Ronald Hutton’s *Triumph of the Moon* is a work of scholarship that, in the twenty years since its publication, has achieved the sort of cultural prominence to which most academic publications merely aspire. Within the academic milieu, this 1999 study of Gardnerian Wicca demonstrated the rich, if relatively recent, history of contemporary Wicca and sheds light on the complex roots of the wider Pagan movement, a set of religions that has suffered from poor academic reception and continuing institutional marginalization. In *Triumph*, Hutton weaves a complex tale for his readers, encompassing intellectual movements and aesthetic sensibilities, coalescing in a particularly British mid-twentieth-century cultural context to produce a religious movement that has since spanned the globe. Equally as important to Hutton’s scholarly impact, however, *Triumph* shaped the ways in which a community of religious practice has thought about itself. It roused internal debates among all contemporary Pagans, not just Gardnerian Wiccans, about origin myths and what constitutes ‘authenticity’. Loved by most, loathed by a few, Pagans now talk about their history in ‘pre-Triumph’ and ‘post-Triumph’ terms. There is little doubt that *Triumph of the Moon* represents for many a key moment in the maturation of a religious community, although debates around its central claims still persist.

Thus, it is truly fitting that there have been two scholarly volumes, ten years apart in 2009 and 2019, produced both as tribute and honor to *Triumph of the Moon*. In addition to celebrating the text itself, these volumes have also served as measures of the state of scholarship about contemporary Paganisms, and specifically modern Witchcraft. The first of these volumes, *Ten Years of Triumph of the Moon*, edited by the late Dave Evans and Dave Green, was a more eclectic volume of scholarship, intended to provide a snapshot of the state of Pagan Studies and the wider field of Esoteric Studies at the time. The present volume, *Magic and Witchery in the Modern West*, edited by two dynamic and enterprising younger scholars of contemporary Paganism, Shai Feraro and Ethan Doyle White, is a more tightly focused effort in its direct engagement with Hutton’s scholarly legacy and influence. In this way the volume succeeds not only in honoring Hutton’s oeuvre; it demonstrates the impact of his research on the work of other scholars, which is high praise indeed.

*Magic and Witchery*, a volume in the Palgrave Historical Studies in Witchcraft and Magic, comprises an introduction by the editors, ten essays, and an Afterword by Hutton. Most of the essays are focused on contemporary Witchcraft, although some essays address wider Pagan culture and practice. Each author in the collection,
generally deftly, explicitly draws on aspects of Hutton’s research as springboards for their own essays. While these efforts might have in some contexts seemed forced, for the most part the authors integrated Hutton’s research in a way that indicates the presence of a wide-ranging scholarly conversation.

The strength of the volume is in the variety of scholarly approaches to modern Witchcraft, demonstrating the rich potential for research in this still emerging set of magico-religious cultures. Especially relevant for readers of this journal, most of the essays incorporate Hutton’s core themes of Romanticism, the inspiration of nature, uses of folklore, and the direct impact of these on contemporary Pagan lived experience. Sarah Pike and Sabina Magliocco, both of whom contributed ethnographically based essays here, most explicitly explore how the construction of ‘nature’, as generated by Romantic Victorian literary sensibilities, has infused the values, beliefs, and worldviews of contemporary Pagans. Some chapters expand into increasingly relevant areas such as political engagement, exemplified by Pike and Shai Feraro’s contributions, both of which provide a fairly tight focus on Pagan environmental politics building on the theme of the sacrality of nature. Chas Clifton’s contribution mirrors Hutton’s own methodological blending of folkloristics and historiography, examining legends of flying ointments among Traditional Witches. Unfortunately, this essay seemed to stop short of a fuller examination of community applications of this trope, instead focusing on definitions and scholarly context at the front of the essay. Helen Cornish contributes a wonderful interpretive piece, providing a fascinating account of how the heritage of Witchcraft is framed and visually negotiated at the Museum of Witchcraft and Magic in Cornwall. Jenny Butler provides a recent history of the development of Wicca in Ireland, and the ways in which that tradition has engaged with the development of ‘Celticity’ in the Irish context, again intersecting with Hutton’s focus on Romanticism as foundational to contemporary Paganisms.

The collection also addresses underexamined segments of the modern Witchcraft milieu. Andrew Chumbley’s influential Sabbatic Witchcraft is given a treatment here by Ethan Doyle White, providing a tantalizing view of the expanding breadth of contemporary Witchcraft traditions. Similarly, Hedenborg-White explores the ways in which Witchcraft was characterized by Thelemites Jack Parsons and Kenneth Grant in the 1940s and 1950s, paralleling the early historical development of Gardnerian Wicca. These fascinating contributions only hint at the variety of existing modern Witchcraft tropes and traditions, demonstrating the need for more comprehensive scholarship which might include Dianic Wicca, Traditional Witchcraft, and the recent feminist intersectional Witchcraft, increasing the scope for applications of Hutton’s research. It is worth noting that despite the title suggesting that the volume might include works on magic, in fact there is almost no primary focus on magic in any essays in this volume. Although Witchcraft and most forms of Paganism are magico-religious traditions in character, the topic of how these groups use magic is generally unexplored here, with the exception of the fascinating and convincing essay by Hugh Urban, addressing the influences of Tantra on the development of the Gardnerian Great Rite. Van Gulik’s essay on creativity in Wicca does examine the interpretative fields in which Wiccan magical experiences occur, but sadly the essay lacks clarity.

The most serious drawback of this volume is a lack of consistency regarding terminology. It would have been helpful for the editors to use the introductory section to define key terms for this volume, and even to have provided a brief introductory paragraph to Gerald Gardner, so as to avoid the redundancy in the contributions.
Although I can understand why the editors might have been reluctant to impose such standards on contributors, some of the terminology can be confusing for a readership that may not know the distinctions in community usage. For example, in some essays British Traditional Witchcraft is used to refer to Gardnerian and Alexandrian Wicca, but in others the phrase Traditional Witchcraft is used to denote specifically non-Wiccan witchcraft. Helen Cornish does the clearest job of disambiguating the terms in her contribution. Additionally, the essays occasionally drift into using Paganism as shorthand for Wicca without clarification, despite the fact that the Pagan community is quite varied and contains many non-Wiccans. Although the usages within the context of each essay were all correct, the readers might have benefited from a stronger editorial hand.

Ronald Hutton’s characteristically gracious Afterword addresses the development of Pagan Studies as an academic field, situated within the increasing public reception of Paganisms as legitimate religions. Hutton notes that the decentralization of modern Paganisms has contributed to an overall eclecticism and increasing cultural dynamism. He notes that although most people no longer fear or condemn modern Pagans as they might have even a quarter of a century ago, Pagans and Witches still suffer from a self-imposed oppositional identity which contributes to Paganisms’ persistent marginality. As a result, the potential for societal integration of Pagans and Witches is limited, which naturally will impact the fortunes of Pagan Studies as an academic area of research. Hutton correctly observes that Pagans still lack societal and cultural power, influence, and true advocacy, and while they are no longer considered dangerous, they are often not considered credible. This is no judgment on the part of Hutton; he is merely describing why Pagans and Pagan Studies struggle for institutional recognition. Yet Hutton also compares the social position of Pagans today to the condition of the early Quakers, now hardly seen as a subversive sect, yet once intensely maligned, and this broader perspective may signal a way forward for Pagan Studies. In the study of minority religions, it is all too easy to keep the focus on the characteristics which appear exceptional, but perhaps there is greater utility in engaging with common themes, histories, and comparisons, demonstrating how Paganism exemplifies wider trends in religious studies rather than focusing on marginalization.

Overall, Magic and Witchery in the Modern West provides a useful addition to research on contemporary Witchcraft and Paganisms, while honoring its most important scholar. Yet given the visibility of Witchcraft as both a cultural phenomenon and as a religious identity, the volume feels limited in scope. This only strengthens the case for future collections that would expand beyond Hutton’s core research areas to better demonstrate the robust and diverse state of modern Witchcraft and its suitability for serious inquiry. For scholars interested in the ways in which ideas about nature inform spiritual and religious traditions, this text provides several useful, grounded examples of how concepts of the other-than-human world are central to the ethics and actions of Wiccans and Pagans, as these religious communities evolve into the twenty-first century.

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References
