Shai Feraro and Ethan Doyle White (eds.). *Magic and Witchery in the Modern West: Celebrating the Twentieth Anniversary of 'Triumph of the Moon'*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019. xiii + 259pp. ISBN 978-3-030-15549-0. $119.99.

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 presents to his readers a complex tale of many threads, including intellectual movements and aesthetic sensibilities which coalesced in a particularly British mid-twentieth century cultural context to produce a new 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.

Thus, it is truly fitting that there have been two scholarly volumes, ten years apart in 2009 and 2019, produced as tribute 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, aiming to provide a snapshot of the state of Pagan studies and the study of

esotericism 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 in many ways 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 also 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 series, 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 Paganism more broadly. Each author in the collection, generally deftly, explicitly refers to aspects of Hutton's work and uses Hutton's research as springboards for their own essays. While these efforts might in some contexts seem forced, for the most part the authors integrate 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. Many of the essays draw in some way on Hutton's core themes of Romanticism, engagement with themes of nature, and uses of folklore. Sarah Pike and Sabina Magliocco, both of whom contributed ethnographically based essays to this volume, most explicitly explore the construction of "nature" in contemporary Pagan culture as generated by the Romantic Victorian literary sensibility that has infused the values and beliefs of contemporary Pagans. The volume's authors also expand into increasingly relevant areas such as political engagement, exemplified by both Pike and Shai Feraro's contributions. Both essays provide a fairly tight focus on Pagan environmental politics that build on the sacrality of nature, a key defining feature of contemporary Paganisms and Wicca. Chas Clifton's contribution mirrors Hutton's own methodological blending of folkloristics and historiography to look at the legends of flying

ointments among Traditional Witches. Unfortunately, Clifton does not provide as much evidence of the Traditionalist embrace of flying ointments as integral to their identity as his initial argument suggests. 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, Manon 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, more thorough examinations into 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, there is, in fact, almost no primary focus on magic in any of the 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, which addresses 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. However, this particular essay lacks clarity partially as

a result of idiosyncratic uses of terms such as "traditionalism" and "eclecticism", both of which have other established meanings within Wiccan and wider esoteric cultures, and also because of the author's lack of differentiation between different types of Wicca in his study.

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 paragraph introduction of 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, and this strategy might have been used as a model for the introduction. 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 benefitted 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. As Pagans do, in fact, share features and historical conditions with a variety of religions and spiritual traditions, taking a broader, more comparative approach might benefit Pagan studies and demonstrate the relevance of the field by deemphasizing the marginality of the subject matter. 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 wider common themes, histories, and comparisons, demonstrating how Paganism exemplifies wider trends in religious studies.

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 increased 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.

Amy Hale
amyhale93@gmail.com