**Everything You Need to Know About Animism**

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“There is no environment ‘out there’ separate from us. The environment is embedded in us. We are as much a part of our surroundings as as the trees and birds and fish, the sky, water and rocks.” ~ David Suzuki

## What is Animism?

The Latin animus means “the rational soul, intelligence, consciousness, and mental powers” and the feminine anima means “soul, living being, mind, and breath”. If you collect all the words for soul from all the languages around the world, almost all of their roots simply mean “breath”, insinuating that the soul and spirits in general are invisible and intangible. In the 1670s, the term anima mundi, meaning “soul of the world”, was used to describe the teachings of ancient Greek philosophers Pythagoras and Plato who believed the world and the universe itself was infused with an animate soul. In 1866, English anthropologist Sir Edward Burnett Taylor popularized the already existing term animism from the Latin anima combined with the suffix -ism (attached to words associated with practices, beliefs, doctrines, worship, etc).  He defined animism as the “theory of the universal animation of nature.” Animism became the go-to term for anthropologists to describe and define the beliefs of non-Christian and prehistoric indigenous peoples.

Animism is the belief that everything has a spirit and a consciousness, a soul, from the tiniest microorganism on earth to the great planets in the heavens to the whole of the universe itself. Animistic faiths usually contain a belief in rebirth & reincarnation either as another human, or an animal, tree, or star. Anything or one can be an ancestor and in a way this is true as even scientists will tell you every single thing in the universe is created from the same space dust — all matter gets recycled and reused. Spirits of place (genus loci) are thought to be either the actual soul of the land or a soul who has come to reside in a hill, stream, or grove as its guardian and benefactor.  Animism is usually viewed as more primitive with polytheism being seen as more advanced (think Stone Age vs. the Roman Empire), but as many modern religious scholars have discovered there is more natural harmony and more earthly wisdom within animism than almost any world religion.

You can try to have one without the other, however, in most cultures the two go hand in hand. The Norse had their pantheon of deities as well as strong beliefs in nature spirits, ancestors, elves, giants, and trolls. The ancient Greeks had a strong underlying current of animism from personifying everything in existence as a spirit or deity and worshipping spirits of springs, rivers, hills, and forests at the same level of devotion if not moreso than their pantheon of deities with sacrifices, offerings and festivals. Anthropologists call these divisions the “low cult” (animism) and the “high cult” (polytheism), but in truth they were not divided at all. You’d be hard pressed to find a pre-Christian religion without a fully integrated combination of deities, fairy-like beings, and an ancestor cult. You’d also find it hard to find a major world religion today without traces of animism still clinging to it. Animism was never wiped out or replaced, it has been here the whole time within the persisting belief in fairies and the otherworld, the Catholic worship of saints, the reverence and superstition surrounding trees, and our cultural folk songs and folk tales. The initial instinct of early folklorists and modern Pagans was to label it all as Paganism, but it was the survival of animism all along.

The synonym for animism we’ve been looking for within the Pagan worldview is the fairy-faith and the explanation for the fairy-faith the academic world has been seeking can be found in the animistic cults of ancestor worship and nature spirit worship throughout the world and human history.

If a religion has an ancestor cult within it or a belief in fairy-like beings, it’s a strong sign it evolved from an earlier animistic version of itself. Gods are often apotheosized celestial bodies, land spirits, animal spirits, forces of nature, and ancestors (kings, heroes, healers, and miracle workers). Deities are not separate from animism, they are born from it. The documented remnants of the fairy-faith in Ireland, Scotland, England, and Europe reveal the presence of ancient-rooted animism which was still practiced after the conversion to Christianity as is evidenced by all the many laws forbidding any practices or rites involving fairies, land spirits, and the worship of sacred stones, water, and trees. Animism is still very prevalent in African, South American, and Asiatic belief systems and folk religions today. For example, Buddhists worship the Buddha and the many bodhisattvas alongside a strong familial ancestor cult. Though the population of those practicing the recognized animistic Ainu religion is very small today, the Japanese still heavily practice Shintoism and have a seemingly irremovable belief in the yokai, or supernatural spirits, demons, and ghosts. Find an indigenous tribe in South America or Africa not yet converted to Christianity and they may not have heard of the term animism, but you can be sure their spiritual practices are intrinsically animistic with an ancestor cult.

“No religion lies in utter isolation from the rest, and the thoughts and principles of modern Christianity are attached to intellectual clues which run back through far pre-Christian ages to the very origin of human civilization, perhaps even human existence.”

E.B. Taylor, Primitive Culture

Animism is not a separate faith standing on its own, it is not a capitalized “Tradition” as defined within the Pagan and witchcraft communities, and it is not a clearly defined spiritual path. Instead, animism is the seed of all religion and infiltrates all religions even in present day. Animism doesn’t exist outside of individual practice and the collective beliefs and practices of an indigenous community. Trying to define it and grasp it in a physical form (like the big name religions or smaller pagan traditions), is like trying to catch moonlight with your bare hands. I will try the best I can to attempt it, but it will only ever be my own definition, experience, and research. Animism will always shape-shift person to person, tribe to tribe, region to region.

Animism is a philosophy backed up by practice, it is a way of life and a way of thought. Animism is your personal relationship with nature and with the inhuman spirits who inhabit and compose nature. It is a relationship of respect and value for all things and all beings, visible and invisible. All life is sacred and sentient, even those outside of your current definition of life and even those regarded as malevolent. Within a balanced ecosystem, all life serves a purpose– even those who may seem like the villain at first glance. Animism is the hands-on spirit work of building an awareness of and relationship with the spirits of plants, trees, fungi, animals, insects, waters, forests, mountains, plains, deserts, elemental forces, and the spirits of the dead buried under your feet. When you live within nature you realize you are a part of it, not separate from it. It becomes important to know as much about your surroundings as possible because your survival depends on your knowledge of and respectful treatment of the land, plants, and animals around you.

## The Beliefs of Animism

Within the philosophy of animism there is no distinction between magic and mundane– all is magical and all is mundane simultaneously. Consider this for a minute: every act is an act of magic. Animism lacks pretentiousness and superfluousness – if an action or item serves no real purpose then it is disregarded. In my opinion, based in research and experience, this is why the same set of rituals are found in animistic practice throughout the world. Animism is made up of shared beliefs, but moreso it is a series of practices and rituals based on these beliefs.

Common beliefs found within animism include fetishism, totemism, the belief in the soul (or multi-faceted soul) and life force, the belief in the existence of noncorporeal or supernatural spirits who can affect human lives, the belief in a spirit realm or multiple other worlds, the reverence and worship of the dead, the existence and practice of ‘witchcraft’ or ‘sorcery’ (magic used by the layperson to gain influence over or protection from spirits), and the existence of some form of shaman (witch doctor, medicine man, fairy doctor, etc) with supernatural powers and the ability to travel between realms who acts as healer and mediator between humans and spirits.

**Fetishism** in the anthropological sense means the belief that something seemingly inanimate can be the embodiment of a powerful supernatural spirit (anything from a statue to a tree or a mountain), or that an object can be intentionally inhabited by a spirit (a fetish like a small stone, a pocket carving, a ritual tool, a skull). Some fetishes can be very personal and never shown to another person, where only the owner or family members can look upon it and seek help or powers from the spirit within it (such as root alrauns). Other fetishes belong to the community with standing stones, Slavic god-poles, and ancient Greek crossroad [herms](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herma) being fitting examples.

**Totemism** is an ancient belief and evidence for it is most easily found in cultural folk tales of creation. Totemism is the belief in an animal, tree, river, supernatural spirit, or other animate being as the original ancestor, creator god, or teacher/benefactor of a clan or tribe and used as its symbol. This belief may be most familiar within North American Native tribes who identify as various clans or houses of the raven, eagle, wolf, etc. The indigenous Ainu in Japan and Siberia were largely a bear cult. For the animistic Hmong people of China, it is an ancient warrior ancestor named Chiyou who is revered as the founder of their tribe, but their creator god Nplooj Lwg is a frog. Each tribe has its own history, stories, songs, symbolism, and physical representations of their totem (i.e. idols, masks, and ceremonial costumes). The belief in totemism is spread further than we may realize. For example, one of my familial Scottish clans once believed they were children of the Yew tree and it has been used as their totem and symbol for longer than there is written record of. You won’t find it on the coat of arms (a modern invention), but the curious belief persisted into modern day.

**Shamanism** is not animism. Shamanism is a practice found within cultures with animistic belief systems. Shamans are the leaders, healers, and spirit intermediaries of their animist tribe. They have supernatural abilities that allow them to work with spirits, work against spirits, heal relationships with spirits, heal physical damage or illness caused by spirits, and the ability to travel between our physical world and the dream world, the spirit world, the world of the dead and safely back again.

**Ancestor worship** is another universal commonality between animistic peoples and involves the belief in the existence of the soul after death which leads to an entire cult of ancestor reverence and worship within each culture. Where ancestor veneration is found, there is also a heavy importance and reverence placed on family, tribe, and elders. Ancestor worship is tenacious and survives conversion to other religions. Catholics still have an active ancestor cult through the worship of saints and the celebrations of All Saints Day and All Souls Day. Buddhism and Shintoism both have a heavy focus on ancestor reverence and Japanese and Chinese Christians still actively practice ancestor veneration and maintain family ancestor shrines. It fascinates me that animism seems to always be bedfellows with ancestor worship. It makes sense to honour the spirits of the dead when following a practice so deeply rooted in working with spirits. It isn’t even debated in indigenous cultures, the ancestor cult is simply there alongside the people’s animism. The perfect example from Europe being the fairy-faith prevalent throughout many localities which is the combined belief in inhuman nature spirits and the spirits of the dead. Where you find the fairy-faith you find animism, and where you find animism you find ancestor worship.

## The Rituals of Animism

The belief in a world full of spirits within animism leads to very specific sets of rituals with similar formulas followed across cultures. There will always be cultural differences in details and etiquette, but the ritual formulas usually contain similar steps. Before anything is done within an animist community, a ceremony is performed to ask permission of a specific set of spirits and to see if the results of the action will be favourable.

Whether you want to go hunting and foraging in the forest, fishing in a river, cut down a tree, build a new house, or ask approval of the ancestors to marry, you would first perform these steps:

* Go to where the spirit(s) live (they can’t hear you if you’re not nearby).
* Declare your intent aloud and request permission from the ruling spirit(s) of said place.
* Submit a suitable and respectful offering to said spirit(s) and hope it is accepted.
* Flatter the hell out of the spirit(s) with sweet words and songs (this can be the offering).
* Ask for a specific and realistic sign of approval (the calls of animals, rain, or perform divination).
* If you don’t receive the sign or something goes wrong, don’t do the thing.
* If you receive the sign and everything seems sunshine and roses, go do the thing.
* When you return from doing the thing successfully, thank the spirit(s) and leave a bigger offering.

Another step sometimes included is to threaten the spirit(s) which is mostly unheard of in modern Pagan and magical traditions, but very common in folk religions and animistic indigenous cultures. It has to be a good threat though and you have to know which spirits you can get away with threatening and which ones it would be incredibly disrespectful to threaten. Common threats include the withholding of offerings until a petition is granted or that you will tattle on the spirit to a fearsome boogeyman or the equivalent of the spirit’s mom or boss.

**Purification & Blessing**

Other common ceremonies are of purification and blessing and they will often go hand in hand with the formula above. Purification of the body and soul being performed before approaching spirits so one goes to them physically and spiritually clean as a sign of respect and also to remove any negative influences that may interfere with the petitioner’s intent. A ceremony of blessing is performed before any action is taken to help influence the best possible outcome whether the action is a journey, a marriage, a new baby, building a new house, or as simple as weaving cloth, going fishing, or cooking a meal. [*The Carmina Gadelica*](http://www.sacred-texts.com/neu/celt/cg.htm), a collection of oral incantations from Scotland from the late 1800s, is full of such rites of blessing covering everything from churning butter and blessing new livestock to waking up in the morning and going to bed at night. Despite some Catholic imagery and wording, most of the incantations are sung or recited in the hope that fairies will stay away and not mess up people’s work or daily life.

**Alignment**

There is no real technical term for this belief and its rites. Alignment is the practice of attempting to more closely align yourself with a spirit whether it is an animal, plant, or ancestor. This can be achieved by ingesting or smoking a plant (or rubbing on a flying ointment) during ceremony to better connect to that plant or to a greater forest spirit, crafting a fetish from an animal claw or tooth to wear to imbue oneself with the powers of said animal, or even the ancient practice of cannibalizing the dead to re-absorb their soul and power into the community. Traditional indigenous ceremonies involving costumes and masks depicting sacred animals and supernatural spirits which involve dancing and mimicking the animals and spirits are also a form of alignment which a modern Wiccan would recognize as being similar in intent to drawing down the Moon.

The philosophy is simply: the closer you are to the intended spirit and the more you work with it, the more you take on attributes and powers associated with it. The more you work with the dead and are around death, the easier it will be to commune with the dead. The more you actively work with an animal spirit, the more you will take on its positive attributes and be able to call it to your aid. Alignment also shows respect as you are consciously seeking out a relationship with spirit through actions and offerings which will likely result in reciprocation from the spirit until it becomes a familiar, ally, or helper.

**The Evil Eye**

Rituals that involve deflecting or counteracting the evil eye also stem from animism and its belief in the existence of intentional and unintentional sorcery by both common people or supernatural means. The belief in the evil eye is found world wide and across cultures and it can be inflicted by humans, the dead, spirits, and deities. It can be an envious neighbour sending you hateful vibes over how awesome your milking cow is or a case of [elfshot](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elfshot) caused by an angry [svartálfr](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Svart%C3%A1lfar). The belief in the evil eye can be so prevalent and strong that an entire community will base its ethics and etiquette around avoiding the evil eye by practicing humility and the deflection of praise. It was once very common in Ireland and Scotland to shout a warning and an apology simultaneously whenever emptying the dirty washing bucket or chamber pot outside so any nearby spirits had a chance to get out of the way rather than getting splashed with filth and cursing you for being disrespectful.

**Protection**

It is not a common belief of animistic peoples that spirits are generally benevolent and mean us well, it is in fact the opposite. Spirits are to be appeased to prevent harm, spirits are to be kept at a safe distance, and spirits are to be protected against by any means necessary. Spirits are considered benevolent, malevolent, chaotic, or neutral with the benevolent being the rarest and usually birthed from beneficial long-term relationships between humans and spirits. The pervasiveness and endless variety of protective charms and talismans found throughout time and different cultures demonstrates how much emphasis humankind has put on the need to be protected from harm, illness, spirits, demons, ghosts, and fairies.

Protection can be in the form of a ceremony or in the form of a consecrated talisman one is meant to wear or hang in one’s home. It is painting your face white before travelling to the underworld, wrapping yourself in an animal hide before visiting the spirit world, wearing a mask or making loud, offensive noises to scare away evil spirits, the burning of bonfires on dark liminal nights, the creation of spirit traps, the burning of special herbs, or the wearing of multi-coloured clothing or mirrored clothing to deflect spirits. Animistic rites of protection can be anything from a holy person blessing someone with powers of protection in a ceremony, a talisman being crafted and consecrated to protect a person, a family or a home, to an entire community dressing up as demons and processing through the town to scare away spirits and monsters for the coming year (yes, the seasonal Krampus parades in Europe!).

A big part of protection is prevention. Animistic cultures tend to try to keep spirits away from human homes, human settlements, agricultural areas, livestock, holy places, and roads and paths. Protections are put up to keep spirits out, spirits are verbally told they are not welcome, and more respectfully, places are designated for unwanted spirits to have for themselves and have offerings left to appease them (much like how outdwellers are treated in modern Druidry). I think we can all learn about having firm boundaries from animistic practices. You don’t invite the dark fairy to Sleeping Beauty’s baby blessing, but you better make sure to send her a nice gift basket for your rudeness! Only the spirits that you trust and are known to mean you well are invited into one’s home and to a community’s ceremonies. These welcome spirits are usually restricted to the family or tribe’s totems and ancestors and even then they have very specific names they are called by to make sure the right spirits show up an no harm is caused and specific etiquette is followed so these spirits feel respected and willing to be present and bestow blessings to the people.

## Comparing Animism Within Paganism & Mainstream Cultures

“Animism is a monist metaphysical stance, based upon the idea that mind and matter are not distinct and separate substances but an integrated reality, rooted in nature.”

Emma Restall Orr

Is animism Paganism? Considering that members of the Pagan community can barely agree on a definition of Pagan/ism for themselves this is not a simple question to tackle. So, instead of looking at the Pagan definition of Pagan, let’s look at the world’s definition of Pagan, which, across most dictionaries and encyclopedias, is “a follower or community practicing a polytheistic religion”. Under this definition, no, animism is not synonymous with Paganism because animism is not polytheism. It does, however, include the belief in many worlds and many spirits, but not necessarily the prescribed worship of them. Sometimes the spirits may be organized into categories (such as water, earth, sky, as well as mundane and supernatural spirits), but there are no set pantheons as a Pagan would recognize. Every cult of animism is different as one tribe would most highly revere the bear as it’s main “deity” and another may most intensely focus their beliefs and rituals around one type of tree. In all honesty, a lot of traditional animistic practices involve avoiding and appeasing spirits rather than seeking them out or worshipping them. Animism is more about respect for spirits and the appeasement of spirits to prevent harm or their involvement in human affairs.

The better questions to ask are: “does Paganism stem from animism?” and “does Paganism contain elements of animism?”. The answer is yes to both. The issue we come across in attempting to cross-compare religions with animism is that most cultures in history who practiced animism had no name for it and no definition for it. It is simply the original and enduring spirituality of humankind. It’s something you do, not something you write down. Despite how ancient its beliefs and practices are, animism is a modern term derived from Latin and coming from academia. People within the Pagan and witchcraft communities have only recently started to adopt it and discuss it. Sometimes it takes us a while to find the right word to describe what we believe and do. The traditional witches and new agers all swarmed to shamanism before many figured out that it’s a hard and not so common thing to be a shaman and what they were actually doing was animism. Many contemporary or ‘core’ shamans use the term shamanism as well when many of them really mean animism. Animism is an ideal word. It is an inoffensive term, it isn’t appropriated from another culture, it doesn’t have specific dogma behind it, and anyone can use it whether they are Buddhist, Christian, Heathen, Shintoist, Wiccan, or even atheist.

Animism is not a religion. Animism is the primal foundation of all religion.

Why is there no set definition of animism in the Pagan community and why does animism feel like a newcomer when, in fact, it contains the most ancient spiritual beliefs of humankind? Because animism is not a religion and does not sit at the same table as the big theisms of monotheism, polytheism, panentheism and their kin. There are no holy books, no churches, no doctrines or dogma, and only a handful of books and articles directed to would-be practitioners coming only from a subculture niche-market within the Pagan community. The entire bulk of information on animistic belief comes from the academic study of indigenous cultures (anthropology, archaeology, ethnology, and ethnobotany), academic studies of plants and animals (botany and zoology), and mainstream culture. A good chunk of these studies pre-2000 comes from the outdated boy’s club of anthropology who did not paint indigenous cultures in a flattering light, often drawing the conclusion that animism is for the primitive, savage, less intelligent, and less knowledgeable people. They were so very wrong and animism is currently undergoing a massive mainstream resurgence with the potential to render eco-centered NeoPaganism obsolete. Modern science it leading us as a whole back to animism. The irony is perfectly glorious.

It is the tendency of the Pagan community to denigrate the mainstream and separate themselves from it. We should stop doing that. We are a part of the whole too. Whether you like it or not, you are part of the mainstream (the [dictionary](http://www.dictionary.com/browse/mainstream) definition, not the negative [Urban Dictionary](http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=Mainstream) definition). Animism is currently taking a much bigger foothold in the mind of the ordinary person than it ever has to Pagans. Somewhere along the line, Pagans became sidetracked and self-absorbed with the aesthetic trappings of our community and its practices and forgot about why we ended up in Paganism in the first place. Wasn’t it to find an alternative spiritual belief? One that honours the earth, nature, and our connection to spirit? When did the eco-centredness of the Paganism of the 60s and 70s dissipate? Probably at the same time the mainstream became tired with hearing the same messages about saving the earth over and over again in media and film. Why does every day Joe and every non-Pagan herbalist I’ve ever met have a better grasp of animism than the Pagan community (many of whom are unconsciously animists)? Well, when did we stop looking up from our own fantasy world to see what was going on around us? Animistic belief and philosophy is currently being fed through mainstream media to every Dick and Jane. It’s time for us to pay attention too. Animism is here, spilling over and soaking into everything and everyone like the massive spring floods inundating my county right now.

It is a good thing. This could be so important to our survival and the preservation of the earth! It’s time to stop looking solely within our tiny niche subculture and step out to look at the big picture. Never forget history is being made as we live and breathe. The changes in spiritual movements and philosophical beliefs happening right now will affect our long-term future. This is potentially a very big deal.

## Animism in the Media

If you don’t believe that animism is becoming household philosophy and infiltrating mass media with absolutely no direct relation to the Pagan movement, let’s take a brief look at the news shall we? This is just the tiniest tip of the iceberg when it comes to animism in the news. Seriously, I can’t even count how many articles I found on the sentience and intelligence of plants, trees, fungi, insects, and animals, the belief in spirits, as well as the practice of ancestor worship.

[BBC News: Do we underestimate the power of plants and trees?](http://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-34849374#_=_)

“We are convinced that plants are cognitive and intelligent, so we use techniques and methods normally used to study cognitive animals.”

[Business Insider: Researchers Have Found Plants Know They Are Being Eaten](http://www.businessinsider.com/plants-know-they-are-being-eaten-2014-10)

“A new study from the University of Missouri shows plants can sense when they are being eaten and send out defense mechanisms to try to stop it from happening.”

[Orion Magazine: The Axis and the Sycamore](https://orionmagazine.org/article/the-axis-and-the-sycamore/)

“This is what we do, we humans. We came down from the trees and now we destroy them. The older I get, the harder it is to take this; the harder it is even to look at it. It is long overdue that we start the restitution.”

[Psychology Today: Are Plants Entering the Realm of the Sentient?](https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-green-mind/201412/are-plants-entering-the-realm-the-sentient)

“When plants seem to be behaving like animals, we must reconsider whether intelligence truly is an exclusively animal trait.”

[Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies: Are Trees Sentient Beings?](http://e360.yale.edu/features/are_trees_sentient_peter_wohlleben)

“Peter Wohlleben argues that to save the world’s forests we must first recognize that trees are ‘wonderful beings’ with innate adaptability, intelligence, and the capacity to communicate with — and heal — other trees.”

[New York Magazine: Our Behavior Toward Animals Hasn’t Caught Up to the Science](http://nymag.com/scienceofus/2017/04/our-behavior-toward-animals-hasnt-caught-up-to-the-science.html)

“Not only must we seriously address sources of human-induced suffering, but we must also work to create a world in which animals are free to live their own lives and make their own choices. After all, humans aren’t the only intelligent beings on Earth.”

[Quartz: People who talk to pets, plants, and cars are actually totally normal according to science](https://qz.com/935832/why-do-people-name-their-plants-cars-ships-and-guitars-anthropomorphism-may-actually-signal-social-intelligence/)

“For centuries, our willingness to recognize minds in nonhumans has been seen as a kind of stupidity, a childlike tendency toward anthropomorphism and superstition that educated and clear-thinking adults have outgrown. I think this view is both mistaken and unfortunate. Recognizing the mind of another human being involves the same psychological processes as recognizing a mind in other animals, a god, or even a gadget. It is a reflection of our brain’s greatest ability rather than a sign of our stupidity.”

[Quartz: Insects may be able to feel fear, anger, and empathy after all](http://qz.com/441672/insects-may-be-able-to-feel-fear-anger-and-empathy-after-all/)

“To be strictly honest, we still can’t say to what degree insects experience emotions yet, although these early experiments are certainly setting the foundations for a future where we recognize that all animals have emotions of some sort.”

[The Independent: Fish are sentient animals who form friendships and experience positive emotions](http://www.independent.co.uk/news/science/fish-sentient-animals-friends-positive-emotions-study-study-source-ethics-eating-pescaterians-vegans-a7660756.html)

“What this study shows is certainly they change the way they perceive their environment when others are present, which suggests they might be cognitively more complex than we originally thought. Maybe because of that people will become more aware of their needs and welfare issues. I think if it helps, it’s great.”

[Huffington Post: Law of Mother Earth: A Vision from Bolivia](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/peter-neill/law-of-mother-earth-a-vis_b_6180446.html)

“Mother Earth has the following rights: to life, to the diversity of life, to water, to clean air, to equilibrium, to restoration, and to pollution-free living. And it further outlines the obligations of the State and the people to these principles and rights as a binding societal duty.”

[Mother Nature Network: Can human rights save Mother Nature?](http://www.mnn.com/earth-matters/wilderness-resources/stories/can-human-rights-save-mother-nature)

“Our current legal system is anthropocentric, extremely human-centered, believing that all of nature exists purely to serve human needs. Contrast this with a holistic framework of law that puts our existence on this planet within its ecological context. Ecosystems and other species would have legal personality, like corporations, with the right to exist, to thrive, to regenerate, and to play their role in the web of life.”

[The Guardian: Now rivers have the same legal status as humans, we must uphold their rights](https://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2017/apr/21/rivers-legal-human-rights-ganges-whanganui)

“What does it mean for a river to have the rights of a person? If the most fundamental human right is the right to life, does it mean the river should be able to flow free, unfettered by obstructions such as dams? Does the right extend to all creatures in the river system?”

[Time Magazine: Tribes appease spirits after tourists strip naked on Malaysia’s sacred mountain](http://time.com/3917317/spiritual-ceremony-earthquake-sabah-mt-kinabalu-emil-kaminski-monkeetime/)

“Did a group of foreigners who took their clothes off at the summit of Malaysia’s Mount Kinabalu cause an earthquake? It’s up to the spirits to decide, according to the Lotud tribe of Sabah state.”

[Resonate: Why Thailand Shrines Offer Strawberry Fanta to Ghosts](http://www.weareresonate.com/2017/04/thailand-shrines-offer-strawberry-fanta-ghosts/)

“The dark spirits won’t go so far as to kill you but if Thai people have accidents, people say it’s because they didn’t give offerings to the spirits. You don’t take care of them? They won’t take care of you. You’ll start arguing with your family. Stuff will go missing. You’ll fall ill…”

[Sixth Tone: Why Bans on Paper Money Will Anger China’s Ghosts](http://www.sixthtone.com/news/how-paper-money-ban-affects-ancestor-worship)

“Several provinces have proposed eliminating the practice of burning paper money during ancestor worship. Some local governments have even banned its burning and manufacture outright, while also taking steps to discourage feudal superstitions such as burning paper idols made to resemble people, horses, or cattle. This is a foolish move, in my opinion, as it strikes a heavy blow to the roots of deep-seated traditional belief systems.”

[Morocco World News: Timeless Belief in Saints and Spirits in Morocco](https://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2017/01/206135/timeless-belief-saints-spirits-morocco/)

“Despite Morocco’s increasing modernization and industrialization, saints are still celebrated, and spirits continue to be an influence in everyday cultural practices. The Moroccan people continue to celebrate saints and spirits by preserving holy places, holding festivals, and observing practices to avoid the wrath of spirits.”

[BBC Magazine: Living with the Dead](http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-39603771)

“To outsiders, the idea of keeping a dead man’s body on show at home feels quite alien. Yet for more than a million people from this part of the world – the Toraja region of Sulawesi in eastern Indonesia – it’s a tradition dating back centuries. Here, animist beliefs blur the line between this world and the next, making the dead very much present in the world of the living.”

## Animism in Mainstream Publishing

Now let’s take a look at some mainstream and best-selling books with heavy themes of animism and its role in anthropology and ecology. The titles may not always include the term animism, but the contents are specifically animistic. I left out non-Pagan books on ancestor worship as that would require a whole post on its own just to list them! I also left out academic anthropology books as again that would require it’s own reading list.

**Academic**

* [Animism in Rainforest and Tundra: Personhood, Animals, Plants and Things in Contemporary Amazonia and Siberia](https://www.amazon.com/Animism-Rainforest-Tundra-Personhood-Contemporary/dp/0857454684/) by Marc Brightman
* [*Animism: Respecting the Living World*](https://cup.columbia.edu/book/animism/9780231137010) by Graham Harvey
* [*The Handbook of Contemporary Animism*](https://www.routledge.com/The-Handbook-of-Contemporary-Animism/Harvey/p/book/9781138928978) edited by Graham Harvey
* [The Relative Native: Essays on Indigenous Conceptual Worlds](https://www.amazon.com/Relative-Native-Indigenous-Collections-Ethnographic/dp/0990505030/) by Eduardo Viveiros de Castro

**Animals**

Okay, there were a lot more than this, but let’s keep it to these three well-recommended ones.

* [The Animal’s Agenda: Freedom, Compassion, and Coexistence in the Human Age](https://www.amazon.com/Animals-Agenda-Freedom-Compassion-Coexistence/dp/0807045209) by Mark Bekoff & Jessica Pierce
* [*The Genius of Birds*](https://www.amazon.com/Genius-Birds-Jennifer-Ackerman/dp/0399563121/) by Jennifer Ackerman
* [When Elephants Weep: The Emotional Lives of Animals](https://www.amazon.com/When-Elephants-Weep-Emotional-Animals/dp/0385314280/) by Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson & Susan McCarthy

**Plants, Trees & Fungi**

* [The Botany of Desire: A Plant’s-Eye View of the World](https://www.amazon.com/Botany-Desire-Plants-Eye-View-World/dp/0375760393/) by Michael Pollan
* Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants by Robin Wall Kimmerer
* [Brilliant Green: The Surprising History and Science of Plant Intelligence](https://www.amazon.com/Brilliant-Green-Surprising-History-Intelligence/dp/1610916034/) by Stefano Mancuso & Alessandra Viola
* [The Hidden Life of Trees](https://greystonebooks.com/collections/frontpage/products/the-hidden-life-of-trees) by Peter Wohlleben
* [The Lost Language of Plants: The Ecological Importance of Plant Medicines for Life on Earth](https://www.amazon.com/Lost-Language-Plants-Ecological-Importance/dp/1890132888/) by Stephen Harrod Buhner
* [Mycelium Running: How Mushrooms Can Help Save the World](https://www.amazon.com/Mycelium-Running-Mushrooms-Help-World/dp/1580085792/) by Paul Stamets
* [Plant Intelligence and the Imaginal Realm: Beyond the Doors of Perception into the Dreaming of Earth](https://www.amazon.com/Plant-Intelligence-Imaginal-Realm-Perception/dp/1591431352/) by Stephen Harrod Buhner
* [Plant Spirit Healing: A Guide to Working with Plant Consciousness](https://www.amazon.com/Plant-Spirit-Healing-Working-Consciousness/dp/1591430771/) by Pam Montgomery
* [Radical Mycology: A Treatise on Seeing & Working with Fungi](https://radicalmycology.com/the-rm-book/) by Peter McCoy
* [Sacred Plant Medicine: The Wisdom in Native American Herbalism](https://www.amazon.com/Sacred-Plant-Medicine-American-Herbalism/dp/1591430585/) by Stephen Harrod Buhner
* The Secret Life of Plants: a Fascinating Account of the Physical, Emotional, and Spiritual Relations Between Plants and Man by Peter Tompkins & Christopher Bird
* [The Secret Teachings of Plants: The Intelligence of the Heart in the Direct Perception of Nature](https://www.amazon.com/Secret-Teachings-Plants-Intelligence-Perception/dp/1591430356/) by Stephen Harrod Buhner

**Animism, Rewilding & Ecology**

* [Becoming Animal: An Earthly Cosmology](https://www.amazon.com/Becoming-Animal-Cosmology-David-Abram/dp/0375713697/) by David Abram
* [Dark Green Religion: Nature Spirituality and the Planetary Future](https://www.amazon.com/Dark-Green-Religion-Spirituality-Planetary/dp/0520261003/) by Bron Taylor
* [Feral: Rewilding the Land, Sea, and Human Life](https://www.amazon.com/Feral-Rewilding-Land-Human-Life/dp/022632527X/) by George Monbiot
* [How Forests Think: Toward an Anthropology Beyond the Human](https://www.amazon.com/How-Forests-Think-Toward-Anthropology/dp/0520276116/) by Eduardo Kohn
* [Love Letter to the Earth](https://www.amazon.com/Love-Letter-Earth-Thich-Nhat/dp/1937006387/) by Thich Nhat Hanh
* [The Nature Fix: Why Nature Makes us Happier, Healthier, and More Creative](https://www.amazon.com/Nature-Fix-Happier-Healthier-Creative/dp/0393242714/) by Florence Williams
* [The Omnivore’s Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals](https://www.amazon.com/Omnivores-Dilemma-Natural-History-Meals/dp/0143038583/) by Michael Pollan
* [Original Wisdom: Stories of an Ancient Way of Knowing](https://www.amazon.com/Original-Wisdom-Stories-Ancient-Knowing/dp/0892818662/) by Robert Wolff
* [Partner Earth: Restoring Our Sacred Relationship with Nature](https://www.amazon.com/Partner-Earth-Pam-Montgomery/dp/0892817410/) by Pam Montgomery
* [*The Sacred Balance: Rediscovering Our Place in Nature*](https://greystonebooks.com/products/the-sacred-balance) by David Suzuki
* [The Sacred Headwaters: The Fight to Save the Stikine, Skeena, and Nass](https://www.amazon.com/Sacred-Headwaters-Fight-Stikine-Skeena/dp/1771640235/) by Wade Davis
* [The Spell of the Sensuous: Perception and Language in a More-Than-Human World](https://www.amazon.com/Spell-Sensuous-Perception-Language-More-Than-Human/dp/0679776397/) by David Abram
* [Spiritual Ecology: The Cry of the Earth](https://www.amazon.com/Spiritual-Ecology-Earth-Joanna-Macy/dp/1890350451/) by various authors
* [Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature](https://www.amazon.com/Nature-Fix-Happier-Healthier-Creative/dp/0393242714/) edited by William Cronon
* [The Wayfinders: Why Ancient Wisdom Matters in the Modern World](https://www.amazon.com/Wayfinders-Ancient-Wisdom-Matters-Lecture/dp/0887847668/) by Wade Davis

## Animism in Pagan Publishing

Lastly, let’s take a look at books published by the Pagan community intended to focus on animism:

* [Animal-Speak: The Spiritual & Magical Powers of Creatures Great and Small](https://www.amazon.com/Animal-Speak-Spiritual-Magical-Powers-Creatures/dp/0875420281/) by Ted Andrews
* [Nature-Speak: Signs, Omens, and Messages in Nature](https://www.amazon.com/Nature-Speak-Signs-Omens-Messages-Nature/dp/1888767375/) By Ted Andrews
* [The Intercession of Spirits: Working with Animals, Angels, and Ancestors](https://www.amazon.com/Intercession-Spirits-Working-Animals-Ancestors/dp/1888767553/) by Ted Andrews
* [Demons and Spirits of the Land: Ancestral Lore and Practices](https://www.amazon.com/Demons-Spirits-Land-Ancestral-Practices/dp/1620553996/) by Claude Lecouteux
* [Elves, Wights, and Trolls: Studies Towards the Practice of Germanic Heathenry](https://www.amazon.com/Elves-Wights-Trolls-Practice-Heathenry/dp/0595421652/) by Kveldulf Gundarsson
* [Encyclopedia of Spirits: The Ultimate Guide to the Magic of Fairies, Genies, Demons, Ghosts, Gods & Goddesses](https://www.amazon.com/Encyclopedia-Spirits-Ultimate-Fairies-Goddesses/dp/0061350249/) by Judika Illes
* [*Mystery Teachings from the Living Earth: An Introduction to Spiritual Ecology*](https://www.amazon.com/Mystery-Teachings-Living-Earth-Introduction/dp/157863489X/) by John Michael Greer
* [*The Wakeful World: Animism, Mind, and the Self in Nature*](http://www.amazon.ca/gp/product/1780994079/) by Emma Restall Orr
* [Yearning for the Wind: Celtic Reflections on Nature and the Soul](https://www.amazon.com/Yearning-Wind-Celtic-Reflections-Nature/dp/1577314115/) by Tom Cowan

[Glennie Kindred](http://www.glenniekindred.co.uk/booksprints/index.html) (who I love) almost gets us there, almost. There are also the works of [Lupa Greenwolf](https://www.amazon.com/Lupa/e/B002BMBPD6/), a main proponent and organizer of the Otherkin movement which she’s since distanced herself from (think Pagan furries but with dragons and fairies too). She mainly focuses on writing about totemism and animal familiars.

I’ve obviously left out the truly terrible books on communing with angels, fairies, and nature spirits (I just couldn’t give them free advertising). Notice only one of these books actually has “animism” in the title… well, subtitle. If you want more than that, then you have to get into fairy territory which can get very woo woo and away from the reality of animism very fast if you aren’t careful. Or, you need to look at books written by the druidic and contemporary shamanic communities — which again do not directly mention or describe animism, but do talk about working with nature and spirits in a very animistic way. I didn’t have much luck finding serious Pagan books on the actual practice of ancestor veneration, but instead have found a lot of goth-esque books on necromancy, sigh. You guys are stuck with [*The Pagan Book of Living & Dying*](https://www.amazon.com/Pagan-Book-Living-Dying-Meditations/) for now.

Pretty sad when you compare the list of mainstream books to Pagan ones, hey?  It’s like the Pagan community dances around animism because many of us have never heard the term and none of us are exactly sure what it even is or if we’re doing it… If I had a dollar for every time I’ve had to define animism to a member of the Pagan, witchcraft, and shamanic communities, I would be significantly richer. It’s just another “ism” under the umbrella of Paganism, isn’t it? It’s just another word for shamanism, isn’t it? Alas, no. It is the “ism” all religions were birthed from. We Pagans have a tendency to label anything with magical potency that is outside of the Judeo-Christian realm as “pagan” whether it is or not. It’s just not the right term though, especially coming from academic or mainstream standpoints.

It’s time to open ourselves up to the fact that a lot of spiritual practitioners we really want to define as pagan aren’t actually pagan, don’t want to be ‘capital P’ Pagans, don’t want or need to be considered under the umbrella term of Paganism, and don’t want to be a part of the modern Pagan community (this includes many cultural traditions such as rootwork and Vodou along with non-Pagan polytheistic religions like Hinduism). More and more people want their spirituality without the velvet robes, festival garb, mystical accessories, foreign lexicons, magical names, and woo-woo-ness in general. Animism is the simple path away from this to a place of common ground. It requires nothing but yourself and what already exists in a traditional culture, in nature, and in the ethereal realms.

Animism doesn’t require proselytization, it appeals to a mass audience without lifting a finger or even being directly named.

Once upon a time I introduced a group of my friends from the Pagan/Wiccan community to local shamanic community who were very animistic in nature and, lo and behold, many of them converted within a year with more following in consecutive years. Why? They had never known those alternate beliefs and practices were even an option. No one had told them, they didn’t come across other options from their teachers and elders, and none of the Pagan literature really talked about alternatives. The living practice of animism filled a void they didn’t even know existed in their Pagan practice. Some members of the local Pagan community were not happy. In trying to build a bridge between the two communities I had lessened their numbers. We can too often be crabs in the bucket desperately trying to pull each other back in, but instead we should let people be free to open their minds to new ways of thought and different ways of defining their spirituality and how it relates to the everyday world. Stop trying to collect every spiritual belief under the umbrella of Paganism to increase our numbers and fall into the trap of validating that ours is the one true way. Allow a massive diversity to flourish. Beauty is found in diversity. Maybe it’s time to apply some principles of permaculture to our views of spiritual beliefs and see faiths as ecosystems with each one playing an important role to a community and the whole of humanity.

Let’s have another example. Remember that time I was forcibly removed as keynote speaker for a polytheism conference because I said I was an animist in a podcast interview… even though beforehand I had told the conference board members (who requested me to be the speaker in the first place) that I was not a polytheist but an animist just like my website said and “were they sure they wanted me to be the keynote?” There was no opportunity for me to speak for myself, I was simply informed I was removed and didn’t get a chance to explain that one could believe in the existence of deities without feeling the need to worship them and, alternately, one could be an animist and work with deity simultaneously. It was a fun PR disaster and a learning opportunity.

Animism and polytheism are seldom found separated in history. Our lack of understanding and ability to define animism and its relation to polytheism is going to continually get us into trouble. We are already at the point where the ‘layperson’ gets it and we don’t. It is time to educate ourselves and each other to prevent future misunderstandings and to prevent us from getting left behind in animism’s wake across the world.

On that note, here is my personal Pagan-friendly recommended reading list in alphabetical order by title. As always, I also encourage you to seek out books on the animism and fairy and folk tales of your own cultural heritage too. Go forth, read, and share!

## The Animism Reader

* [An Encyclopedia of Shamanism](https://www.amazon.com/Encyclopedia-Shamanism-One-M/dp/1404211403/) by Christina Pratt
* [Ancient Pathways, Ancestral Knowledge: Ethnobotany and Ecological Wisdom of Indigenous Peoples of Northwestern North America](https://www.amazon.com/Ancient-Pathways-Ancestral-Knowledge-Northwestern/dp/0773543805/) by Nancy J. Turner
* [An Encyclopedia of Fairies: Hobgoblins, Brownies, Bogies, & Other Supernatural Creatures](https://www.amazon.com/Encyclopedia-Fairies-Hobgoblins-Supernatural-Creatures/dp/039473467X/) by Katharine Briggs
* [Animal-Speak: The Spiritual & Magical Powers of Creatures Great and Small](https://www.amazon.com/Animal-Speak-Spiritual-Magical-Powers-Creatures/dp/0875420281/) by Ted Andrews
* [*Animism: Respecting the Living World*](https://cup.columbia.edu/book/animism/9780231137010) by Graham Harvey
* [Animism: The Seed of Religion](https://www.amazon.com/Animism-Seed-Religion-Edward-Clodd/dp/1502399474/) by Edward Clodd (1905)
* [Becoming Animal: An Earthly Cosmology](https://www.amazon.com/Becoming-Animal-Cosmology-David-Abram/dp/0375713697/) by David Abram
* [The Botany of Desire: A Plant’s-Eye View of the World](https://www.amazon.com/Botany-Desire-Plants-Eye-View-World/dp/0375760393/) by Michael Pollan
* Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants by Robin Wall Kimmerer
* [Celtic Sacred Landscapes](https://www.amazon.com/Celtic-Sacred-Landscapes-Nigel-Pennick/dp/0500016666/) by Nigel Pennick
* [Dark Green Religion: Nature Spirituality and the Planetary Future](https://www.amazon.com/Dark-Green-Religion-Spirituality-Planetary/dp/0520261003/) by Bron Taylor
* [Demons and Spirits of the Land: Ancestral Lore and Practices](https://www.amazon.com/Demons-Spirits-Land-Ancestral-Practices/dp/1620553996/) by Claude Lecouteux
* [The Druidry Handbook: Spiritual Practice Rooted in the Living Earth](https://www.amazon.com/Druidry-Handbook-Spiritual-Practice-Rooted/dp/1578633540/) by John Michael Greer
* [Earth Wisdom: A Heart-Warming Mixture of the Spiritual and the Practical](https://www.amazon.com/Earth-Wisdom-Heart-Warming-Spiritual-Practical/dp/1848504802/) by Glennie Kindred
* [Elves, Wights, and Trolls: Studies Towards the Practice of Germanic Heathenry](https://www.amazon.com/Elves-Wights-Trolls-Practice-Heathenry/dp/0595421652/) by Kveldulf Gundarsson
* [Encyclopedia of Spirits: The Ultimate Guide to the Magic of Fairies, Genies, Demons, Ghosts, Gods & Goddesses](https://www.amazon.com/Encyclopedia-Spirits-Ultimate-Fairies-Goddesses/dp/0061350249/) by Judika Illes
* [The Fairies in Tradition and Literature](https://www.amazon.com/Fairies-Tradition-Literature-Routledge-Classics/dp/0415286018/) by Katharine Briggs
* The Fairy-Faith in Celtic Countries by W. Y. Evans-Wentz
* [*The Handbook of Contemporary Animism*](https://www.routledge.com/The-Handbook-of-Contemporary-Animism/Harvey/p/book/9781138928978) edited by Graham Harvey
* [The Intercession of Spirits: Working with Animals, Angels, and Ancestors](https://www.amazon.com/Intercession-Spirits-Working-Animals-Ancestors/dp/1888767553/) by Ted Andrews
* [Letting in the Wild Edges](https://www.amazon.com/Letting-Wild-Edges-Glennie-Kindred/dp/1856231178/) by Glennie Kindred
* [*Mystery Teachings from the Living Earth: An Introduction to Spiritual Ecology*](https://www.amazon.com/Mystery-Teachings-Living-Earth-Introduction/dp/157863489X/) by John Michael Greer
* [Nature-Speak: Signs, Omens, and Messages in Nature](https://www.amazon.com/Nature-Speak-Signs-Omens-Messages-Nature/dp/1888767375/) By Ted Andrews
* [Partner Earth: Restoring Our Sacred Relationship with Nature](https://www.amazon.com/Partner-Earth-Pam-Montgomery/dp/0892817410/) by Pam Montgomery
* [Plant Intelligence and the Imaginal Realm: Beyond the Doors of Perception into the Dreaming of Earth](https://www.amazon.com/Plant-Intelligence-Imaginal-Realm-Perception/dp/1591431352/) by Stephen Harrod Buhner
* [Plant Spirit Healing: A Guide to Working with Plant Consciousness](https://www.amazon.com/Plant-Spirit-Healing-Working-Consciousness/dp/1591430771/) by Pam Montgomery
* [The Rebirth of Druidry: Ancient Earth Wisdom for Today](https://www.amazon.com/Rebirth-Druidry-Ancient-Earth-Wisdom/dp/0007156650/) edited by Philip Carr-Gomm
* [The Return of the Dead: Ghosts, Ancestors, and the Transparent Veil of the Pagan Mind](https://www.amazon.com/Return-Dead-Ghosts-Ancestors-Transparent/dp/1594773181/) by Claude Lecouteux
* [The Road to Hel: A Study of the Conception of the Dead in Old Norse Literature](https://www.amazon.com/Road-Hel-Study-Conception-Literature/dp/0837100704/) by H.R. Ellis Davidson
* [The Secret Commonwealth of Elves, Fauns and Fairies](https://www.amazon.com/Secret-Commonwealth-Elves-Fauns-Fairies/dp/0486466116/) by Robert Kirk
* [*Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*](https://www.amazon.com/Shamanism-Archaic-Techniques-Ecstasy-Bollingen/dp/0691119422/) by Mircea Eliade
* [Shamanism As a Spiritual Practice for Daily Life](https://www.amazon.com/Shamanism-Spiritual-Practice-Daily-Life/dp/0895948389/) by Tom Cowan
* [*Shamans: Siberian Spirituality and the Western Imagination*](https://www.amazon.com/Shamans-Siberian-Spirituality-Western-Imagination/dp/1847250270/) by Ronald Hutton
* [The Spell of the Sensuous: Perception and Language in a More-Than-Human World](https://www.amazon.com/Spell-Sensuous-Perception-Language-More-Than-Human/dp/0679776397/) by David Abram
* [The Tradition of Household Spirits: Ancestral Lore and Practices](https://www.amazon.com/Tradition-Household-Spirits-Ancestral-Practices/dp/1620551055/) by Claude Lecouteux
* [Tree Wisdom: The definitive guidebook to the myth, folklore and healing power of Trees](https://www.amazon.com/Tree-Wisdom-definitive-guidebook-folklore/dp/0722534086/) by Jacqueline Memory Paterson
* [*The Wakeful World: Animism, Mind, and the Self in Nature*](http://www.amazon.ca/gp/product/1780994079/) by Emma Restall Orr
* [Way of Natural Magic](https://www.amazon.com/Thorsons-Natural-Magic-Nigel-Pennick/dp/0722540388/) by Nigel Pennick
* [*The Way of Wyrd*](https://www.amazon.com/Way-Wyrd-Brian-Bates/dp/1401905013/) by Brian Bates
* [Witches, Werewolves, and Fairies: Shapeshifters and Astral Doubles in the Middle Ages](https://www.amazon.com/Witches-Werewolves-Fairies-Shapeshifters-Doubles/dp/0892810963/) by Claude Lecouteux

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* [Ancestor Altars and Rituals](http://sarahannelawless.com/2010/10/29/ancestral-altars-rituals/)
* [Ancestor Worship in Modern Witchcraft](http://sarahannelawless.com/2009/10/30/ancestor-worship-in-modern-witchcraft/)
* [Animism at the Dinner Table](http://sarahannelawless.com/2016/08/16/animism-at-the-dinner-table/)
* [Cosmogeny of an Animistic Mystic](http://sarahannelawless.com/2011/02/05/cosmogeny-of-an-animistic-mystic/)
* [Introduction to Animal Familiars](http://sarahannelawless.com/2010/01/13/animal-familiars/)
* [Is Witchcraft Shamanism?](http://sarahannelawless.com/2010/06/09/is-witchcraft-shamanism/)
* [Land Guardianship](http://sarahannelawless.com/2012/03/25/land-guardianship/)
* [Plants Can Be Witches Too](http://sarahannelawless.com/2011/07/11/plants-can-be-witches-too/)
* [Quotes on Pacific Northwest Shamanism: Initiation](http://sarahannelawless.com/2011/04/26/quotes-on-pnw-shamanism/)
* [Quotes on Pacific Northwest Shamanism: Spirits](http://sarahannelawless.com/2011/05/18/quotes-on-pnw-shamanism-spirits/)
* [The Religion of Trees](http://sarahannelawless.com/2010/11/30/the-religion-of-trees/)
* [On Shapeshifting: A History and Guide for Shifters](http://sarahannelawless.com/2010/04/14/shapeshifting/)
* [The Seer’s Reading List](http://sarahannelawless.com/2010/05/29/the-seers-reading-list/)
* [The Song of the Land: Bioregional Animism](http://sarahannelawless.com/2014/02/21/the-song-of-the-land-bioregional-animism/)
* [The Witch and the Wild](http://sarahannelawless.com/2014/07/01/the-witch-and-the-wild/)

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