
Description of Reconstructionist Religions.

Posted by ShaamAnsu - 2008/03/14 22:55

Reconstructionist religions are generally classified as a subgroup or offshoot of Neopaganism. Reconstructionism is a methodology which attempts to accurately base modern religious practice on culturally and historically genuine examples of ancient religious practices. This methodology is also sometimes termed Traditionalism. Some Reconstructionists are attempting to restore the ancient social orders and tribal way of life, while the majority of Reconstructionists are primarily concerned with adapting ancient religious practice to life in the modern world. In some areas, like Greece and regions of the former Soviet Union, modern adherents of Reconstructionist religions view their practice as a continued extension of the indigenous religious practices of their ancestors.

“ There is no attempt to recreate a combined pan-European paganism.

Researchers attempt to stay within research guidelines developed over the course of the past century for handling documentation generated in the time periods that they are studying.

A multi-disciplinary approach is utilized capitalizing on results from various fields as historical literary research, anthropology, religious history, political history, archeology, forensic anthropology, historical sociology, etc. with an overt attempt to avoid pseudo-sciences.

There are serious attempts to recreate culture, politics, science and art of the period in order to better understand the environment within which the religious beliefs were practiced.

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Reconstructionists believe that the indigenous belief systems and religions which existed prior to the modern era conversions are both valid and relevant in the modern age. Reconstructionists view their myths (or meta-narratives), folk customs, languages and symbols as the organic expression of their culture. This cultural relevancy is ethnically and regionally specific, having evolved over thousands of years to suit a particular people's emotional and spiritual needs. Reconstructionists view the modernist religious tendencies of proselytization, evangelization and doctrinal ordained assimilation as destructive to the cultures and societies subjected to these practices.

Reconstructionism is by its very nature dependent on the literary and oral record and has a very strong scholarly and academic bent, emphasizing the study of languages, archaeology, anthropology and folklore. Cultural authenticity is highly valued.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polytheistic_reconstructionism

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Re:Description of Reconstructionist Religions.

Posted by Rael - 2008/03/22 14:04

I have to admit that the reconstructionists have left a bad taste in my mouth since first encountering them. The ones I have listened to on boards such as these and on Witches Voice are of the mind that it is their way or the highway. No middle ground, no room for the powers that be to do a new thing in the earth. IMO, nothing could be further from the truth.

I believe the awakening through Wicca and even the fluff bunnies are all a part of a revival of the basic principles of magick that we lost through the last 2 millenia. We have proven that we don't have to go by the old formulas in order to practice our craft. It is just a matter of believing it is possible through whatever works for you. I started out as a fluff bunny, but I didn't stay there. I grew. My rituals produce real results--they give me an edge on life that others don't have because they believe they are at the mercy of life's circumstances. The reconstructionists can throw all the stones they would like at the Wiccans and the fluff bunnies, but therein lies something special--restoration and true growth out of the immaturity of youth into wise old ones that know what they believe and why--and good at their craft. We should respect our youth... not throw stones at them.

This is not to say there is not a place for reconstructionists--they just need to lose the attitude and see the big picture. I do appreciate the history they have brought to light--I read what they have to say in spite of the attitude, and I glean from it what is of value. But we don't have to be like the ancients. We have to realize that civilization is growing and changing. We must change with it. We must adapt to our changing times.

I respect Wicca for being our birthing room of a whole new generation of newbies that are willing to be different and to explore life from a supernatural angle. From there, they will grow with an apt knowledge of paganism, and one day they will laugh at themselves and their own silly stages like I do now. But that was part of the process all along...

Post edited by: Rael, at: 2008/03/22 14:19

Re:Description of Reconstructionist Religions.

Posted by ShaamAnsu - 2008/03/22 18:09

Well, some boards are very rude and defensive. To me, this just shows immaturity and insecurity about themselves and what they believe.

Those practicing Trad. Witchcraft..feel their way is right..Trad. Wiccans feel their way is right, Eclectic Wiccans roll merrily along, Neo/New-Age..get stomped on any way they go. Fluff bunnies will either stay all Fluff or grow.

Those boards where people fuss all the time, I stay away from. They don't interest me a bit.

Reconstructionists are found in other belief systems too. Hellenic Polytheism, Celtic Reconstructionists and many more. Asatru, to name a few.

Belief systems, and I don't care what they are, are evolving with the times, there will be change and there will be disagreements..but all in all, when it levels out...it will be pretty balanced, I believe.

Post edited by: ShaamAnsu, at: 2008/03/22 18:10

Re:Description of Reconstructionist Religions.

Posted by bgruagach - 2008/03/23 21:20

To be honest I find a lot of the disdain aimed at so-called "fluffies" to be pretty funny. The main complaint seems to be that the fluffy one is eclectic and not historically correct.

I'd love to see someone present a truly original spiritual system that drew on absolutely nothing from other sources as it was developed! That should be about as easy as getting blood from a stone. After all, the vast majority of human cultures had contact with other neighboring cultures, and ended up absorbing or borrowing things willy-nilly as a result of that interaction. The reality of a "pure" culture is a rather questionable myth.

Another way to put it is that a lot of the conflict boils down to the "witchier than thou" syndrome. Everyone wants to think their system is the Real Thing™ and some seem to have bought into the monotheistic assumption that for one system to be true others must therefore be false. In Pagan and magickal religions it seems that some have swallowed the logical fallacy that something must be Authentically Ancient™ in order to be worthy.

Of course something does not have to be old in order to be worthwhile. There are lots of examples of where an old idea was less worthy of a newer one, such as the older idea of the Earth being the center of the universe being replaced by the newer and more provable idea that the Earth is just one planet in one solar system in one galaxy of a huge universe. History itself is a problematic study because the observations are so often filtered through assumptions that are constantly being revised and replaced. Just look at the confusion over recent events like what happened on Sept. 11 2001 -- it's no wonder there is a lot of confusion and disagreement about what might have happened hundreds or even thousands of years ago!

In the end the best way to deal with things is to use what works for you, go with the theories and philosophy that makes the most sense to you, and while we can keep an open mind about other people's opinions we are ultimately going to have to go with our own decisions. Other people can whine and complain that their way is the One True Way™ but they are not living in your shoes so can't really dictate how you must believe or worship or live. That's up to you.

Re:Description of Reconstructionist Religions.

Posted by ShaamAnsu - 2008/03/24 13:11

"witchier than thou"

:laugh: :laugh: :lol: :P Love that one....

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Re:Description of Reconstructionist Religions.

Posted by Rael - 2008/03/28 00:51

Very good observations from both of you--sorry I have not followed up on these, but my boss has been ill lately, and I am second in command--and with the Easter holiday--WOW!--talk about job security!

It is fun, though... I thrive on the busyness!!

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Re:Description of Reconstructionist Religions.

Posted by Rael - 2008/03/29 14:50

I wanted to add to this thread about how spiritual consciousness must have evolved with ancient man. It had its roots in man's imagination as he for the first time became aware of his surroundings and what must be the cause of the things around him. The evolution of this god/dess consciousness must have been a very interesting process, and that is the same process that continues today. How can anyone say what we arrive at through the same process is not just as valid as what the ancients arrived at?

We are only able to give our interpretation of what must have been thousands of years ago based on what little evidence still exists about what the ancients believed. By putting our interpretation on the evidence, are we still not in that same area if imagination in that interpretation.

When I speak of imagination, I speak of more than fantasy--I speak of the place where we come to be inspired in an original way--(to re-word) the place of original thought that comes by inspiration, the place where true magick originates. So as we "feel" our way through original spiritual experience (for us and our path) that takes us the next step in our spiritual evolution, how are we different from the ancients?

If we write that experience down and that writing survives 1000+ years, will se give birth to a new facet of religion in the future?

Interesting...

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Re:Description of Reconstructionist Religions.

Posted by ShaamAnsu - 2008/04/16 09:56

"If we write that experience down and that writing survives 1000+ years, will se give birth to a new facet of religion in the future?"

Yes, certainly. As humanity evolves, technology evolves, the word evolves, religion evolves....each will have it's own "signature"...as to the time it existed.

There is a timeline you can follow...just by reading and learning about religions...from when the beginnings were recognized and were illustrated in some way...drawings on cave walls, stone work, the pyramids, the sphinx, the Buddha statues, and many other ancient things coming to light every day.

Each day that passes, that timeline grows longer..as we evolve in our respective religions/belief systems/ paths.

Spiritual consciousness exists today as it has always existed...and really evolves the same way.

(I can't get the quote button at top to work..lol)

(I tried to fix the quote code for you -- BGRuagach)

Post edited by: ShaamAnsu, at: 2008/04/16 10:01

Post edited by: ShaamAnsu, at: 2008/04/16 10:01

Post edited by: bgruagach, at: 2008/04/16 15:35

Post edited by: bgruagach, at: 2008/04/16 15:36

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