

THE ROLE OF NATURE, DEITIES AND ANCESTORS IN CONSTRUCTING RELIGIOUS IDENTITY IN CONTEMPORARY DRUIDRY

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Introduction

Globalization and pluralization combined with the resultant religious and cultural diversity have raised the issue of self-identity in new ways. The once dominant Christian identity of the West is increasingly replaced by new forms of Western spirituality rooted in pre-Christian religions. This open spiritual marketplace provides a religious economy that competes in such a way as to appeal to people's intellect, experience and behavior. As such, an individual's level of religious satisfaction relates correspondingly to these salient characteristics of religious identity.

Some have suggested that Pagan religions such as Druidry, Asatru and Wicca are successfully confronting the Western religious economy and providing new opportunities for self-identity. This article will look explicitly at the Druid religious identity as it relates to nature, deities and ancestors. Setting the article in the context of religious identity theory, I propose that further study of religious identity needs to incorporate three salient features – intellect, experience and behavior. A framework for religious identity theory – a theory of religious identity, satisfaction and deprivation –

will be put forward as a manner by which one might understand the ascription and achievement of an identity.

After defining and situating Druidry in the context of Pagan religions, this essay will examine the relationship between nature, deities and ancestors and intellect, experience and behavior. An essential characteristic of the article is the attempt to allow practitioners of Druidry to express their beliefs in relationship to their identity. As such, the article represents a framework by which one might study expressions of Pagan religious identity specifically as well as religious identity in general. Furthermore, as Christian influence continues to decline in the West, but religious influence in general is still present, the religious identity, satisfaction and deprivation framework presents a model by which the researcher might understand the changes occurring within religious people and culture.

Defining Druidry

Emile Durkheim defined religion in terms of a system of beliefs and practices related to the sacred that united a community.¹ While Druidry is certainly a religion, this definition fits more appropriately with formal religions. Instead, contemporary Druidry has an affinity with folk religions. Folk religions often incorporate aspects of formal religions. However, by nature they are concerned with existential questions and how to secure responses to those questions. They represent sets of beliefs that are often animistic and unconcerned about continuity between the spiritual and physical worlds. However, it can certainly have an effect on both the spiritual and physical worlds. Lois related, “Like many, I do not see a firm line where religious belief

ends and other areas of life begin: religion, in some form or another, permeates politics, education, economics, romance, and all of daily life.”²

Characteristic of the study of folk religions, identifying a coherent unified system of beliefs is a challenge for those who study contemporary Druidry. In fact, defining Druidry itself is a challenge. Ronald Hutton’s recent book describes this difficulty. He notes that it is nearly impossible to describe ancient Druids with any degree of accuracy. At the same time, many have attempted to give their own understanding and recreated what they perceived to be a resemblance of the ancient Druids.³ In spite of this difficulty, others are attempting to reconstruct Druidry as a modern spirituality competing in the marketplace of religious ideas in the West.

Nevertheless, a consensual view of contemporary Druidry suggests that it is a new religious movement attempting to revive and reconstruct ancient folk practices associated with the Indo-European peoples. As such, contemporary Druidry is nature venerating and polytheistic with an explicit attempt to tie into what is known about ancient Druidic theology and practice.⁴ Contemporary Druidry helps us understand that religion is more than systems as there is an organic nature as well. In this sense, Druidry might be thought of as a syncretistic or split-level religion having had a particular, historically identifiable understanding, albeit unascertainable, that has been revived in a contemporary religious identity.

Research Data

The research for this article is a result of an on-going project attempting to understand the religious nature of contemporary Druids in relationship to the Western

religious landscape. Two hundred and thirty interviews with 70 practitioners have been conducted by diverse means since September 2002. Three interviewing techniques constituted the use of the Internet: via electronic mail exchanges, a discussion forum and an on-line open-ended survey. Likewise, the traditional approach of face-to-face interviews was also employed, on occasion as a result of the initial electronic contact. As a result of the use of the electronic interviews, participant observations were made at three rituals and were followed up by face-to-face interviews with twelve practitioners. One telephone interview was conducted and was followed up by email. A fuller description of this research is given elsewhere.⁵

For this article, the data was obtained from one of the open-ended questions: What is the meaning of life in your understanding of contemporary Druidry? What is important to note is that I was not looking for practitioners to talk about how they obtained knowledge or what they practiced nor was I looking explicitly for experiences. As will be described, the data that emerged indicated the significance of nature, deities and ancestors in constructing a sense of religious identity. Also, it became very apparent in the language that was used to describe these that practitioners gained a sense of satisfaction from their knowledge about Druidry, their practices of rituals and the resultant experience in their religious lives.

Religious Identity Theory

The literature on identity testifies to an early understanding of it being ascribed or achieved. Work by Talcott Parsons and others juxtaposed ascription and achievement seeing the distinction between qualities of an individual and performance of

an individual.⁶ Identity has moved from once being ascribed to an individual based on birth or heritage to being achieved based on individual choice due in part to the rejection of institutionalized order. Identity, as Manuel Castells put it, is “people’s source of meaning and experience.”⁷ Castells goes on to argue that meaning is socially constructed. It relates to a network of cultural attributes that are ultimately individualized. The ensuing identity is related to society at large, groups or communities resisting society, or particular movements seeking to build new identities. Among societal actors instrumental in the construction of identity is religion.

The similarities with Peter Berger’s socially constructed reality cannot go unnoticed. Berger insisted that religion was not central in the creation of society, but was simply an element of social reality which served to, among other things, give meaning to life. At the time of *The Sacred Canopy*, Berger believed that religion would decline as the individual made progress through advancements produced by modernization. Ultimately, religion would no longer be plausible and thus no longer necessary for one’s identity. Later, Berger recognized that modernization did not coincide with the decline of religion and that religion continues to provide individuals with a sense of identity.⁸

Paul Hiebert, Tite Tienou and Daniel Shaw argued that one’s identity has multiple features that can be summarized in terms of diachronic and synchronic identities. By diachronic identity, the individual’s sense of self is rooted in understanding from where one has come. By synchronic identity, the individual’s sense of self is based upon the roles that are played in society. Both diachronic and synchronic identities are intrinsic to an individual’s sense of identity.⁹

According to Lewis Rambo and Charles Farhadian, religious identity comprises four features: ritual, relationships, rhetoric and roles. In terms of ritual and religious identity, a new religious convert deepens his or her religious commitment through enacting rituals concomitant with religious belief. Relationships, secondly, and the development of relationships specifically, served to tie the new religious convert to the religious group. Thirdly, rhetoric serves to give the new religious convert a common language with his or her peers. Finally, roles help new religious converts understand particular behaviors and values or attitudes commensurate with their new religious life.¹⁰ While these features address an understanding of identity, whether ascribed or achieved, it does not account for a cognitive level, but rather an experiential and behavioral.

Increasingly, religious identity is conceived as being both ascribed and achieved. Particularly in relationship to ethnic groups, Wendy Cadge and Lynn Davidman demonstrated that two ethnic groups – Thai Buddhists and Jews – considered their religious identity intrinsic to their ethnicity and over time also noted an increased religious conviction that they described as achievement.¹¹ Similarly, Lori Peek looked at ascription of religious identity of second generation Muslims. She noted over time religious identity was achieved due to maturation. Additionally, when crisis occurred, identity became proclaimed.¹² Others, like Christopher Hitchens and Richard Dawkins, have argued that religion cannot be ascribed since one's identity is in essence what one makes of it. Thus, one without the ability to choose one's religion is abused if the religion was chosen for her. Dawkins, therefore, has asserted that there is no such thing as a Muslim child or Christian child. The insistence of such designations is tantamount to child abuse.¹³

A Theory of Religious Identity, Satisfaction and Deprivation

In this context, then, the following theory of religious identity is put forward. Ascribed religious identity only makes sense in the context of an ethnic group or culture with clear religious boundaries. It follows then that where such boundaries are unclear and people do not necessarily self-identify with a particular religious group, religious identity would be achieved. Of course, this is rather complex in the case of religiously diverse countries like the United States and United Kingdom or areas like Western Europe where people will naturally self-identify as Christian,¹⁴ but not necessarily participate in religious activities. So, while there might be an intellectual assent to being Christian, concomitant experience and behavior do not necessarily follow. In some cases, such experience and behavior take on an additional identity that is not representative of one religion or another, for example, a Christobuddhist.¹⁵

The question then is raised, what does it mean to be religious? I propose the following as a theory of religious identity, satisfaction and deprivation. The immediate concern for this paper is identity and satisfaction. I have dealt with deprivation in another place,¹⁶ but will more fully address it in a forthcoming project. I postulate that the religious identity of an individual is made up of three salient features: intellect, experience and behavior. To varying degrees, each feature plays a role in helping the religious person have a sense of who she is. Intellectually, the person knows on a cognitive level that the religious beliefs are true. There may be arguments for such a claim based on sacred writings and/or historical evidence. The intellectual feature may also be strengthened by a person's experience or a person's experience may lead to an intellectual consent. The same would be said for the behavioral feature. Due to the

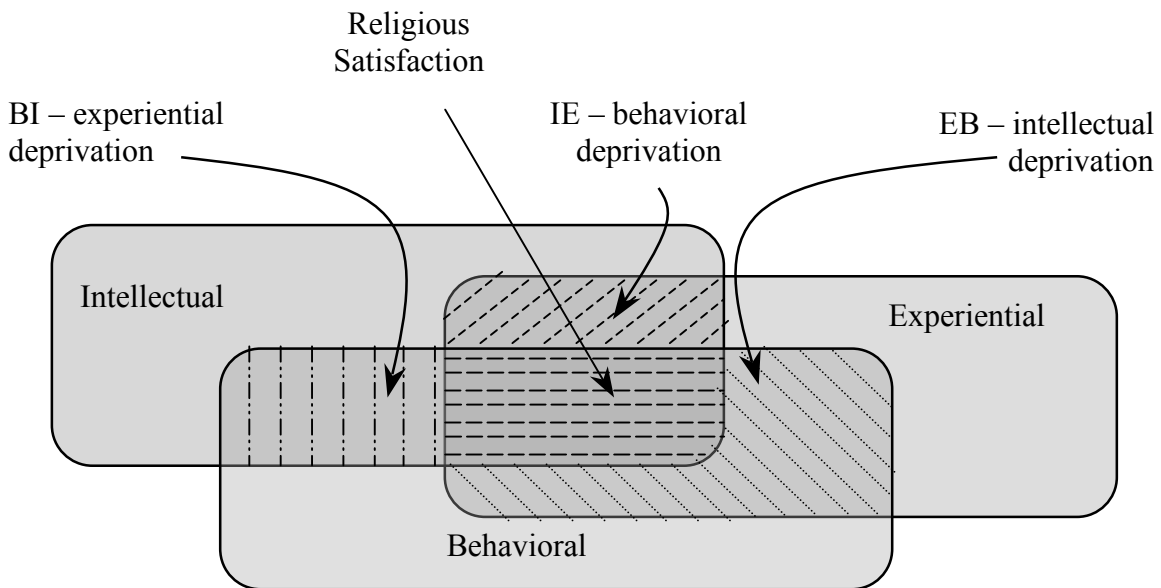


Figure 0: Theory of Religious Identity, Satisfaction and Deprivation

intellectual consent of religious belief, a corresponding set of behaviors result that mark one as an adherent. The theory is illustrated in the figure 1.

Ascribed religious identity occurs at the experiential and behavioral levels of the theory. Such an identity is inherent in the individual only because it is a shared identity with the culture, ethnic group or parents. As an individual matures and the cognitive faculties are developed, the person can understand her religious identity on the intellectual level and decide whether or not to consent thereby achieving her own religious identity. When these salient features of identity coalesce there is religious satisfaction. That is to say, when the practitioner sees the relationship between the intellect, experience and behavior and how each informs the others, there is a greater likelihood for satisfaction and a lesser likelihood that the practitioner would switch religious groups.

Deprivation occurs when one of the three features is no longer satisfying the religious identity of the individual. This sort of unsatisfied desire for religion might lead to bargaining of religious identity and the incorporation of other identities into one's own creating a dual religious identity. Similarly, as the deprivation becomes increasingly acute and satisfaction can no longer be achieved in one's religion, religious switching can occur. It might also be equally true that deprivation will motivate an individual to discover or solidify one's intellect, experience or behavior so as to strengthen personal conviction. In other words, deprivation might be as much a cause of religious switching as it is a solidifier of religious identity.

Nature, Deities and Ancestors in Religious
Identity Construction

The three salient features of religious identity – intellect, experience, behavior – were apparent in the manner in which contemporary Druids talked about themselves and in particular when the topics of nature, deities and ancestors were discussed. This three-fold idea – nature, deities, ancestors – was widespread in contemporary Druidry. One member of Ar nDraiocht Fein (ADF) referred to this notion as the Kindreds, “Most of us believe that by working with members of the Kindreds: spirits of nature, the ancestors and the deities, we develop allies that help us through troubled times.”¹⁷ Whether or not the Kindreds are a universal in Druidry is unclear. Nevertheless, religious identity for adherents of Druidry is derived from an understanding of nature, ancestors and deities. Christy states,

[Those practices (rituals, etc.)] open the portals to the Otherworld where I can experience the wonders of Nature, Faerie, mythology, fantasy, history, the future. All that is available to me through Druid (and Wiccan) training, and I feel very connected to the Gods, the world and nature.¹⁸

Nature

Philip Carr-Gomm writes, “Druidry has an entirely different vision that celebrates and revels in life-as-it-is-now – not life as it might be in the hereafter or as it could be if we were able to break the cycle of death and rebirth.”¹⁹ In this way, the meaning of life is mirrored in the cycles of nature. Joyce stated, “We celebrate the changes, we celebrate the fertility, the birth, the harvest, the death.”²⁰ Life is a journey of experiences beginning with birth and leading to death and some type of re-birth. The cycle of nature helps in the intellectual understanding of this process and is therefore

celebrated ritually at festivals reinforcing the deep sense of responsibility that the Druid has for the environment. The festivals provide a behavioral means where the practitioner can experience oneness with nature and its rhythm in the changing seasons.²¹ For example, consider the following comment from Greg:

I feel that everything on this planet is connected, in a symbiotic relationship. We may have higher intelligence than other species but have misused it. Mankind has at times seen themselves as dominator of the planet, resulting in a disconnection from the natural world, leaving destruction in our wake. I believe that life should be lived passionately, and that a deep sense of connection with nature is life-enhancing, both for ourselves and also for the wider world that we live in.²²

There are eight community festivals celebrated by Druids during the course of the year beginning with Samhain.²³ These same eight festivals are also celebrated by Wiccans. Carr-Gomm gives the impression that there is some historical evidence for such a practice.

Witches, Wiccans and Druids all celebrate these times of the year. Although we can find traces and records of ancient practices and folklore associated with these special times, we cannot be sure that any particular community in ancient times celebrated all eight. In the modern era, it was only in the middle of the last century that Ross Nichols and Gerald Gardner introduced the celebrations of the complete eightfold cycle – a practice that has now become widespread.²⁴

Such evidence legitimizes the historicity of Druidry. Accordingly, Druids claim that these past practices can be discerned intellectually through historical research. For example,

Pagan refers to following the ancient ways, neopaganism is following the old path as we think it was followed. One of the problems is that no one knows for sure what the ancient Druids followed. They didn't write anything down. So, ADF Druidry is a reconstruction religion. We do this by researching history, archaeology and the way humans lived and their belief systems and their migrations.²⁵

What is of interest for this research is the contemporary meaning given to these practices more than their historical authenticity. As Maya Sutton and her co-author Nicholas Mann suggest, indifferent of the practice’s historicity, “We use this cyclical pattern in our Druid ceremonies and find that it becomes more relevant and appropriate as time goes by.”²⁶ Nevertheless, the feasts are viewed as rites of passage in the cycle of life. They help bring understanding to different stages from birth to death. Steve related the following:

Just as Christians take the life, acts and words of Christ as the path by which they order their lives and model their behavior, so, I think, do Pagans--Wiccans, druids and others, take the Wheel of the Year as a guiding inspiration. Everything has a beginning, middle and end, and must, for life to continue.²⁷

According to Ross Nichols, founder of OBOD, the solar feasts remind the

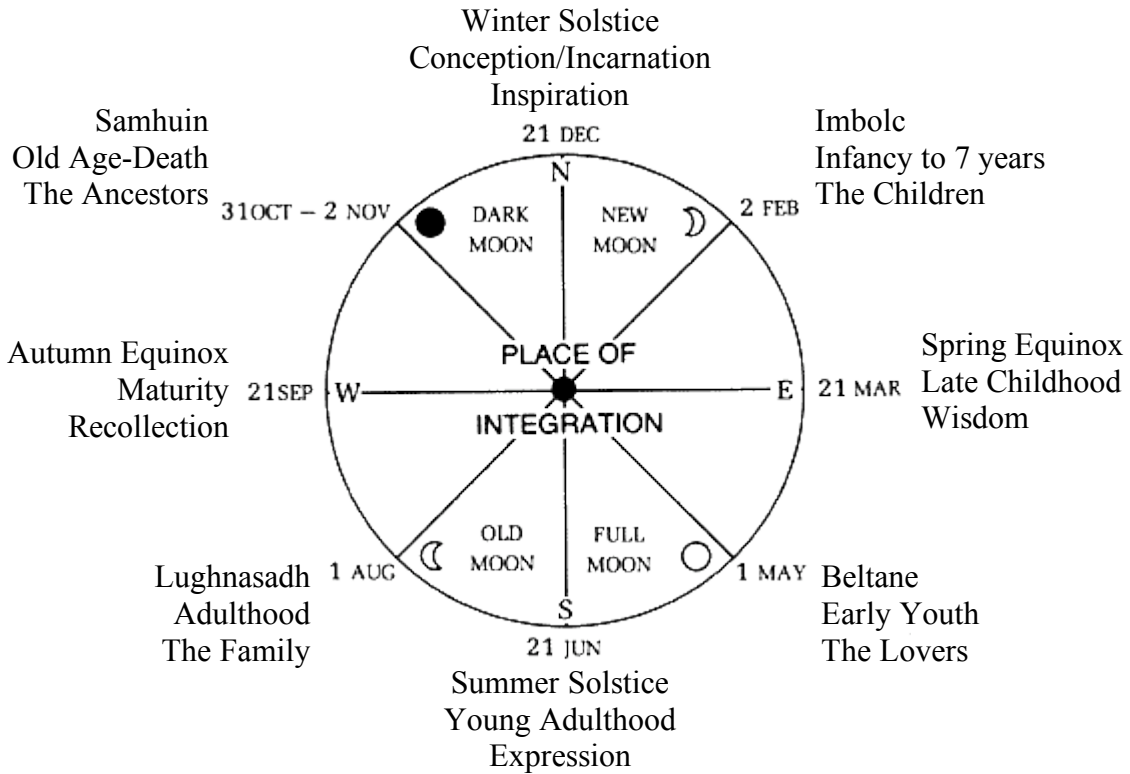


Figure 2: The Druid Circle of the Year

practitioner of the importance in giving and receiving, “The putting into practice the law of giving and receiving is what makes these solstice ceremonies the high ones of the year. The full cup that has been received must be emptied if it is to be refilled.”²⁸ Tim stated,

I believe the meaning of life to be a chance to grow and improve. Improve not only ourselves, but the earth by reconnecting with a time when people lived with the land and not against it. When we were a part of nature, in harmony, not when we ignore it. To acknowledge the spirits that are around us and give them the proper respect.²⁹

Interspersed in these solar feasts are feasts of the season. Relating the experience connected to the cycle, Carr-Gomm stated, “The four fire festivals relate to key life periods and the experiences necessary for each one of them.”³⁰ Orr summarizes the meaning of these rites of passage,

So the Druid family is offered rites of passage which carry the members from conception to death. These ceremonies of celebration, dedication and transformation are to some extent individually crafted to be specifically relevant to the people involved. They are designed to aid processes of change, to bring confidence and affirm support.³¹

It is apparent in the Druid understanding of nature that one can see the explicit tie to the behavior feature of identity that results in the experiential. The behavior is informed by an intellectual consent to these rituals as true or right. Such consent is based not only upon a type of historical validity, but also upon the individual’s experience.

Deities

Through the connection with the cycle of nature, a practitioner achieves a sense of cosmic belonging that is in the same time intellectual, experiential and

behavioral. That belonging creates meaning and order for life. So, it is in the context of the wheel of the year that a practitioner understands his/her relationship to nature, ancestors and the gods, goddesses. There is no single pantheon in Druidry. However, there is a strong sense of the existence of multiple deities. Jana related,

As polytheists, we believe in a multiplicity of deities, some more powerful than others. Individual Groves within ADF may have specific deities that are worshipped at every occasion for worship or may change which deity is worshipped based on the time of the year. The same holds true for our solitary members as well.³²

Relating to the reality of the gods existence in comparison to the reality of the existence of religious leaders, Jim said, “Their identities are firm and established, just as my gods are, whether or not they once walked as people.”³³ In some cases, the reality of the existence of the gods was not as important as the effect the gods had on one’s life.

The Gods have guided me - we could get into a psychological versus metaphysical argument of “Do the Gods exist?” This to me is irrelevant. Whether through an acknowledgement of their existence or being more in-tune with my subconscious I am making better life choices which in turn has led to me becoming happier. This leads to those around me becoming happier.³⁴

Whatever the case, Christy related that the goal was to learn.

I believe our spirits are eternal and we vacillate between being in a state of spirit and earthly manifestation. Our goal is to learn the truth and grow closer to the Life Force that is the Universe, whether you call it The Force, the Gods, God, Goddess, Deity, Great Spirit, Eternal Spirit or any of the multitude of concepts humans have devised to encompass this incredible, but intangible force of life.³⁵

There is a strong sense of being in the presence of and experiencing gods and goddesses. The gods and goddesses are viewed as imminent rather than transcendent giving the practitioner the experience of communing with gods. Since Druidry is polytheistic, this might be expected. Lois stated,

We also live among gods. The Divine is immanent in reality to such an extent that one is never outside of its presence. There is no “deus absconditus” (hidden God) or withdrawn transcendence: the gods are here with us, all the time, in all our comings and goings. Thus, we live together among the gods, which means doing the best by them that we can.³⁶

While ancient writers related the Celtic gods with their own, there is an intellectual attempt to reconstruct them for the contemporary context. This reconstruction makes Druidry distinct from Wicca in that Wicca’s theology is characterized by its polarity. Wicca views the essentiality of the maleness and femaleness of deity as expressed in the god and the goddess. Druidry on the other hand does not necessarily view this distinction. One insider explains the difference,

One of the ways in which Druidry differs from modern Wiccan witchcraft is that it does not posit a dual theology of one god and one goddess. Indeed it doesn’t posit any single theology at all. Gods and goddesses are treated as heroes of story and the spirits of place -- of river, rock, well, and tree -- are just as divine as any pantheon of archetypal characters corresponding to social roles or crafts. The Celtic gods and goddesses, such as Lugh, Brigit, Dagda, Boann, Cernunnos, Hu, Taranis, Ogma, Angus Og, Cerridwen, and Arianrhod (among others) are sometimes characters of legend, and sometimes spirits of place. In the case of Lugh and Brigit, these are spirits of knowledge and craft and healing.³⁷

Nevertheless, it is difficult if not impossible to identify a specific pantheon of gods in Druidry. Again, Lois explained,

There is no simple pantheon and modern Druidry often embraces deities and stories from diverse other pantheons, recognizing the power of myth across cultures. Some modern druids are Celtic reconstructionists, some are pantheists, some are syncretists drawing on Native American or Asian philosophies and deities. I venture to say, however, that most if not all Druids recognize and revere the spirits of the trees, animals, and wilderness places.³⁸

The experience with the deities, no matter what pantheon, was reinforced by the idea that these were deities predating Christianity. The ancient, here, intellectually legitimized the contemporary practice. More often than not, it was personal interaction with gods and

goddesses that created a sense of knowing they are present. For example, “It’s the idea, the understanding that, whatever might happen, they will be there to help us if we only ask and pay attention while they’re answering.”³⁹

Ancestors

Miranda Green points out that, for contemporary practitioners, the ancestors provide the connection between the past and present.⁴⁰ Jana explained,

These [ancestors] can be your own direct ancestors, the ancestors of the tribe (community) you now belong to or the ancestors of the earth, the place where you meet or worship. We feel that all of our ancestors are worthy of respect and that no ancestor was completely bad, that they all have some good within them. It is also important to remember that without these ancestors, we wouldn’t be here.⁴¹

The connection with the ancestors is significant for the Druid. Christy commented, “Those practices (rituals, etc.) give me a sense of stability and continuity with my fellow Pagans, and my ancient ancestors.”⁴² It not only provides them with a sense of identity that has been inherited down through the centuries, what I have referred to elsewhere as ancientization, the ancestors are viewed as a rich resource that can counsel and protect. Clyde stated, “When a person in the family dies, I believe they have become one of the ancestors, and as such, may be appealed to for guidance.”⁴³

It might well be argued that, in spite of many Druids converting from other faith expressions, practitioners have a deep sense of an ascribed identity in that they are identifying with an ancestry they have inherited. Cliff stated,

Really, guiding souls on this plane of existence is what I believe the deceased do between lives as well. When a person in the family dies, I believe they have become one of the Ancestors, and as such, may be appealed to for guidance. The

ancestors, are after all, one of the triumvirate of, for want of a better term, entities, we appeal to in our rituals.⁴⁴

As was common in interviews as well as observed in rituals, the experience with the ancestors, reinforced by rituals, contributed to intellectually legitimizing the religious identity of contemporary Druids.

Conclusion

What has been argued in this article is the connection of intellect, experience and behavior as salient features of religious identity. Nature, deities and ancestors all contribute to the religious identity in contemporary Druidry. For example, Alicia stated, the meaning of life is “To connect with the divine, with the rest of humanity, and nature.”⁴⁵ Trusting in the cycles of nature, then, provides meaning to life and gives an intellectual explanation to the religious experiences enacted in rituals.

As further research is conducted on religious identity, the features of intellect, experience and behavior must be considered. Certainly there are varying degrees by which each feature is understood on the part of the practitioner. On occasion there will also be incongruence between the three creating various levels of deprivation. Nevertheless, all three are important factors for one’s religious identity and when all three are present religious satisfaction might be achieved. Consider the following comment from Kristen:

We believe that we are here to gain a better understanding of how the world around us, and everything that happens on it, works. Druidry is a path of lifelong learning. We learn about the cycles of nature, the history of our ancestors and the nature of our Gods and Goddesses.⁴⁶

Many Druids believe that Druidry offers an intellectually, experientially and behaviorally satisfying answer to the quest for a religious identity.

¹Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (1912), 44.

²Lois, personal interview, 18 June 2004

³Ronald Hutton, *The Druids* (London: Hambledon, 2007)

⁴Michael T. Cooper, "Pathways to Druidry: A Case Study of Ar nDraiocht Fein," *Nova Religio* (forthcoming)

⁵Michael T. Cooper, "Research Observations: The Meaning of Life in Contemporary Druidry," *Sacred Tribes Journal* vol. 3, no. 1. Internet resource: www.sacredtribesjournal.org (forthcoming).

⁶Talcott Parsons, *The Social System* (Glencoe, Illinois: Free Press, 1959).

⁷Manuel Castells, *The Power of Identity* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2004), 6.

⁸Peter Berger, *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion* (New York: Anchor, 1969); Berger, *The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and Politics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999).

⁹Paul G. Hiebert, Tite Tienou and Daniel Shaw, *Understanding Folk Religion* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000).

¹⁰Lewis R. Rambo and Charles E. Farhadian, "Converting: Stages of Religious Change," in *Religious Conversion Contemporary Practices and Controversies* eds. Christopher Lamb and M. Darrol Bryant (London: Cassell, 1999), 30.

¹¹Wendy Cadge and Lynn Davidman, "Ascription, Choice, and the Construction of Religious Identity in the United States," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 45, no. 1 (2006): 23-38.

¹²Lori Peek, "Becoming Muslim: The Development of Religious Identity," *Sociology of Religion* 66, no. 3 (2005): 215-242.

¹³Christopher Hitchens, *God is not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything* (New York: Twelve, 2007) and Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2006).

¹⁴United States – 78 percent (US Religious Landscape Survey 2008); Eastern Europe – 82.6 percent; Northern Europe – 81.4 percent; Southern Europe – 82.5 percent; Western Europe – 72 percent (information retrieved from www.thearda.com/internationaldata/regions, accessed 11 April 2008).

¹⁵David W. Chappell, "Religious Identity and Openness in a Pluralistic World," *Buddhist Christian Studies* 25 (2005): 9-14. See for example Gideon Goosen, "An Empirical Study of Dual Religious Belonging," *Journal of Empirical Theology* 20 (2007): 159-178.

¹⁶Cooper, "Pathways to Druidry."

¹⁷Jana, personal interview, 09 June 2003.

¹⁸Christy, personal interview, 13 July 2003.

¹⁹Philip Carr-Gomm, *The Druid Mysteries: Ancient Wisdom for the 21st Century* (London: Rider, 2003), 6.

²⁰Joyce, personal interview, 24 March 2003.

²¹Carr-Gomm, *Druid Mysteries*, 89.

²²Greg, personal interview, 20 June 2003.

²³Carr-Gomm acknowledges that Samhain was believed to mark the beginning and end of the Celtic year, "This now seems incorrect historically, but nevertheless those who celebrate this time today notice a definite shift in the life of the year—with it dying in some way and perhaps only really being reborn at the winter solstice, the time that scholars now believe marked the traditional beginning of the new year." *Ibid.*, 93. Cf. Graham Harvey, *Contemporary Paganism: Listening People, Speaking Earth* (New York: New York University Press, 1997), 3-6.

²⁴Philip Carr-Gomm, *Druidcraft: The Magic of Wicca and Druidry* (London: Thorsons, 2002), 88.

²⁵James W. Maertens, "Druidry Teaches . . ." (accessed from www.druidry.org, 31 August 2003).

²⁶Maya Magee Sutton and Nicholas R. Mann, *Druid Magic: The Practice of Celtic Wisdom* (St. Paul, Minn.: Llewellyn, 2002), 228.

²⁷Steve, personal interview, 26 April 2003.

²⁸Ross Nichols, "Festivals of Light," in *The Druid Teachings of Ross Nichols*, ed. Philip Carr-Gomm (London: Watkins, 2002), 108-109.

²⁹Tim, personal interview, 20 June 2003.

³⁰Carr-Gomm, "Druid Festivals" available from <http://druidry.org/obod/intro/festivals.html>, accessed 17 October 2003.

³¹Orr, *Principles of Druidry*, 98.

³²Jana, personal interview, 09 June 2003.

³³Jim, personal interview, 12 July 2003.

³⁴Tim, personal interview, 20 June 2003.

³⁵Christy, personal interview, 13 June 2003.

³⁶Lois, personal interview, 18 June 2004.

³⁷James W. Maertens, “Druidry Teaches . . .” (accessed from <http://www.druidry.org>, 31 August 2003).

³⁸Lois, personal interview, 18 June 2004.

³⁹Joyce, personal interview, 30 August 2003.

⁴⁰Miranda J. Green, *The World of the Druids* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1997), 178.

⁴¹Jana, personal interview, 09 June 2003.

⁴²Christy, personal interview, 13 July 2003.

⁴³Clyde, personal interview, 2 July 2003.

⁴⁴Cliff, personal interview, 02 June 2003.

⁴⁵Alicia, personal interview, 20 June 2003.

⁴⁶Kristen, personal interview, 09 May 2003.