

What is a "Starhawk"?

by MISTER Joseph Murphy

After reading the article in the "X-press" regarding "A Place for Womyn" submitted by Dawn Ambler, I was intrigued as to who this Starhawk is, whom Ambler quoted, and what exactly this "womyn" is all about. I proceeded to the library to garner information on her. I found a book by her ("Dreaming the Dark") on reserve for Vaughn Jeliffe's Family Studies 452 course. I found out that she is a feminist witch, literally. She celebrates witchcraft interlaced with feminist doctrine in a way that unites the individual with the earth. (???)

Starhawk says, "We are gathered under a high Victorian ceiling in a flat in the Mission district. The sashes are drawn as the time comes to work magic. We take off our clothes.

"That is relevant, because our magic, our deliberate linking and focusing of minds, our raising and molding [sic] of subtle energies, our touching of each other, our intimacy, is not separate from our sexuality. Nor can our sexuality be separated from our magic. We are not lovers with each other, but we are five naked women in the small room, and as we breathe together, inhaling and exhaling in unison, becoming one--one breath, one organism--the air is heavy with odors [sic] that are earthy, spicy, fetid. We are exotic flowers; we are slowly-eroding-over-a-lifetime flesh.

"We are witches. We pursue together the Mysteries. And sexuality, not in its narrow but its broadest sense, is the essence of those Mysteries.

"I am writing now beside a lake that is 7000 feet up in the Sierras. The still water is a perfect mirror, reflecting the rounded outcroppings of pink and gray [sic] granite, which have been molded [sic] into forms that undulate and are sexual. Cracks suggest vaginas and their stony, clitoral protrusions. The line where rock meets water becomes the body's line of symmetry. The Goddess stretches out Her arms: a fallen log and its mirror image, to protect Her hidden clefts. Her pendulous breasts, looked at from the opposite side, become uprising penises. Up here, it seems clear that earth is truly Her flesh and was formed by a sexual process: Her shakes and shudders and moans of pleasure, the orgasmic release of molten rock

spewing forth in fiery eruptions, the slow caress of glaciers, like white hands gently smoothing all that had been left jagged." This excerpt and many others from Starhawk's book leaves me with the impression that Starhawk suffers from chemical imbalances within the cerebral cortex. I have great difficulty in taking seriously one who would use as reference a womyn who appears mentally unbalanced, feminist or not, to say the least.

This aroused my curiosity all the more and lead me to the discovery of Margot Adler's "Drawing Down the Moon".

She has noted how a number of feminists are becoming interested in witchcraft: "...a number of feminists have stated that women are Witches by right of the fact that they are women, that nothing else is needed, and feminist Witch Z Budapest has at times declared the Craft to be 'Wimmins Religion,' a religion not open to men. In addition, feminist Witches have stated that Witchcraft is not incompatible with politics, and further that the Craft is a religion historically conceived in rebellion and can therefore be true to its nature only when it continues its ancient fight against oppression."

This oppression grew from the male overthrow of an ancient patriarchal society: "They bowed to no man, being the living remnants of the oldest culture of all-one in which men and women were equal sharers in a truly cooperative society, before the death-dealing sexual, economic, and spiritual repression of the Imperialist Phallic Society took over and began to destroy nature and human society." (This is ludicrous.)

As Adler notes, "Feminism implies equality, self-identification, and individual strength for women. Paganism has been, for all practical purposes, antiestablishment spirituality. Feminists and Pagans are both coming from the same source without realizing it, and heading toward the same goal without realizing it, and the two are now beginning to interlace."

Of course, the goal is equality between the sexes: "I don't believe that there are any psychological differences between men and women. In fact, I think the big mystery of our society is that men and women are exactly alike and that this truth is being hidden under