

The Beauty of Paganism That Has Been Warped by Years of Manipulated History and Societal Culture

Three Main Arguments:

1. The rise of Christianity demonized Paganism
2. Paganism is parallel to many other religions and their beliefs
3. Paganism is about believing nature is sacred and everything of earth is nature and sacred (rather than the misconceptions about it)

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To understand the religion of Paganism, this essay aims to provide a discussion of how the rise of Christianity demonized Paganism, the connections Paganism has to other religions, and the true intent behind Paganism that has been deeply misunderstood. By the end of this paper, the reader will understand that Paganism isn't about "the devil" or deviance but about life and love.

This first section provides a general discussion about the rise of Christianity and how it led to the demonization of Paganism. "When Christianity spread across Europe and beyond, Christian leaders tended to view the worship of non-Christian deities as an abomination to be corrected by all means." (Strmiska, Michael. *Modern Paganism in World Cultures*. ABC-CLIO, 2005.) An example of this correction would be Christians getting rid of any

Works Cited

O'Donnell, James J. *Pagans*. Harper Collins, 2015.

In *Pagans*, O'Donnell brings to life various pagan rites and essential features of Roman religion and life. The book discusses the rise of Christianity from the viewpoint of the people who witnessed their ways of life destroyed by a powerful religious cult. I chose this book for the importance of understanding the effects some religions have on others. The rise of some religions may be the fall of others, just like in this case with Paganism and Christianity.

Pearson, Joanne, et al. *Nature Religion Today*. 1998.

Nature Religion Today is an academic anthology edited by the British religious studies scholars Joanne Pearson, Richard H. Roberts and Geoffrey Samuel. This anthology is made up of multiple papers by various scholars working in the field of Pagan studies. With these variety of perspectives, the book examines different forms of contemporary Paganism used in North America and Europe. I chose this book in order to study the different forms of Paganism and the origins of which they came from. Unlike other religions, not everything is universal.

Strmiska, Michael. *Modern Paganism in World Cultures*. ABC-CLIO, 2005.

Modern Paganism in World Cultures is an academic anthology edited by the American religious studies scholar Michael F. Strmiska. The book holds eight separate papers produced by various scholars working in the field of Pagan studies. The book focuses on different forms of contemporary Paganism as practiced in Europe and North America. I chose this book for similar reasons as I chose the last. It is important to get different perspectives on one subject rather than sticking to one source.

Wise, Constance. *Hidden Circles in the Web*. AltaMira Press, 2008.

In *Hidden Circles in the Web*, scholar and practitioner, Constance Wise, explores Feminist Wicca through the lens of process thought. She develops a new theology of feminist spirituality that she discusses. Untraditionally, Wise explains its concepts in simple language and illustrates her points with accessible examples from life. Wise discusses 6 areas of belief: history, anthropology, epistemology, ethics, cosmology, and theology. I chose this book to develop an understanding of practices and religions that have stemmed off of Paganism.

York, Michael. *Pagan Theology*. NYU Press, 2005.

In *Pagan Theology*, author Michael York, an American Religious Studies major, knowledges on the religion of Paganism. He provides not just an introduction to, but an expansion of, the

concept of Paganism. To help him accomplish this goal, York provides an overview of Paganism's theological perspective and practice. York also examines the need for a new definition of Paganism through the outlooks of other religions. I chose this book for the purpose of a change of perspective. One of my previous books looked through the perspective of those practicing Paganism and now this one focuses on the perspective of other religions.