

DRUIDRY:
EXPORTED POSSIBILITIES AND
MANIFESTATIONS

Gordon Cooper

THE ORDER OF BARDS OVATES & DRUIDS
MOUNT HAEMUS LECTURE FOR THE YEAR 2001

THE MOUNT HAEMUS AWARD

There was already the Bond or circle of Druid fellowship between them, called the Caw, and companions of these several bodies founded the present-day Mount Haemus Grove in 1245.

Now Mount Haemus is a real mountain in the Balkans, and either this or another of the same name was the classical prison of the winds. ... The Aeolian isles off Sicily are also, however, given for this windy prison. It was, whatever the location, the allegorical name for powerful inspiration which lurked beneath the surface.

Ross Nichols, *The Book of Druidry*

As for the Mount Haemus Grove of 1245, I am simply baffled. The only historical connection between Druidry and Mount Haemus that I can discover comes from the mid-eighteenth century, when William Stukeley wrote letters describing himself as 'a Druid of the Grove of Mount Haemus'. All that he meant by this was that he was one of a group of friends who met at his house on a hill in the Highgate area near London which, because of its windy position, was nicknamed by them after the mountain in Greek mythology which was the home of the winds. His letters were published in the nineteenth century, and may somehow have become the basis for a myth involving the Middle Ages and John Aubrey.

Ronald Hutton, First Mt Haemus Lecture

Recognising the vital part that history plays within Druidry, and thanks to the generosity of the Order's patroness, the Order is now able to grant a substantial award for original research in Druidism, with particular emphasis on historical research. We have called this scholarship the Mount Haemus Award, after the apocryphal Druid grove of Mt Haemus that was said to have been established near Oxford in 1245.

Philip Carr-Gomm

Chosen Chief

The Order of Bards Ovates & Druids

Alban Eilir 2005

DRUIDRY: EXPORTED POSSIBILITIES AND MANIFESTATIONS

Gordon Cooper

'In every grain of wheat there lies hidden the soul of a star.'

Arthur Machen, *The Great God Pan*

Druidry, as Nuinn conceived of it, was a phenomenon that transcended history and reached towards the future as much as it had manifested in a distant past. His perceptive observation has led me to some musing that may be of interest here. It is appropriate that we are gathered here at the ford of the Ox, in the middle of the Land of the White Bull, discussing the futures and pasts of druidry on this, the 40th Anniversary of the Founding of OBOD.

Let me try and illustrate some of the forces that led at least some of us to be assembled here today. My initial point of departure is a seemingly familiar story, one that many of you know quite well.

After two World Wars, the most recent one terminating with the first kindling of nuclear fires by the Modern Prometheus, most in the West breathed a collective sigh of relief. Plastics, television, the jet engine, transistor electronics, computers, insecticides (part and parcel of nerve gas research in Germany) Instant Film (Polaroid, another German war product), a mobile and mechanised society that only Hugo Gernsbach, inventor of the term and, arguably, genre of 'science fiction' and the director Fritz Lang (of 'Metropolis' fame) had seen coming, and the promise of clean, safe nuclear energy that would make the benefits of electricity too cheap to meter and transform the world into an urban and suburban paradise.ⁱⁱ

From the standpoint of most science fiction of the 1950's. the light at the end of this artificial tunnel was powered by fission, displayed on formica, shrouded in Perspex, and nourished by crops where prayers to Ceres were replaced with ritualised sprayings of fields with chemicals known to be safe, (such as DDT) heaped on this breakfast table, attended by its obligatory television and microwave oven. All of us would eat artificially grown strawberries with synthetic cream topping, whether we wanted to or not, as we dressed in our grey flannel suits and consumed handfuls of safe, non-addictive tranquillisers to deal with stress.

Not all shared this particular vision of Utopia, and some mourned the passing away of all the Old Orders. Make no mistake, the transformations in Western society between 1900 and 1955, less than the span of a single life, were the most shattering and disturbing since population pressures mandated an agrarian lifestyle, replacing the gathering and hunting practices that are native to our species, and our legacy since the Plio-Pleistocene transition, approximately 2 million years ago. Hundreds of cultures and languages had been eliminated in the name of progress, resulting in a loss of knowledge that is unparalleled in history.

Between the time that Nuinn wrote 'Cosmic Shape' and Rachel Carlson's book 'Silent Spring' began to shape the consciousness - and laws - in the United States and around the world, the ominous clouds over Los Angeles and the killer fog of London in the 1950's were assumed to be rare phenomenon, and not the harbinger of the coming age.

Supporters of native rights and pre-industrial cultures had died by the start of the Cold War. The so-called 'Primitive' peoples from around the world were viewed as safe and harmless enough to use for advertising gasolines and highways. Neither Arab nor Lakota were spared from the humiliation of becoming marketing images, liberally displayed on the motorways celebrating this high speed future.

Surprisingly enough, from an American point of view, it is by those who served in the armed forces that the costs of what was being lost were most keenly appreciated.

Front line troops stationed in a tiny island nation, brought by war and kept there to preserve the peace were the first to hear rumblings of the quiet and fading melodies of traditional wisdom and practices.

Whispered about in private, officially forbidden to many of them, groups of these soldiers would gather in small villages late at night, where they would be ushered into the houses of natives, dressed in white ceremonial garments, who would share rituals said to be old when Rome was young, preserving a primordial wisdom that could heal the soul and

point a way towards a healthier world. There was talk of an ancient school of priestesses who governed, divined, and manifested the will of the Spirits on earth, living in remote crofts. Murmurs of an ancient and hidden book of wisdom, passed from teacher to student, copied by hand and only seen by the worthy were widely shared by the eager acolytes.

Many in the States spent much of their time arguing over the validity of the portion of the secret text they had received. Some doubted it even existed outside of their own country. Disputes sometimes erupted into outright fights.

It fell to a somewhat colourful figure on the West Coast of North America, a student of the Art for many years, to resolve the controversy. He broke what many considered the rules of the game by publishing the book openly and discussing it on the Internet in the 1990's.

So it was that Patrick McCarthy, a British Columbia native and karate instructor, brought the ancient Okinawan manuscript, the Bubishi, into public view and the Japanese and Okinawan karate practitioners generated a flurry of responses to his publication of the book of the 5 Ancestor Fists, passed down from teacher to student since at least the late 18th century. Many in the Okinawan and Japanese karate community dispute the accuracy of his version of the Bubishi, while others insist they have had the same interpretation as his all along, and received it in secret from one of the great Okinawan masters of the past who are now dead.

If some of you are seeing a parallel to one of the major disputes in Stateside Wicca in recent times, you are not wrong. Wicca, Druidry and Okinawan martial arts were introduced to the States within a few years of each other. ^{iv,v}

The journey across the oceans transformed each of these disciplines into something new. The brevity of study, regardless of its sincerity or comprehension on the part of the student, meant that any number of cultural and technical nuances were overlooked by these almost-contemporary Western propagators of tradition in the blinding light of what was to each of them, a personal revelation about life and the world.

The short training time and many almost imperceptible cultural barriers meant that a single native instructor might have many students, each practising a slightly different version of what, in hindsight, are variations on a theme. In the United States and Canada, these individual differences often resulted in the creation of entirely distinct lineages of each discipline, each vying with its nearest perceived rivals over having the distinction of being the sole standard-bearer of the true tradition.

This is the way the story is usually told - the triumphant return of Paganism and the rescue of native arts for and by the cynical modern world, an alternative to Western established religions and scientism, nurtured in the bosom of the generation that proudly proclaimed "Don't Trust Anyone Over 30!"^{vi}

One of the driving intellectual forces of the 1960's counterculture was the notion that the past was irrelevant. While this perspective resulted in a focus on experiential learning, it also blinded the emerging magical culture of the United States to its long and complicated heritage. Magic of the 1960's borrowed freely from any source, so long as it wasn't found in the recent past or within the Western heritage. Tantra, yoga, breath control, piercing, drug use, sacred dance and movement had been part and parcel of late 19th century esoteric practice. While their rediscovery in the 60's brought these topics once again into the mainstream of the magician's toolkit, the decades of prior experience and reflection by earlier generations were lost. Intellectual giants in the esoteric field, such as Israel Regardie and the dancer Ruth St. Denis lived out the 1960's in relative obscurity while their fields of expertise were reinvented from scratch and a handful of literary references in living rooms across North America.

For the purpose of most North American EuroPagans, druidry began as a humorous way to duck out of church services at Carleton College, Northfield, Minnesota in 1963, with the founding of the Reformed Druids of North America. Borrowing lines from Walt Whitman and a single obscure masonic symbol, the RDNA managed to reinvent much of the humour and reverence for nature without the revivalist druid commentaries, creating such masterpieces of druidic thought as 'The Mish-Mash'.

A wider reading of the poetic and literary record shows that the literary tendencies to manifest what would today be considered Neo-Pagan ideologies are far more complex than this simple paradigm, with borrowings being the rule rather than the exception in the visioning of druids that inspired and reflected trends in the Arts and society.

For those of us with an interest in druids, the cultural looking glass goes back even further, to Greek and Roman times, with the writings of geographers, travellers and Roman generals, none of whom would today qualify as field researchers in any University's Department of Anthropology.^{vii} As we follow the trail of those who sought to read the book of nature, let's see who told the tales that would 'Make the wild blood start in its mystic springs.' (Emerson).

This quest for the druid has taken scholars, authors and poets into the distant past and often projected them into a future. Sometimes the poet or scholar cannot distinguish between the primordial past and the future. This too has been a persistent theme in the quest for druids, whether the divinatory tool of choice has been a forensic anthropological laboratory or the flight of crows at sunset.

As one point of emergence, let's consider the triple manifestation of works that were within the span of two generations of scholars - the folklore and linguistics studies of the Brothers Grimm, the Kalevala as collected and assembled by Elias Lonnrot around the Karelian region of Finland in the early decades of the 19th century, and the Ossian materials, promoted by James Macpherson as an indigenous and pre-Christian tradition from Scotland. All reflect a fascination with the prospects of recovering older, more primal modes of expression within Europe. All reveal the influence of contact with indigenous cultures at the edges of their geographic boundaries. While the 18th century naturalists and explorers generally didn't record the existence of dragons at the corners of maps, they could - and did - reveal cultures generally believed to be living in a state of grace (or depravity) that was close to the original state of Mankind, at least as viewed by that era.^{viii} The Fenian, the witch of the Grimm Brothers, and the figures of the Kalevala share several characteristics in common.

All were collected, or allegedly collected, by scholars operating at the heady, cutting edge of late 18th/early 19th century fieldwork. All were said to have originated directly from the utterances of peasants, and been passed down from the most ancient of times, and rescued from loss at the last moment.^{ix}

All three creations were used in the establishment of national identities, and were seized upon as typological characteristics of those regions, and rightly or wrongly, set expectations for what materials could (or should) be found in other cultures. A modern interpretation of the wise primeval figure was already bounding across British literature, as James Wheeler had written a book in 1747, entitled 'The Modern Druid', which was about propagating oak trees. The literary products of the Brothers Grimm, McPherson and Lonnrot did not fall on sterile soil, but on the rich humus of previous generations of authors and readers who were eager for tales about their primitive but noble ancestors. Simultaneously, the cultural encounters in the New World between British settlers and the remaining native cultures were creating their own unique ideologies. The Kalevala would inspire Longfellow to write his poetic epic 'Hiawatha' in a metric form ultimately derived from the Kalevala, and J.R.R. Tolkien would borrow heavily from the poetry and structure

of this same work in his *Silmarillion* and *Lord of the Rings* trilogy. Gandalf the Grey is easily recognizable as an archetypal druid, the eternal wanderer dressed as a scruffy old man of deep wisdom from a time long past.

As I have mentioned, the process of carrying ideas across the oceans can be transformative. The literary fictions of Macpherson would have been read by the same Thomas Paine (and others) who were negotiating treaties with the very real native peoples of the New World. It must have been remarkably difficult for educated folk of that age to have not conflated the hypothesised wise Gael of Macpherson or the druids of antiquity with the eloquent chiefs and advisors of the Six Nations League. ^x

The founding fathers (and mothers) arrived in a New World that had been almost entirely depopulated prior to the 16th century. While the numbers vary, between 60 and 90% of the indigenous populations of North, Central and South America had died due to disease of one sort or another when the colonists arrived. The land that greeted them was truly unfamiliar, and a wilderness beyond their wildest imaginations.

All of this fed, directly or otherwise, into the structure of the nascent US government, and by reflux, revitalised the concept of the noble savage in European culture, especially as contrasted to the perceived decadence of the current generations. It was then, as now, a time of magical lodges and secret societies, said to preserve ancient lore against the day it would again be needed.

The Masons among the signers of the Declaration of Independence would be shocked even further when they discovered the strong similarities between their lodge procedures and the Midewewin rituals of the East coast native Americans, resulting in historically complex lodges such as the Improved Order of Red Men. This encounter with the wilderness and a hearkening to the past is a recurring theme in the quest for the druid.

To quote John Burroughs, the naturalist and first biographer of Walt Whitman:

‘Yet it would be absurd to say, as a leading British literary journal recently did, that Emerson is not a poet. He is one kind of a poet. He has written plenty of poems that are as melodious as the hum of a wild bee in the air, -chords of wild aeolian music. Undoubtedly his is, on the whole, a bloodless kind of poetry. It suggests the pale gray matter of the cerebrum rather than flesh and blood. Mr. William Rossetti has made a suggestive remark about him. He is not so essentially a poet, says this critic, as he is a Druid that wanders among the bards, and strikes the harp with even more than bardic stress.’

Let me note that William Michael Rosetti, brother of Dante Gabriel and Christina Rossetti discussed his strong affection for the poetry of Whitman with Swinburne, a British poet who would later become a powerful influence on the Delsarte poets Bliss Carman and Aleister Crowley.

While the earliest transmitters of paganism (and karate) were members of the military, the frothy processes of designing this post-Christian, post-Apocalyptic future took place far from barracks and bases on West Coast University campuses, in Consciousness Raising groups and ultimately cross-pollinating with the New Left in the pages of Green Egg Magazine in the middle to late 1960's.

For many of these writers on the West Coast of the United States, history was an inevitably circular process, with modern western culture being unsustainable in the long run. The return of paganism was seen as something of an inevitability after the crash of Western, Christian civilisation, with the few lucky survivors walking naked through a paradise powered by lasers and tantric sex, surviving on apples, strawberries and mushrooms, eschewing agriculture and animal husbandry for a lifestyle of vegan gathering in the tropics.

If this rather dialectic vision sounds a bit like the end stage of Marxism or medieval Catholic thought, you are not far from wrong. Most liberal (and even conservative economists) in the West tended to view society in Marxist terms, regardless of their individual ideologies. The notion of a 'third world' is a direct import from Marxist theory into mainstream economics. The analytical tools of revolutionary Marxism became part and parcel of 1960's feminist thought, which in turn influenced Euro-Pagan ideologies. The most successful coven-as-corporation in the United States, based in Marxist process theory, is named 'Reclaiming'.

Turning for a moment to cutting edge academia in the departments of Religion in the 1960's, the most influential mythographer of the late 20th century, Mircea Eliade, viewed himself as a 'failed Catholic'. Remembered as a novelist in Europe and a mythographer in the States, this one time member of the Romanian Iron Guard wrote many influential books and articles on the 'Myth of the Eternal Return', many of which are still read today in academic Pagan circles. Eliade wrote the classical work on shamanism without ever directly studying the subject, relying on early Soviet fieldwork for the bulk of his data. His typological study of shamanism would have an impact on the roles that Euro-Pagan clergy would establish for themselves in the latter third of the twentieth century. ^{xi}

Eliade's counterpart in Indo-European cultural studies was the widely cited and occasionally read Georges Dumézil, who theorised that cultures speaking Indo-European languages originally had a tripartite caste system of priests, warriors and farmers. Dumézilian ideology became part of American druidic thought in the 1980's when Isaac Bonewits adopted many of Dumézil's theories into ADF ('our own druidry').

Members of the generation that proudly proclaimed 'Don't Trust Anyone Over 30!^{xii}' managed to ignore hundreds of years of Western magical and cultural innovation in their quest for the untarnished, pure state of being. As a result of this process, there is an almost complete lack of continuity between the magical and mystical practices of the 1960's and anything earlier. Promoters of 1970's style polyfidelity and a sacred sexuality would have found nothing at all surprising in the 1910 Tantric salons of the Omnipotent Oom in New York State, where such luminaries as Leopold Stokowski were in regular attendance.

This same 1960's generation applied its dialectic tools towards a study of druidry, and managed to dismiss approximately 1500 years of history as irrelevant. The blinding quest for the oldest, most complete, most primitive manifestations of any human institution sent would-be druids scurrying for textbooks of Yaqui so they could converse with Castaneda's literary creation, Don Juan. At the same time, their distaste for the establishment led to a wholesale rejection of revivalist druidry and extant magical lodges, both of which were viewed as patriarchal, oppressive and corrupted by Christianity, which itself was flattened into a single undifferentiated, monolithic construct by modern Euro-Pagan writers.

What was missed in all of this, was the centuries of thought on the image of the druid in the grove, beckoning to poet, ritualist, and magician alike, from across the ages. This flow of Awen had created bodies of art, dance, and at least one practical manual of silviculture in England in the 18th century.

The great breakthrough that Ross Nichols articulated was the notion that druidry existed outside of time, that it did not depend on living an Iron Age life, that it could be manifested in the Here and Now. As an asthmatic who lived at the time of the 'killer fog' of London in the 1950's, the very real importance of trees and a green world would not have been lost on Nuinn, or his asthmatic friend, Gerald Gardner.

As mentioned earlier, a concept changes when it is exported. This export can be as simple as the movement of information from one department of a University to another. With one eye on pagan deities, another on the structure of Delsarte dance and his third eye

on Swinburne, Bliss Carman, the Canadian poet, created a series of works around the theme of a troubled student encountering deities. He cast these in the form of tableau performances. If a modern pagan organisation were to perform these as written, it would be clear to us and their intended audience that the performance was spiritual and religious in nature.

Interpreting works that occur at the boundaries of art, magical lodges and poetry becomes even more problematic when we lack testimony from the participants. We can but note that any number of such fusions happened in America from the middle 19th century throughout the 20th century, and cannot pigeonhole them strictly as magic, religion, or performance art without doing violence to their context.

It is within fiction and poetry that chthonic goddesses, nature spiritualities and alternative societies are to be most readily found. These in turn would inspire trends of thought that would be recognised as religious in nature when they manifested in the 1960's. Starting at least as early as 'The Midnight Court' (Cúirt an Mheán by Bryan Merrymann, composed in 1780) an Irish poet seeing a vision of a powerful, divine woman opened up a world of possibilities, satirical, satirical and utopian.

Sexuality, utopia and goddess themes are oftentimes inseparable in the visions of frustrated cowboys from Texas like Robert E. Howard, visionary New England welders (Richard Shaver and his extraterrestrial chthonic earth-mothers), and college professors whose Utopian world combined the excesses of Penthouse Magazine, a caste of priest-scientists and Iron Age villages (The 'Gor' series by John Norman). Recognisably Feminist thought would be evident in the fiction of these eras as well as in politics. One popular author in the 90's wrote extensively on economic inequality, women's religion, and produced the enduring best-seller 'Herland' - Charlotte Perkins Gilman.

At the last US Pagan event I attended some years ago, the workshop on the place of scholarship in ritual creation had to be cut short due to a need for additional space for the decommissioning of a fictional Klingon warship as part of a Klingon Wiccan ritual.

The short list of authors who treated with mankind in the wild, looking back to the past or the possible future for inspiration include, in no particular order: Jack London, Hemingway, Kipling, Bernie Wrightson, Richard Wagner, Charles Moulton, Neil Gaiman, Robert E. Howard, Vera Chapman, C.S. Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien, T.H. White, Peter Valentine Timlett, Zenna Henderson, Margaret St. Claire, Richard Hovey, Dryden, Neville Graham, Bliss Carmen, H. Rider Haggard, Longfellow, Emerson, Whitman and Thoreau.^{xiii} Each would in their own way write fiction that would inspire readers to go in search of

deities and druids. Sometimes this would result in the creation of fan clubs that would resemble religious cults, as happened with Robert A. Heinlein's 'Stranger In a Strange Land' and John Norman's fictional counter-earth 'Gor.'

Those of us in the States should feel fortunate that Heinlein's satirical Stranger in A Strange Land rather than his militaristic fiction became the basis for one popular pagan church in the 1960's. Gene Roddenberry's vision of Cosmic Elders seeding the galaxy with genetic material would become the basis for the previously mentioned Klingon Wicca.

Where is druidry going? I will venture several guesses. First, the Utopian vision of any single science fiction writer will not come to pass. The future is complex and as wiggly as the salmon of Wisdom. The same processes of acculturation and adaptation that began on the North American continent with Columbus continue to this day in New Zealand, Australia and South Africa. It will be among the 'minor' and newer generations of poets, writers and artists that a response to the demands of society and the Land itself will manifest in poems, rituals and ultimately, new commentaries to the Book of Nature itself. After a time of reflection and experimentation, these visions will be regarded as part of the druidic heritage, as surely as any Welshman dressed in red woollen garments with green symbols would be regarded today.

Notes

i Arthur Machen The Great God Pan

ii Fiction, drama and poetry were frequently the vehicles that transported druids from the misty past to the imagined future. Themes relevant to druidry were played out in the most influential fantasy and science fiction movies of the 1960's. "Silent Running" presents a dystopian future with no war, no hunger or poverty, and no trees. The last orbiting forest, scheduled for destruction by accountants, is preserved by a half-mad druid astronaut. The Soviet film "Solaris", based on the novel by Stanislaw Lem, reveals a conscious, self-aware planet and its effect on a team of rational Soviet cosmonauts. This film prefigures the Gaia hypothesis as James Lovelock developed it in the 1970's. "Planet of the Apes" portrays a dark future based on Robert Adrey's notion of the killer ape. 2001, based on a short story by Arthur C. Clarke, takes one explorer beyond this extraterrestrially mediated killer ape heritage into a distant and alien future.

iv Canadian Karate-Do generally traces its history to Chitose Sensei, while most of the US practitioners carried Japanese Shotokan ("Shoto" or "Pine Waves" being the pen name of Funakoshi Gichin, who was a friend of the Okinawan doctor and martial arts master Chitose), Japanese or Okinawan Goju-Ryu (named by Miyagi Chojun) Isshin-Ryu (or Shito or Shorin (Shaolin) Ryu to the States. ("Ryu" indicates temple or school.) The post-War occupation of Japan forbade the practice of jiu jitsu, and the various weapons arts of Japan. Karate was not regarded as a traditional martial art, and was exempt from the prohibition, a factor which almost certainly led to its propagation. Years of cultural prejudice had all but eradicated the older jiu jitsu and judo schools in the States, where both of these arts had to wait until the 1980's and late 1950's, respectively, to see a revival of their status as popular disciplines. As part of this loss of knowledge, atemi-waza or point striking (aka the "Death Touch") was taught and understood in 1920's America and Europe, being a common feature in pulp novels of that era. This too was rediscovered within the past 20 years.

v Helen Honeycutt-Adams discussed this topic in her autumn 2003 Seattle Pagan Scholars presentation titled "The Myth of the One True Book"

vi There are of course differences. The most notable one is that druidry has no great written book of Art, unlike its fraternal twin, Wica. The book of druidry is writ in the stars and the lands, as Ross Nichols developed the concept in his book, "The Cosmic Shape". In this brief but prescient work, Nuinn argued for myth that was to be rooted in the soil.

- vii Though in fairness, since Michael Drayton wrote "Poly Olbion" in 1613, it has been realised, at least by poets, that our notion of the past is re-written periodically, with the lore of druids and bards as one such highly mobile target.
- viii The fascination with indigenous magicians has a long history in the West, as Gloria Flaherty has documented in her book *Shamanism in the 18th Century*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992)
- ix Blair's introduction to the Ossianic Cycle might well be taken for a defence of Castaneda's field work, *Pitdown Man*, or the historicity of some contemporary magical traditions. See Fiona J. Stafford, *The Sublime Savage: A Study of James Macpherson and the Poems of Ossian* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1988) 98.
- x Seen under the flashlight of ethnography, data regarding native cultures, including the basic assumptions under which the materials are collected, are intimately connected to the meta-narrative structure that is shared by an author and reader.
- xi This intellectual traffic now flows in both directions, as anthropologists teaching classes in neopaganism have sometimes showed up in my lectures
- xii The science fiction movies "Logan's Run" and "Soylent Green" spoke to the dystopian realities that a youth culture would actually embody.
- xiii To cite one small example of how tightly fiction and modern esoteric culture are interwoven, had H. Rider Haggard's nanny told him stories of an ethereal cocker spaniel at midnight, the writings of Carl Jung would certainly have been radically different, as his female archetype was based on Haggard's "Ayesha".

The Author

Gordon Cooper arrived at druidry through years spent poking through dusty texts and time spent meditating in the Puget Sound region of the Northwest United States. He has been involved in the EuroPagan movement for 28 years where he has written articles for a variety of Pagan revival periodicals since 1978. After time in the military as an Intelligence Analyst and Fire Control Systems tester, he attended the University of Texas @ El Paso where he studied Anthropology under Dr. David Eyde, a specialist in Melanesian tribal cultures. While in El Paso he took up the study of Jin Tsung Dao, a Chinese family martial art and did field work in the Mixtec Dance and Religious revival movements. He holds a B.A. with honors in Turkish and Anthropology, and is a master instructor in Jin Tsung Dao. The Co-founder of Celtic Reconstructionism, he has wisely moved on to the broader field of druidry. His hobbies include translating classical Turkish poetry, Victorian Photographic processes, walking, researching the connections between Physical Culture and magical lodges and target shooting.

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Published in 2005 by The Order of Bards Ovates & Druids

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