Grange Appeal

Peter Lamborn Wilson

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The work we are going about is this, to dig up Georges Hill and the waste grounds thereabouts, and to sow corn, and to eat our bread together by the sweat of our brows.

And the First Reason is this, that we may work in righteousness, and lay the Foundation of making the Earth a Common Treasury for All, both rich and poor. That everyone that is born of the land may be fed by the Earth and his Mother that brought him forth, according to the Reason that Rules in the Creation.

— Gerrard Winstanley, the Digger
"The True Levellers Standard Advanced," April 26, 1649

Brothers of the plow, The power is with you;
The world in expectation waits For action prompt and true,
Oppression stalks abroad, Monopolies abound;
Their giant hands already clutch The tillers of the ground.
(Chorus)
Awake, then, awake! the great world must be fed,
And heaven gives the power to the hand that holds the bread.

— Geo. F. Root,
"The Hand That Holds The Bread"
Grange Melodies (Philadelphia, 1905)

I.

One summer day in Colorado some years ago, the poet Reed Bye drove me around to look at a few of the still-standing Grange Halls of Boulder County. Plain wood-frame structures, simple in an almost Amish or Shaker manner (American Zen) and almost barn-like, these rural outposts of farm culture have been overtaken by the county's insane rate of "development." The farms that once surrounded the Grange Halls have been sold and subdivided — the Denver gentry have built huge "trophy homes," strip malls, defense and biomutagenic labs, New Age supermarkets, etc., etc. The few horses and bewildered cows that still stand around in the shrinking "open spaces" appear to be waiting for the End. A thick but slightly luminous atmosphere of nostalgia hangs over the lonely halls baking in the sunlight.

Ever since childhood Sunday afternoon excursions in the fifties, I've been noticing Grange Halls in little American towns and admiring them. The bigger halls sometimes resemble charming Victorian churches — "carpenter gothic" — or firehouses. Not many of them appear to be still active or owned by the Grange. In Rosendale, a town near where I live in Upstate New York, the slightly ornate but decaying Grange Hall was saved by artists but tragically burned down several years ago.

So far I've been unable to discover any nice coffee table books devoted to this rich cross-section of American working-class vernacular public architecture. Not even the Grange itself seems to have published a study of its own disappearing heritage. At first I wasn't even certain that the Grange still existed. But eight years ago when I moved to the Hudson Valley, I began to see signs that the organization was not entirely moribund. At the Ulster County Fair, I met some exceedingly pleasant old ladies selling spiral-bound cookery books compiled by local Grangers.

At one point I thought about doing a book on Grange Hall architecture, but soon realized how huge a job it would be. Between 1868 and 1933, New York State alone spawned 1,531 Granges.[1] I'm no photographer, and I don't even own a car. I'd need a grant just to record the Granges in my own immediate area, let alone the state or the whole country.

Old photo archives do exist, as I learned when I tracked down some Grange historians and corresponded with them. But in the meantime I'd discovered other and even more fascinating aspects of Grange history. In its heyday, the Grange was one of the most progressive forces in the Populist movement, not just a club for lonely farmers in those long-dead days before cars and TVs atomized American social life. Once upon a time, the Grangers were firebreathing agrarian radicals. Moreover, it turned out that the Grange was a secret society with secret rituals.

Why hadn't I ever heard about this before?

[1] See Leonard L. Allen, *History of New York State Grange* (Watertown, NY: Hungerford-Holbrook Co., 1934).

II.

Of course, the Grange wasn't the first manifestation of American agrarian radicalism. In colonial times, for example, rural New York experienced a number of "Anti-Rent" uprisings against the feudal-manorial "Patroon System" introduced by the Dutch but preserved and even extended under the British. Even after the Revolution, farmers were still subjected to feudal leases and rents and treated as a rural proletariat by manor-lords like the Rensselaers and the Livingstons. In 1845, the long-simmering situation exploded in an Anti-Rent War. Farmers disguised as "Calico Indians" tarred and feathered some sheriffs.[1] A few people got shot. English and Irish Chartists, German Communists, and Manhattan radicals supported the rebels. But the movement was co-opted by the usual clever politicians who rode to power on radical slogans, then delivered only tepid reform. Private property was saved from the extremists who had really dreamed of abolishing rent. Like Punk squatters in Amsterdam or Manhattan who win legal control of their squats, the Anti-Rent farmers were transformed suddenly into landlords.

Looked at from a "Jeffersonian" point of view, America seems founded on agrarian principles as a revolutionary democratic nation of free yeoman-farmers. However, the 1789 Constitution acted as a counter-revolution and put an end to any immediate hope of extending the Jeffersonian franchise to slaves, Indians or women. (The Bill of Rights represents the last-minute "tepid reforms" of Jefferson himself, who — like many of the Founding Fathers — was a slave owner and land speculator.)

Back-country farmer uprisings like Shay's Rebellion and the Whiskey Rebellion were crushed by Washington, the new "King George." The American ruling class would consist of slave owners, merchants, financiers, lawyers, manufacturers and politicians — all male, all white. When freedom is defined in terms of property, those with more property have more freedom. Most Americans were still small farmers, and this remained the case throughout the 19th and even into the 20th century. But already by the end of the 18th century, the Jeffersonian yeoman had lost control of the American future.

This loss, however, went largely unnoticed. Because of the existence of the *frontier*, (itself a creation of land speculators and Indian killers), the farmer could always leave rents and oppression behind and find 40 acres and a mule somewhere over the horizon. By the time of the Civil War, however, the frontier was already beginning to vanish. Slavery was abolished largely because it no longer suited an emergent capitalist economy based on money rather than land as the true measure of wealth. Labor had to be "free" — that is, regulated by wages and rents. In the Gilded Age of the Robber Barons following the Civil War, two classes emerged as the prime victims of this supposed freedom: the urban proletariat and the small farmers.

Railroads "opened up" America's rural hinterlands, true, but railroads also acted as the tentacles of predatory capitalism. Financiers and monopolists controlled the farm economy at nearly

[1] See Henry Christman, *Tin Horns and Calico* (New York: Henry Holt, 1945); see also Dorothy Kubik, *A Free Soil — A Free People: The Anti-Rent War in Delaware County, New York* (Fleischmanns, NY: Purple Mountain Press, 1997).

every point of supply, demand and transportation. Farmers didn't work for wages, and they might even own property; nevertheless, they were exploited just like factory workers in the city. "Money interests" ruled reality itself, or so it seemed.

The Civil War had put an end to many of the old antebellum reform movements, but the post-War era created a whole spectrum of new ones. "Populism" was in the air — a hard-to-define radicalism, both urban and rural, that began to give birth to new organizations and take up new causes. In 1866, a Bureau of Agriculture clerk (and Freemason) in Washington, D.C., named Oliver Hudson Kelley, toured the devastated South and reported back not only to his office but also to a small circle of friends, all minor government clerks with farming backgrounds. They agonized over the plight of the American farmer and decided to take action. They founded a fraternal order, the Patrons of Husbandry (i.e., agriculture), that became known as the Grange (an archaic word for barn).

The "Seven Founders" of the Grange were all white men, but Kelley's niece, Miss Carrie Hall, convinced him to include women in the new organization, even as officers. For this she is recognized as "equal to the Founders" of the order. Aside from "Father" Kelley himself, a tireless, idealistic and charismatic figure, two founders exercised great influence on the order's forms and functions: William Saunders, a prominent landscape gardener originally from Scotland, and Francis Morton McDowell, the only non-bureaucrat, a fruit farmer from Steuben County, New York. Three Celts and their inspiring ideas for the order breathe a glorious and eccentric air of imagination and poetry. They proposed nothing less than a Masonic-style mystic and secret society, complete with ritual, regalia, and seven degrees of initiation, all based on the symbolism of farming.

In 1868, the first Grange of the infant order, Number One of Fredonia, New York, was founded in Chautauqua County, where another great Populist organization, the educational Chautauqua movement, also originated. (I wonder if the Marx Brothers knew of this when they or George S. Kaufman chose the name "Fredonia" for the fictional setting of their great anti-war comedy "Duck Soup.")

After a slow start, the new organization began to experience almost unbelievable success. Within eight years, some 24,000 charters had been granted, and membership was pushing a million. The Grange had hit on a magical formula: economic self-organization, cooperation, and mutual aid; no involvement in legislative electoral politics but militancy on social and economic issues; plenty of picnics, outings, celebrations, socializing and shared fun; and a really impressive but simple ritual based on the Eleusinian Mysteries.

III.

> Patrons, on your weary way,
> Is there darkness and delay?
> Have you trouble, constant strife
> To attain the higher life?
> Seek Pomona's signet ring,
> Talismanic words 'twill bring,
> Words that conquer far and near;
> Always hope *and perservere.*
>
> — Jas. L. Orr, "Hope and Perservere"
> (initiation hymn for 5th Degree)
> *Grange Melodies*

Between, say, 1840 and 1914, at a rough but reasonable guess, one out of every three Americans belonged to a fraternal organization — Masons, Oddfellows, Elks, Woodsmen, Rosicrucians, Good Templars, Druids, Daughters of Isis, etc. — or at least to some cultural society such as the Athenaeum or Chautauqua. With hindsight we can speak of a society falling away from organized religions but needing a secular substitute for the sociality or conviviality of the churches. After all, we reason, without telephones, TVs and automobiles, humans needed to come together physically to reproduce social life. (We moderns appear to have evolved beyond this crude physicality and require only the *image* of the social.) As technology came to mediate and even determine all aspects of the social, those fraternal and cultural organizations collapsed or disappeared.

This abstract view sees only a negativity (social isolation) and its negation in association. It tells us very little about the consciousness and motivation of the fraters and sorors of these organizations, nor of the positive and creative aspects of their thought and activity. Nineteenth century America possessed a great seriousness about raising its consciousness and reforming its institutions. It still dreamed of itself as a new world wherein the poisoned human relations of the past could be cured and transformed. The more radical of the fraternal organizations should really be considered as elements of the historical movement of the social.

The Grange cannot be seen merely as a refuge from isolation; nor can it be understood solely in economic terms, as some historians seem to imply. Certainly these motives existed, but they were enriched and informed by philosophical ideals which themselves were enacted or "performed" as social act in festivals and rituals. The masonic-inspired rituals of organizations like the Grange or the Knights of Labor can't be dismissed as epiphenomenal frippery or mere fraternal icing on

[1] Solon Justus Buck, *The Grange Movement: A Study of Agricultural Organization and its Political, Economic and Social Manifestations, 1870–1880* (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, reprint 1963, c. 1913).

[2] Oliver H. Kelley, *Origin and Progress of The Order of the Patrons of Husbandry in the United States: A History from 1866 to 1873* (Philadelphia: J. A. Wagenseller, 1875).

the cake of ideology. These rites were experienced as an integral aspect of practice that included conviviality and cooperation — indeed, as the essence or very meaning of such practice.

Historians writing from a perspective outside the Grange, such as the excellent Solon Justus Buck,[1] have little to say about its ritual. Insider Grange historians, such as Father Kelley[2] have little to say about the ritual's meaning, which for them is a given — and moreover to some extent a *secret*, and thus not discussable. So, in order to lift even a tiny corner of the veil, I've tracked down a very rare and obscure privately published (but not secret) book by C. Jerome Davis.[3] Davis's sources seem to imply that the real meaning and purpose of Grange ritual was the creation for modern agriculture of a craft Mystery in the classical sense of that term: an "open cult," so to speak, or symbolic discourse orchestrated toward transformation of life through transformation of consciousness.

It's not my intention to attempt a full description and history of the Grange degrees and their symbolism. In any case, much of this material remains secret, and I have no access to it. In order to set the scene for the Eleusinian connection, however, I'll begin with Solon Buck's brief summation of the "mystic" aspects of the Grange — in which, by the way, he takes very little interest.[4]

When the Grange was founded on December 4, 1867, Bro. McDowell was not present. He arrived in Washington on the eighth of January, 1868, and immediately suggested changes that resulted in a complete reorganization of the upper framework of the order.

> The arrangement then adopted, which has remained substantially in force ever since, embraced seven degrees, four to be conferred by the subordinate grange, one by the state grange, and the two highest by the National Grange. The four subordinate degrees for men were entitled Laborer, Cultivator, Harvester, and Husbandman; and the corresponding degrees for women were Maid, Shepherdess, Gleaner, and Matron. The state grange was to confer the fifth degree, Pomona (Hope), on masters and past-masters of subordinate granges, and their wives if Matrons. The National Grange would confer the sixth degree, Flora (Charity), on masters and past-masters of state granges and their wives who had taken the fifth degree. Members of the sixth degree would constitute the National Council and after serving one year therein might take the seventh degree and become members of the Senate, which body had control of the secret work of the order. This degree, Demeter or Ceres (Faith), embraced a number of new features introduced by McDowell and was put forward as "a continuation of an ancient Association once so flourishing in the East." McDowell accepted the position of supreme head of this degree with the title of High Priest. Although there was considerable agitation for the abolition of the higher degrees among the rank and file of the Grangers when the organization was at the height of its prosperity in the seventies, all that was accomplished was a series of changes which rendered

[3] C. Jerome Davis, *High Priest of Demeter: Notes & Quotes on the Origin of the Ritual and Early Years of the Order of the Patrons of Husbandry* (No place of publication, 1974). Many thanks to New York State Grange Historian Stephen C. Coye for a photocopy of this gem.

[4] Most historians seem rather embarrassed by "secret societies" and unwilling to discuss them seriously lest they themselves be seen as conspiracy-cranks rather than real scholars. I've scanned many histories of, say, the intellectual origins of the American Revolution or Constitution that made no mention of Freemasonry! One needn't be a mystic to discuss the history of mysteries, but this subtle point seems to elude academics.

> these degrees accessible to all Patrons in regular order; while the control of the order was kept in the hands of representative delegate bodies.[5]

The "ancient Eastern flourishing Association" was, of course, the Eleusinian Mysteries. McDowell electrified the D.C. conclave with the revelation that he himself had been initiated in Paris in 1861 into the Mysteries by the last High Priest of Demeter, the Duc D'Ascoli of Naples. Contrary to received opinion, the Mysteries had not been stamped out by the Church in the 4th century A.D. but had survived secretly in Magna Graecia (southern Italy, originally colonized by Greeks) throughout the centuries. McDowell was to be the next High Priest of Demeter.

It's impossible to sort out a precise chronology from *Notes & Quotes*, but it's clear that McDowell had first visited Europe in 1858 looking for esoteric experiences relevant to his passion and profession of pomology. At some point he meets the mysterious Duke (and Duchess) and is persuaded to undergo initiation. He receives certain symbolic regalia, described in the following letter:[6]

> To the Officers of National Grange
>
> Dear Brothers:
>
> I reached here yesterday noon & became the guest of Brother McDowell our Worthy Priest of Demeter. I need not assure you I found a cordial welcome — that you already anticipated. As instructed by you I made him familiar with the entire work we have accomplished since he confered upon us the seventh degree — and our labors have met his most hearty approbation while he expresses himself even more sanguine than ourselves of the success of the order. It is his intention, now that the work is completed, to take immediate steps to organize Subordinate Granges in several towns in this vicinity, having the proper material already selected for that purpose.
>
> I have already had the pleasure and satisfaction of examining the papers and paraphanilia which he received from the Duke of Ascoli at the time he had the Degree of Demeter confered upon him & am perfectly satisfied with the authenticity of the same. The portraits of the Duke & Duchess are both before me also the Priests cap with which the Duke decorated Brother McDowell at the time he was made a Priest. This cap is well worthy a description & is the work of a Nun. It is composed of various colored silk & pure gold thread, the later, predominating. The designs upon it are leaves of various hireogliphics & to every design even the minutest there is an appropriate explanation. It is lined inside with a pea green silk very finely quilted & its weight is about two pounds. You can form some idea of the workmanship when I assure you it required two years steady labor of a nun to make it. There is no tinsel or bead work about it — it is all genuine needlework. While the purity of the gold shows for itself being now over three hundred years old & as bright and brilliant as when made.
>
> I have had this cap on my head & while describing it have it on the table before me. Could it but speak & tell of the honored heads that it has decorated & which

[5] Davis, *op. cit.*

[6] This letter, dated April 8, 1868, from Wayne, NY, McDowell's home town, was written by Father Kelley. The last

> now have crumbled to dust, could it exemplify to us the mysteries where it has been present what interesting mementos we should possess.

Kelley then describes McDowell's "Surplice" (black silk with gold trim) and hierophantic vest of white satin embroidered "with designs appropriate to agriculture" (dove, pruning hook, sickle).

> When we were first told about the Duke's regalia I must confess that I had some misgivings, but seeing is believing in this case. Besides the Duke has his biography in print, & on page 195 New American Encyclopedia you will find a notice of the town of Ascoli an ancient city in Italy, from whence the Duke was made Grand Chamberlain to the King of Naples. However credulous others may be in regarding this degree of Demeter, just rest easy and do not trouble yourselves about showing proof — the whole history is at hand & it is ours & we *have the bonafide thing*. Your Scottish & Memphis rites & Solomon's Temple are completely eclipsed. We can just bust the wind out of anything in the way of antiquity. It will be the height of my ambition to receive at some future day the position & the regalia & occupy the chair of the Priest of Demeter, the very highest position in our order but as it is a life office & must descend in regular rotation I shall probably be binding grain in the harvest field above long before it will come my turn.
>
> However it is in good hands as it now is and there is no one connected with the Order to whom we can all look with greater pride & respect than to Bro. McDowell. It was our salvation that he came to Washington at the time he did & he is worthy of all honor for the interest he has taken in the Order. When he shall appear in the seventh degree during the session when it will be confered — we can all bow to him in deep reverence & do so with heartfelt pleasure.

All masonic-style organizations require a *legend* or founding myth, such as the Masons' myth of the Temple of Jerusalem, the Rosicrucian story of Christian Rosenkreutz's tomb, and the Shriners' links to the Bektashi Sufi Order of Turkey. Ancient Greece, Rome and Egypt, India (and the American "Indians"), Chaldea, Islamdom, the Druids and many other exotic sources were invoked. Scholars always assume these myths are bogus, but they may sometimes judge too hastily. For example, I believe the Bektashi-Shriner connection may be real (for reasons too twisted to get into here). As for the Grange legend, I reserve judgment but also see no reason to debunk it. However, even without a genuine "apostolic succession" from remote Antiquity, the legend remains very suggestive. Naples since the Renaissance seethed with alchemy, hermeticism, and secret societies; pagan and obsessed with magic, Evil Eyes, phallic cults (think of the murals at Pompei), ancient Naples never died. Eighteenth century Egyptian Freemasonry had origins in southern Italy (Cagliostro), once a hotbed of Isis worship. The Eleusinian Mysteries had already been introduced into Masonry in the 18th century when Antoine Court de Geacutebelin, French occultist and author of *Le Mond primitif*, performed his own version of the rites at Voltaire's initiation as a Mason.[7]

In another unsigned paper probably by Father Kelley, we find further clues:

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page or pages and signature are missing. Spelling errors and punctuation in original.

[7] See James Stevens Curl, *The Art & Architecture of Freemasonry* (Woodstock, NY: Overlook Press, 2002).

> The Temple of Solomon was dedicated in the year 1004 before Christ — 800 years before that time the Mysteries of Ceres were celebrated, and in 1356 B.C. they were introduced into Greece by Emolpos — where they became the most celebrated of all the religious ceremonies. History tells us that for 1800 years these Mysteries of Ceres were maintained and the Ceremonies were of the most costly and magnificent in the known world. Both sexes were admitted and of all ages & so popular did they become that it was considered a crime to neglect them. So great was the influence of the prominent officials, that the Emperor Valentinian attempted to suppress them, but he met with strong opposition, they were finally combatted by Theodosius in the year 370 A.D. and the public displays discontinued. After that they were maintained privately & by prominent supporters introduced into Italy. There the Mysteries of Vesta were the most popular and after became mingled with the forms in the Church of Rome. Somewhat modified the Mysteries of Ceres here met with favor & handed down from generation to generation after a while became almost a secret political organization, which it is claimed had much to do in curtailing the temporal power of the Pope of Rome. Its principles were strongly Republican and its ceremonies of the very highest order.

So, the mysterious Duke appears to have been an anti-papalist and man of "strong Republican principles," perhaps a radical aristocrat, like Prince Kropotkin or Lord Fitzgerald of Ireland. If so, might he have had connections with the Italian Masonic-inspired secret society of the Carbonari? The "Charcoal-Burners" were real revolutionaries, admired even by the young Marx. In any case, most Italian Masons are anti-Pope, and most Popes are anti-Mason. (The last Pope to die at the hands of a rogue Masonic order — "Propaganda Lodge II" — was John Paul I, at least according to a rather persuasive conspiracy theory.[8]) The Church automatically excommunicates any Catholic who joins the Masons. The Carbonari went farther "left" and embraced anti-monarchism as well.

These suppositions about the Duke may or may not be borne out by subsequent research. In any case, when the Grange adopted the Eleusinian Mysteries as their Seventh Degree legend, they were able to consult recent scholarship and archaeology in order to flesh out their understanding of the mythic material. What exactly were the Eleusinian Mysteries?

The short answer is that no one really knows, since the initiatic vow of secrecy was (almost) never broken in Antiquity. We depend on the fulminations of early Church Fathers. But the founding myth on which the secret and very theatrical rites at Eleusis were based has never been kept secret: a strange and poetic version of "Persephone's Quest," her rape by Pluto, Demeter's grief, the final resurrection, the magical link with the fertility of grain, the intimations of immorality, and so on. Consult any good source on classical mythology for details.

But the nocturnal underground ritual theater at Eleusis remains shrouded in obscurity. What "miracle" did the Priests of Demeter produce so infallibly year after year for their audiences of initiates? Philosophers found it as convincing as the simplest pilgrims. Alcibiades dared to mock the Mysteries and was overthrown and exiled. The show went on for several millenia. According to the Grange, it never ceased. Perhaps the Seventh Degree Grange ritual would shed light on the elusive mystery of Eleusis. But the Seventh Degree is secret, and I respect secrets.

One of the most radical and controversial interpretations of Eleusis was proposed by the Classicist, Carl Ruck. Following the speculations of poet Robert Graves, and in collaboration with

[8] David Yallop, *In God's Name: An Investigation into the Murder of Pope John Paul I* (London: J. Cape, 1984).

ethnomycologist Gordon Wasson, he proposed that the key to the Mysteries was a psychedelic mushroom. Before descending into the chamber of the ritual, each initiate was given a cup of the *kykion*, a drink composed of water, barley and mint. If I understand him correctly, Ruck suggests that the barley was deliberately infected with ergot fungus, the organic source of LSD. The famous discoverer of LSD, Albert Hoffman, collaborated with Wasson and Ruck and suggested a simple way to remove toxins from ergot with water, a method well within the possible bounds of ancient technology.[9] If the audience at Eleusis was undergoing a directed "entheogenic experience," this would explain the awe, deep emotion, and the sense of having witnessed a miracle that informs the ancient texts despite their pious "silence" about details. (This notion was first proposed, I think, by the magician Aleister Crowley in 1913 when he tried to revive the Eleusinian Mysteries in London and dosed his audience with mescaline! Ruck, Wasson, and Hoffman, however, offer a genuine hypothesis in keeping with archaeology and ethnobotany, whereas Crowley relied on sheer imagination.)

Pardon this digression, which has nothing to do with the Grangers — temperance advocates to a man and woman. (Wine, yes. Distilled spirits, no.) The Seven Founders (and Miss Carrie Hall) found in the myth only a spiritual intoxication. For them, the most important aspects of the Eleusinian complex revolved around a) its openness to all, originally all free Greeks, and by extension all humanity; b) its literal "re-enchantment of the landscape" of agriculture, its divinizing of the farmer's labor; and c) its feminism, manifested both as "goddess worship" and as full and equal gender participation in rites and offices.

In Masonry, women are usually excluded from initiation and membership. The Utopian Socialist, Charles Fourier, among other radical 19th century hermeticists, proposed an "Androgynous Masonry" that would erase this outdated male chauvinism and provide a new source of magical potency for masonic rites. The official lodges never accepted androgyny, but it proved to be an important key to success for the Grange.

Kelley and McDowell, if not intoxicated, certainly seem to have been elated and "empowered" (in New Age jargon) by their contact with the Mysteries. Kelley writes:

> History shows that in the Temple of Ceres at Eleusis the most magnificent scenic displays & transformation scenes were produced all having the object & aim of impressing the most beautiful lessons upon the minds of the initiates — visions of the creation of the Universe — to witness the introduction of agriculture of sound laws & gentle manners which followed the steps of the Goddess Ceres to recognize the immortality of the Soul as typified by the concealment of corn planted in the Earth, by its revival in the green blades.
>
> The initiates were taken to the Vestibule of the Temple & there arrayed in the Sacred fawn skin. From this it was intended to make our regalia, and the first regular regalia ever made from the National Grange was this one I now wear. But when we took into consideration the terrible slaughter of Fawns that would be necessary to furnish the entire order we decided upon the kind after adopted at the suggestion of Brothers McDowell & Thompson. The nankeen was the nearest to resemble the dressed fawn skin.

[9] R. Gordon Wasson, Stella Kramrisch, Carl Ruck, and Jonathan Ott, *Persephone's Quest: Entheogens and the Origins of Religion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).

When we consider that the mysteries was the oldest organization founded upon the cultivation of the soil & in which woman was admitted upon an equality with man & no other secret agricultural society having existed since until the Grange was introduced, we can claim to be fortunate in making the connecting link by Bro. McDowell —[10]

[10]Davis, *op. cit.*

IV.

> Some curious weeds I might mention
> That lend to the landscape no charm;
> To one let me call your attention,
> Keep politics off your farm.
> Tho' weeds will with politics mingle,
> Potatoes with politics fail;
> Devote your whole mind to your business,
> And make ev'ry effort avail.
> (Chorus)
> Keep politics off your farm (your farm),
> Your crops they will certainly harm (will harm);
> If you would successfully labor,
> Keep politics off your farm.
>
> — C.E. Pollock, "Keep Politics Off Your Farm, *Grange Melodies*

How radical was the Grange?

As an organization, the Patrons of Husbandry formally eschewed politics and religion — but the political implications of its tenets were obvious, and most Grangers followed them to logical conclusions. Populism in general cannot be called "revolutionary," since it proposed neither overthrow of the state nor the abolition of capital. Perhaps Populism should be compared with the Social Democratic movement of Europe rather than with communism or anarchism.

Nevertheless, Populism's enemies certainly saw it as socialistic, and in newspaper cartoons of the period, the Grangers are depicted running wild in tandem with anarchists and other undesirables. I don't know if any anarchists supported or joined the Grange, but I've also never seen any anarchist denunciations of the Grange. Some anarchists and libertarian socialists have sometimes practiced some sort of "united front" politics with other radical forces. The Populist *moment* seems to have been so uplifting, inspired and urgent, so optimistic (even naiumlve) in its anticipation of universal reform that it no doubt attracted and absorbed energies from both left and right. Some especially ungenerous historians go so far as to interpret Populism as a "prelude to fascism"; in my view, the racist and authoritarian aspects of later Populism constitute a contamination rather than an essence.

In effect, the most "anarchistic" aspect of the Grange manifests precisely in its avoidance of *legislative* politics and *organized* religion. In this it seems to harmonize somewhat with the Transcendentalist/Individualist wing of American anarchism — Thoreau, Emerson, Josiah Warren, and S. Pearl Andrews. And the very idea of an agricultural cult is quite reminiscent of Fourier and his disciples at Brook Farm. (The word "Association" appears rather often in Grange literature;

it was a Fourierist key-term, introduced to American radicals by A. Brisbane and the "utopian socialists," a generation before the Grange appeared.)

The Grange can certainly be seen as part of the great 19th/20th century movement of cooperation, whereby the real producers of value (e.g., farmers and workers) can eliminate parasitic capitalists and middlemen by organizing voluntarily, as producers and/or consumers, and pooling their energies and resources. After a few rocky starts and even disasters, the Grange settled on the English "Rochedale System" and experienced real success with many cooperative ventures in grain merchandizing, purchase of farm equipment, etc.[1] Of course, like all cooperative ventures in competition with capitalism, such voluntary associations can always be undersold and ruined by "combinations" or even simply by rival companies with more capital. Given the chance, coops nearly always succeed — at least at first. In the "war to the knife" of the free market, however, coops always seem to lose in the end.

Given its premises, the Grange logically supported state control and regulation of economic activity — i.e., a kind of socialism. On one level, Populism can be seen as the culmination of the 19th century's struggle between the people and the corporations. Although most state legislatures are supposed to have the power to grant, refuse, or revoke corporate charters, in practice, the corporations have literally bought and paid for very dubious legislation, such as the amazing legal miracle — one might even call it "Mystery" — of the "fictitious person," the corporate body with more rights but far fewer liabilities than mere flesh-and-blood humans. This process was well underway by the "gilded" post-Civil War era of trusts, monopolies, the railroad, ravenous bankers and financiers, and the railroads — the powers arrayed above the heads of American farmers and workers: the "Octopus."

In the end, as we know, the corporations won. But the Grange at least gave them a run for their money. The story of the "Granger Laws," the many attempts to regulate the railroads, and the ultimate defeat — if all else failed, the railroads simply declared bankruptcy and vanished — is too complex to detain us here. I only want to emphasize the *style* of the Grange, which might justly be called *agrarian-social militancy.*

Little by little, Grangers were drawn into the ferment of Populist politics:

> So many political meetings were held on Independence Day in 1873 that it was referred to as the "Farmers' Fourth of July." This had always been the greatest day of the farmer's year, for it meant the opportunity for social and intellectual enjoyment in the picnics and celebrations which brought neighbors together in hilarious good-fellowship. In 1873, however, the gatherings took on unwonted seriousness. The accustomed spread-eagle oratory gave place to impassioned denunciation of corporations and to the solemn reading of a *Farmers' Declaration of Independence.* "When, in the course of human events," this document begins in words familiar to every schoolboy orator, "it becomes necessary for a class of the people, suffering from long continued systems of oppression and abuse, to rouse themselves from an apathetic indifference to their own interests, which has become habitual … a decent respect for the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes that impel them to a course so necessary to their own protection." Then comes a statement of "self-evident truths," a catalogue of the sins of the railroads, a denunciation

[1] Founded 1844 in Rochedale by English weavers under the influence of Robert Owen. It really worked, unlike other

> of railroads and Congress for not having redressed these wrongs, and finally the conclusion:
>
> We, therefore, the producers of the state in our several counties assembled … do so solemnly declare that we will use all lawful and peaceable means to free ourselves from the tyranny of monopoly, and that we will never cease our efforts for reform until every department of our Government gives token that the reign of licentious extravagance is over, and something of the purity, honesty, and frugality with which our fathers inaugurated it, has taken its place.
>
> That to this end we hereby declare ourselves absolutely free and independent of all past political connections, and that we will give our suffrage only to such men for office, as we have good reason to believe will use their best endeavors to the promotion of these ends; and for the support of this declaration, with a firm reliance on divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor.[2]

If only the Grange had adhered strictly to its original non-political forms of organization — economic self-management, voluntary association, etc. — it might have been spared the fate of collapsing along with the Populist political movement. Every radical "third force" in American history that falls for the lure of party politics ends the same way. (The Libertarian Party and the Green Party seem to be the latest of these paper tigers.) Genuinely radical possibilities are buried under the rubric (and rubble) of "practical goals" (i.e., tepid reforms), economic organization abandoned for third-party futilitarianism, cooptation, and eventual suppression. The feather-brained Democrat, W.J. Bryan, promised the Populists that their cause would never be "crucified on a cross of gold"; instead it was crucified on a cross of silver. The anti-racist, feminist and socialist promise of Populism collapsed, and the movement devolved toward the eventual demagogy of a Huey Long. Leftwing remnants moved on into other forms of organization and resistance — also eventually crushed by World War I and the "Red Scare" of 1919–20.

For the Grange a collapse had begun as early as 1874 (the year after the "Declaration" and the entry into politics), and by 1880 the number of active Granges had shrunk from about 20,000 to 4,000. Cooperative failures and electoral failures can be blamed even more than organizational problems, such as too-rapid expansion and infighting. When the Grange began to achieve results with the Rochedale System, the collapse was contained and the order survived. But its heady days of rebelliousness receded into a lost past.

The independent American farm — the old Jeffersonian ideal — began to appear doomed. The Great Depression marked a new low point for the family farm. Just like any other industry, agribusiness depends for its triumph on the elimination of competition. The number of independent farmers seems now to have fallen to a point where political and economic power becomes impossible. The "farm lobby" represents the multinational agribusiness corporations, not Mom and Pop. Where I live in the Hudson Valley, I hear a lot of pro-farming rhetoric from politicians. But in the real estate sections of newspapers and magazines, I see apple farms — "ideal for development" — vanishing every day. How is one to conceive of a resistance against such conditions?

Owenite ideas; its principles still form the basis for many contemporary Cooperative systems.

[2] Solon Justus Buck, *The Agrarian Crusade* (Washington, DC: Ross and Perry, 2003 [1913]).

In 1874, its year of greatest power, the Grange held a convention in St. Louis and proclaimed a "Declaration of Purposes." Among other planks, this document endorsed the motto: "In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity." By odd coincidence, this also happens to have been the motto of Stephen Pearl Andrews.

S. Pearl Andrews (1812–1886) embraced every Reform cause of the 19th century: abolitionism, free love, women's rights, phrenology, individualist anarchism, spiritualism, you name it. With Josiah Warren he founded the marvelous and amorous commune "Modern Times" in Brentwood, Long Island, and he edited a newspaper for Victoria Woodhull ("Mrs. Satan"), spirit-medium, stock broker, Free Lover, and the first woman to run for President of the United States. Andrews believed himself a synthesis of Fourier, Swedenborg and Bakunin. He created his own science, "Universology," his own political system, "Pantarchy," his own church, and even his own language.[3] Andrew's version of the motto was: "In things proven, Unity; in whatsoever can be doubted, Free Diversity; in things not touching upon others' rights, Liberty; in all things, Charity." Perhaps an anarchist strain can, after all, be detected in the radical heritage of the Grange.

Some while ago, I accompanied my friend, local beekeeper Chris Harp, who had been invited to address a nearby Grange. The hall was decrepit but beautiful; the Grangers (including a Ceres and a Pomona) were ancient and none-too-prosperous looking but warmly hospitable; babies and toddlers symbolized future hopes; hot dogs, cake and coffee were served. When Chris began describing the plight of the honeybee in today's polluted, overdeveloped countryside, the senior Grangers all nodded knowingly. One toothless old character thumped the arm of his chair and said, "That's capitalism!"

[3]See my biography of Stephen Pearl Andrews in *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, Vol. 250, 2nd series, Gale Group, 2002).

V.

> The gas-lighted hall with its pleasures,
> He dreams of, and longs to be there;
> And heedless of trouble and labor,
> He hitherward seems to repair.
> "How stupid a life in the country,
> The city has many a charm!"
> My boy, from your reverie waken,
> 'Tis better to stay on the farm.
>
> — J.H. Tenney, "Tis Better
> To Stay On The Farm,"
> *Grange Melodies*

None of the issues that once agitated the Grange have ever been resolved — not one. They've simply changed their outward forms. Some of them were mitigated, or at least held in check, during the 20th century. For example, although the U.S. preached free-market capitalism, it still practiced protectionism, because it had to. The inherent contradictions of American agriculture (like many other problems) were suppressed by Keynsian government spending, the New Deal, and post-WWII prosperity.

With the triumph of global capital and neoliberalism at the end of the 20th century, however, the old problems and contradictions were suddenly once again revealed and even exacerbated. To speak of the agricultural crisis is to speak of an ecological/environmental crisis that threatens all life, not merely vegetables or cows. To mention only one new form of an old problem: the Grange campaigned against unfair patent laws that gave patent-holding monopolies the oppressive "right" to set unfair prices on farm machinery and other socially necessary resources. Nowadays the issue reappears as "intellectual property," as agribusiness megacorporations like Monsanto buy up the "rights" to natural plant-DNA, eradicate biodiversity, fix prices and standards, patent genetically modified (GM) crops and "terminator seeds," fertilizers, pesticides, and so on. The old-time Grangers had already diagnosed the essential principle: knowledge is a social good, not a commodity. But their struggle failed, and we've inherited all the original muck plus a century of vile accretions.

The struggles over privatization of land, water and air; the Green movement and the ecological struggle; the battle against genetic prometheanism and "frankenfoods"; the anti-globalization movement and its call for local autonomy and economic justice; the uprisings against neoliberalism (the new mask of the old-time Mammon-capitalism) spreading throughout Latin America; the growing movement to disempower the bloated multinationals — these are all variations on the old causes of the Grange.

The World Trade Organization, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and other "global" treaties and institutions have to some extent superseded the old nation-states as the

primary powers behind the new oppression. The U.S. empire acts as a hegemon for this illusory "free market," dispensing corporate welfare and waging war on behalf of Big Oil and at times, Big Agriculture, leading the onslaught against the global environment, and dumbing down the world with its viral consumerist disinfotainment industry. In the great neoliberal, neocon mall that constitutes late — or too-late — capitalism, the U.S. has appointed itself both CEO and security cop. It may be a New World Order, but it's the same old Octopus of trusts, monopolies, and state power.

All the planks in the old Grange platform could simply be repainted and spruced up with trendy vocabulary to serve as groundwork for a new agrarian radical movement. For instance, to speak locally, the utter devastation facing our independent apple farmers owes much of its genesis to "free" global economics. Not only is the U.S. apple lobby controlled by northwest Pacific area agribusiness, but even the megafarms there are being ruined by cheap Chinese apple juice concentrate dumped on the world market in vast quantities. Any 19th century Granger could have analyzed this situation in two minutes.

On a very small scale some positive actions are being taken to create a real alternative to the utter demise of agriculture. In the organic farm movement — already in danger from agribusiness, which has scented a "market niche" — CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) farms are sprouting up all over our region. CSAs connect people, who sign up as members, with the source of their food, since members pay the farmer up front for a season of produce. Even a few genuine food co-ops do a lively trade in local and organic produce. "Seed Savers" and other movements have appeared to protect biodiversity and popularize tasty old strains and plant varieties. Herbalism offers a source of income for gardeners and wildcrafters. Permaculture and other sustainability systems are gradually gaining recognition. Guerilla gardens are springing up even in urban wastelands. But the question remains: does all this amount to real resistance?

In Europe, where there are heroes and martyrs like Reneacute Riessel and Joseacute Boveacute serving hard time for attacks on McDonald's and GM crops, yes. Europe even has a "Slow Food" movement. And yes, struggle thrives also in India, where mass movements are organized around some of these issues to provide resistance against the so-called Green Revolution, GM seeds, dams, forest destruction, and other measures that are destroying traditional agriculture, and with it, the peasantry itself.

In America the answer is not so clear. In America the activists are mostly Earth First!-type militants and wilderness defenders. By contrast, the new forms of agriculture sometimes seem like hobbies for well-meaning (and well-off) do-gooders rather than radical praxis for agrarian rebels. Where is the modern Grange that could provide both an ancient tradition of militancy along with a real appreciation of the contemporary Green position in today's terms and vocabulary? Where is the movement to embrace all independent farmers and gardeners as part of a larger movement for a "sacred Earth" and economic justice? Or is this just an idle dream?

VI.

Scholars of prehistory used to speak of the "neolithic agricultural revolution." Nowadays the term "revolution" is not much used in reference to the introduction of agriculture, since in fact, the "appearance" of agriculture stretched over a few thousand years. Moreover, it wasn't really agriculture, but horticulture — gardening.

Historians also used to assume that agriculture represented "progress" in relation to the million-year human economy of hunting and gathering. In the 1960s, however, anthropologist Marshall Sahlins turned this notion upside down when he demonstrated that hunter/gatherers were the "original leisure society," "working" on average three or four hours a day and enjoying an average of 200-odd different food items.[1] Primitive agriculturalists, by contrast, worked twelve to fourteen hours a day and got by on twenty or so foodstuffs. Hunters spent vast amounts of time napping, dancing, making love, or getting high. "Advanced civilization" doesn't appear magically with the new agricultural technology. Gardeners are self-sufficient no more; yet Sumer and Egypt were still 10,000 years away.

In this context, the *reason* for agriculture suddenly becomes very mysterious. Why give up the good life of hunting for the brow-beating labor of farming? The "neolithic revolution" now looks more like a fall from grace — from Golden Age or Eden into the curse of Cain, work and war. Sahlins himself never said this, but many of his readers believed it, since it chimed nicely with 60s radicalism and "zero-work" rebelliousness.

In subsequent years, however, I came to reconsider this critique of agriculture in light of the work and writings of botano-historians like N. Vavilov and Carl O. Sauer and archeologists like Marija Gimbutas. Sahlins and his school still seem relevant, but a more nuanced picture emerges.[2]

Nomadic hunter/gatherers usually move in an annual round within a given territory, returning to the same camps at the same seasons. Men hunted and women gathered, more or less. Seeds of favored plants would fall around the campsite into disturbed soil enriched by garbage and feces. Next year when the band returned, they found their favorite plants waiting for them, as if the plants had followed them and loved them as much as they loved the plants. The first gardens appeared in an intense erotic aura, realized in the universal figure of the Earth Goddess and her many avatars. As gardening thus took on more and more meaning, women came to play a greater role in the tribe.

The first gardenstuffs, or "cultivars," were all luxuries, not necessities. In the old world, in South Central Asia, the first cultivars seem to have been barley (for beer), grapes (for wine), and hemp (for intoxication). In the New World, the earliest cultivar was tobacco. Gardening may involve hard work, but its origin was in love, its end in sheer pleasure. No wonder it proved popular and began to spread, most likely through "Women's Mysteries" and shamanic secret societies.

[1] Marshall Sahlins, *Stone Age Economics* (Chicago: Aldin Atherton, 1972).

[2] On N.I. Vavilov, see references in the bibliography in Hakim Bey and Abel Zug (eds.), *Orgies of the Hemp Eaters: Cuisine, Slang, Literature & Ritual of the Cannabis Culture* (Brooklyn: Autonomedia, 2004); and Frank Browning,

Neolithic gardening/hunting humans organized themselves into small villages of "free peasants." They preserved and maintained the old rights and customs of the hunters: rough egalitarianism (no "classes"), no leaders (only elders and specialists), a "gift economy" and a shamanistic spirituality, with a new emphasis on earth goddess mysteries and the calendrical cycle. Eventually they managed to produce a surplus, largely of stored grain, which became their communal wealth. The village temple served as a center for redistribution. Everyone received a fair share, more or less. In Mesopotamia, the villagers even began to experiment with small-scale irrigation.

Then around the Fourth Millenium, something suddenly went drastically wrong with this harmonious polity. Was it the discovery of metallurgy and new weapons technology? A revolt of the warriors or of bad shamans against ancient egalitarian folkways? Or even a revolt of men against women? In any case, it happened with the swiftness of revolution (or coup d'eacutetat): the sudden emergence of the state.

The essential act of the state was to seize control of the surplus on behalf of an elite who, from then on, would concern themselves not with work but war: the new form of war, source of booty and slaves. The rest of the tribe was reduced to the status of peons. The earliest dynasties of Sumer and Egypt indulged in paroxysms of cruelty, hecatombs of human sacrifice, self-glorifying architecture, and a new temple ideology of war gods and divine kings. Land was no longer a "commons" but was divided into property, most of it belonging to the temple and palace. The disappearance of the commons proved to be a long drawn out process. Here and there some scraps of socially owned land may still survive even today, as yet overlooked by the forces of privatization. But the problem *began* in Sumer in about 4000 BCE. By the time of Gilgamesh (an actual historical figure), few humans farmed for themselves and their community; most farmed for the Man, the ruler and owner. Naturally, resentment and rebellion ensued, and memory traces of the turmoil linger in the old myths. Civilization — and its discontents — arose from the violent appropriation of the agricultural surplus.

From this "fall" many other miseries arose — at least for the majority of humans. The usurping minority recreated for itself all the old leisure and freedom of the hunters — in fact, they spent their leisure hunting and monopolized hunting, the "sport of kings," and punished all poachers. Stealing the king's game must be one of the very oldest forms of radical resistance. Many others soon followed.

Charles Fourier believed that civilization was based on agriculture, and that civilization was a tragic mistake. He was, of course, defining agriculture as alienated labor. Humans should have progressed directly from horticulture to utopia (or "harmony" as Fourier called it); and the husbandry of the utopian future would consist of complex horticulture practiced by voluntary associations of community-dwelling "gastrosophists" (gourmet philosophers) devoted to pleasure and luxury for *all*, not for a tyrannical few. Fourier's odd and poetic notions found many enthusiastic followers in America, and he was also considered a seminal figure in the Cooperative movement.

Agrarian radicalism might be seen as a deeply conservative concept based on shared culture memories (perhaps unconscious) of the Neolithic polity of free peasant horticulturalists. The image of the neolithic certainly survives in folktales and myths, from Hesiod's Hyperborea to the "Big Rock Candy Mountain." The free peasant village form seems to be so natural that it reappears spontaneously wherever and whenever it can. William Morris and other socialists admired the

Apples (New York: North Point, 1998) for Vavilov's work on the origin of apples and his (fatal) disagreement with Lysenko and Stalin.

European Middle Ages, not for their feudalism but for their craft guilds and peasant communes. The ancient Russian *Mir*, or free peasant commune, inspired many radical thinkers — Kropotkin, Herzen, the Narodniks, the Mystical Anarchists, Gustav Landauer, and even Marx (otherwise a fierce Russophobe).

In the 19th century during the Imperialist era, radical agrarian ideas spread to colonies where the economy still depended on peasant labor. These ideas invariably resonated with ancient folkways and local myths of resistance and freedom. In Mexico, for example, agrarian radicalism melded with indigenous and mestizo culture in interesting ways. The anarchist Magon Brothers (who ironically operated as the "Mexican Liberal Party") popularized the slogan *Tierra y Libertad* — almost a three-word definition of agrarian radicalism. Zapata took the message to the people, and in 1994, the whole tradition, now with a strong Mayan input, re-emerged in Chiapas as the EZLN. The Zapatistas were the honorable first to declare war on global capital and neoliberalism — either desperate fools or prophetic heroes.

Looking at the "long duration" of the history of agriculture, the Grange seems to fit with many of the themes outlined above, and even to offer a "proof-text" for some of them. The impulse to rediscover a "sacred" dimension in farming, with the inevitable reappearance of the Goddess, strikes a chord of recognition that vibrates back to the neolithic. Nineteenth century American farmers were not peasants in any strict sense of the term and cherished no specific image of a "commons," no specific tradition of non-authoritarian self-management such as the *Mir*. But the rank injustice they experienced plus the exuberance of their imagination conspired to awaken in them archaic forms of mythic desire — for autonomy, conviviality, mystery and pleasure — for the return of the Goddess.

VII.

1. You may talk of all the nobles of the earth,
Of the kings who hold the nations in their thrall,
Yet in this we all agree, if we only look and see,
That the farmer is the man that feeds us all.
2. There's the President …
3. There are Governors and legislators …
4. There are speculators …
5. Then the preacher … lawyer … doctor …
Tailor … smith …
6. Now the Patrons true are coming to the fight.
7. From the rising to the setting of the sun,
Great monopolies are surely doomed to fall;
Then onward in the fight, and we'll battle for the right,
While the farmer is the man that feeds us all.

— Knowles Shaw, "The Farmer Feeds Us All,"
Grange Melodies

The title of this essay has a double meaning. First, I wanted to try to describe the appeal of the Grange, its colorful history of radicalism and mysticism. I find that very few educated Americans have even heard of the Grange, much less its significance. I hope I've managed at least a brief sketch of the inspiring importance of this history for contemporary Green theory and praxis.

However, since the Grange still exists, I also intended an appeal *to* the Grange. With all due humility and deference as an outsider, I'd like to point out that some movement very much like the Grange will undoubtedly emerge to offer some coherence to the struggles of the new agriculture, in all its myriad forms, against the *antibiosis* and oppression of the megacorporations. True, the appropriation of the surplus has reached the point where five or six behemoths own and control 90 percent of the world's food. But the 6,000-year resistance is still not ended and cannot end until the last grain of wheat is dead.

If a Grange-like movement is thus demanded by history (assuming we haven't already reached the end of history, as the corporate globalists proclaim), then perhaps it could be… the Grange.

Two different worlds would have to unite to create a new and militant Grange — but those two worlds have a great deal in common. The same forces are crushing peasants in India and the last few family farms in America. The Zapatistas and the urban gardeners of New York City's Lower East Side are ultimately on the same side as the independent farmers — the side of life, of *biophilia*, of love of life.

Well, it's a nice thought. If Populism is going to be reborn in America, then the question of politics arises, though this is not a political essay. Instead it merely wants to establish the general principle that the radical Green agenda has deep roots; it has ancestors, precursors, patron saints.

It has tradition — "that which is handed down." Old principles can be creatively adapted and applied to new situations.

Terms like "Gaia Hypothesis" and "biophilia" are not sentimental or poetic devices, nor political slogans. They might perhaps be called scientific mysteries. (In fact, both terms were coined by scientists.) That the earth is alive and in love with life may be true but unprovable, like certain axioms in mathematics. Precisely here mysteries can become Mysteries. Hermeticism is perhaps a science of the unprovable, and it is based on the axiom that the earth is not only alive but in some sense sacred. Long before modern neo-pagans began worshipping Nature, the cult of the goddess was already reborn, as it always will be — but this time in the hearts of hardworking Temperance/Protestant American farm families. A strange moment in radical history, to be sure — this birth of Green Spirituality.

Peter Lamborn Wilson
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