



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS  
JOURNALS + DIGITAL PUBLISHING

---

Exporting Nature Religions: Problems in Praxis Down Under

Author(s): Lynne Hume

Source: *Nova Religio: The Journal of Alternative and Emergent Religions*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (April 1999), pp. 287-298

Published by: [University of California Press](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/nr.1999.2.2.287>

Accessed: 04/11/2015 02:21

---

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).



University of California Press is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Nova Religio: The Journal of Alternative and Emergent Religions*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

## Exporting Nature Religions: Problems in Praxis Down Under

---

Lynne Hume

In spite of the fact that the cultures in which it has taken root often exist in vastly different natural environments, Christianity, with its emphasis on the Word, has managed to adapt to cultural differences without significant alteration of its basic message. Nature religions, on the other hand, which depend to a great extent on their natural environment, do not adapt quite so easily, particularly when they travel from the northern hemisphere to south of the equator. The Word, it seems, is more pliant than the environment. Australia's vastness and its extremes of geography, climate, flora, and fauna pose problems for those wishing to practice nature religions based on a northern hemisphere cycle of seasons and northern hemisphere mythologies. This paper will explore some of these difficulties and discuss how Australia's modern pagans are attempting to resolve them.

The data collected for this paper is part of an ongoing research project which commenced in Canada in 1991 and continued in Australia in 1992. It is based on six years of research using participant observation, informal interviews, library searches, and a study of various Australian pagan newsletters. During the course of this time, I visited pagans in various Australian states and participated in private rituals performed by different groups and in public pagan festivals and other activities. The purpose of the research was to explore pagan beliefs and practices and to interpret what they mean to participants. Employing Peter Berger's useful concept of plausibility structures, I briefly describe basic elements of paganism and finish by considering the manner in which Australian pagans are addressing problems of ritual practice that arise in their unique natural environment.

## PLAUSIBILITY STRUCTURES

Sociologist Peter Berger describes plausibility structures as social structures which are “taken for granted and within which successive generations of individuals are socialized in such a way that this world will be real to them.” “The firmer the plausibility structure is,” he continues, “the firmer will be the world that is ‘based’ upon it.”<sup>1</sup> All religions, according to Berger, require specific communities for their continuing plausibility. When a plausibility structure loses its coherence or continuity, the world that is based on it begins to totter and its reality ceases to impose itself as self-evident truth. When this happens, it loses its legitimacy. Further, since every religious worldview is founded on a plausibility structure that is itself the product of human activity, every religious worldview is inherently precarious; conversion to another religion is always possible in principle. The possibility of transferring one’s allegiance from one religious worldview to another increases with the degree of instability or discontinuity of the plausibility structure in question.<sup>2</sup>

Berger’s notion helps to explain the appeal of alternative religions such as paganism. The following statements articulate the collapse of the plausibility of a Christian-based worldview for two pagan women. The first woman indicates that it was primarily the basic doctrinal notion of a monotheistic deity, coupled with a disbelief in the concept of inherent sin, that led her to desire change. The second woman also talks about unfulfilled needs, especially in relation to current social issues such as gender equality.

### *Case One*

I discovered paganism after Christianity failed to fulfill my needs. There was something lacking in Christianity. I am unsure whether it was because I couldn’t comprehend God or sin, or whether the whole notion of redemption after death was too daunting. I wanted to feel the magic whilst I was alive, not after I was dead.<sup>3</sup>

### *Case Two*

I was raised a reasonably strict Catholic and stayed with the church until about fourteen years of age. At about twenty-six years of age I felt the need for a nonmaterial dimension to my life. I began investigating various lifestyles and beliefs. I was looking for something which would address my needs—primarily gender equality, justice and a lack of hypocrisy. What is interesting about paganism is its multiplicity of choices.<sup>4</sup>

These statements are only two examples of views that are frequently reiterated by other pagans.<sup>5</sup> Many feel that Christianity has failed to answer personal needs and to address adequately contemporary social

issues; as a result, they began to doubt the legitimacy of Christian doctrines and practices and to search for a belief system which offered answers to their questions. Thus, the move from Christianity to paganism—what Berger calls individual transference into another world (conversion)—became not only possible, but desirable. Most say that when they discovered paganism it was like “coming home” and entering a world of “like-minded people.”

### MODERN PAGANISM

Modern paganism is a new religious movement that is gaining momentum throughout the world. Solid academic monographs have detailed its emergence and practice in Britain, the United States, and Australia, and many scholarly articles have addressed various aspects of the movement.<sup>6</sup> In addition, New Age bookstores contain a plethora of “how-to” books for those interested in practicing pagan rituals. All agree that paganism is nature-based, polytheistic, and eclectic. Included under the umbrella term “paganism” are such sub-groups as shamans, Druids, Wiccans, and witches, and some writers have gone from general discussions of paganism as part of the New Age movement to particular studies of these sub-groups. Paganism’s foundations are as diverse as its sub-groups and include elements taken from Neoplatonism, Theosophy, and Spiritualism, as well as influences from the Freemasons, the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, Aleister Crowley, and the Western esoteric tradition in general.

Paganism asserts that pre-Christian pagan religions transmitted compelling and beneficial spiritual systems that were suppressed and replaced by monotheistic religions, especially Christianity. Modern pagans encourage a return to the “old ways” and talk about the Old Religion in a generic, all encompassing sense, while at the same time introducing newly reworked perspectives on these older traditions. The modern pagan movement has been referred to interchangeably as paganism or neopaganism and broadly encompasses any earth-centered or nature-based religion with roots in a pre-Christian past.

Modern pagans practice religious ecology, which is founded on the belief that the natural world is part of, not apart from, the deities who created it. The physical world within which humans live overlaps with the spiritual realms of nature spirits, deities, and transitional beings—yet the two worlds are apart. The goal of paganism is to bridge the gulf between these worlds and to experience self-realization by doing so. Pagans do not believe that religious intermediaries are either necessary or desirable in order to attain this goal.

Paganism is polytheistic, animistic, and pantheistic. The divine is believed to be contained in every aspect of nature and is at the same

time a creative force, an energy, which is anthropomorphized as Goddess and God. The gods are manifest in the world through the turning of the seasons. Pagans perform distinctive rituals for magical and healing purposes and to celebrate the seasons, honor the deities, attain self-realization, and initiate participants into nature's mysteries. The seasonal cycle of rituals marks out events in the natural rhythm of the seasons; equinoxes and solstices and the movements of the sun and moon are hence critical phenomena. The sacred space of these rites can be constructed anywhere and is set up according to a pagan worldview based upon compass directions, geographical position, and natural environment.

### **CELEBRATORY RITUALS**

Most pagans follow a seasonal cycle based on twenty-one celebrations known as the Wheel of the Year. This cycle acknowledges the seasonal fluctuations and their influences on the environment. The ritual calendar is based on the solar cycle, the annual seasonal and agricultural cycles, and the waxing and waning of the moon. Seasonal changes are seen as symbolic of nature's eternal power to renew itself, and each occasion is reified and anthropomorphized. For example, the sowing of the crops becomes the play between the maiden and the corn god; the fertility of the crops becomes a ritual enactment of intercourse (either symbolic or actual) between the God and the Goddess. As the seasonal wheel turns it reveals birth, life, and death as a continual cycle that Mircea Eliade termed the "myth of the eternal return."<sup>7</sup> Just as the seasonal changes are reflected in the natural order, so the gods undergo an annual metamorphosis as they meet, court, consummate their love, grow, die, and are reborn. The phases of the goddess reflect the important stages in a woman's life—those of maiden, mother, and crone—while the god moves through the stages of son, lover, and Lord of the Shadows.

The story is usually told by beginning at Samhain (popularly known as Halloween), a time of darkness and silence. At this time the God is asleep in the Otherworld awaiting rebirth, and the Great Mother, as Queen of Darkness, conceives within herself. As the year progresses, so does her pregnancy. During the winter solstice the Great Mother gives birth to a son who symbolizes the reemergence of the sun from the darkness of winter. As the days lengthen, the wheel turns, moving towards spring, and the next event is Imbolc, a celebration of new beginnings and growth. The Goddess becomes a virgin once again.

Following Imbolc is the spring equinox, when the young God is initiated into the male mysteries. Between spring equinox and Beltaine, the sun's heat becomes stronger and the young man and woman pursue

one another. Eventually they celebrate their love in a sexual consummation at Beltaine, when they are joined together as husband and wife, king and queen, in a sacred marriage. Beltaine is a time of fertility and fire and celebrates the mystery of a man and woman's love for each other. As the sun reaches its greatest height at summer solstice, the woman's mature power is reflected in her approaching motherhood, and the man's power is reflected in his kingship. From midsummer the sun starts its descent into darkness, and now a dark figure appears who challenges the king. The sun begins to fade, and darkness casts a shadow over the world as the days grow shorter. The crops have matured, and the next festival is Lughnasadh, the celebration of the harvest. The cutting of the corn symbolizes death and transformation and reflects the seasonal changes. The sun's powers are waning, but Lughnasadh is celebrated as a time of fulfillment, of the reaping of all that has been sown. At the autumn equinox, the powers of light and darkness once again stand as equals, but now the darkness descends and both the king and queen face their death. The king dies and passes beyond this world to become the Lord of the Otherworld, the queen becomes the crone, and they both finally understand the ancient mystery of death and rebirth. Then the wheel returns to Samhain, indicating a new beginning of the spiral dance of life.

In this yearly cycle, gods and humans are intimately and inextricably linked, and energies flow from feminine to masculine and back again. Sexuality and death are emphasized as normal stages of an ever-repeating cycle of nature. The regular enactment of rituals, occurring as they do almost every six weeks, renews the experiential focus on the sacred, provides a framework for communal activities, and heightens pagans' perceptions of their natural environment. They thus become very conscious of the fluctuations and general rhythms of nature.

Following a mythology based on a northern seasonal cycle such as the one above, however, presents real problems for pagans living in the southern hemisphere. In the northern hemisphere, the seasonal cycle commences on 31 October (Samhain), then moves through winter solstice (December), Imbolc (February), spring equinox (March), Beltaine (April), summer solstice (June), Lughnasadh (August), and autumn equinox (September). In the southern hemisphere, the cycle is shifted by six months: Samhain (April), winter solstice (June), Imbolc (August), spring equinox (September), Beltaine (October), summer solstice (December), Lughnasadh (February), and autumn equinox (March). This means that if pagans are serious about following the rhythm of nature within their particular environment, something needs to be done about the mythology that gives it symbolic meaning. As we shall see, a mere reversal does not adequately address the problem.

The Australian pagan community is divided concerning whether, in fact, any differences should be implemented. In a series of short articles appearing in various Australian pagan newsletters in 1988 and 1989, individuals offered their own versions of an Australian Wheel of the Year.<sup>8</sup> Some said it should be kept the same as the northern hemisphere; others felt that the difference was important. The main argument in favor of a southern hemisphere adaptation is based on common sense; people feel it is ludicrous to be celebrating winter solstice at the height of a hot Australian summer. The sabbats therefore have to be transposed, making them opposite to their northern counterparts.

For some pagans, however, reversing the seasons of the northern hemisphere still does not resolve the problem of adaptation to the Australian continent. A simple reversal would, according to the myth, designate summer as a fertile time. In actuality, however, summer in Australia is a dry, barren time when the fierce southern sun burns into the earth, depleting human energy and bringing drought and bushfires—hardly the basis for fertility. According to these theorists, summer should be ruled by the crone aspect of the Goddess.

Fertile times in Australia are from March to May. In June and July, the earth is preparing itself for the blossoming of spring. This occurs from late July to August, when native plants flower and birds start gathering nesting materials. The height of spring is in September, with the season petering out in late October or mid-November when the sun begins to increase its intense heat. By observing the earth in its regional variations, therefore, a different picture unfolds.

The northern hemisphere myth of the year, therefore, is a poor fit for Australian pagans who are attuned to their environment. It is basically a difference between working with earth-centered forces and working with the “dance” of the sun and the moon. Because of this incongruity, some pagans feel that a different myth could be created, one that reflects what is happening both in the sky (the pattern of the sun’s angle to the earth) and on the earth. Australia is a land of extremes: its relentless, scorching, drought-bringing sun and sudden electrical storms and flood-bringing downpours signify the volatile gods and goddesses believed to preside over its natural order. In some areas there are tropical rain forests, and in others a cold snowy climate. One suggestion is to look toward Aboriginal spirituality for guidance, but this notion has not been pursued.<sup>9</sup>

The anthropomorphic interpretation of the Wheel of the Year focuses on the interplay between the Goddess, the God, and the pattern of the seasons. The fertile and arid times are related to the meeting, courtship, and consummation of love and the growth and death of the gods and their offspring. As the seasons change their garments, the Goddess and God interact in a human way. An Australian version of this annual cycle could be as follows:

November is the time when the Goddess leads the young God into sexual initiation. The young God then grows and becomes, in the scorching heat of December, the Summer King, and she becomes the Red Queen, both beautiful and terrible. They dance the land-marriage and in a powerful rite are transformed; the God self-immolates but his ashes fall onto the ground, creating bushfires. Thus he is flame and ash, and she, as earth, becomes scorched and parched and takes on the crone aspect.

In January, she is the Dark Goddess and he is the Lord of Shadows. She is the death bringer through heat. In February, flash floods are added to the violence of the drought. The God grows while waiting for the rain. In March, the Goddess reaches a transition and looks to new beginnings. The maiden emerges from the shadow of the crone, bringing healing rains which nurture the earth and engender potential for life. Seeds germinate, and she flirts with the life spirit who is the God locked in the Underworld. He captures her and takes her into his realm of dreams. This Lord of Shadows initiates her into the Mysteries and in May she begins to learn the power of self-knowledge.

From May to June, she becomes Queen of the Underworld and they are in balance and release creative energy into the world. Unfurling leaves of new plants are enriched by the now fertile earth.

In July and August, she teaches the young God the mysteries of the world, and in September they play in the green woods. She assumes the cloak of the earth mother, and he is the young forest lord. In October, spring is in full bloom and they explore their sexuality. In November they come together in the Great Rite, and the circle continues.<sup>10</sup>

Another perspective argues that, depending on geographical factors, Australia should be viewed as having two or three or even six seasons.<sup>11</sup> Such a recognition would present even more conceptual wrinkles for Australian pagans trying to develop a regionally authentic ritual cycle.

Pagan rites are usually enacted within a sacred circle which is "opened" and "closed" by ritual actions known as "casting the circle." The way one moves within the circle has ritual significance: "deosil" is the direction the sun appears to take as it moves from east to west; "widdershins" is the opposite direction. Sometimes these directions are referred to as "clockwise" and "anticlockwise." However, in Australia, even the expressions deosil and widdershins become reversed, because they refer to the sun's direction and have nothing to do with directions of the hands of a clock. That they have become associated with clockwise and anticlockwise movements creates some confusion. Clockwise (deosil in the northern hemisphere) has become associated with good, and anticlockwise (widdershins in the northern hemisphere) is associated with dark deeds. Widdershins direction is used for banishing and closing a circle; deosil direction is used for opening a circle. These directions have sometimes assumed a moral charge, as evidenced in expressions such as the "left-hand (evil) path," and the "right-hand (good) path."



The southern hemisphere reverses the directions, so that clockwise in Australia becomes widdershins and anticlockwise becomes deosil. Because Australian pagans cling to northern hemisphere terminology and hold differing opinions about the subject, circle-casting can become confusing when different groups celebrate rites together.

Even within the sacred circle itself (which is set up according to the cardinal points of north, south, east and west, and their corresponding elements), placing the directions of north and south creates some confusion, though east and west remain in the same position in both hemispheres. In the northern hemisphere, north is regarded as the place of greatest darkness and corresponds to the element of earth. In the southern hemisphere, however, the dark unknown is in the south, and the element of earth is placed in the south. Conversely, the element of fire is in the south in the northern hemisphere, but in the north in the southern hemisphere, since the fire of the sun moves in an arc through the northern quadrant of the sky and the heat of the equator is to the north of Australia.

Theoretically, one opens the circle following the path of the sun, and because the sun appears to rise in the east and go north in Australia, the opening sequence should go from east to north, then west to south, thus following the magnetic flow of the earth and the appropriate earth current in Australia. For some pagans, such details are important when working magic. The corresponding elements for the directions of east (air) and west (water) remain the same.

In a further theoretical variation found in Sydney, New South Wales, elements are joined to compass points according to Australian coast geography: water corresponds to east because of the great expanse of Pacific Ocean immediately to the east; earth corresponds to west because the entire continent is west of Sydney; fire corresponds to north because of the sun's movement through the northern sky and the heat of the equator; and air corresponds to south.

To overcome the problem of various groups working according to hemispheric variants, it was suggested at the annual Australian Wiccan Conference in 1988 that ritual circles be cast in either direction (clockwise or anticlockwise) to reflect the different working practices used in Australia. It was also suggested that the powers from each of the cardinal directions (north, south, east, west) be invoked in a generic sense so that all present could use their own visualizations and associations. Similarly, god and goddess names would be substituted with "Lord" and "Lady," or "Ancient Ones," or some other general term. In the end, the seasonal cycle was left up to individuals and covens to determine and define as they saw fit.

Wiccans who were trained according to the northern hemisphere cycle still celebrate the seasons according to the northern hemisphere and cast the circle in a clockwise direction. One of the arguments

for retaining the clockwise direction of the northern hemisphere in circle-casting is that a ritual is performed at the astral level, and thus directions do not really matter since there are no physical directions at the astral level. Others, however, say that it does not “feel right” to be working northern hemisphere cycles in Australia and that the energies are different.

Some Australian pagans have devised a combination mode. That is, they use northern hemisphere orientations when setting up the circle, move clockwise for deosil and anticlockwise for widdershins, celebrate Samhain in October and Beltaine in May, but use southern hemisphere seasonal cycles for the equinoxes and the solstices. For them, it is appropriate to have the shortest day at the time it occurs, but it doesn't feel right to have Samhain in May or Beltaine in October. Clearly, these pagans are responding to the difficulty of relating to a myth cycle based on northern hemisphere geography and traditions.

#### CREATION OF MEANING

Both Peter Berger<sup>12</sup> and Ernest Becker<sup>13</sup> maintain that meaning is never given, but that it is actively created through a dialectical relationship between the individual and culture. This sort of dialectic is occurring within the Australian pagan community, which creates meaning using the natural world as its axis. Questions such as, How does the myth cycle relate to the land here?; When should one celebrate Samhain?; Which way is deosil?; In which direction should a circle be cast?; and Where should the elements be placed within a circle? lead, in turn, to a re-casting of mythology to accommodate environmental differences. These questions also generate some interesting arguments on the appropriate ways of putting belief into practice.

Philosopher and sociologist Alfred Schutz theorizes that commonsense knowledge of everyday life provides the foundation for how people gain knowledge and make sense of their worlds.<sup>14</sup> Berger and Luckmann develop this argument further when they analyze how the foundation of knowledge in everyday life produces human activity in which reality is socially constructed. They provide us with an understanding of the “reality *sui generis*” of society, and of the objectifications of subjective processes and meanings by which the intersubjective commonsense world is constructed.<sup>15</sup> We have seen how the subjective experience of everyday life in the natural world in Australia necessitates a reevaluation by pagans of a seasonal cycle based on northern hemisphere commonsense reality and its accompanying mythical, anthropomorphic equivalents.

Berger and Luckmann write that the relationship between humans and their social world is and remains a dialectical one. That is, humans (not in isolation but in collectivities) and their social world interact with each other.<sup>16</sup> There is a continuing dialectical process during which problems of logical coherence may arise:

The difficulties that may arise here are connected with the theoretical activities of the legitimators and the practical ones of the educators in the new society. The theoreticians have to satisfy themselves that a hunting goddess is a plausible denizen in an agrarian pantheon and the pedagogues have a problem explaining her mythological activities to children who have never seen a hunt. Legitimizing theoreticians tend to have social aspirations and children tend to be recalcitrant. This, however, is not a problem of abstract logic or technical functionality, but rather of ingenuity on the one hand and credulity on the other—a rather different proposition.<sup>17</sup>

This statement is particularly relevant with regard to Australian pagans. Those who learned and internalized the pagan philosophy in the northern hemisphere underwent a process of habitualization of ritual actions, philosophy, and calendrical events. Some of these people find it difficult to transpose such ingrained habits to a southern clime and prefer to conduct their Wheel of the Year strictly according to northern hemisphere orientations. They explain away discrepancies by saying that the “work” all happens on the astral plane and thus that literal geographical orientation is irrelevant. For this group of people, physical actions and objects such as athames (a blunt knife used by a practitioner to cast the circle), wands, and other ritual tools are simply mnemotechnic aids to something that is occurring at another level of reality. This approach is convenient if rituals are performed in sites insulated from obvious external differences in the environment. However, those who conduct rituals outside are obliged to modify the Wheel of the Year in order for their beliefs and practices to retain cognitive validity. They cannot accept the discrepancies between designated ritual and commonsense knowledge. For these people, the importation of nature religions requires an expansion of the dialectic between individual and culture to include the dialectic between culture and nature.

Berger offers three “moments or steps” (externalization, objectivation, and internalization) that express the process by which individuals interact, experience, and respond to the external world. Each step has a functional purpose:

Externalization is the ongoing outpouring of human being into the world, both in the physical and the mental activity of men. Objectivation is the attainment by the products of this activity (again both physical and mental) of a reality that confronts its original producers as a facticity external to and other

than themselves. Internalization is the reappropriation by men of this same reality, transforming it once again from the structures of the objective world into structures of the subjective consciousness.<sup>18</sup>

Thus, humans produce society, objectify this social reality, and then internalize that reality. Major shifts initiate a restructuring of cosmological assumptions so that they retain congruence with experienced reality. Subsequent actions and cognitions are legitimated as a result of this restructuring, and cosmological assumptions are authenticated.

### CONCLUSION

Some Australians, like their North American and European counterparts, are searching for a new type of spirituality—one which is based more on experience and less on text-based faith. They are also concerned with the environment and feminist issues and feel that paganism addresses both concerns: it is nature-based and concerned with environmental issues, and it deviates from monotheism in that it has both a god and a goddess, and both males and females have proportionate roles to play. Some pagans tend to be anti-Christian and regard church hierarchical structures as anathema to their own ideals of an egalitarian society and a religious community based on networks of individuals. Christianity, as a church-based doctrinal religion, has lost its plausibility for these explorers of paganism.

Modern pagans are faced with problems that their putative ancestors never encountered. As has been demonstrated, living in the southern hemisphere necessitates a dialectical process in order to lessen these problems and leave practitioners with a viable, intact structure for their world. Curiously, the discrepancies between northern hemisphere and southern hemisphere have not resulted in an abandonment of belief but in a more determined effort to fit the environment into the myth cycle, or conversely, to fit the myth cycle into the environment. In renegotiating the myth cycle, pagans engage in a more in-depth study of their beliefs, fitting action to logic and meaning to myth. In this way their beliefs become more entrenched in their way of life. Poetic myth becomes imbued with truths which can be affirmed by the immediate surroundings. By engaging in dialogue with others, each person is able to construct pagan rites and beliefs pertinent to his or her own locale and in doing so vitalize a rapidly growing new religious movement.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Peter L. Berger, *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion* (New York: Anchor Books, 1969), 47.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.

<sup>3</sup> Personal communication from KS, female, Queensland, 1994.

<sup>4</sup> Personal communication from MS, female, Queensland, 1994.

<sup>5</sup> This information is based on personal interviews with pagans at annual Australian pagan events such as the Pagan Summer Gathering, the Oestre Festival, the Wiccan Conference, and both public and private rituals held in Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, and Western Australia over a five year period. In addition, it is based on letters written to me from various individuals.

<sup>6</sup> Tanya Luhrmann, *Persuasions of the Witch's Craft* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1980); Graham Harvey and Charlotte Hardman, eds., *Paganism Today* (London: Thorsons, 1996); Margot Adler, *Drawing Down the Moon: Witches, Druids, Goddess-Worshippers, and Other Pagans in America Today* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1979); Starhawk, *The Spiral Dance: A Rebirth of the Ancient Religion of the Great Goddess* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1979); Loretta Orion, *Never Again the Burning Times: Paganism Revisited* (Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 1995); Kevin Marron, *Witches, Pagans and Magic in the New Age* (Toronto: Seal Books, 1990); Lynne Hume, *Witchcraft and Paganism in Australia* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1997).

<sup>7</sup> Mircea Eliade, *Cosmos and History: The Myth of the Eternal Return* (New York: Harper, 1959).

<sup>8</sup> *Children of Sekhmet* 3, no. 2 (1989): 5; *Shadowplay*, nos. 6, 5; 14, 7; 17, 6 (all undated).

<sup>9</sup> The interface between paganism and Aboriginal spirituality is being pursued in another article, and the matter of appropriation of Aboriginal culture is presently being undertaken by other Australian researchers. To make the situation more complicated, many Aboriginal myths depict the sun as woman and the earth as male.

<sup>10</sup> Adapted from articles in several Australian pagan newsletters.

<sup>11</sup> In the tropical regions of the northern part of the continent, there are two seasons, wet and dry; in the inland desert regions, there are three seasons; in the coastal regions, there are six seasons.

<sup>12</sup> Berger, *The Sacred Canopy*.

<sup>13</sup> Ernest Becker, *The Denial of Death* (New York: Free Press, 1973); *Escape from Evil* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1975).

<sup>14</sup> Alfred Schutz, *Collected Papers* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1962), 149.

<sup>15</sup> Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality* (Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1966), 34.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 78.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 89.

<sup>18</sup> Berger, *The Sacred Canopy*, 4.