

with its movement from entrance to exit, is undeniably stylish, but perhaps too much so—it requires that he deal with rituals of betrothal in two separate chapters, and I found myself wishing that he had sacrificed some of the elegance for the sake of clarity and consolidated all of his material on becoming a bride in a single chapter. However, if the structure of the book makes it necessary to read it twice, the substance of the book certainly rewards such a second reading. As expected from the University of Hawai'i Press, the book is beautifully bound, and illustrated with a number of black and white reproductions of *ukiyo-e* scenes of women's lives, including a fabulous depiction of the ten stages of fetal development. Lindsey has also included as appendices his translated versions of *trousseau* lists and etiquette instructions for young women entering the worlds of marriage and pleasure; these bring the book to a charming conclusion.

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*Introduction to Pagan Studies*

Barbara Jane Davy. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press, 2007.

ISBN: 0759108188. Pp. viii + 245.

Reviewed by Nicholas Dion, University of Toronto.

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Published as the third volume in AltaMira's Pagan Studies series, Barbara Jane Davy's *Introduction to Pagan Studies* sets out with the expressed intention of i) introducing the study of Paganism as a world religion, a legitimate endeavour following the publication of Michael York's *Pagan Theology: Paganism as a World Religion* in 2003, and ii) exploring the ways in which Pagan Studies, through its inherent interdisciplinarity, "researches the intellectual, religious, and social spheres of Paganism" (7–8). Finally, the text strives to introduce its readers to Paganism "in terms of some common categories in the study of religion, including beliefs, practices, theology, ritual, history, and the role of texts and scriptures" (8). The professed audience can therefore be understood to be made up of academics who, while familiar with the general study of religion, may not be familiar with Paganism in these terms. In this sense, Davy's publication fills an important void in the academic corpus. While the market for books on Paganism is currently saturated with so-called 'Wicca 101' publications, texts seeking to introduce the basic tenets of the religion to neophyte practitioners, the vast majority of these texts are of questionable reliability and provide little to quench the academic's thirst for knowledge. Paganism's own internal plurality complicates the issue further; while no two Pagans are likely to practice their religion in the same way, each author presents his or her brand of Paganism as authoritative, removing the flexibility and leniency essential to most Pagan groups. Davy's *Introduction* provides a well-researched and

well-supported account of the information one would customarily find within a 'Wicca 101' text.

At the same time, Davy is not striving to introduce her reader solely to Wicca, but to Paganism as a whole. The ambitious scope of this project becomes problematic at times. Wiccan examples dominate each chapter, while other forms of Paganism, such as Druidism, Asatru, reconstructionist traditions and Shamanism, are relegated to the background. Her examination of individual and family practices in chapter 3 deals heavily with the significance of magic, to which certain Pagan traditions give minimal importance, and her illustration of typical Pagan holy days is limited to the Wiccan Wheel of the Year (57). In truth, many Pagan traditions differ considerably from one another. Asatruars, for example, hold many values that directly contradict those of Wiccans or Druids, and this often gives rise to conflict, as Davy illustrates anecdotally on several occasions (25; 27). These methodological difficulties seem inherent in the scope of Davy's project and can thus be excused. Difficulties arise, however, when the information provided is too easily generalised and when said generalisations are not sufficiently highlighted, such that the uninformed mind might be led to believe that all Pagan traditions value nature equally, for example, or embrace a literal rather than a psychological understanding of polytheism.

As expected, many chapters of Davy's text methodically survey much of the information one would seek in an introductory text. The first chapter examines typical Pagan beliefs, including the elevation of orthopraxis over orthodoxy and the rejection of faith in favour of belief. Chapter 2, dealing with social organisation, lists many of the political, legal, and religious Pagan groups in existence today and addresses one of the major issues facing many Pagan traditions as their numbers swell: will institutionalisation become necessary for the survival of these traditions, or will it be a herald of their demise? The chapter on individual and family practices deals at length with magical practices and with holy days, while the fourth chapter on group practices examines festival activities and rites of passage. The next three chapters focus on the historical development of Paganism, providing a condensed version of Ronald Hutton's *Triumph of the Moon*, and examine in turn the historical development of Paganism and the myths surrounding it (the Murray hypothesis, Marija Gimbutas's myth of the matriarchies and theories of an unbroken Pagan lineage embraced by the Romantics, to name but a few), as well as literary and charismatic influences on the formation of modern Paganism. The eighth chapter, titled 'Denominations', is self-explanatory and requires little comment, except perhaps to suggest that it should have come earlier in the book and that the traditions named therein could have been kept in mind throughout.

Thus far, the reader may often be left wondering how Davy's text introduces one to Pagan Studies rather than to Paganism. The answer lies in the final three chapters, which deal respectively with ethical and political issues within Paganism,

with current issues in Paganism and with research within Pagan Studies. Again, the issues raised within the first two chapters of this section—the ethics of cultural appropriation, gender roles, environmental ethics, the political nature of Pagan rituals, interfaith relations (especially with Judaeo-Christian traditions), Wicca in the media and the commodification of Pagan beliefs—are common within Pagan circles and present few novel ideas for the seasoned Pagan Studies academic, although those new to the field may find some directions for future study.

The final chapter suffers from Davy's own background in the anthropology of religion. Despite the professed interdisciplinarity of Pagan Studies, Davy's final chapter amounts to a survey of the sociological and anthropological studies of Paganism performed in the last decades, to the exclusion of philosophical and psychological texts that have also had some bearing on the field. While one will quickly be forced to admit the overwhelming corpus of work within these two fields dealing with Paganism, this truth need not be normativised, a move that dissuades academics in other fields from turning their attention to Paganism.

The result of Davy's work is a suitable introduction for academics without any familiarity with Paganism, yet one that may prove more effective at providing basic information than at highlighting the nuanced differences between Pagan traditions or at encouraging reflection upon the many philosophical and methodological problems that exist within Pagan Studies. The seasoned Pagan Studies scholar is likely to find these two points a source of great frustration. Still, Davy is to be praised for venturing into these uncharted waters and drafting the first introduction to the field of Pagan Studies, with hopes that others will be inspired to take up the same challenge.

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### *Reconsidering Evil*

Petruschka Schaafsma. Leuven: Peeters, 2006.

ISBN: 978-90-429-1840-5. Pp. 304.

Reviewed by Nathan Loewen, McGill University.

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What would be lost if 'evil' were dropped from the vocabulary of philosophical reflection? Petruschka Schaafsma introduces *Reconsidering Evil* with a promise to address the "dismantling" of evil (5) and to "regauge" the notion of evil (8) in order to reestablish its vitality amid the plurality of modernity. To this end, Schaafsma closely reads Paul Ricoeur, Immanuel Kant, Karl Jaspers and Karl Barth in order to survey each for content related to evil. This study overtly engages only Western thought in relation to Christianity, and its figures deliberately bookend German idealism. G.W.F. Hegel's thought on religion and evil is dismissed as without novelty or import for