2003 of Francophone Pagan networking tools such as the Internet-based umbrella resource *Racines païennes*. An initiative of the Francophone public Coven Yggdrasil, this website provides links to other French-language Pagan Internet resources, thus partially bridging the gap of inaccessibility for unilingual Francophones who would otherwise experience much difficulty in accessing Pagan material and people. This recent trend is a sign that at least some of the supposedly reserved and secretive Francophone Pagans in Montreal are willing to emerge from the shadows and develop a public face, as the Anglophone component of the Montreal Pagan community had done for two decades prior.

The development of a stronger, more visible Francophone component within the Montreal Pagan community will pose a great challenge to the American-dominated model of routinization and standardization of Paganism observed by Berger et al. According to Berger, “The growth of information networks, the desire for greater legitimacy, the increased number of adherents, and the development of a professional ethic are all promising the religion to change”<sup>2</sup>. This change is supposed to include a greater standardization of Pagan practices, reference materials, rituals forms, songs and chants, and the institutionalization of this radically individualistic religious movement into standardized, recognizable forms. Berger takes the American model of Paganism as the norm, which she assumes can be generalized elsewhere in North America. My research shows that it is not the case. The process of institutionalization of Paganism in

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<sup>2</sup> Berger, 1999:104.

Quebec as part of Canada does not follow Berger's model. Furthermore, Quebec as a "distinct society" is producing a "distinct Paganism" within Canada.

As this research is being completed, Paganism in Montreal is still very much an Anglophone subculture that is beginning to show the marked influences of Canadian and Québécois cultures. As my research data analysis shows, there are definite ways in which Quebec culture influenced the development of Paganism within the province, and especially Paganism as practiced by Francophones.

For example, Francophone Québécois Pagans experience their relationship with their cultural past in ways that are not shared with their American counterparts. Like most Pagans, Pagans in Montreal construct imagined links with their past through the crafting of their spiritualities and religious practices<sup>3</sup>. However, due in part to the lingering influence of the 1960s Quiet Revolution, Francophones in Quebec are usually far less nostalgic about their past than Americans tend to be<sup>4</sup>. For many Francophone Québécois, the time before the Quiet Revolution is usually referred to as a kind of Dark Age (*La grande noirceur*), an era dominated by political corruption, undemocratic power structures and the omnipresent tyranny of the Roman Catholic Church. As seen in Chapter 4, the Quiet Revolution is often spoken of as a kind of cultural Renaissance of the Québécois people, a time of secularization, modernization and political empowerment for the previously disadvantaged majority population within Quebec. For these reasons, Francophones in Quebec are less likely to idealize their ancestral past, especially when the past is perceived as something to be overcome.

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<sup>3</sup> See Magliocco 2004.

<sup>4</sup> Lucie Marie-Mai DuFresne, interview 2007-08-08. See also Magliocco, 2004.

Likewise, the anticlerical, pro-modern sentiments carried over from the 1960s Quiet Revolution continue to influence the ways many Québécois understand and accept notions of religiosity and spirituality of any kind. The Quiet Revolution aftermath also explains the tendency among many Québécois to mistrust religion on principle. This is linked to the finding that some Francophone Pagans tend to perceive Paganism as a lifestyle more than a religion. Surprisingly, Francophone Pagans are fairly likely to perceive some historical continuity between their own cultural heritage and the growth of the Pagan movement in the province of Quebec.

I also found some marked patterns of difference between ethno-linguistic categories with regards to how participants experienced their previous religious affiliations. For many Montreal Pagans, their previous religious involvement did not correspond with their previous degree of religiosity, or degree of intellectual involvement with their former faiths. The Francophone and Canadian Bilingual survey respondents, the majority of whom claimed French Canadian ancestry and were raised in the Roman Catholic faith, were the least consistent about corresponding levels of belief in their former religion and previous levels of practice. Interestingly the Francophone and Bilingual research participants were the most likely to answer that they still believed in some elements of their previous religious affiliations. This could be due to the traditional association between French Canadian cultural identity and the Roman Catholic faith, or it could correspond to less divergence between the Catholic religion as practiced in Quebec, and Paganism as understood by Montreal Pagans. This particular cultural pattern became apparent in many areas of my research data analysis, as discussed in Chapters 3, 4 and 5.

Other significant differences between Anglophone and Francophone Pagans included findings that although both groups answered that they practice roughly the same forms of Paganism, a slightly higher number of Francophones include some form of what they call Shamanism within their Pagan practice. This finding corresponds in part to some respondents' observations that Francophone Pagans are less reluctant than Anglophones to craft and cobble their spiritualities by borrowing motifs from various religious traditions that are not part of their cultural background.

Anglophone Pagans are far more likely to claim that social networks and the presence of a Pagan community influence their spiritual practice and their sense of being Pagan. This is less true for most of my Francophone respondents, some of whom even claim that their spiritual practice is purely personal. Also, a non-negligible number of Anglophones in my sample answered that they have been exposed to Paganism for a longer period of time than they have considered themselves Pagan. This was not the case among the majority of Francophone Pagans.

The overwhelming majority of Pagans in my sample, regardless of ethno-linguistic category, religious background and/or personal religious history, claimed that they had a sense of "Coming Home" upon encountering Paganism. This finding hints at how Pagans in Montreal experience ideological *communitas*, in so far as they believe that the "home" in which they develop their spiritual selves exists as a fully developed entity, at a level of existence unbound by language or other accidents of culture and history.

Nonetheless, Anglophone and Francophone Pagans alike engage in ideological *communitas* through the sharing of common values and a collective effort at constructing the parameters of the emerging Pagan identity. My research data suggests that in spite of

kaleidoscopic differences between practitioners, paths, beliefs, practices and worldviews, Pagans in Montreal view a certain number of characteristics as paramount to the very definition of what it means to be a Pagan, as discussed in Chapter 5. These include a reverence for nature and the belief that the Earth is sacred and in need of protection from human excesses, and the sense that Paganism unites people in a community of affinity.

This community of affinity is built on a sense of participating in a deeply transformative shift of consciousness towards a more ecologically sustainable, gender egalitarian and radically individualistic paradigm. As discussed in Chapter 4, Montreal Pagans internalize the values promoted by their spiritual paths to the degree that these also colour their perspectives on politics, relations between linguistic groups, and for some their perceived relationships with their fellow human beings.

Because the majority of Montreal Pagans are first-generation Pagans, in that they acquired their religious identity of their own free will and through their own agency, it is more difficult to gauge how Paganism will be transmitted to the next generation. Yet the majority of research participants told me during interviews that although they intend to teach Paganism to their children, they would accept the possibility that their children could choose a different path later in life.

At this particular point in its development of a normative and ideological *communitas*, Paganism in Montreal is at a stage corresponding to the first phase of ethnogenesis defined by Wulff's in Chapter 1 of this study. By this I mean that Paganism in Montreal is at the present moment (circa 2008) a collection of disparate individuals, and several groups of individuals, who believe that they share similar religious and

philosophical ideas and practices, and to varying extents identify with one another and/or recognize each other as belonging to the same broad religious movement.

If the Francophone component of the Montreal Pagan community catches up to the level of normative *communitas* developed by its Anglophone component, it would shift the development of Paganism in Quebec even further, allowing for an even greater number of Francophones to access this otherwise discrete religious movement. It would also forever change the parameters of Pagan identity in Montreal and in Quebec because, as Lucie DuFresne put it, “You don’t build a community when you’re an option. You become a community when you’re it”<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> Lucie Marie-Mai DuFresne, personal communication 2008-02-24.

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Iseum de la Déesse du Lotus:

<http://www.iseum-lotus.org>

Magia Artemisia:

<http://www.magia-artemisia.com>

Mélange Magique

<http://www.themagicalblend.com>

Montreal Pagan Resource Centre (MPRC)

<http://www.paganuniverse.com/mprc/>

<http://www.paganuniverse.com/mprc/about.html>

Montreal Reclaiming:

<http://www.cosmic-muse.com/reclaiming/home.html>

Neuf jours et neuf nuits – Paganisme de l'Europe du nord:

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**Appendix A**  
**Survey Questionnaire**  
**In English and French**

# PAGANISM IN MONTREAL

## SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Participant,

I am currently completing my Master's degree in Religious Studies, Anthropology of Religion at the University of Ottawa. My Thesis involves research on the processes of identity formation and community building in the North American Pagan subculture.

I have chosen to conduct my field research within the Montreal Pagan community because this city has a high concentration of Francophone as well as Anglophone Pagans, which is a unique phenomenon in North America.

This anonymous survey questionnaire is meant to provide the researcher with statistical data on Montreal Pagans. All adults (ages 18 and older) who self-identify as Pagans and who currently reside on the Island of Montreal are encouraged to fill out the survey and return it to the researcher electronically (e-mail to \_\_\_\_\_), or by mail at the following address:

Marisol Charbonneau – M.A. Thesis on Paganism in Montreal  
Department of Classics and Religious Studies  
University of Ottawa  
70 Laurier Ave East, Room 102  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1N 6N5

If you do not reside on the Island of Montreal or are under-aged, please do not respond to this survey questionnaire. Please submit the completed survey questionnaire only once. Any duplication will compromise the integrity of the research findings.

If you wish to participate in the interview process, please check the box at the bottom of this page, and include your contact information (telephone number or e-mail address). If needed, you can include your name.

An electronic version of this survey questionnaire is available at the website <http://www3.sympatico.ca/arktos>  
Thank you so much for participating in this study!

Marisol Charbonneau  
University of Ottawa

### FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEW (Optional)

- I wish to participate in a follow-up interview

Contact info: \_\_\_\_\_

## GENERAL INFORMATION – Demographic Profile

Please check (✓) the appropriate response for each question:

What is your gender?

- Male  Female  
 Trans-gendered (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

What is your age bracket?

- 18-22  38-42  
 23-27  43-47  
 28-32  48-52  
 33-37  53-57  
  58 and older

Were you born in Canada?

- Yes  No

If you were not born in Canada, in which country were you born? \_\_\_\_\_

If you were born in Canada, in which Canadian province or territory were you born?

- British Columbia  New Brunswick  
 Alberta  Nova Scotia  
 Saskatchewan  Prince Edward Island  
 Manitoba  Newfoundland and Labrador  
 Ontario  Yukon  
 Quebec  Northwest Territories / Nunavut

Where do you live on the island of Montreal (which borough)?

- Ahuntsic - Cartierville  Outremont  
 Anjou  Pierrefonds - Roxboro  
 Côte-des-Neiges – Notre-Dame-de-Grâce  Rivière-des-Prairies – Pointe-aux-Trembles  
 Lachine  Rosemont - La Petite-Patrie  
 LaSalle  Saint-Laurent  
 Le Plateau-Mont-Royal  Saint-Léonard  
 Le Sud-Ouest  Verdun  
 L'Île-Bizard - Sainte-Geneviève  Ville-Marie  
 Mercier – Hochelaga – Maisonneuve  Villeray - Saint-Michel - Parc-Extension  
 Montréal-Nord

How long have you been living in the city of Montreal (including all merged boroughs)?

- Less than one year  21-25 years  
 1-5 years  26-30 years  
 6-10 years  31-35 years  
 11-15 years  36 years or more  
 16-20 years  I've lived in Montreal my whole life

Where did you live before moving to Montreal? \_\_\_\_\_

Which language do you use predominantly in your daily life?

- English  French  
 Other (Please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

Which of the following best describes your **linguistic background**?

You may check more than one answer if it applies to you. Please be specific.

- Francophone (French is my first language)
- Anglophone (English is my first language)
- Allophone (my first language is neither French nor English). Please specify your first language: \_\_\_\_\_

Which of the following most accurately describes your **ethnic background**?

You may check more than one answer if it applies to you. Please be specific.

- Of French Québécois descent.
- Of French-Canadian other than Québécois (Acadian, Franco-Ontarian, etc.), descent.
- Of Métis, Aboriginal (First Nations) or Inuit descent (Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)
- First-generation immigrant. Please specify your ethnicity and country of origin: \_\_\_\_\_
- Second-generation immigrant. Please specify the ethnicity and country of origin of your immigrant parent(s): \_\_\_\_\_
- Anglo-Canadian (This category may include any ethnic group originating from the British Isles, such as English, Scottish, Irish, Welsh descent). If you can identify one or some of these groups in your ethnic background, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_
- English-Canadian from an immigrant background other than Anglo-Canadian. Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_
- Of American (U.S.A.) origin. Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_
- Other. Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

## **PAGAN AFFILIATION AND PERSONAL RELIGIOUS HISTORY**

**Please check (✓) the appropriate response for each question:**

How would you identify/describe your current Pagan religious or spiritual path? You may check more than one answer if it applies to you. Please be specific.

- Wicca (Gardnerian, Alexandrian, etc. please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)
- Witchcraft (please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)
- Druidism (please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)
- Goddess Worship / Goddess Spirituality
- Asatru / Heathenism / Odinism
- Deep Ecology
- Shamanism (please specify : \_\_\_\_\_)
- Animism
- Reconstructionism (please specify your culture/pantheon: \_\_\_\_\_)
- I don't know (Undefined / Unspecified / I have yet to find or experience my path)
- Other(s) (Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)
- Eco-Pagan
- Eco-Feminist
- Pantheism
- Polytheism
- Christo-Paganism
- Judeo-Paganism

How long have you considered yourself a Pagan?

- Less than one year
- 1-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-15 years
- 16-20 years
- 21-25 years
- 26-30 years
- 31-35 years
- 36 years or more
- I've always considered myself a Pagan

How long have you practiced your current Pagan religion or spiritual path?

- Less than one year
- 1-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-15 years
- 16-20 years
- 21-25 years
- 26-30 years
- 31-35 years
- 36 years or more
- I've always practiced my current Pagan religion/spiritual path

Which of the following best describes the religion in which you were raised as a child?

You may check more than one answer if it applies to you. Please be specific.

- Roman Catholic
- Protestant (please specify denomination: \_\_\_\_\_)
- Christian other than Roman Catholic or Protestant (please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)
- Judaism (please specify sect: \_\_\_\_\_)
- Islam
- Buddhism
- Hinduism
- Pagan (please specify tradition: \_\_\_\_\_)
- Other (Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)
- Agnostic
- Humanist
- Atheist
- Theistic but non-denominational

How was your previous religious affiliation determined?

You may check more than one answer if it applies to you. Please be specific.

- Family tradition (Parents or guardians belong to previous religious affiliation)
- Parental choice (Parents converted to previous religious affiliation when I was a minor)
- Peer or societal pressure
- Personal rebellion
- Personal curiosity about other religious traditions
- Conversion due to personal spiritual experience
- Conversion due to romantic partnership / marriage
- Other (please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)

How was your Pagan affiliation or identity determined?

You may check more than one answer if it applies to you. Please be specific.

- Family tradition (Parents or guardians belong to Pagan religion or spiritual path)
- Parental choice (Parents converted to Pagan religion or spiritual path when I was a minor)
- Peer or societal pressure
- Personal rebellion
- Personal curiosity about other religious traditions
- Conversion due to personal spiritual experience
- "Coming Home" (or, "I've always felt I had an atypical spiritual inclination and later found out that it fit well within Paganism")
- Other (please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)

How would you describe your religious or spiritual evolution or itinerary (indicate if needed the order in which you explored the religions listed in the previous questions)?

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Which of the following best describes your level of faith and/or intellectual religious involvement **before becoming a Pagan?** (You can check more than one answer.)

- I was a devout believer in my previous religious affiliation.
  - I was a partial believer in my previous religious affiliation.
  - I was not at all a believer in my previous religious affiliation.
  - I am still a believer in my previous religious affiliation, even after becoming a Pagan.
  - My own experience and/or faith did not fit with my previous religious affiliation.
  - Other (please elaborate)
- 
- 

Which of the following best describes your previous religious practice **before becoming a Pagan?** (You can check more than one answer).

- I used to practice my religion regularly (I attended regular services, etc.).
  - I used to practice my religion occasionally (Holidays, friends' and families weddings, funerals, etc.).
  - I seldom practiced my religion (attended services once a year or less, etc.).
  - I never practiced my religion.
  - I was not at all religious prior to becoming a Pagan.
  - I still practice the religion in which I was raised, even after becoming a Pagan.
  - I managed my own practice in my previous religious affiliation.
  - Other (please elaborate)
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- 

After becoming a Pagan, do you still believe in your previous religious affiliation?

- Yes
- No

If you answered "yes", please explain how this fits in with your current Pagan belief and practice.

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## **PAGANISM AND COMMUNITY**

**Please check (√) the appropriate response for each question:**

*How long have you been aware of the existence of other contemporary Pagans?*

- Less than one year
- 1-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-15 years
- 16-20 years
- 21-25 years
- 26-30 years
- 31-35 years
- 36 years or more
- I've always known about other Pagans

How long have you been aware of the existence of other Pagans living on the island of Montreal?

- Less than one year
- 1-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-15 years
- 16-20 years
- 21-25 years
- 26-30 years
- 31-35 years
- 36 years or more
- I've always known about other Pagans in Montreal

How long have you been aware of the existence of fellow practitioners of your specific Pagan path?

- Less than one year
- 1-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-15 years
- 16-20 years
- 21-25 years
- 26-30 years
- 31-35 years
- 36 years or more
- I've always known of others in the same Pagan religion or spiritual path
- I don't know anyone else of the same Pagan religion or spiritual path

How did you become aware of the existence and nature of contemporary Paganism? (You may check more than one answer).

- Through books
- Through newsletters, magazines, and other literature
- Through friends or social networks (University-based Pagan associations, etc.)
- Through the Internet
- Through movies or television depicting Pagan characters
- Through nonfiction television or video documentaries
- Through pure coincidence or serendipity (a chance encounter with a Pagan, a chain of events leading you to discover a local Pagan bookstore, etc.)
- Through other means (Please specify)

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Please list which books, movies, websites, etc. have led to become aware of the existence and nature of Paganism.

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How did you become aware of the existence of other Pagans in the Montreal area?

- Through the mention of Montreal Pagans in books, newsletters, magazines, and other literature
- Through friends or social networks (University-based Pagan associations, etc.)
- Through the Internet
- Through nonfiction television or video documentaries
- Through pure coincidence or serendipity (a chance encounter with a Pagan, a chain of events leading you to discover a local Pagan bookstore, etc.)
- Through other means (Please specify)

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Which of the following most accurately describes the social aspect of your Pagan religious / spiritual practice?

- I am a solitary practitioner.
- I am mostly solitary in my religious/spiritual practice, but I sometimes worship with other people.
- I practice my religious/spiritual path mostly in a group, but I sometimes worship alone.
- I always practice my religious/spiritual path in a group.

If you joined a Pagan group, how did this come to be? (Note: You need **not** reveal the names of fellow group/circle/coven members if you are uncomfortable discussing this aspect of your Pagan experience).

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Which among the following have influenced you the most in finding and **maintaining** your current Pagan belief and practice? (You may check more than one answer).

- Books, newsletters, magazines and other literature (Please specify)  

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- Films and television programs that feature Pagan characters and motifs (Please specify)  

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- Internet website and forums with a strong Pagan content (Please specify)  

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- Friends and acquaintances who are also Pagan
- Friends and acquaintances who support my choice of religious affiliation
- Family members who are also Pagan
- Family members who support my choice of religious affiliation
- The local Pagan community in Montreal
- The local Pagan community in a location other than Montreal (Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)
- A sense of calling from Gods/Goddesses/Spiritual entities with which I feel most affinity
- Other factors (Please specify)  

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What books or written references have been most influential in the shaping of your Pagan worldview?

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What books or written references should, in your opinion, be read or consulted by people who want to be Pagans?

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## PAGANISM AND IDENTITY

Please check (✓) the appropriate response for each question:

Is your Pagan identity linked with a sense of involvement or affinity with a reconstructed pre-Christian **culture**?

- Yes  No

If you answered “yes” to the previous question, please identify the **culture(s)** associated with your Pagan religious or spiritual path. You may check more than one answer. Please be specific.

- Celtic culture  Roman culture  
 Norse culture  Egyptian (pre-Islamic) culture  
 Classical Greek / Hellenic culture  Prehistorical matriarchal culture  
 Native American (**pre-contact**) culture(s). Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Native American (**post-contact**) culture(s). Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Inuit cultures (**pre-contact**). Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Inuit cultures (**post-contact**). Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_  
 A mixture of cultures. Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other. Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

Is your Pagan identity linked with a sense of personal identification with the **history** of a culture that is not your national culture (as an example, do you feel an affinity with Irish culture and history, even though you were born and raised in Canada)?

- Yes  No

If you answered “yes” to the previous question, please identify the **national culture(s)** with which you feel your Pagan religious or spiritual path shares a **history**. Please be specific.

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Is your Pagan identity linked with a sense of personal identification with a specific **ethnic group** (as an example, does your Pagan religion make you feel “Celtic”)?

- Yes  No

If you answered “yes” to the previous question, please identify the **ethnic affiliations** associated with your Pagan religious or spiritual path. Please be specific.

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Does your Pagan identity involve a sense of belonging to any of the following:

(You may check more than one answer. Please be specific).

- A lineage tradition (as the result of initiation by a priest/ess, or self-initiation)
- A family-based tradition (biological family)
- An ancient tribe or clan
- A tribal community
- An ancient pre-historical matriarchal culture
- An ancestral faith (as practiced by my ancestors before they became Christianized)
- An extended family (biological family and/or family of choice)
- A worldwide community of believers
- A North American community of believers
- A Canadian community of believers
- A provincial (Quebec-based) community of believers
- A municipally based community of believers (Montreal-based, in this case)
- An ethnically-based community of believers
- A linguistically-based community of believers
- A karmically defined community of believers
- A community of like-minded people
- A community of practitioners
- An empowering tradition (however defined)
- A healing tradition
- A feminist tradition
- An ancient tradition that I must rediscover as my birthright
- A New Religious Movement (NRM)
- An Earth-based / Nature-based tradition
- A socially activist religion
- A human potential movement
- Other(s). Please specify:

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In which language do you practice your Pagan religion or spiritual path?

- English
- French
- In a language other than English or French (please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)

In which language is the majority of your Pagan reference material?

- English
- French
- In a language other than English or French (please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)

Do you have difficulty translating some basic concepts of your Pagan religious or spiritual path into your first language?

- Yes
- No
- This does not apply to my practice

Do you have difficulty accessing Pagan reference texts in your first language?

- Yes
- No
- This does not apply to me

What are your political inclinations? You may check more than one answer.

- I am socially liberal (or “left of centre”)
- I am socially conservative (or “right of centre”)
- I am a moderate
- I am a federalist (I believe in Canadian political unity)
- I am a Quebec separatist (I believe Quebec should become an independent country)
- I am a Quebec sovereignist (I believe Quebec should have more autonomy and sovereignty within the Canadian federation).
- I am politically neutral / I don’t have any interest in politics
- Other. Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you feel that your Pagan religious or spiritual path reflects your political views and inclinations?

- Yes
- No

If you answered “yes” to the previous question, please explain how this is so.

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Do you feel that your Pagan religious / spiritual path influences your ecological views?

- Yes
- No

Do you feel that your Pagan religious / spiritual path influences your views on gender?

- Yes
- No

If you answered “yes” to the previous question, please explain how Paganism influences your views on gender.

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Do you think it is useful or harmful for Pagans to wear recognizable symbols of their religion (pentagrams, Goddess pendants, etc.)?

- It is useful for Pagans to wear recognizable symbols.
- It is harmful for Pagans to wear recognizable symbols.
- It doesn’t matter (it is neither useful nor harmful).

Do you wear any symbols reflecting your Pagan religious identity?

- Yes
- No

If you answered “yes”, which kind of symbols do you wear?

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If you answered “no”, would you like to wear such symbols on your person?

- Yes
- No

According to you, what makes you recognizable as a Pagan to other Pagans?

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Do you think that your Pagan practices are linked to a specific place, land, climate or territory?

- Yes  No

If you answered "yes", please explain:

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Do you think that Pagan practices should vary according to place, land, climate or territory?

- Yes  No

If you answered "yes", please explain:

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According to you, would a Pagan identity acquired through biological (familial) lineage differ fundamentally from a Pagan identity acquired through teaching and/or initiation?

- Yes  No

Is your Pagan religious or spiritual practice shaped by your gender?

- Yes  No

According to you, would a Pagan practice transmitted through a male gender line differ from a Pagan practice transmitted through a female gender line?

- Yes  No

According to you, is there a fundamental difference between rural-based and urban-based Pagan traditions?

- Yes  No

If you answered "yes", does it inform your practice?

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Do you know something about shamanic practices?

- Yes  No

In your opinion, do shamanic practices fit within Paganism?

- Yes  No

Do you know something about Amerindian / Native American spirituality?

- Yes  No

If yes, has what you learned contributed to your own Pagan views?

- Yes  No

If not, would you like to learn more?

- Yes  No

Do you know something about Quebec folk traditions?

- Yes  No

Do you find these useful in your Pagan practice?

- Yes  No

Do you use any Quebecois folk spell or ritual?

- Yes  No

Do you think there is a link between folk Quebecois magical tradition and contemporary Paganism?

- Yes  No

Do you think New Age has anything to offer Paganism?

- Yes  No

If so, please elaborate:

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Do you think Black Magic has anything to offer Paganism?

- Yes  No

If so, please elaborate:

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When is it appropriate to use Black Magic?

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Do you think White Magic has anything to offer Paganism?

- Yes  No

If so, please elaborate:

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What kind of White Magic would be closest to your version of Paganism?

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Do you have any comments/observations/ideas/insights you would like to add?

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Thank you very much for participating in my study!

For updates on the research, please visit my website: <http://www3.sympatico.ca/arktos>

Marisol Charbonneau  
University of Ottawa

# Le Paganisme à Montréal

## SONDAGE

Cher(ère) participant(e),

Je complète présentement ma Maîtrise en Sciences de la religion – Anthropologie de la religion à l'Université d'Ottawa. Mon Mémoire de thèse comporte une recherche sur le processus de formation de l'identité et de la notion de communauté au sein de la culture néo-païenne en Amérique du Nord.

La principale raison pour laquelle j'effectuerai mon étude de cas à Montréal est l'importante concentration de païen(ne)s francophones et anglophones qui y résident.

Ce questionnaire anonyme a pour but de me fournir des informations de nature démographique et statistique sur les païen(ne)s de Montréal. Les adultes (âgé(e)s de 18 ans et plus) qui s'identifient en tant que païen(ne)s et qui résident sur l'île de Montréal sont priés de répondre au questionnaire et de me le faire parvenir soit électroniquement (courriel \_\_\_\_\_), ou par la poste à l'adresse suivante:

Marisol Charbonneau - Thèse de Maîtrise sur la communauté païenne de Montréal  
Département des Études anciennes et Sciences de la religion  
Université d'Ottawa  
70 Ave Laurier est, Suite 102  
Ottawa (Ontario)  
K1N 6N5

Si vous ne vous comptez pas parmi les païen(ne)s, avez moins de 18 ans, ou ne demeurez pas sur l'île de Montréal, veuillez ne pas répondre au questionnaire. Une fois complété, prière de me faire parvenir votre questionnaire une seule fois. Sinon, toute duplication pourrait compromettre l'intégrité des résultats de ma recherche.

Si vous désirez participer à une entrevue, veuillez cocher la case au bas de la page, puis y inclure vos coordonnées (numéro de téléphone ou courriel). Vous pouvez y inclure votre nom, au besoin.

Une version électronique de ce sondage est disponible à l'adresse Internet suivante :  
<http://www3.sympatico.ca/arktos>

Je vous remercie sincèrement de votre participation.

Marisol Charbonneau  
Université d'Ottawa

### ENTREVUE (Facultatif)

- J'aimerais participer à l'entrevue.

Coordonnées: \_\_\_\_\_

## INFORMATIONS GÉNÉRALES – Profil démographique

Veillez cocher (✓) la case correspondante pour chacune des questions suivantes :

Etes-vous...?

- Homme       Femme       Transsexué(e) (Veillez préciser) \_\_\_\_\_

Quel est votre âge ?

- 18-22 ans                       33-37 ans                       48-52 ans  
 23-27 ans                       38-42 ans                       53-57 ans  
 28-32 ans                       43-47 ans                       58 ans ou plus

Etes-vous né(e) au Canada?

- Oui     Non

Si vous êtes né(e) hors du Canada, quel est votre pays de naissance? \_\_\_\_\_

Si vous êtes né(e) au Canada, quelle est votre province ou territoire de naissance?

- Colombie-Britannique       Ontario                       Ile-du-Prince-Édouard  
 Alberta                       Québec                       Terre-Neuve et Labrador  
 Saskatchewan               Nouveau-Brunswick       Yukon  
 Manitoba                       Nouvelle-Écosse           Territoires-du-Nord-Ouest / Nunavut

Dans quel arrondissement de la Ville de Montréal habitez-vous?

- Ahuntsic - Cartierville                       Outremont  
 Anjou     Pierrefonds - Roxboro  
 Côte-des-Neiges – Notre-Dame-de-Grâce       Rivière-des-Prairies – Pointe-aux-Trembles  
 Lachine     Rosemont - La Petite-Patrie  
 LaSalle     Saint-Laurent  
 Le Plateau-Mont-Royal                       Saint-Léonard  
 Le Sud-Ouest                                       Verdun  
 L’Ile-Bizard - Sainte-Geneviève               Ville-Marie  
 Mercier – Hochelaga – Maisonneuve       Villeray - Saint-Michel - Parc-Extension  
 Montréal-Nord

Depuis combien d’années habitez-vous l’île de Montréal (incluant tous les arrondissements mentionnés ci-haut)?

- Moins d’un an                       11-15 ans                       26-30 ans                       J’ai toujours vécu à Montréal  
 1-5 ans                                       16-20 ans                       31-35 ans  
 6-10 ans                                       21-25 ans                       36 ans ou plus

Où habitiez-vous avant de demeurer à Montréal? \_\_\_\_\_

Quelle langue utilisez-vous le plus fréquemment dans votre vie quotidienne?

- Français       Anglais       Autre (veuillez préciser) : \_\_\_\_\_

Laquelle des réponses suivantes décrit le mieux votre **profil linguistique**?

Vous pouvez cocher plus d’une réponse. Soyez précis(e).

- Francophone (le français est ma langue maternelle)  
 Anglophone (l’anglais est ma langue maternelle)  
 Allophone (ma langue maternelle n’est ni le français ni l’anglais). Veuillez préciser quelle est votre langue maternelle: \_\_\_\_\_

Laquelle des réponses suivantes décrit le mieux votre **profil ethnique**?

Vous pouvez cocher plus d'une réponse. Soyez précis(e).

- Québécois(e) de souche française
- Canadien(ne)-français(e) autre que québécois(e) (acadien(ne), franco-ontarien(ne), etc.).
- Métis(se), autochtone ou Inuit. Veuillez préciser: \_\_\_\_\_
- Immigrant(e) de première génération. Veuillez préciser votre ethnicité et pays d'origine: \_\_\_\_\_
- Immigrant(e) de seconde génération. Veuillez préciser l'ethnicité et le(s) pays d'origine de votre (vos) parent(s) immigré(e)(s): \_\_\_\_\_
- Canadien(ne)-anglais(e) (cette catégorie inclut les groupes ethniques provenant de la Grande-Bretagne, soit de l'Angleterre, l'Écosse, l'Irlande, le pays de Galles, etc.). Si vous êtes en mesure d'identifier un ou plusieurs de ces groupes, veuillez les préciser: \_\_\_\_\_
- Canadien(ne) anglophone d'origine ethnique autre que canadienne-anglaise. Veuillez préciser: \_\_\_\_\_
- D'origine américaine (des États-Unis). Veuillez préciser: \_\_\_\_\_
- Autre. Veuillez préciser: \_\_\_\_\_

## IDENTIFICATION PAÏENNE ET PROFIL RELIGIEUX

**Veuillez cocher (✓) la case correspondante pour chacune des questions suivantes :**

Comment décririez-vous la religion ou spiritualité païenne à laquelle vous appartenez au moment présent? Vous pouvez cocher plus d'une réponse. Soyez précis(e).

- Wicca (Gardnerienne, Alexandrienne, etc. Veuillez préciser : \_\_\_\_\_)
  - Sorcellerie (veuillez préciser: \_\_\_\_\_)
  - Druidisme (veuillez préciser: \_\_\_\_\_)
  - Culte de la Déesse / Spiritualité de la Déesse
  - Asatru / Religion d'origine nordique / Odinisme
  - Écologie des profondeurs
  - Chamanisme (veuillez préciser : \_\_\_\_\_)
  - Animisme
  - Religion reconstruite à partir du passé (Veuillez préciser): \_\_\_\_\_
  - Je ne le sais pas (spiritualité non définie/je n'en ai pas encore fait l'expérience, etc.)
  - Autre(s). Veuillez préciser: \_\_\_\_\_
- Éco-féminisme
  - Éco-paganisme
  - Panthéisme
  - Polythéisme
  - Christo-paganisme
  - Judéo-paganisme

Depuis combien d'années vous comptez-vous parmi les païens ?

- Moins d'un an
- 1-5
- 6-10
- 11-15
- 16-20
- 21-25
- 26-30
- 31-35
- 36 ans ou plus
- J'ai toujours été païen(ne)

Depuis combien de temps pratiquez-vous votre religion ou spiritualité païenne présente?

- Moins d'un an
- 1-5 ans
- 6-10 ans
- 11-15 ans
- 16-20 ans
- 21-25 ans
- 26-30 ans
- 31-35 ans
- 36 ans ou plus
- J'ai toujours pratiqué ma religion ou spiritualité païenne du moment présent

Laquelle des réponses suivantes décrit le mieux la religion au sein de laquelle vous avez été élevé(e) ? Vous pouvez cocher plus d'une réponse. Soyez précis(e).

- Catholicisme (Église catholique romaine)
- Protestantisme. Veuillez préciser la dénomination : \_\_\_\_\_
- Christianisme autre que le catholicisme ou le protestantisme. Veuillez préciser : \_\_\_\_\_
- Judaïsme. Veuillez préciser : \_\_\_\_\_
- Islam
- Bouddhisme
- Hindouïsme
- Théïsme non spécifié
- Paganisme. Veuillez préciser votre tradition: \_\_\_\_\_
- Autre(s). Veuillez préciser: \_\_\_\_\_
- Agnosticisme
- Humanisme
- Athéïsme

Comment votre identification religieuse précédente a-t-elle été déterminée ?

Vous pouvez cocher plus d'une case. Soyez précis(e).

- Tradition familiale (les membres de ma famille ou gardiens appartiennent à cette religion)
- Choix de l'un ou des deux parents (mes parents se sont convertis à cette religion pendant mon enfance ou adolescence)
- Influence de mon groupe social
- Rébellion personnelle
- Curiosité personnelle face aux autres traditions religieuses
- Conversion suite à une expérience spirituelle individuelle
- Conversion suite à un mariage et/ou une relation de couple
- Autre(s) raison(s). Veuillez préciser: \_\_\_\_\_

Comment votre identification païenne a-t-elle été déterminée ?

Vous pouvez cocher plus d'une réponse. Soyez précis(e).

- Tradition familiale (les membres de ma famille ou gardiens appartiennent à cette religion)
- Choix de l'un ou des deux parents (mes parents se sont convertis à cette religion pendant mon enfance ou adolescence)
- Influence de mon groupe social
- Rébellion personnelle
- Curiosité personnelle face aux autres traditions religieuses
- Conversion suite à une expérience spirituelle individuelle
- "Retour chez soi" (ou le sentiment d'avoir toujours eu des convictions religieuses différentes de la norme, et que celles-ci s'harmonisent bien au sein du paganisme)
- Autre(s) raison(s). Veuillez préciser: \_\_\_\_\_

Comment décririez-vous votre cheminement spirituel ou votre itinéraire religieux (indiquez, s'il y a lieu, l'ordre selon lequel vous avez fait l'expérience des religions mentionnées dans les deux questions précédentes)?

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Laquelle des réponses suivantes décrit le mieux le niveau de votre foi, ou de votre engagement intellectuel face à la religion **avant de devenir païen(ne)**?

Vous pouvez cocher plus d'une réponse.

- Je croyais fermement à ma religion précédente.
  - Je croyais en partie à ma religion précédente.
  - Je ne croyais pas du tout à ma religion précédente.
  - Je crois toujours à ma religion précédente, même après être devenu(e) païen(ne).
  - Mon expérience personnelle ou ma foi ne correspondait pas à ma religion précédente.
  - Autre(s). Veuillez préciser:
- 
- 

Laquelle des réponses suivantes décrit le mieux le niveau de votre pratique religieuse **avant de devenir païen(ne)**? Vous pouvez cocher plus d'une réponse.

- Je pratiquais ma religion de façon régulière (ex. : j'allais à l'Église à tous les dimanches, etc.).
  - Je pratiquais ma religion à l'occasion (ex. : lors du temps des Fêtes, lors des mariages des membres de ma famille ou de mes amis, lors de funérailles, etc.).
  - Je pratiquais très peu ma religion (ex. : j'allais à l'Église moins d'une fois par année, etc.).
  - Je ne pratiquais jamais ma religion.
  - Je n'étais pas du tout religieux avant de devenir païen(ne).
  - Je pratique toujours ma religion précédente, même après être devenu(e) païen(ne).
  - Je me débrouillais seul(e) en ce qui avait trait à ma pratique spirituelle.
  - Autre(s). Veuillez préciser:
- 
- 

Après être devenu(e) païen(ne), croyez-vous toujours à votre religion précédente?

- Oui
- Non

Dans l'affirmative, veuillez préciser comment cela s'intègre dans votre religion ou spiritualité païenne du moment présent.

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## **PAGANISME ET COMMUNAUTÉ**

**Veillez cocher (✓) la case correspondante pour chacune des questions suivantes :**

Depuis combien de temps êtes-vous au courant de l'existence des païen(ne)s contemporains?

- Moins d'un an
- 1-5 ans
- 6-10 ans
- 11-15 ans
- 16-20 ans
- 21-25 ans
- 26-30
- 31-35
- 36 ans ou plus
- Je l'ai toujours su.

Depuis combien de temps êtes-vous au courant du fait qu'il y a des païen(ne)s à Montréal?

- Moins d'un an
- 1-5 ans
- 6-10 ans
- 11-15 ans
- 16-20 ans
- 21-25 ans
- 26-30
- 31-35
- 36 ans ou plus
- Je l'ai toujours su.

Depuis combien de temps êtes-vous au courant du fait qu'il existe des païen(ne)s ayant la même forme de religion ou spiritualité païenne que la vôtre?

- Moins d'un an
- 1-5 ans
- 6-10 ans
- 11-15 ans
- 16-20 ans
- 21-25 ans
- 26-30 ans
- 31-35 ans
- 36 ans ou plus
- Ceci ne s'applique pas à mon cas.
- J'ai toujours su qu'il y avait des païen(ne)s ayant cette même forme de religion ou spiritualité païenne.

Comment avez-vous appris l'existence et la nature du paganisme contemporain?

Vous pouvez cocher plus d'une case.

- A l'aide de livres
- A l'aide de communiqués, de revues ou autres sources écrites
- A l'aide d'ami(e)s ou de réseaux sociaux (associations universitaires, etc.)
- A l'aide de l'Internet
- A l'aide de films ou de programmes de télévision comportant des personnages païen(ne)s
- A l'aide de documentaires télévisés ou cinématographiques
- Par chance ou pure coïncidence (par une rencontre fortuite avec des païen(ne)s, ou par événements fortuits qui m'ont amené à découvrir une librairie païenne, etc.)
- Autre(s). Veuillez préciser: \_\_\_\_\_

Veillez énoncer quels sont les livres, films, sites Internet, etc. qui vous ont amené(e) à découvrir l'existence et la nature du paganisme : \_\_\_\_\_

Comment avez-vous appris qu'il existait des païen(ne)s à Montréal et dans les environs?

- Mention de païen(ne)s à Montréal dans des livres, revues, et autres sources écrites
- A l'aide d'ami(e)s ou de réseaux sociaux (associations universitaires, etc.)
- A l'aide de l'Internet
- A l'aide de documentaires télévisés ou cinématographiques
- Par chance ou pure coïncidence (par une rencontre fortuite avec des païen(ne)s, ou par événements fortuits qui m'ont amené à découvrir une librairie païenne, etc.)
- Autre(s). Veuillez préciser: \_\_\_\_\_

Laquelle des réponses suivantes correspond le mieux à l'aspect social de votre pratique religieuse ou spirituelle païenne?

- Je pratique toujours seul(e).
- Je pratique seul(e) d'habitude, mais il m'arrive à l'occasion de pratiquer avec d'autres personnes.
- Je pratique en groupe d'habitude, mais il m'arrive à l'occasion de pratiquer seul(e).
- Je pratique toujours en groupe.

Si vous faites partie d'un group païen, précisez comment vous vous êtes joint à ce groupe. (Veuillez noter que vous n'avez pas à révéler le nom de de votre groupe ou d'autres détails si cela vous gêne). \_\_\_\_\_

Laquelle des réponses suivantes décrit le mieux ce qui a favorisé la découverte et le **maintien** de votre foi et de votre pratique païennes ? Vous pouvez cocher plus d'une case.

- Livres, revues et autres sources écrites (veuillez préciser) : \_\_\_\_\_
- Films et programmes de television comportant des personnages et thèmes païens (veuillez préciser) : \_\_\_\_\_
- Sites Internet et groupes de discussion en-ligne comportant un contenu païen (veuillez préciser) : \_\_\_\_\_
- Ami(e)s et connaissances qui sont païen(ne)s
- Ami(e) et connaissances qui ont une attitude favorable face au paganisme
- Membres de ma familles qui sont païen(ne)s
- Membres de ma famille qui ont une attitude favorable face au paganisme
- La communauté païenne de Montréal
- La communauté païenne dans une ville hors de Montréal (veuillez préciser) : \_\_\_\_\_
- Un sentiment d'avoir été choisi(e) par des Dieux / Déesses / Entités spirituelles avec lequel(le)s je ressents une affinité profonde
- Autre(s). Veuillez préciser: \_\_\_\_\_

Quels sont les livres ou références littéraires qui vous ont le plus influencé lors de la formation de votre perspective païenne ? \_\_\_\_\_

Selon vous, quels livres ou références littéraires devraient être consultés par des personnes aspirant au paganisme? \_\_\_\_\_

## PAGANISME ET IDENTITÉ

Veillez cocher (✓) la case correspondante pour chacune des questions suivantes :

Votre identité païenne est-elle liée à un sentiment d'appartenance ou d'affinité à une ou plusieurs **culture(s)** pré-chrétienne(s) réelle(s) ou imaginaire(s)?

- Oui  Non

Dans l'affirmative, veuillez préciser quelle(s) **culture(s)** vous associez à votre identité païenne. Vous pouvez cocher plus d'une case.

- Culture celte  Culture romaine  
 Culture scandinave  Culture égyptienne (pré-islamique)  
 Culture grecque ou hellénique classique  Matriarcat préhistorique  
 Culture(s) autochthone(s) (**avant contact**). Veuillez préciser: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Culture(s) autochthone(s) (**après contact**). Veuillez préciser: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Culture(s) Inuit (**avant contact**). Veuillez préciser: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Culture(s) Inuit (**après contact**). Veuillez préciser: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Un mélange de cultures. Veuillez préciser: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Autre(s). Veuillez préciser: \_\_\_\_\_

Votre identité païenne est-elle liée à un sentiment d'identification personnelle avec l'**histoire** d'une culture nationale qui n'est pas la vôtre? (Par exemple, ressentez-vous une affinité à la culture et à l'histoire de l'Irlande, bien que vous soyez né(e) et ayez grandi au Canada)?

- Oui  Non

Dans l'affirmative, veuillez préciser quelle(s) **culture(s) nationale(s)** a (ont), selon vous, une **histoire** commune avec votre religion ou spiritualité païenne. \_\_\_\_\_

Votre identité païenne est-elle liée à un sentiment d'identification personnelle avec un **groupe ethnique** (ex : croyez-vous que votre religion païenne vous rapproche d'une identité « celte ») ?

- Oui  Non

Dans l'affirmative, veuillez préciser quel(s) **groupe(s) ethnique(s)** vous associez à votre identité païenne. \_\_\_\_\_

Dans quelle langue pratiquez-vous votre religion ou spiritualité païenne ?

- Français  Anglais  
 Dans une langue autre que le français ou l'anglais (veuillez préciser) : \_\_\_\_\_

Dans quelle langue se trouve la plupart de votre matériel de référence sur le paganisme ?

- Français  Anglais  
 Dans une langue autre que le français ou l'anglais (veuillez préciser) : \_\_\_\_\_

Éprouvez-vous de la difficulté à traduire les concepts de base de votre religion ou spiritualité païenne dans votre langue maternelle ou habituelle?

- Oui  Non  
 Ceci ne s'applique pas à ma pratique païenne

Éprouvez-vous de la difficulté à trouver des textes de référence sur le paganisme dans votre langue maternelle ou habituelle?

- Oui
- Non
- Ceci ne s'applique pas à mon cas

Lesquels des énoncés suivants associez-vous à votre sentiment d'appartenance à une identité païenne ? Vous pouvez cocher plus d'une case.

- Une tradition par lignée (le résultat d'une initiation par prêtre(sse), ou initiation solitaire)
- Une tradition familiale (famille biologique)
- Un clan ou une tribu anciens.
- Une communauté tribale
- Une culture matriarcale préhistorique
- Une religion ancestrale (la religion de mes ancêtres avant l'arrivée du christianisme)
- Une famille élargie (famille biologique et/ou choisie)
- Une communauté mondiale de croyant(e)s
- Une communauté nord-américaine de croyant(e)s
- Une communauté canadienne de croyant(e)s
- Une communauté provinciale (québécoise) de croyant(e)s
- Une communauté municipale (montréalaise) de croyant(e)s
- Une communauté ethnique de croyant(e)s
- Une communauté linguistique de croyant(e)s
- Une communauté karmique de croyant(e)s
- Une communauté de personnes sur la même longueur d'onde
- Une communauté de pratiquant(e)s
- Une tradition permettant aux gens de s'assumer ou de se développer
- Une tradition thérapeutique ou une communauté de guérisseurs
- Une tradition féministe
- Une tradition ancienne que je dois redécouvrir car elle m'appartient de droit
- Un nouveau mouvement religieux / une nouvelle religion
- Une religion basée sur la Terre et/ou la Nature
- Une religion engagée au niveau social
- Un mouvement de potentiel humain
- Autre(s). Veuillez préciser: \_\_\_\_\_

Quelles sont vos orientations politiques? Vous pouvez cocher plus d'une case.

- Je suis d'orientation libérale (de gauche)
- Je suis d'orientation conservatrice (de droite)
- Je suis d'orientation modérée (centre)
- Je suis fédéraliste (je crois que le Canada doit demeurer un pays uni)
- Je suis séparatiste (je crois que le Québec devrait être un pays indépendant)
- Je suis souverainiste (je crois que le Québec devrait avoir plus d'autonomie et de souveraineté dans un Canada uni).
- Je suis neutre en ce qui concerne la politique / je n'ai aucun intérêt en la politique
- Autre(s). Veuillez préciser: \_\_\_\_\_

Croyez-vous que votre religion ou spiritualité païenne reflète vos opinions et orientations politiques?

- Oui  Non

Dans l'affirmative, veuillez expliquer de quelles façons votre religion ou spiritualité païenne reflète vos opinions et orientations politiques.

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Croyez-vous que votre religion ou spiritualité païenne influence vos opinions écologiques ?

- Oui  Non

Croyez-vous que votre religion ou spiritualité païenne influence vos opinions sur les rôles masculins et féminins ?

- Oui  Non

Dans l'affirmative, veuillez expliquer comment le paganisme influence vos opinions sur les rôles masculins et féminins.

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Selon vous, est-ce une bonne idée ou une mauvaise idée pour les païen(ne)s de porter des symboles représentant le paganisme et faciles à reconnaître (tels que les pentagrammes, les pendentifs représentant la Déesse, etc.)?

- Porter de tels symboles ou représentations serait bénéfique pour les païen(ne)s.  
 Porter de tels symboles ou représentations serait nocif pour les païen(ne)s  
 Cela n'a aucune importance (cela n'est ni nocif ni bénéfique).

Portez-vous des symboles reflétant votre identité religieuse païenne ?

- Oui  Non

Dans l'affirmative, quels types de symboles portez-vous?

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Si vous avez répondu "non", aimeriez-vous porter visiblement sur soi de tels symboles?

- Oui  Non

Selon vous, est-il facile pour d'autres païen(ne)s de vous reconnaître en tant que païen(ne)?

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Vos pratiques païennes sont-elles liées à une aire géographique précise (une région, un territoire) ou à un climat précis?

- Oui  Non

Dans l'affirmative, veuillez expliquer pourquoi il en est ainsi:

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Croyez-vous que les pratiques païennes devraient être liées à une aire géographique précise, ou à un climat précis?

- Oui  Non

Dans l'affirmative, veuillez préciser pourquoi vous croyez cela:

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Croyez-vous qu'une identité païenne transmise par appartenance à une lignée familiale est fondamentalement différente d'une identité païenne acquise par enseignement et/ou initiation?

- Oui  Non

Votre pratique religieuse ou spirituelle païenne est-elle déterminée par votre sexe?

- Oui  Non

Croyez-vous qu'il y a une différence importante entre une pratique païenne acquise par l'intermédiaire d'une lignée masculine et une pratique païenne acquise par l'intermédiaire d'une lignée féminine ?

- Oui  Non

Croyez-vous qu'il y a une différence importante entre les traditions païennes de souche rurale et celles de souche urbaine ?

- Oui  Non

Dans l'affirmative, cette différence est-elle présente dans votre pratique?

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Conaissez-vous des pratiques chamaniques?

- Oui  Non

Croyez-vous que les pratiques chamaniques ont leur place dans le paganisme?

- Oui  Non

Conaissez-vous des éléments de la spiritualité amérindienne / autochtone?

- Oui  Non

Dans l'affirmative, vos connaissances à ce sujet ont-elles contribué à la formation de votre perspective païenne ?

- Oui  Non

Si vous avez répondu "non", aimeriez-vous en apprendre davantage sur la spiritualité amérindienne ou le chamanisme?

- Oui  Non

Conaissez-vous des traditions folkloriques québécoises?

- Oui  Non

Trouvez-vous ces dernières utiles dans votre pratique païenne?

- Oui  Non

Utilisez-vous des sortilèges ou charmes folkloriques québécois?

- Oui  Non

Croyez-vous qu'il existe un lien entre la tradition de magie folklorique québécoise et le paganisme contemporain?

- Oui  Non

Croyez-vous que le Nouvel âge ait de quoi à offrir au paganisme?

- Oui  Non

Dans l'affirmative, veuillez préciser:

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Croyez-vous que la magie noire ait de quoi à offrir au paganisme?

- Oui  Non

Dans l'affirmative, veuillez préciser:

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Quand serait-il acceptable d'avoir recours à la magie noire?

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Croyez-vous que la magie blanche ait de quoi à offrir au paganisme?

- Oui  Non

Dans l'affirmative, veuillez préciser:

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Dans l'affirmative, quel type de magie blanche ressemble à votre version du paganisme?

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Avez-vous des idées, commentaires ou observations à ajouter?

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Merci beaucoup d'avoir participé à cette étude!

Pour rester au courant de mon projet de recherche, visitez le site Internet:

<http://www3.sympatico.ca/arktos>

Marisol Charbonneau

Université d'Ottawa

**Appendix B**  
**Interview Questions**  
**In English and French**

# **INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

## **INTERVIEW QUESTIONS - OUTLINE OF GUIDED INTERVIEW**

### **ETHNICITY**

- What does Paganism in general contribute to your identity?
- To what degree do you identify with your culture or community of origin (the culture in which you were raised as a child)? If the answer is “yes”, is this sense of identity similar to what you gain from your Pagan religious affiliation?
- How do you integrate your sense of belonging to your culture of origin and your identity as a Pagan?
- Is there an ethnic component or focus to your Pagan religious or spiritual path? If so, please explain.
- Has your Pagan religious or spiritual path fostered for you an additional or different ethnic / cultural identity? If so, please elaborate.

### **LINGUISTICS**

- Do you practice your Pagan religion or spiritual path in the language in which you were raised? If no, please explain why this is so.

### **QUEBEC**

- In what ways does the Pagan community in Montreal contribute to your identity?
- How do your religious affiliations inform your sense of being a Québécois(e)?
- Do you feel that your religious choices create a distance between you and other Québécois(es), or between you and society in general?
- How do your religious affiliations inform your sense of being Canadian?
- How do your religious affiliations inform your sense of being North American?
- Do you think it is possible for Paganism to grow in the Province of Quebec?
- What do you share with Anglophone Pagans?
- What do you share with Francophone Pagans?
- What do you share with Pagans who have the same ethnic background as yourself?

- What do you share with Pagans who follow the same religion and/or spiritual path as yourself?
- What do you share with Pagans in Quebec outside of Montreal?
- What do you share with Pagans outside of Quebec?
- How do your religious affiliations inform your political views?
- (If English or French is not your language of origin) What do you share with Pagans of the same linguistic background as yourself?

#### GENDER

- What do you share with Pagan men?
- What do you share with Pagan women?
- How do your religious affiliations inform your views on sexuality?
- How do your religious affiliations inform your views on gender roles?

#### OTHER FACTORS

- How do your religious affiliations inform your views on the environment?
- How do your religious affiliations inform your ethics?
- Is this a reason for you to be a Pagan and/or to belong to or work with a Pagan group?
- How do your religious affiliations inform your sense of belonging to society?
- How do your religious affiliations inform your sense of being in the world?

#### CONTINUITY

- Do you wish for your values and way of thinking to be transmitted to your (existing or as-yet-unborn) children?
- Do you wish for your values and your way of thinking to be transmitted to the next generation?
- Do you wish for your values and way of thinking to be shared by a community of believers?
- Are your spiritual values and religious practices something you think should be shared with others?

- Do you believe that a Pagan affiliation fosters the sense of belonging to an alternative ethnic or cultural identity?
- Do you have anything else you wish to add?

# QUESTIONS D'ENTREVUE

## QUESTIONS D'ENTREVUE – GUIDE

### ETHNICITÉ

- De quelles façons le paganisme contribue-t-il à votre identité personnelle?
- A quel degré vous identifiez-vous avec culture ou votre communauté d'origine (la communauté au sein de laquelle vous avez été élevé(e))? Dans l'affirmative, ce sentiment d'appartenance s'apparente-t-il à celui que vous ressentez face à votre affiliation religieuse païenne?
- Assimilez-vous votre identité païenne à votre sentiment d'appartenance à votre culture ou communauté d'origine?
- Y a-t-il une composante ethnique à votre identité religieuse païenne? Dans l'affirmative, veuillez élaborer.
- Votre religion ou spiritualité païenne provoque-t-elle en vous un sentiment d'identification à une culture ou un groupe ethnique qui n'est pas votre groupe d'origine? Dans l'affirmative, veuillez élaborer.

### LINGUISTIQUE

- Pratiquez-vous votre religion ou spiritualité païenne dans la langue dans laquelle vous avez été élevé(e)? Si non, expliquez pourquoi il en est ainsi.

### QUÉBEC

- De quelles façons la communauté païenne de Montréal contribue-t-elle à votre identité personnelle?
- De quelles façons vos affiliations religieuses influencent-elles votre sentiment d'être québécois(e)?
- Croyez-vous que vos affiliations religieuses vous éloignent des autres québécois(es), ou de la société en général ?
- Vos affiliations religieuses influencent-elles votre sentiment d'être canadien(ne)?
- Vos affiliations religieuses influencent-elles votre sentiment d'être nord-américain(e)?
- Croyez-vous que le paganisme puisse croître au Québec?

- Qu'avez-vous en commun avec les païen(ne)s anglophones?
- Qu'avez-vous en commun avec les païen(ne)s francophones?
- Qu'avez-vous en commun avec les païen(ne)s ayant la même origine ethnique que vous?
- Qu'avez-vous en commun avec les païen(ne)s ayant la même religion ou spiritualité païenne que vous?
- Qu'avez-vous en commun avec les païen(ne)s qui résident au Québec, hors de Montréal?
- Qu'avez-vous en commun avec les païen(ne)s qui résident hors du Québec?
- Vos affiliations religieuses influencent-elles vos opinions politiques?
- (Si l'anglais ou le français n'est pas votre langue maternelle) qu'avez-vous en commun avec le païen(ne)s ayant la même langue maternelle que vous?

#### GENRE

- Qu'avez-vous en commun avec les hommes païens?
- Qu'avez-vous en commun avec les femmes païennes?
- Vos affiliations religieuses influencent-elles vos opinions sur la sexualité?
- Vos affiliations religieuses influencent-elles vos opinions sur ce qui a trait aux rôles masculins ou féminins?

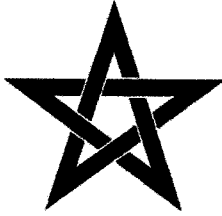
#### AUTRES FACTEURS

- Vos affiliations religieuses influencent-elles vos opinions sur l'environnement?
- Vos affiliations religieuses influencent-elles vos opinions d'éthique ?
- Vos opinions sur l'environnement et l'éthique influencent-elles votre appartenance au paganisme et/ou à un groupe païen ?
- Vos affiliations religieuses influencent-elles votre sentiment d'appartenance à la société ?
- Vos affiliations religieuses influencent-elles votre façon d'être dans le monde?

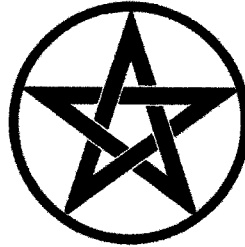
#### CONTINUITÉ

- Désirez-vous que vos croyances et valeurs spirituelles soient transmises à vos enfants (présents ou futurs) ?
- Désirez-vous que vos croyances et valeurs spirituelles soient transmises à la prochaine génération ?
- Désirez-vous que vos croyances et valeurs spirituelles soient partagées par une communauté de croyants ?
- Croyez-vous que vos croyances et valeurs spirituelles devraient être partagées par d'autres personnes ?
- Votre identification au paganisme crée-t-elle en vous un sentiment d'appartenance à une ethnie ou culture alternative ?
- Avez-vous quelque chose à ajouter?

**Appendix C**  
**Generic Forms of**  
**Common Pagan Symbols**



**Pentagram**



**Pentacle**



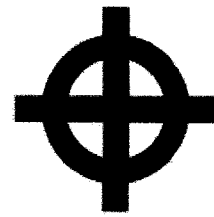
**Ankh**



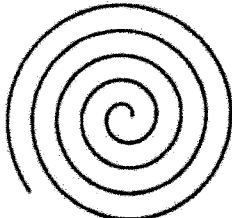
**Goddess Symbol**



**Hexagram  
or  
Star of David**



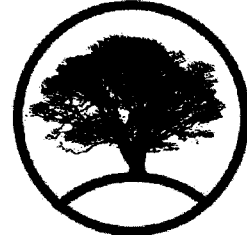
**Solar Cross**



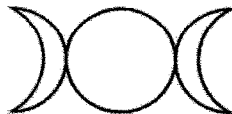
**Spiral**



**Thor's Hammer**



**Tree**



**Triple Moon  
or  
Threefold Moon**



**Triskelion**



**Unicursal Hexagram**