

Notes from the Underground

The Enlightenment was a movement of ideas which characterized much of 18th century European thought. Its adherents believed that truth could be attained through reason, observation and experimentation. They sought to use their scientific method in the service of humanitarian ideals like tolerance, justice and the welfare of humanity. Some Enlightenment leaders encouraged an open-minded investigation of the nature of society. Others called for a more revolutionary program, defended the victims of religious persecution, and encouraged the development of technology. This is the movement that gave the western world separation of Church and State and set the stage for the Industrial Revolution.

In reaction to the classicism and rationalism which marked the Enlightenment, Romanticism was a movement which, although it began in 18th century, came into fruition during the 19th and characterized much of the thinking of the Victorian era. Romanticism was concerned more with feeling and emotion than with form and aesthetic qualities. The social thinkers of this era were strongly critical of the industrialization and urbanization of 19th century society, and their writing was marked by passion and imagination—visionary and idealistic at best, but sentimental or fantastic at worst.

Romanticism flourished well into the 20th century, and Modernism was only partially successful in succeeding it. The sleek geometry and aesthetic linearity of Modern art seemed fragile and insubstantial in contrast to Romantic opulence, and a return to the rigours of rationality proved difficult after a century of devotion to the primacy of emotional experi-

ence. In our feature article on the Nazi Party's 'Green Wing', Peter Staudenmaier traces the means by which an intuitive affection for the purity of the natural world, combined with a harsh criticism of modern technology and a rejection of humanism (none of which would be unfamiliar to today's deep ecologists), led to savage political consequences. A repudiation of historic methodology and a wholesale indictment of the rational process made it impossible for an entire generation to effectively critique the political and economic structures which generated the ecological and social ills of their day. Conflating biological and social categories, a single culprit was identified, and organized mass murder was the result.

Many of those Neopagan writers who promote alternative historical paradigms invoke Post-modernism as an academically credible means of reinterpreting the past and challenging empirical studies of history. David Waldron, in his article on Witchcraft Histories, suggests that these narratives, in part because of their reification of beliefs and images, owe more to Romanticism than to Post-modernism.

Dr Juliette Wood, the current president of Britain's Folklore Society presents a more generous evaluation of Margaret Murray than did her predecessor, calling Murray a "charmingly eclectic scholar", and pointing out that many of the perceived irregularities in Murray's work were the typical procedures of her day.

We *Pom* editors were considerably impressed with the article on Magical Cosmologies and Science by Dave Green, in spite of the fact that none of us are well informed on the subject of Chaos Magick. We enthusiastically encourage those readers who are familiar with the topic to give this piece a close reading and respond with such commentary as seems appropriate.

Persephone's hard-working minions