

As Above, So Below: A System of Value-based Ethics for Wiccan Clergy

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For the precious individuals
who have suffered at the hands
of an unscrupulous, or simply indifferent, teacher, coven or tradition.
My hope is that this work will prevent future suffering and violations of dignity.

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A special thank you goes to all of the people who have shared their experiences of harm at the hands of ethically-challenged, mentally ill or malicious people who have held the office of Wiccan clergy. By sharing your experiences you taught me how important it is to do something to protect the trust we place in our community and in each other.

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Abstract

This work examines the present state of Wiccan ethics and the social reality existing in many Wiccan communities. Mention is made of the high degree of congruence between the roles of clergy and therapist. The literature on professional ethics codes is reviewed for types, roles and effectiveness of current ethical systems. The work of C. S. Herrman an analytical philosopher, is examined. He developed a systematic method to bring spiritual belief and values into congruence with ethical practice. The APA's Code of Ethics is examined for standards that could be useful in a code for Wiccan clergy. Herrman's methods are used to define a template for a Wiccan value system and a code of ethics for Wiccan clergy.

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Introduction

Professional counselors and Wiccan clergy are healers in a similar vein and share similar ethical responsibilities: they have a common duty to prevent unnecessary human suffering and to aid in the healing process when suffering occurs; they serve as guides on the path of self-realization, taking on the roles of teacher, supervisor, evaluator, and counselor; and their positions and/or status generate power differentials. All of this clearly suggests that counseling ethics are relevant to Wiccan clergy, and that Wiccans would greatly benefit from a study of professional ethics.

Just as counselors recognize the importance of cultural awareness, regularly assisting individuals and groups in their search for value clarification, it behooves Wiccan clergy to do likewise. This thesis examines Wiccan culture, one that is expanding rapidly: a recent population survey estimates over 3/4 of a million Witches, Wiccans, and pagans in North America (Covenant of the Goddess, 2000). Therapists can expect to see a corresponding increase in the number of Wiccans, Witches and other pagans in their offices.

As both a Wiccan clergywoman (with nineteen years of experience in the Wiccan community) and a future counselor, my work is greatly affected by these dual roles.

Given these realities, my primary intentions in writing this thesis are:

- 1) To assist others in preventing harm. A healthy coven can provide sacred space for experience of the numinous in a way that few other human group structures can.

However, a coven or spiritual community, much like a family, can also be dysfunctional. I want to take an active approach to prevent spiritual and psychological damage within Wiccan groups. In addition, the methods outlined will give students, teachers, and communities the tools to determine if a breach of ethics exists, and methods to heal such a breach and to redress harm.

- 2) To create options for building healthier communities. My knowledge and experience can support Wiccan individuals and communities by giving them the means to help themselves. The proposed template (chapter 4) will give Wiccan groups a tool to identify their beliefs, principles, values and ethics. Aiding the education of Wiccan clergy about professional ethics will support ethical behavior in Wiccan groups and enable all Wiccans to make more informed decisions.

Chapter 1 of this thesis examines the social structures commonly found in Wiccan communities, including the coven, the tradition, the solitary practice and the community. Personal and group Wiccan ethics are considered, with discussions of the Wiccan Rede and traditional Craft law. Common dysfunctions present in North American Wiccan communities are explored, from Witch wars to abusive clergy. These take a toll on communities, frequently precipitating crises of faith.

Points made in this chapter are 1) that failure to clarify and support ethics in the social realm has resulted in an overvaluation of autonomy at the cost of social reliance; 2) communities are fragmenting, and nothing less than the integrity of the religion is at stake; and 3) a more professional definition of Wiccan ethics is essential to decrease the frequency of these common problems.

Chapter 2 surveys the field of professional ethics, examining the differences between personal, professional and global ethics. Literature from legal, biomedical, business, and counseling ethics is reviewed in order to provide a broad understanding of the intent of professional ethics.

Professional ethics, while protecting the autonomy of the professional, also exhibit an almost universal standard: that professionals respect the autonomy of the individuals they serve. To better fulfill these obligations, professional codes fall into several categories: aspirational, educational, and regulatory. Special attention is devoted to the numerous functions served by the adoption of professional codes, including accountability, social responsibility, public relations, and dispute resolution. Tasks necessary to establish a code of ethics are enumerated, and include obtaining a consensus from all affected, the definition of values, use of empirical research of dilemmas experienced by group members, and development of procedures for implementation. The work of C. S. Herrman, an analytical philosopher, is introduced. He has created a systematic method to develop a professional code of ethics that is congruent with a group's beliefs, principles, and values.

Chapter 3 examines the code of ethics set out by the American Psychological Association for any specific relevant standards that might apply to a code for Wiccan clergy. The five aspirational principles identified by the APA—integrity, professional and scientific responsibility, respect for people's rights and dignity, concern for others' welfare, and social responsibility—are shown to especially relate to Wiccan ethics.

In addition, many general ethical standards, such as respecting the boundaries of competence, nondiscrimination, and avoiding harmful and exploitative relationships, are

shown to be relevant as well. Other issues that have special significance are those concerning therapy, privacy and confidentiality, teaching and supervision, and resolving ethical issues. An accompanying document on patient's rights is considered for its importance.

In chapter 4, Herrman's belief-reliance paradigm is implemented in relation to Wiccan beliefs, principles, and ethics. Stemming from the Wiccan belief that everything in the universe is interconnected, there is an accompanying belief that there exists a correspondence between spirit and matter. Many Wiccans adopt the Hermetic saying "As above, so below; as below, so above" (Three Initiates, 1912, p. 28) to describe this process of correspondence. The system of ethics presented in this chapter utilizes this process, relating spiritual beliefs to principles, principles to values, and values to ethics.

A process that Wiccan groups can use to define a value system for themselves is described. A template for this system and for developing a code of ethics for the office of Wiccan clergy is proposed, including 1) exploration of the rights and responsibilities of all Wiccans; 2) the duties of and to the office; and 3) the specific behavioral standards applicable to Wiccan clergy.

Chapter 1

Wicca, Wiccans, and Ethics

The Religion: Definitions

Today, the meanings of the terms Wiccan, Witchcraft, Neopagan and pagan are quite blurred; there has even been a great deal of disputation (occasionally amounting to confusion) among scholars. Pearson (2000) has with some success clarified the central issue: "Wicca, Paganism and witchcraft are not synonymous... despite their commonalties." She has here drawn a distinction: "Wicca is esoteric and Paganism is its exoteric manifestation." Wiccans have used "pagan" to identify people who were dedicated to the path of a nature-based religion, but who were without systematic initiation. In today's society, however, the term "pagan" has been adopted by individuals and groups of such diverse practices and beliefs that there is little common ground. Yet that ground—the simple common factor of exclusion from the so-called "great" religions—has been insufficient to support a "pagan ethic" among those identifying themselves as pagan or neo-pagan (or Neopagan).

Introduced approximately half a century ago, Wicca draws its roots from the Western esoteric traditions. At the foundation of Wiccan belief is the premise that everything in the universe, both manifest and unmanifest, is inherently interconnected and that Spirit is both immanent and transcendent. Wiccans are both pantheistic and animistic. Many Wiccans believe in reincarnation, a cycle of life, death and rebirth.

As a religion, Wicca offers what all religions offer: a philosophy of life, a sense of the place of human beings in the cosmos, an understanding of our relationship with the plant and animal kingdoms of our planet and home, and a form of worship through which we can participate in the mysteries of the life force and fulfill our needs for shared human activity by doing this with others (Crowley, 1996, p. 3).

While Wiccans find the sacred in all of the universe, most localize immediate reverence in nature, the earth, the moon and the sun. They aggregate in circles when celebrating and worshiping in order to honor the cycle of life they perceive both in nature and in their own lives. Their holy days are taken to be rites of passage, marking the emblems of each cycle, solar and lunar events known respectively as "sabbats" and "esbats".

Belief in free will and in the ability to affect this systemic universe leads to the belief in magic, generally defined by many in the Wiccan community as "the art of creating change in accordance with will" (Harrow, 1999, p. 110), or as "the art of changing consciousness at will" (Starhawk, 1982, p. 13).

As a mystery religion, Wiccan practices maximize opportunity for the personal experience of the mysteries. The deep personal journey of self-realization and conscious evolution performed by a Wiccan initiate is one of the highest forms of magical intention. Janet and Stewart Farrar sum it up well: "To the witch, self-development and the full realization of one's unique yet many-aspected potential are a moral duty" (1986, p. 136). Initiation into increasingly deeper mysteries is done in stages, otherwise known as the

degree system (frequently three-tiered). Vivianne Crowley, Wiccan priestess and psychologist, gets to the heart of the matter:

The Pagan mystery religions were systems through which their initiates came to understand the true nature of reality and also their own inner nature: who and what we really are. Through exposure to teaching, ritual and symbol, the doors of perception were opened; the windows of the soul were cleansed; and unto the initiate were revealed the mysteries of the Gods and of their own inner psyche: all they were and all they had the potential to be (1996, pp. 2-3).

There is no centrally accepted theology or dogma in Wicca. Accordingly, individual Wiccans are encouraged to develop their own relationship with the divine. Most incorporate both polytheism and monotheism, drawing upon the myths and spirituality of multiple cultures. The divine is also seen by many as a multifaceted One (called by some the Goddess); others choose to interact with countless male and female facets of the divine One.

Within Wicca many "paths" are recognized, including Traditional Wicca (e.g., Gardnerian, Alexandrian, Hereditary), feminist Witchcraft (e.g., Reclaiming, Dianic), eclectic Wicca, and solo practitioners known as "solitaries". It is clear, then that within Wicca there is extensive diversity; but there is enough common ground to build a value system, including regulatory ethics for Wiccan offices. This discourse will focus on ethics for those individuals and groups identifying themselves as Wiccans.

The Wiccan Community

Composition and Demographics

There is little scientific research, demographic or otherwise, to distinguish between Wiccans, Witches, Neopagans and pagans. Nor are there any academically rigorous studies that have counted the numbers of Wiccans. There have, however, been a few informal surveys that indicate the phenomenal growth of the Wiccan and pagan populations over the last few decades. In the '70s the Wiccan and pagan population was estimated to be between 3,000 and 30,000 (Adler, 1979, p. 105; Jorgensen & Russell, 1999, p. 326). Today, estimates of Wiccan and Pagan populations in North America range from 200,000 to close to 768,000 (Jorgensen & Russell, 1999, p. 326; Covenant of the Goddess, 2000).

Jorgensen & Russell (1999), in a survey of 643 Neopagans, found most to be from 26-41 years of age, more likely female, and almost all whites of European descent. They also found that most live in urban areas, are working or middle-class, and are significantly more educated than the social norm. 46.7% identified themselves as Wiccan, while 40.2% claimed to practice diverse pagan paths including Shamanism (5.4%), ceremonial magic (2%), Druidism (1.2%), Gaian (2.8%), or a combination of various Neopagan paths.

The Wiccan community consists of covens, traditions and solitaires. The autonomous coven is the basic group structure found in the Wiccan community. These covens serve many purposes, serving as a center of group worship, clergy training, and sometimes as a "family" of choice. Covens are small (rarely over ten persons), intimate

groups operating in full autonomy, and therefore without accountability to any external "authority".

Like a denomination, a given tradition will define and support a set of ritual practices that its member covens hold in common. When covens exist within the larger community (i.e., of a tradition), they will usually follow similar training schedules, with similar rites and rituals. Traditions often convey lineage, a common ancestry, which is sometimes accompanied by greater respect and acceptance of authenticity within a community. Relationships between tradition members frequently mirror actual family relations. It must still be remembered that despite the similarity of covens within a given tradition, covens and coven leaders will generally be considered autonomous.

Solitaires are those Wiccans *not* working with a coven. Some do receive their initial training in a coven, while others are entirely self-trained. Twenty years ago, the solitary path was not always accepted as a legitimate path to the Wiccan mysteries. The enormous growth referred to above has challenged and now even altered this norm. As the tremendous influx of seekers desiring training outstripped the existing resources of covens and teachers, many turned to Wiccan literature and relied on their own personal experience for their training.

In Jorgensen and Russell's sample (1999), 45.9% responded that they practice as solitaires, while 47.7% work with groups. In an informal web survey of 1341 Neopagan participants on the Witches' Voice (1997b), 79% identified as "self-dedicated", while only 18% had been initiated into a tradition.

Larger local and national groups have also formed. The Covenant of the Goddess (CoG), founded in 1975, is a national congregation of autonomous covens and solitaires

whose purpose is "to establish a Church that will further our mutual interests and purposes in the service of our Lady and our Lord, in order to be better able to serve the religious needs of the lay members of our religion, and to be better able to assist one another in the training of our clergy and in all other matters that may benefit from improvements in our communication" (CoG Charter, 1975).

Personal Ethics

Wicca offers a religion that values every individual's worth and right to self-determination. When Wiccan groups support healthy interactions, they maximize the spiritual truth found in Wicca and offer great worth to individuals choosing this spiritual path. They will likewise maximize individual autonomy within interpersonal relationships, and offer the opportunity to experience the mysteries and self-evolution. Unfortunately, we have seen, and especially since the great surge in the numbers of seekers, huge pitfalls in the reality of social existence. Though the majority of interactions is quite positive, there is now a prevalent social acceptance of common dysfunctional behaviors not unlike those found in other groups, especially families.

Many authors have recognized the strong tendency among Wiccans to avoid stated rules or standards. Judy Harrow, a Wiccan high priestess and psychotherapist, warns that the "whole notion of taking counsel together regarding ethical issues frightens some Pagans. We are the free-spirited folk who resist all constraint. We pride ourselves on our temperamental allergy to rules and rulers" (2000a). "The ethics of integrity" according to Starhawk, feminist Witch and one of the founders of Reclaiming Collective, "are choices based on internal consistency and inherent consequences. They are not based

on absolutes imposed upon chaotic nature, but upon the ordering principles inherent in nature. Nor are they based on rules that can be taken out of context." (1982, p. 35).

Vivianne Crowley writes of decision-making processes to distinguish between "shades of grey" taught to individual practitioners: "This moral sense is developed by seeking to adhere to certain basic ideals of love, joy, truth, honour and trust, and making decisions which are most in accordance with them" (1996, p. 5).

There is one universally acknowledged moral injunction in Wicca—the "Wiccan Rede." Respecting the interconnectedness of all beings, Wiccans are to freely limit their personal autonomy with the intent to harm none. The U.S. Army Chaplain's Manual offers an excellent treatment of the Rede:

The core ethical statement of Wicca, called the "Wiccan Rede," states "an it harm none, do what you will." The Rede fulfills the same function as does the "Golden Rule" for Jews and Christians; all other ethical teachings are considered to be elaborations and applications of the Rede. It is a statement of situational ethics, emphasizing at once the individual's responsibility to avoid harm to others and the widest range of personal autonomy in "victimless" activities (*A Handbook for Chaplains*, 1993).

The decentralized nature of Wicca and the lack of clear group standards place responsibility firmly in the hands of the individual. Wiccans are given the directive to look within—in the "Charge of the Goddess"—which is the most well loved and widely accepted liturgy of the Wiccan religion. "And thou who thinkest to seek for me, know thy

seeking and yearning shall avail thee not unless thou knowest the mystery: that if that which thou seekest thou findest not within thee, thou wilt never find it without thee" (Farrar & Farrar, 1984, p. 43).

Very little has been written to date that would offer ethical guidance either to individuals or groups. The only work published on the topic of personal ethics is Robin Wood's book *When, Why...If* (1996), an excellent primer for individuals in the Craft. At the end of each chapter on subjects such as honesty, help, harm, and will, Wood includes thought-provoking exercises which encourage readers to explore their own values and morals. Despite the book's simplicity, and in some ways because of it, it is important to the Wiccan community.

Group Ethics

No sources exist that directly address ethics in relation to Wiccan groups. Experience and research agree that the vast majority of Wiccan groups have no spoken or agreed-upon code of ethics beyond the Wiccan Rede, although some Wiccan churches and businesses, as for example the Covenant of the Goddess and the Witches' Voice, have adopted an aspirational code of ethics (CoG Code of Ethics, 1975; Waldie & Walker, 1997). Extensive research failed to find a single example of a code of ethics in relation to a coven, a tradition or an individual teacher. No professional Wiccan clergy or teachers' associations exist. With very few exceptions, the literature on Wiccan ethics, laws, and rights shows little in the way of a systematic approach.

In spite of the above, there are sporadic efforts bearing fruit. In response to students who "have suffered at the hands of abusive teachers," Charles Mars developed

an excellent tool for the Wiccan community titled, "The Seeker's Bill of Rights" (1997). Mars drafted the document to empower students by developing the awareness of the fact that "while they do not have 'degrees,' they are still human beings with rights and dignity." Mars was one of the first to acknowledge Wiccan teachers' obligations to respect their students' rights, and one of the first to publish.

Wiccan traditions sometimes provide a measure of accountability, with councils of elders serving also as councils of ethics. But elders' councils have minimally-developed methods of operation, and will not—except with training—be able to adopt and administer an actual code of ethics. It is also the case that an elders' or clergy council cannot succeed unless the community empowers them by conferring upon them the authority to act.

Traditional Craft Law (Amber K, 1998; Lady Galadriel, 1992; Lady Sheba, 1973) is an amalgam of ritual practice, morals—and ethics. In every version, the word "law" is interpreted quite loosely; some laws, for example, are outdated anachronisms: "the Law was made and ardane of old" (Lady Sheba, 1973, p. 1). There are laws that describe moral behaviors: "that none shall use the Art in any way to do ill to any" (Lady Sheba, p. 17). Some laws prescribe religious practice: "You shall make an altar unto the Lady, and you shall make due reverence unto Her, for every place where She enters is exalted" (Lady Galadriel, 1992, p. 11). And there are, finally, some traditional laws providing guidance in ethical dilemmas: for example, "In the matter of quarrels or disputes between the members of the Circle, the High Priestess shall convene the Council, and inquire into the matter. The Council shall hear each person privately, and then both together" (Lady Galadriel, p. 16).

Some few of the traditional laws, when taken wrongly or to an extreme, can lead to potentially destructive consequences—"In the Magic Circle, the words, commands, and every wish of the High Priestess are law" (Lady Sheba, 1973, p. 1). Another law proscribes involving the intervention of outside authorities: "No one may do anything which will endanger any of the Craft, or bring them into contact with the law of the land, or any of our persecutors" (Amber K, 1998, p. 359). Together, these two laws create the potential for a coven to become a tyranny.

The only accountability in the Wiccan tradition is to the high priestess, in some cases the high priest, and the elders. But many covens have but one priestess; absent some other method of accountability, the individuals they serve have no recourse when suffering from unethical behavior on the part of their leaders. It should also be noted that none of these laws is "enforced"—there is not even a version universally agreed upon, though practitioners are expected to use them. "These ethics shall be understood and interpreted in light of one another, and especially in light of the traditional laws of our religion" (CoG Code of Ethics, 1975).

Ethical Issues Confronting Wicca

The Problem of Authority

The lack of consideration of organizational ethics and the focus on the complete individual autonomy of Wiccan leaders has damaged the social reality of Wiccan communities. Judy Harrow, a Gardnerian priestess and professional counselor, is one of the few that recognizes the dangers, "Cooperation, once 'merely' an ethical ideal, has

become a survival imperative. Life is relational, contextual. Exclusive focus on the individual Will disables our empathic sense of connection with other people and with all of life" (Harrow, 2000c). She encourages Wiccans to respect their relationships:

Never confuse radical freedom with moral indifference. Our religion sanctions neither laxity nor callousness. Freedom demands far more of us than the most stringent set of commandments ever could. It demands introspection, discernment and decision. All who know that what goes around will surely come around, understand from this that unmitigated selfishness is never a virtue and 'do what you will' can never be the whole of the law (2000a).

Immediate to any thought of ethics as a restraint on runaway autonomy comes the issue of the Wiccan response to authority, over which there seems to be a schism within Wiccan thought. Starhawk equates authority with rank in a hierarchy, declaring such hierarchies to be "structures of estrangement" (1982, p. 114). Based on fear and domination, those in authority, she notes, "have the power to enforce obedience" (1987, p. 11).

Judy Harrow represents the different thread found within Wiccan thought. She defines authority as "the many ways in which power within a community may be granted, legitimated, or validated" (1999, p. 271). And she refers to hierarchy as "sacred order": "The familial relationship of a lineage is structurally similar [to a hierarchy], and so looks the same when drawn on paper. The difference is in the nature of the linkages—love and respect instead of command and control" (p. 274).

In a near-anarchist society, the lack of formal government is tolerable only as long as all individuals practice personal responsibility. Evolving individuals—and Wicca sees every individual as evolving—do not always do this; hence there is a need to protect individuals within the group when threatened by the malfeasance of a few, especially if the transgressor holds a higher level of prerogative with respect to other group members. Wiccans need to understand that, within a group, individual autonomy has its greatest true protection in a codified ethics limited by the recognition of individual rights that are central to the reason for the group's existence.

Professionalizing Wiccan Clergy

Many Wiccans express deep fear of hegemony, institutionalization, and rules, believing that all institutions are rigid, domineering and have great potential for harm. Words such as clergy, seminary, and church, or anything that reminds them of models used by Christian organizations are likely to cause anxiety and defensiveness. Some Wiccans therefore demonize organizations (especially the religious), holding fresh memories or fears due to the real or perceived harm inflicted by those groups. In fact, it is the very consequence of the harms and destructiveness of some organizations that has been responsible for the great number of adherents coming to Wicca, if only because of the high value placed on autonomy. It is only natural that any perceived threat to autonomy is reacted to defensively. For a variety of reasons, then, there are strong objections to paid clergy—ranging from the fear that priests and priestesses would exploit people for their own profit, to the fear that spirituality would be sacrificed for business efficiency.

Raising the question of community-wide standards can make for an interesting discussion—or a powderkeg, in the wrong circumstances. It depends on the people, and the criteria, involved. We must consider what kind of standards would serve us as a community, and what kind might undermine the very diversity that gives us strength (Barrette, 1998).

Despite the objections to professionalizing Wiccan clergy, the trend is nevertheless emerging. Helen Berger, a researcher who spent over a decade studying the Craft communities in the northeastern United States, recognizes the changes in Wicca. Dr. Berger, having examined the reasons underlying the social changes, considers that "the tension that has existed since the beginning of the religion between spontaneity and homogeneity is giving way to greater routinization" (1999, p. 104). She recognizes that "[t]he growth of information networks, the desire for greater legitimacy, the increased number of adherents, and the development of a professional ethic are all pressuring the religion to change." She points out that the increase in size and diversity of the population actually necessitates "the growth of routinization" (p. 127).

Wiccan clergy do not receive adequate training in preparation for the tasks they must meet and the roles they serve. Many Wiccan clergy are seeking advanced degrees in order to fill in the gap in their training. The Covenant of the Goddess, a legally recognized church, issues ministerial credentials, but does not address the issue of standards. Senior Wiccans are in the initial stages of founding organizations that teach

professional skills, such as the programs currently being developed by Cherry Hill Seminary, the Aquarian Tabernacle Church and the Ardantane Project.

Professionalizing may have other advantages, including gaining respect and acceptance as clergy, and being allowed to interact with other groups in the larger society (hospice, interfaith, etc.). The clergy would benefit from an increase in accountability, better conflict resolution, and greater community stability. Wiccan covens and traditions have sought legal recognition in the United States and Canada, which would allow their clergy to perform marriages and other traditional tasks of clergy and church. The more respect accorded clergy by the law-granting institutions, the closer the clergy will be to a fully competent, legally recognized service provider to the community.

Within Wicca there is at present a great need to redefine the roles served by clergy, given that the boundaries of the role are poorly defined—as the Wiccan community has grown, new roles have risen out of necessity. Wiccan clergy may serve the needs of a coven, a group the size of a family, or may choose to serve the large community through sponsoring gatherings, or by founding a sanctuary. Others feel "called" to serve the roles that clergy historically fulfill in any society or culture.

They may perform roles as diverse as teacher, coven leader, sanctuary developer, or as facilitator of rites of passage (such as marriage and funerals). Some have prison or military ministries. Still others serve as archivists, scholars, and writers of liturgy and theology. Yet others serve as bard, healer, mediator, and counselor. Some Wiccan clergy serve in hospices and even help to found cemeteries. For whatever the role or function, however, the vast majority of Wiccan clergy are unpaid, performing the tasks as a service to the community while holding down full-time jobs to support themselves.

The Problem of Abuse: Family and Clergy

Arnold Mindell (1995, p. 107) defines abuse as "the unfair use of physical, psychological or social power against others who are unable to defend themselves.... Whether a process or relationship is abusive depends upon a group's or individual's sense of their ability to protect themselves."

Rabinovich (1992, 2000) interviewed 67 Canadian Witches (40 females and 27 males). This study produced the surprising result that all 40 women, and 20 of the 27 men, had a significant history of abuse (2000). Of these, 29% indicated parental substance dependency, 22% identified themselves as victims of incest, and 46% indicated that they had experienced some other severe form of physical, sexual or emotional abuse. These results demand further research to determine 1) if a history of trauma is, in fact, a shared experience of the majority of Wiccans; and 2) whether methodological errors inflated the figures (Did the study author take the term "abuse" too broadly? Did the manner of asking the question ask for the received response?).

At any rate, this is not solely a Canadian phenomenon; the present writer clearly sees these trends in the Texas community. I would add another personal observation that I believe is also a psychological reality: The safety provided when each individual consciously states the intention to enter (the) circle in "Perfect Love and Perfect Trust" is very attractive to seekers who have been harmed.

Perhaps it is this sacredness of all existence which draws the individual to Neo-Paganism, for it underlines at the subconscious level the sacredness of the worshipper him/herself. A worldview which extends the sacred to all things

including the self is very powerful for individuals who have been repeatedly socialized to doubt their self-esteem and accept as natural their position as powerless.... For perhaps the first time, the individual has control over external forces and is encouraged to continue exercising this control via Will and magical practice (Rabinovich, 2000).

The cycle of abuse in the family of origin often continues in other settings to which these individuals are exposed during their adult lives (Herman, 1997, pp. 40-2, 110-111). Unless they have had corrective emotional experiences and have learned to recognize dysfunctional behavior, they continue to play the same roles they played in previous dysfunctional relationships.

The traditional silence respected by most Wiccans can turn poisonous; it can even be used to conceal abusive behavior. Substance abuse, for an example, is an accepted norm in many communities, evidenced by the frequent use of the label "party pagans." One Texas community has ten highly publicized monthly events held at bars, allowing them to serve as a doorway into the pagan community—yet people are encouraged to bring along their children to these events. Open display of "adult" behavior in front of minors is effectively a silence regarding their actual nature, a silence in failing to admonish or warn children about these activities.

Clergy abuse occurs in all religions, but the decentralized nature of Wiccan groups tends to actually promote the social acceptance of such behavior. The abuse of power by clergy, to name but one category, will be found to include denial of informed consent, violating confidentiality, falsifying credentials, serving with impaired judgment,

and engaging in exploitative and/or coercive relationships for personal gain, pleasure or perverseness. Lacking any accountability, abusive clergy are essentially free to continue victimizing their students, covens and communities. While not a rigorous or scientifically valid result, it is nonetheless significant as an eye opener that an informal Witches' Voice survey found that only 34% of 523 individuals responded *in the negative* to the question, "Have you ever left a group or organization because of a Pagan Teacher's actions or behaviors?" (Witches' Voice, 1997a).

A too-frequent example of clergy abuse found within the Wiccan community is that of sexual abuse. A significant portion of the community fails to realize that having sexual relations with their teacher carries an alarming potential to cause emotional trauma. In the same survey quoted above only 46% of 523 total responses answered in the negative to the question, "Do you feel that it is acceptable for a teacher to have sexual relations with their students?" (Witches' Voice, 1997a).

The fact is that many Wiccan teachers believe, often sincerely, that having sexual relations with their students in ritual context is ethical; some actually require it for full initiation. Some, on the other hand, use their classes as a pool for sex partners, taking on new students every few months. Wiccans believe in the sacredness of sex; but they must come to understand that there are sexual predators in the Wiccan community who use this belief as an excuse for forcing themselves on coven members.

Crisis of Faith

The decentralized nature of the Wiccan community prevents control of abusive behavior because no one has the authority to stop abuse even when someone is courageous enough to speak out about it. Silence enables the abuser to recruit more victims from among the community. Despite the fact that such hesitance (to report severe violations) is, ethically, an implied collusion with the abuser, few seem bothered at the signal sent—that abuse is an acceptable norm. When this happens, trust and faith in the community as a safe haven is destroyed.

During 19 years in the Wiccan community, I have personally witnessed frequent acts of abuse and have counseled dozens who have shared first-hand experiences of abuse by clergy, teachers, or coven leaders. Individuals, families and entire communities have been victimized by people claiming to be Wiccan priests, priestesses and teachers. These individuals were ethically ignorant, mentally unstable or intentionally malicious. The resulting suffering was obvious in those coming to me, seeking solace for symptoms of depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress, and suicidal ideation. They have variously described their experiences as betrayal, abandonment, and rape.

I have seen their grief, fear, and suffering. I have felt the shame and guilt that they turn on themselves for having been a victim of a person in whom they had placed their trust as a spiritual guide. Betrayed by someone claiming to have spiritual authority, this intense psycho-spiritual loss of trust and reliance resulted in a crisis of faith.

When individuals place reliance in a group, they become vulnerable due to increased exposure implied in the reliance on others for a species of security (personal communication, Herrman 2000). If a group adequately protects its members' individual

interests and rights, then the exposure is protected and the security in trust can flourish—even to the point of becoming an expression of faith. If, however, the membership's reliance is betrayed, their exposure is unprotected and the group no longer constitutes a safe space, to say nothing of a safe haven. Betrayal of an individual's reliance and trust, especially in a spiritual setting, produces a crisis of faith.

A few courageous individuals may attempt to speak up about instances of clergy abuse, only to then be victimized by the coven or tradition protecting the perpetrator. "Whistle blowers" risk being ostracized and labeled as agitators. The perpetrators attempt to deflect accusation by pointing their fingers at the complainant and accusing *them* of victimization.

Many lose their spiritual home because of choosing not to stay in a community where abuse appears to be a norm. Individuals, families, and entire communities have been traumatized by acceptance of abusive behavior; and when the occurrence is community-wide, foundational beliefs are shattered and the community fragments. Acceptance of abuse violates a root belief held by Wiccans, that all beings are sacred and have worth. "Eventually, for self-protection, the gentle will either change or go away. We could lose what we have misguidedly refused to protect" (Harrow, 2000d). To remain silent about the presence of contempt violates the integrity of the Wiccan religion.

The reality is that the autonomy of individual clergy is protected even in the face of harm to those they serve. Though most Wiccan clergy are moral and good people, they do not possess the tools to protect their communities from those who are not. When a community protects autonomy as its highest value, individuals will often fail to recognize and uphold their reliance upon each other. Complete autonomy means the absence of

accountability. There are no methods to resolve these conflicts, except to accept the behavior or leave the community. In either case there is trauma—

In "Trauma and Recovery," Judith Herman, M.D., writes, "Traumatic events destroy the sustaining bonds between individual and community. Those who have survived learn that their sense of self, of worth, of humanity, depends upon a feeling of connection to others" (1997, p. 214). She shares a path to healing through the community:

The response of the community has a powerful influence on the ultimate resolution of the trauma. Restoration of the breach between the traumatized person and the community depends, first, upon public acknowledgment of the traumatic event and, second, upon some form of community action. Once it is publicly recognized that a person has been harmed, the community must take action to assign responsibility for the harm and to repair the injury. These two responses—recognition and restitution—are necessary to rebuild the survivor's sense of order and justice (1997, p.70).

The Need for Value Definition

Unspoken Norms

All groups have norms and values, whether these are unspoken or explicit. Refusing to articulate or write down rules does not mean that no rules exist; it only means that they remain unspoken and become covert (Brown, 1988, Yalom, 1995). Group norms may be healthy or unhealthy. The reality of Wiccan ethics as evidenced by

behavior in Wiccan communities sometimes differs significantly from the expressed ideal. Covens can exhibit the same types of problems experienced by dysfunctional families. Individuals can bring family problems to the covens, repeating with their covens the unhealthy behaviors learned in their families. Substance use and abuse, unhealthy emotional relationships, and clergy abuse exist practically as a norm in many Wiccan covens and communities.

We still need to be aware when something begins to go wrong. Denial disempowers us. If we can't even admit that there is a leader, how can we notice if the leader is getting off track? How can we talk over our concerns with our covenmates? How can we confront a leader's inappropriate behavior (Harrow, 1999, p. 31)?

Fortunately, most teachers and coven leaders are benevolent. Yet many communities are plagued by predatory behaviors, and the community feels defenseless to stop them because it will not recognize anyone as possessing the authority to do so. Ethical holes exist in the reality of social relationships in Wiccan communities, including the lack of recognized obligations that accompany the prerogatives of community offices, the lack of methods for resolving ethical violations, and the lack of standards for restitution of harm.

The acceptance of a leader's word as law; the restraints on involving legal authorities under any circumstances; the valuation of silence over dissent; and the complete autonomy of coven leaders—all of these circumstances create the risk of covens

becoming tyrannies. The combination of absolute authority, secrecy, silence, and isolation creates an atmosphere for acceptance of extremely unhealthy behaviors.

The Clergy

There exists a great divergence of opinion and practice on the matter of Wiccan clergy. Some Wiccan groups identify all initiates as clergy. Some Wiccan groups teach that a practitioner becomes clergy only when they have reached the third degree after a minimum of three years of study and apprenticeship. Others believe that all Wiccans are clergy, since Wiccans are encouraged to develop personal relationships with the divine and do not need a gatekeeper to the gods. Many Wiccans have read a book or two and have decided to found covens, teach students and consider themselves clergy. Clearly, this amount of variability reflects the decentralization of Wiccan groups and strongly suggests a lack of any standards or common language. Furthermore, what Reid (1999) thinks to be a contributing element in the genesis of Witch wars and community conflict is valid for conditions within the coven. "It is by no means guaranteed," she says, "that the norms, values and practices taken for granted by one coven will be shared by, or agreed to, by another coven, group or individual."

The problem of defining what clergy really are has its broader parallel, as Reid is ready to note: "[M]any Neopagans... use precisely the same language to represent related concepts with different underlying content." The lack of agreement on either the underlying content or on basic definitions may be thought only natural for a young religion. Nonetheless, at a critical developmental stage—as Wicca is at or approaching—the confusion has created problems for a community that is exploding at the seams.

Witch Wars

Witch wars have plagued every major Wiccan and pagan community in North America for decades. In an informal survey on the Witches' Voice, 31% of 1341 people responded positively when asked if they had experienced a Witch war (1997c). Most of these "wars" are conflicts between groups (coven/coven) that have escalated to affect larger groups. (Entire communities become embroiled in conflicts between leaders of the same group or different groups).

They most frequently appear to be the result of personality conflicts between leaders of different groups, many of whom exhibit a fundamental lack of respect for each other; the result being that they engage in bickering, gossip and so flame disputes into out and out wars. Even some claiming personal responsibility as their ethical core act hypocritically, or defensively, because all the while they engage in blame games, pointing the finger at each other. This antagonistic atmosphere has torn communities apart and always produces immense suffering—

A "Witch war," as opposed to other kinds of conflict that may also be prevalent in any given community, tends to display two central features. First, the conflict is conducted in a fairly open and public manner that is visible to the community members; second, it permeates and polarizes the community to such an extent that community participants are left with two choices: either to choose a side, or to withdraw from participation in the community until the conflict finds some resolution (Reid, 1999).

This same writer (Reid, 1999) has identified the core reasons for the high frequency of Witch wars, and mentions among them the lack of structures necessary for conflict resolution, perceived threats to authenticity, issues of legitimacy and authority, and the lack of "*consensus on the meaning of key concepts* [my emphasis]." All of which leads, she writes, "to a situation where groups and individuals with competing visions of Witchcraft are trying to establish their authority and authenticity in an unregulated environment, where the language used by all parties, although superficially similar, often has different connotations" (Reid, 1999).

Coming to Terms: The Role of Ethics

No one lives or thrives completely disconnected from other beings. If Wiccans adhere to a belief in Nature as a system, then individual human beings are not, and can never be, completely autonomous. It is therefore unfortunate that many Wiccans are blind to the fact that they enjoy personal liberty solely because they are fortunate to live in a country that protects their individual rights. Social structures are necessary to maximize liberty and to protect the autonomy of every member of the group from the immoral use of power by another member.

All groups have norms and standards; and if they are not negotiated by consensus they will exist in an unstated and covert form (Brown, 1988, Yalom, 1995). Norms that are not negotiated and shared openly have a potential to cause harm. Covert rules will often mirror the patterns commonly found in dysfunctional families, patterns easily replayed within the coven by individuals "recreating the familiar".

Currently, many norms exhibited in the Wiccan community are not congruent with Wiccan values. Reality proves that the Wiccan Rede alone is insufficient to prevent harm and maintain adequate ethical standards. Nor can Wiccan groups rely solely on enlightened personal autonomy, but need instead to create ethical standards for the purpose of empowering both individuals and groups.

With regard to norms and values, professionalizing Wiccan ethics would increase congruence in the following ways:

1) Definition of shared values

Shared values are relatively unrecognized in Wiccan communities and those that are recognized may not be universally upheld. Failure to define shared values makes protecting those values next to impossible. Wiccans frequently define themselves in terms of others only by pointing out the differences. Wiccans would benefit from self-definition, which is generated internally, rather than from an externally-based exercise in a reflected sense of self. It is of course necessary to identify values in order to develop ethics that are in accord with those values—

It behooves each of us to clarify our personal values. It behooves those of us who are members of groups, lineages or traditions to work together to clarify our collective values. It behooves the entire neo-Pagan community to clarify those broadly-shared values that define our religion. Leaving our values as unspoken assumptions can lead to incongruity, as well as to inner and interpersonal conflict (Harrow, 2000b).

2) Definition of group roles

Wiccans need to define the offices empowered by the group to serve specific needs, especially the role of clergy. Every group member possesses an office, for example, the office of initiate, and the group as a whole possesses an office of, for example, the tradition. The rights and responsibilities of each office need to be defined. The powers granted to each office and the obligation of each office to the other offices should be clearly stated. A Wiccan priest or priestess has a moral obligation to be responsible for his or her actions, especially concerning their use of power with respect to other offices in the group. To rely solely on intuition would be a failure both of social responsibility and of the duty to harm none—

We need a deeper and more mature analysis. We need to ask questions like "right to do what?" and "law against what?" We need to get away from absolutes and to look in practical terms at the advantages or disadvantages of our choices (Harrow, 2000d).

3) Voluntary ethics codes

Development of voluntary codes by covens, traditions, local communities, national organizations or professional associations could aid decision-making and actively protect individuals and communities from harm. Having no central authority, groups and communities need to police themselves; but they also need to possess the education and the tools that allow for effective self-governance.

Standards of professional behavior, such as avoidance of public conflict between coven leaders, would go a long way to prevent Witch wars. Ethics codes can aid informal resolution; and where that is unsuccessful an ethics committee can mediate the dispute. Autonomous Wiccan clergy would greatly benefit from the creation of a self-regulated voluntary professional society that administers a code. A self-regulated voluntary professional affiliation for Wiccan clergy would support the autonomy of covens, while at the same time allow for accountability to a standard for ethical behavior that is based upon beliefs, principles, and values that all within the community can rely upon. A systematically designed code will help define the role of clergy and the necessary standards of competent behavior, as well as specify what categories of behavior are considered harmful:

"[H]arm" needs some unpacking as a concept, and clarification as to who and what might be included in 'none' is necessary, as there are clearly implications here for what is to be construed as appropriate behaviour both in relation to other people and towards nature (where indeed these are seen as separate) (Bowman, 2000).

4) Accountability

At present, it is the rare group of Wiccans that possesses any recourse when harm has occurred. The larger the communities become, the more frequently ethical dilemmas will occur. It is imperative that Wiccan groups develop procedures to help Wiccan clergy recognize ethical dilemmas and handle violations when they occur. Not only are clergy

spiritually liable, but they may become *legally* liable if they turn a blind eye to abuse of power. Communities must not, for example, accept or otherwise condone the psycho-spiritual rape of their members, most especially by their own clergy. Starhawk offers a good summary of this need:

The immanent value of the individual cannot be separated from a concern for social justice. For that concern to root itself in reality, it must be expressed in action. Any group that claims to offer liberation or spiritual growth must at least be concerned with minimizing the harm it does (1987, p. 136).

5) Protection from misappropriation

Not only would professional ethics protect against individual predatory action, it would protect the religion from misappropriation by predatory societies. Gallagher (2000) wrote about the recent resurgence of nature religion among European neo-nazis in order, apparently, to further their own prejudices. She writes, "A pagan ethic" she notes, "which acknowledged the proximity of the wider social web to that of its own communities would go some way to disentangle the prejudices of the one from the spiritual declarations of the other" (2000). She adeptly recognizes not only the protection afforded by a stated ethic, but also the potential for personal and social transformation.

6) Prevention of future suffering by protecting reciprocal reliance

Creation of ethics codes would protect the reliance that Wiccans place in covens, traditions and communities. Professional ethics codes would be especially beneficial for

groups like the Covenant of the Goddess and the larger traditions. Because Wiccan clergy are encouraged to establish personal relationships with students and with other covens, both student and teacher require protection. Wiccan priests and priestesses nurture intimacy and reliance from their coven members, and here again the reliance of both the leader and the coven must be protected. The closer the relationship, the greater the reliance.

Groups must acknowledge and limit the authority of the offices that they create and empower. Groups need to be accountable for the authority they create. An organization that demands reliance but gives none in return is called a tyranny. Wiccan clergy must become aware that they have obligations to their students, their peers, the community, and the religion.

Wiccan groups and clergy must stop contributing to harm by refusing to protect those whom they serve and by accepting harmful behavior as a group norm. When the initiate is asked, "Are you willing to suffer to learn?" they do not believe that they are consenting to accept intentional suffering as a consequence of group membership. On the contrary, they expect "perfect love and perfect trust" to be the norm.

Chapter 2

The Profession as a Specific Group With Ethical Responsibilities

Categories of Ethics

Professional psychology clearly shows us that it is natural for humans to form groups, most of which evolve ethics, whether written, or unspoken. Brown (1988, pp. 20, 27) has written that "our social identity, our sense of who we are and what we are worth, is intimately bound up with our group memberships." The members of groups, he notes, "are usually interdependent; one person's experiences, actions and outcomes are linked in some way to the experiences, actions and outcomes of the others in the group." Hoffman (*Association Management*, 1999, p. 53), speaking specifically of ethics in the group context, remarks of the "reciprocity between the ethics of organizations and the ethics of individuals." Given that, as he notes, "none of us are islands unto ourselves," he summarizes with a generalization: "We are very much influenced by organizations, communities, cultures, our families, and the like." Individuals in groups must place reliance on each other, as well as on the group as a whole. Ethics can be said to protect these relations of reliance, by which it may also be seen to uphold the very reason for the group's existence.

In treating of professional ethics, Colero (2000) has suggested the need to differentiate it from other kinds of ethics, of which he names two: personal and global. Personal ethics "reflect [the] general expectations of anyone in any society, acting in any capacity," and include concern for the well-being of others, respect for the autonomy of

others, trustworthiness and honesty, willing compliance with law (with the exception of civil disobedience), and basic justice, being fair, refusing to take unfair advantage, benevolence/doing good, and preventing harm.¹

Consideration of ethics for globally influential groups calls for socially directed obligations (Colero, 2000). Governments and transnational corporations have a responsibility to influence society in "a positive way". He writes: "Can a person (or company) truly be 'successful' while causing human suffering or irreparable environmental damage?" Examples of ethical principles for this category include global justice (as reflected in international laws), society before self/social responsibility, environmental stewardship, interdependence & responsibility for the 'whole', and reverence for place.

On the subject of professional ethics, Colero thinks that those in this role or capacity "take on an additional burden of ethical responsibility.... [Consequently], professional associations have codes of ethics that prescribe required behavior within the context of a professional practice such as medicine, law, accounting, forestry or engineering." The general principles he identifies for professional ethics include: impartiality/objectivity, openness/full disclosure, confidentiality, due diligence/duty of care, fidelity to professional responsibilities, and avoiding potential or apparent conflict of interest.

Cogan (1953, p. 48) defined the profession as "a vocation whose practice is founded upon an understanding of the theoretical structure of some department of learning or science, and upon the abilities accompanying such understanding." Savan

¹ Colero's descriptions of personal, global and professional ethics were listed in bulleted fashion. I have adhered closely to his use of language in listing the qualities here.

(1989, p. 179), in stressing social function, defines professions as being "groups which apply special knowledge in the service of a client."

Aside from any definition of the profession, the definition of ethics, and of its normative relation to the professions, has animated many discussions and generated schools of thought, philosophical and otherwise. By way of overview, Robert K. Massie (2000, p. 280) considers the ethics code to "constitute a subset of a much broader network of social codes that vary along four dimensions: from the implicit to the explicit, from small to large, from informal to formal, and from duties to goals." Frankel (1989, pp. 110-11) identifies three types of professional code, though he considers each of them to be voluntary. The "aspirational" code is "a statement of ideals to which practitioners should strive." His "educational" code is "one which seeks to buttress understanding of its provisions with extensive commentary and interpretation." Lastly he proposes a "regulatory" code that seems to be the closest in tone to what we would expect in a professional code. Such a code includes, he says, "a set of detailed rules to govern professional conduct and to serve as a basis for adjudicating grievances."

Ford (2001, p. 11) classifies ethical theories into two camps: theories of value, and theories of obligation. Theories of value identify what is most valued, whereas those of obligation "prescribe what one ought to do in a given situation." Another distinction used by some authors is between "virtue" ethics and "principle" ethics. Meara, Schmidt and Day (1996, p. 4) explain: "Principle ethics can be described as a set of prima facie obligations one considers when confronted with an ethical dilemma. Virtue ethics focuses on character traits and nonobligatory ideals that facilitate the development of ethical individuals".

In their classic *Principles of Biomedical Ethics* (1983), Beauchamp and Childress proposed five "prima facie duties" of principle ethics: nonmaleficence, fidelity, beneficence, justice, and autonomy. On the other hand there is Bersoff (1996, p. 87), who fails to see a clear distinction between virtue and principle ethics. He does not find "a great deal of difference between these moral principles and the 'four virtues,' i.e., prudence, integrity, respectfulness, and benevolence as Meara, et al. define them."

Virtue ethics and principle ethics as described above do cite aspirational standards, but are not specific enough to be truly effective even though—and perhaps because— they are voluntary. Kitchener, for example, cites the need for more than general norms of aspirational ethics. "Even people of high moral character," she concludes, "sometimes fail to perceive what they ought to do when faced with a moral crisis. Those with a virtuous character thus need principles and rules to provide important guidance in deciding the best moral action in difficult situations" (1996, p. 93).

The Character of Professional Ethics

Much has been written on ethics and ethics codes, but there is not always much unanimity of opinion. Frankel, one of the seminal workers in this area, considers a professional code to be the "visible and explicit enunciation of its professional norms" (1989, p. 110). He elaborates at some length on the diverse functions fulfilled by a code of ethics: It is an enabling document, a source of public evaluation, and of professional socialization. It serves also to enhance a profession's reputation and public trust, while preserving entrenched professional biases. And, of course, it deters unethical behavior,

provides an organizational support system, as well as methods for adjudication of ethical violations.

Dunbar (1998, p. 177) views professional ethics codes "primarily as regulatory devices to protect the public from incompetent and unethical practices by certified members of the profession." Another author would stress the need to provide accountability and enforce social responsibility (Boeyink, 1994), to which still another adds the service (of an ethics code) as a public relations statement (Keith-Spiegel, 1994).

Although ultimate responsibility for their actions rests with individual professionals," notes Frankel, "promoting ethical conduct does not, and should not, have to be solely the responsibility of the individual" (1989, p. 110). What is more, "exclusive emphasis on the individual ignores the importance of social structures in shaping individual consciences and behavior". Writing in the *Notre Dame Journal of Law*, Johnson (2000) agrees, and identifies his own arguments "in defense of the codification" of professional ethics: client protection, equality of client treatment, promotion of ethical discourse, symbolic value of declarations of principle, and re-examination of previous ethical choices. And according to Beyerstein (1993, pp. 419-20), there are four cardinal purposes to be served: guidance to the individual, consensual standards, issuance of public statements, and limiting of the public's expectations of the professional.

What seems indisputable is that ethics codes in the professions can and should serve to assist in adjudicating disputes and in providing accountability. According to Frankel, it is the very fact that codes imply the possibility of professional error, and that such errors will be dealt with by thorough and fair investigations, that the codes "can

enhance public respect for their performance" (1989, p. 114). Failures in these areas are apt to have what Stevens recognizes as "far-reaching consequences":

Each time we make a decision to overlook the ethical standard of practice, no matter how we rationalize the behavior, we are intensely exacerbating the probability of doing harm. As important, we are teaching our clients and our students that there are acceptable alternatives to ethical behavior and that choosing these alternatives does no injury (2000, p. 177).

When professions do not self-regulate, other agencies, such as the state, will institute "other means of social control—licensing, peer review, malpractice [and] new mandatory reporting laws" (Frankel, 1989, p. 114). For some, the task of ethics codification or its enforcement, is an uphill task. Pope and Vasquez (1998) have listed twenty "ethical substandards" used by people to rationalize or overlook unethical behavior. There is, for example, this refrain—"It's not unethical as long as you don't talk about ethics." Other rationalizations cited are: ignorance, lack of malicious intent, intention not to repeat, having the client's consent, inconvenience, not having received complaints for the (prior) behavior, and that old stand-by, that other colleagues also engage in the behavior.

For an evaluation of codes in actual practice, Leach and Harbin (1997, p. 187) compared the ethical codes of professional psychologists from twenty-four countries using the APA code as a baseline. Ten of the individual standards were so widely used as "to approach a universal ethical standard," and these were all related to the principles of

beneficence and nonmaleficence. I think it is worth the space to enumerate them; the widely accepted standards dealt with the following topics: disclosures, confidentiality, boundaries of competence, avoiding harm, exploitative relationships, delegation to and supervision of subordinates, fees and financial arrangements, false or deceptive statements, informed consent to therapy, and informed consent to research.

Codes really exist to support professionals and clients in their respective decision-making capacities. As an "enabling document", Frankel explains that a code reflects the "collective experience" of the members of a profession; it should provide a "framework for organizing and evaluating alternative courses of action" (1989, p. 111). "A code may be compared to a compass," Frankel muses, "in that it provides the direction but does not presume to locate the ultimate destination. But in principle it enables the professional to make more informed choices".

Elements to Be Considered in the Development of a Code of Ethics

Literature in the field of professional ethics has brought forth in clear terms the factors that need to be addressed in preparing a code of ethics. One of the primary tasks is to define the different groups that have relationships with that professional, often referred to as "stakeholders". Higgs-Kleyn & Kapelianis (1999, p. 364) observe that a profession owes ethical obligations to "a number of parties such as clients, other members of the profession and the general public." Wiley (2000) recognizes professional obligations to society, employers, clients, colleagues, professional organizations and the profession as a whole.

Of extreme importance to the success of a code is that those affected by the code have input in its creation. Keyserlink (1993, p. 408) explains the matter as follows:

There are at least three reasons why representatives from all the societies and professions to which a code is directed should contribute to it:

1. to correctly identify the abuses and dangers to be addressed;
2. to ensure that the code in question reflects awareness of and sensitivity to different moral and cultural perceptions, as well as cross-cultural commonalities;
3. to strive together to make the code not just a reflection of the moral status quo in any society, but a challenge to all the member societies to improve conduct toward [those served].

It is also important to identify shared values, and to define those aspirational values at the foundation of a group's beliefs, principles and ethics. Global values have been recognized, but only a very few, and the respect for persons is chief among them. "Under the umbrella of that principle," states Keyserlingk, "are typically placed these derived obligations: respect for autonomy, the protection of nonautonomous persons and those with diminished autonomy, informed consent, privacy, and confidentiality" (1993, p. 390). These are the aspirational values very likely to be shared in common by any prospective membership of a group governed by an ethical code.

Various professional organizations recognize these same shared aspirational values. The American Psychological Association (APA, 1992) identifies six aspirational

principles: competence, integrity, professional and scientific responsibility, respect for peoples' rights and dignity, concern for others' welfare, and social responsibility. The American Counseling Association (ACA, 1995) organizes its ethics into "standards of practice" which are mandatory behavioral ethics, and its actual "code", which is more aspirational in character. Dean describes other common categories found in codes of ethics: exercise of due care, confidentiality, fidelity to special responsibilities, avoidance of the appearance of a conflict of interest, willing compliance to the law, acting in good faith in negotiations, respect for human well-being, and respect for the liberty and constitutional rights of others (as cited in 1994, p. 40).

Beyond the identification of values comes a requirement to perform "due diligence". In common language, this means collecting facts relevant to the issue under investigation. Another way of saying that facts are at the center of things is to call the approach "empirical". Thus Frankel (1989, p. 113) says that a code "should be empirically grounded". He follows that up with a description of its application, admonishing that "procedures for its interpretation should be sensitive both to the different contexts in which members work and to the effects of such differences on the application of the profession's norms" (ibid.). According to Pope & Vasquez (1998, p. 24), the APA Committee on Ethical Standards chose empirical analysis "because empirical research was a primary method of psychology, [thus] the code itself should be based upon such research and should draw upon the experience of APA members." As part of this empirical research, all 7,500 members of the APA (in 1948) were sent a letter asking each member "to share his experiences in solving ethical problems by describing the specific circumstances in which someone made a decision that was ethically critical"

(in *ibid.*). The committee received reports of over 1,000 critical incidents. "During the next years," report Pope & Vasquez (*ibid.*), "the incidents with their accompanying comments were carefully analyzed, categorized, and developed into a draft code".

Experienced and dedicated ethics committees track what standards are violated most often. Strom-Gottfried (2000, p. 253) studied the National Association of Social Workers, which surveyed code violations occurring between 1986 and 1997, and reported as follows:

The study's findings are clustered in 10 categories of violations: violating boundaries, poor practice, competence, record keeping, honesty, confidentiality, informed consent, collegial actions, reimbursement, and conflicts of interest....

One hundred forty-seven cases (55 percent of all those in which there were findings) resulted in conclusions of some form of boundary violation. Sexual activities accounted for 107 violations.

There are still other factors important to consider when crafting a code. Ethics committees must include procedures for decision-making; dozens of examples of decision-making processes are readily available. Despite this fact, no research exists on the effectiveness of the various models, leading Cottone and Claus (2000) to collaborate on a comprehensive review of the material available on ethical decision-making models for the years 1984 through 1998. They report on the grouping of models into the following general categories: theoretical or philosophical, practice-based, and specialty-

relevant. Code effectiveness, the authors conclude, hinges on clear procedures to investigate and adjudicate code violations, regardless of model.

As evidenced by the many variables to be considered in creating a code of ethics, an effective procedure requires a significant investment of time and effort. The Ethics Resource Center recommends twelve components as being minimally necessary to develop, implement, and manage an industry-wide comprehensive ethics program. These include, for example, a focus on ethical leadership, vision statement, values statement, code of ethics, designated ethics official, ethics task force or committee, ethics communication strategy, training, help line, rewards and sanctions for ethical behavior, comprehensive system to monitor and track ethics data, and periodic evaluation of ethics efforts and data² (as cited in *Association Management*, 1999).

The last matter to be discussed, though hardly the least important, is the need to include methods for evaluating and ensuring a healthy evolution of the code so as to reflect changes in organization or tradition . Codes are frequently referred to as "living documents", a phrase expressing their capacity to adapt to changing organizational needs.

Protection of Autonomy

Wiccans are particularly sensitive to any perceived threat to their personal autonomy. For this group it is therefore especially important to examine how an ethics code can protect autonomy. As reported previously, some Wiccans believe that autonomy is best protected by having no rules. One hopes that Wiccans will take comfort knowing

² This list was cited in a bulleted format. The author's language was closely adhered to here.

that it is a primary function of any professional ethics code to protect the autonomy of the *professional* as well as that of the client.

In order to minimize the abuse of power, professionals have always required an awareness of ranking, and of the inherent power differentials that are directly implied within their relationships. Arnold Mindell (1995, p. 42) defines rank as "a conscious or unconscious, social or personal ability or power arising from culture, community support, personal psychology and/or spiritual power." Power differentials would appear to exist in all relationships, whether we acknowledge it or not. Professional psychologists recognize power differences in every relationship, whether familial, professional, social, or spiritual.

Wiccan clergy participate in roles that involve unavoidable power differentials: teacher-student, counselor-client, spiritual guide-seeker. It is important that they be aware not only of ranking relationships, but of responsibilities that attend rank. Mindell (1995, p. 64) notes that any conscientious organizational entity "does not deny or ignore its rank. Instead, it stands for its power and uses it judiciously." Those with greater rank have an obligation not to misuse this unavoidable power differential. Minimizing abuse of power by the profession as a whole or by an individual is for this reason a prime objective of all professional ethics codes.

Beauchamp and Childress (1983, p. 59) define autonomy as "self-governance"—"Being one's own person, without constraints either by another's action or by psychological or physical limitations." Of course, professional ethics codes must protect not only the autonomy of the professional, but also the autonomy of those they serve. Keyserlink (1993, pp. 397-8) makes this very clear in having defined respect for

personal responsibility as "an obligation to value *the autonomous choices and actions of others*, those made by people who are competent, informed, and acting voluntarily [my emphasis]." Frankel explains the broader context out of which this protection has come:

Historically, the professions and society have engaged in a negotiating process intended to define the terms of their relationship. At the heart of this process is the tension between the professions' pursuit of autonomy and the public's demand for accountability.... It has long been recognized that the expertise and privileged position of professionals confer authority and power that could readily be used to advance their own interests at the expense of those they serve.... Autonomy has never been a one-way street and is never granted absolutely and irrevocably (1989, pp. 109-10).

It is important to see personal autonomy in its relation to society and culture. "Moral principles", say Beauchamp and Childress (1983, p. 65), "are not disembodied rules, cut off from their cultural setting." It is worth our while to examine this idea at some length, so I will allow for a couple of long excerpts. First, the view of Beauchamp and Childress (*ibid.*)—

To interpret autonomy in morality as entailing the reign of subjective principles involves an inherent misunderstanding of both moral belief and ethical theory. This conception wrongly portrays moral principles as formulated by atomized 'moral' agents disengaged from a cultural setting... By its nature morality is not

individual-centered.... Virtuous conduct, role responsibilities, acceptable forms of loving, charitable behavior, respect for persons, and many other moral views are individually *assumed*, but usually appropriated from cultural arrangements [their emphasis].

Extreme individualism, a philosophical approach in defense of full autonomy, seems to presume that individuals are isolated from the natural and social orders, as if by this fact nothing could exist that would present a danger to the social fabric. Callahan (1984, p. 41), in opposition to such a view, and speaking from the context of bioethics, will have the last word on the matter:

This understanding of autonomy is hazardous to moral relationships and moral community. It buys our freedom to be ourselves, and to be free of undue influence by others, at too high a price. It establishes contractual relationships as the principal and highest form of relationships. It elevates isolation and separation as the necessary starting point of human commitments. It presumes that the moral life can be made a wholly voluntary matter,... thus attempting to deny the validity of many uninvited moral obligations that ordinary life with other people usually casts before us.

Developing Ethics in Accord with Belief

C. S. Herrman, an analytical philosopher, has developed a method to create ethics that are congruent with spiritual belief. The system is described in his paper "The Origin of Ethics from Conceptions of Spirit, and its Function as an Expression of a Belief-Reliance System" (Unpublished, 2001). What he has done is establish connections between a cascading series of ethics-related concepts: spirit, belief, principle, value and morality. Belief, informed of spirit, can be transposed as principles, which in turn presuppose values, the fulfillment of which constitutes his definition of moral behavior. By assuring the freedom and security of moral behavior, ethics in his system will automatically protect values, and therefore also the principles they express, as well as the spirit-belief complex from which a tradition is generated. Any group reliant on beliefs can and does have the capacity to form an organized belief-reliance system featuring the concepts mentioned above. Of special importance to Wicca is the fact that such a system can be applied even in the absence of a pre-existing set of institutions, rules or otherwise enforceable guidelines.

In order to apply his methodology, a group must first identify its beliefs about how spirit manifests in the world of form. After identifying these beliefs, it is possible to generate the group's core principles that are specific derivations of the spiritual beliefs. Herrman defines a principle as "a statement embodying in words the spirit without which an organization/group would not exist." The role that principles play in a group is "to enable the values that the group aspires to as a whole or as individual members." Having

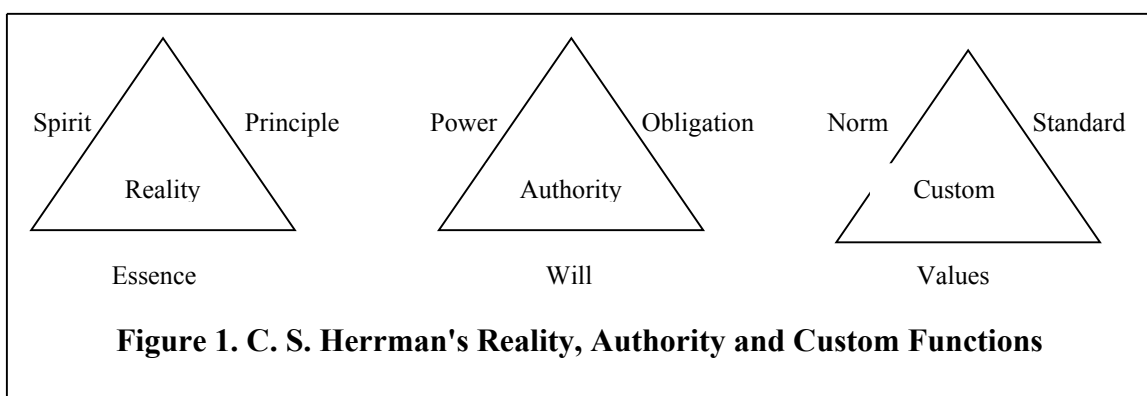
identified the principles on which the existence of the group is based, the group can communicate its values and objectives, and from there its ethics.

The entire purpose of ethics, according to Herrman, is to protect every individual's inherent right as a group member to maximize attainment of the values and benefits the group has to offer; thus an ethics code must protect the reliance that individuals place in the group. Herrman perceives reliance as being formally assured through "offices" recognized and/or created by the group, though it is important to note that ethics rules are valid only where moral behavior or values, etc. are at risk of breach. It is further essential that a group recognize that *all* of its members hold an office. That is, every group member has something of an ethical duty toward others, and everyone else has a responsibility to respect each member's office in turn, though not necessarily by the enforcement of ethical regulations. Though it seems to at first glance, Herrman's system has no aspirational ethics, since these ideas are expressed as the principles in his cascade, and therefore any and all ethical rules that exist are rules that can be breached and for which redress or resolution can be sought.

In the case of Wicca, any given tradition and its officers have an obligation to all of its initiates to protect the reliance they have placed in the group. Those individuals that serve the group—priests, priestesses and elders—are under strict obligations to protect the reliance of every group member, thereby protecting the integrity of the group as a whole, and the values that the group offers. Mr. Herrman's system brings these benefits and requirements into relation with one another through the concept of "office"—which applies generally to any group of people who voluntarily share obligations in common, and rely on them to justify their authority to achieve aspirations otherwise unobtainable.

Herrman uses a triadic function to suggest how spirit informs the world of manifestation. Three of these functions that are useful to an ethics code for Wiccan clergy (see also chapter 4) can be briefly introduced here: the "reality" function, the "authority" function and the "custom" function. Each of these functions stands alone as a self-consistent logical system. But because every function is ultimately derived from a common ancestral archetype, each of these three functions is related to one another in a way similar to the different spheres in the Kabbalistic Tree of Life as they inform each other, from spirit to the world of matter.

Each function gets its name from the center label (refer to fig. 1). The center is also what Herrman calls the "transcendent", because it is created by the combination of the other three factors (such that in no one or two of them could the transcendent be discerned). For example, in order to have legitimate authority, an office holder would hold the *power* or capacity to perform the duties of the office, the *will* to fulfill the office, and the *obligations* that justify the application of the power.



The relationship between belief, principle, value and ethics can easily be seen in action within the government of the United States. The axiomatic *belief* that "All men are

created equal" implies a *principle* of inherent worth and the recognition of the *value* of rights (Bill of Rights). To assure the acts of freedom that fulfill our rights, we have offices and the code of ethics holding the officer accountable.

Herrman (table 1) defines the necessary steps for the development of a professional code of ethics:

Table 1: Ethics Functions in Context of an Ethics Commission

	Aspect	Description
1	Assessing Tradition	Determine moral behaviors with respect to values, values with respect to principles, principles with respect to beliefs. Detect and evaluate relevance/significance to belief-reliance system of changes in values relative to beliefs, and propose transition guidelines.
2	Realm of Authority	Determine the values properly to be protected by ethics; show that the values/morals are at risk or present a risk to beliefs. In short, no picayune applications of ethics, since it degrades the necessary appearance of propriety, hence the value and effectiveness of the ethics code. Determine the extent to which any given office requires ethics protection
3	Conduct & Procedure	Prescribe manner of observation (how obtrusive, etc.), the means of recording, and to whom and when violations are to be reported, etc. Prescribe manner of comportment of ethics officers 1) In their ethicist function; 2) in the Wiccan community at large; and 3) in respect of civil interchange (in 'public').
4	Evaluative Technique	For all ethical behaviors under purview of ethics commission, determine effectiveness and efficiency standards and evaluate behavior in accordance therewith, and normative standards of disciplinary action. Prescribe rules governing the creation and convoking of an enforcement group tasked with deciding how to implement ethics findings as prescribed by the ethics commission.

5

Group
Constitution

Prescribe and provide for training and oversight for members of commission, as well as standards for evaluation and dismissal; and the same for ancillary staff, with hiring and training guidelines, etc.

Prescribe possible manners (appointment, election, etc.) by which an ethics commission may be established, including qualifications. Determine number of members, where and how often to meet, whether and to what extent all are involved in rule making or final evaluations, etc. Determine a tenure for the commission itself or its members, etc.

Chapter 3

Aspects of the APA Code of Ethics Relevant to Wiccan Principles and Practice

General Applications

Many of the accepted ethical standards applicable to therapists and counselors are likewise relevant to the practice of Wiccan clergy. This is especially the case for clergy engaged in direct role overlaps of teaching with supervision and/or evaluation, and any of these with general or pastoral counseling. Wiccan clergy serve, for example, as pastoral counselors not only to their coveners but to the larger Wiccan and pagan communities; those clergy that teach will also frequently mentor and evaluate the next generation of priests and priestesses.

In this chapter I will identify, from the 1992 edition of the American Psychological Association's *Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct* (hereafter referred to as the APA "Code of Ethics" or simply the "Code", all citations coming from the 1992 edition), those standards having particular relevance to Wiccan clergy. This specific code was selected for the reasons that psychology and clergy functions are role-congruent, and that the APA's Code of Ethics applies to issues brought about by multiple roles (for the functions of, e.g., therapy, teaching, supervision, evaluation, research and forensics).

The Code is organized into four categories: introduction, preamble, general ethical principles, and ethical standards. The introduction informs of the "intent, organization, procedural considerations, and scope of application" of the code. In addition it briefly describes the procedures for filing a complaint about a member, as well

as setting out the kinds of actions that the APA may take in response to violations, including "reprimand, censure, termination of APA membership, and referral of the matter to other bodies."

The authors identify the preamble, together with the (general ethical) principles as "aspirational goals to guide psychologists toward the highest ideals of psychology". It should be noted that such "aspirational ethics" are not intended to be *enforceable* standards of behavior, but serve instead as underlying concepts that members are encouraged to apply in their decision-making.

The last section, on specific ethical standards, deals with the enforceable rules of conduct applicable to all members in their professional capacity as psychologists. Here also the Code is careful to point out that "the fact that a given conduct is not specifically addressed by the Ethics Code does not mean that it is necessarily either ethical or unethical."

A related document, *Rules and Procedures* (APA, 1996) details the boundaries of authority of the APA ethics committee. It is of course essential to provide such a document concurrently with the creation of a code of ethics. For the APA it elucidates general operating rules, as well as procedures to handle matters such as membership applications (also readmissions) and procedures to handle fraud and various other alleged code violations. The document also addresses actions that the APA ethics committee would need to take in response to actions of other legislating bodies as, e.g., when a psychologist loses his state license (he would not retain APA membership).

Applicable Principles

The Code of Ethics describes the aspirational ethics of psychologists as "principles" and enumerates six of them: competence, integrity, professional and scientific responsibility, respect for people's rights and dignity, concern for others' welfare, and social responsibility.

For each of these six I will state or quote portions of the principle, and follow it with remarks pertinent to Wiccan clergy and/or Wiccan ethics in general. All quotations are from the 1992 edition of the Code.

Competence

"Psychologists strive to maintain high standards of competence in their work. They recognize the boundaries of their particular competencies and the limitations of their expertise. They provide only those services.... for which they are qualified by education, training, or experience."

As we have seen in chapter two, competence is a problematic issue within the Wiccan community. Many who are attempting to serve as coven leaders and clergy have had minimal or no training. One problem is that the majority of the information available for the training of Wiccans consists of general primers and spellwork manuals, jokingly referred to as "Wicca 101" books. After reading a book or two anyone can decide to take students and found a coven. Few texts exist that discuss the deeper issues of Wiccan theology, group ethics, conflict resolution, non-profit financial administration, and other more professional topics that would be covered in a graduate level clergy education program. More than a few of these people, if unintentionally, have harmed their students

and coveners as a result of attempting to function in a role for which they lack competence.

Integrity

The principle of integrity proposes that psychologists be "honest, fair, and respectful of others... they do not make statements that are false, misleading, or deceptive." This principle, it is suggested, encourages APA members to "strive to be aware of their own belief systems, values, needs, and limitations and the effect of these on their work." In addition, the professional is cautioned to "avoid improper and potentially harmful dual relationships."

Personal integrity is highly valued in most Wiccan communities. Honesty and fairness are not only valued but are expected of Wiccan clergy. When well-trained, Wiccan clergy maintain awareness of their personal beliefs and values, and they act and speak in a manner consonant with their values. Further, all Wiccans are expected to be firmly on the path of self-development. To that end, clergy are to be especially mindful of the responsibility that is likewise stressed for all initiates.

Unfortunately, the only method relied on in most communities to achieve accountability is based on cause-effect formulae (the Wiccan and pagan view of karma). Many therefore rationalize their conduct, good and bad alike, with the expectation that whoever causes harm in the present will get what they deserve in the future. The integrity of the religion is placed at risk when clearly harmful behavior has become socially acceptable. Frequently this is the result of a misguided attempt to protect autonomy. The

specifics addressed by the principle of integrity are certainly applicable for inclusion in a code for Wiccan clergy.

As for dual relationships, it has to be understood that they are inherent in the role of Wiccan clergy, who must fulfill the roles of teacher, mentor, ritual facilitator, counselor, evaluator, friend, community member and family member. In my experience, dual relationships need not be harmful, but we all should acknowledge that ethics education would aid Wiccan clergy serving in multiple roles. Such training would help those who experience significant role stress, and would keep others away from harmful overlaps.

Professional and Scientific Responsibility

"Psychologists uphold professional standards of conduct, clarify their professional roles and obligations, accept appropriate responsibility for their behavior, and adapt their methods to the needs of different populations." It is further stated that the personal life of the professional remains such—unless their actions "compromise their professional responsibilities or reduce the public's trust in psychology and psychologists." As a preventive measure the code advises the professional to "consult with colleagues in order to prevent or avoid unethical conduct."

Wiccan clergy have both professional and scientific responsibilities. Personal and professional boundaries for Wiccan clergy are usually much less clear than in other "professional" therapeutic relationships. They do need to be aware of the responsibilities that come with a given role, especially in relation to other's rights. It seems clear that a code of ethics would make this task both simpler and more effective.

Wiccan clergy need to be aware that their roles carry obligations beyond the realm of personal responsibility. Such include, for example, confidentiality and the avoidance of exploitative relationships. Consultation within limits of confidentiality is an extremely valuable tool used by therapists, and Wiccan clergy would greatly benefit by the incorporation of this practice.

Individuals performing surveys need to be aware of their scientific responsibility. In the rapidly growing Wiccan community there is more interest both within and without to gather data about the composition, duration and other information concerning members. Such information must be gathered in a way that does not unreasonably intrude on privacy, and must also be done with approved methodology to ensure statistical validity.

Respect for People's Rights and Dignity

Psychologists accord appropriate respect to fundamental rights, dignity, and worth of all people. They respect the rights of individuals to privacy, confidentiality, self-determination, and autonomy, mindful that legal and other obligations may lead to inconsistency and conflict with the exercise of these rights.

It is of the greatest importance that this principle be included in a code of ethics relevant to Wiccan clergy. This principle is, after all, at the very heart of the Wiccan religion, which is grounded in the belief that all beings have inherent worth and dignity. An entire set of rights is made manifest from this principle, including respect for autonomy, confidentiality and self-determination. This principle also recognizes the need

for the professional to be aware of, and sensitive to, cultural and individual differences; this includes, of course, fostering attitudes free from bias and discrimination.

Concern for Others' Welfare

In their professional actions, psychologists weigh the welfare and rights of their patients or clients, students, supervisees, human research participants, and other affected persons, and the welfare of animal subjects in research. When conflicts occur among psychologists' obligations or concerns, they attempt to resolve these conflicts and to perform their roles in a responsible fashion that avoids or minimizes harm. Psychologists are sensitive to real and ascribed differences in power between themselves and others, and they do not exploit or mislead other people during or after professional relationships.

Like the actions and words of a therapist, the actions of Wiccan clergy influence others' lives, whether or not they are conscious of the effect. The duty to intentionally minimize harm that may result from this influence is obviously important, and should certainly be incorporated into the ethical practice of Wiccan clergy. This obligation is owed to coven members, students and colleagues, as well as those whom the clergy directly guide in spiritual practice. It is worth noting here that this principle follows immediately from foundational Wiccan beliefs.

Social Responsibility

Psychologists are aware of their professional and scientific responsibilities to the community and the society in which they work and live. They apply and make public their knowledge of psychology in order to contribute to human welfare.

Psychologists are concerned about and work to mitigate the causes of human suffering.

Wiccan clergy do definitely have a social responsibility, although the usual focus on autonomy distracts many from realizing this aspirational ethic. It is a matter of simple survival that Wiccans learn to integrate this principle into the practice of their religion. Indeed, the Wiccan Rede recognizes social responsibility, and still many Wiccans fail to be aware of the necessity of this ethic in order to achieve congruence with the belief that the universe is systemic.

Witches do not, by the very nature of their craft, make their knowledge generally available, but they do apply their knowledge to that end. Through all of recorded history, Witches have frequently been healers, of themselves and others; as such they also work to mitigate human suffering.

Specific Regulatory Standards

§1.01 Applicability of the Ethics Code

This standard restricts the applicability of the APA ethics code to professional activities. Reflection and definition of the boundaries for personal and profession roles would benefit Wiccan clergy. Being Wiccan clergy is at the center of many individual's

self-identity, making it all the more necessary, if also difficult, for them to distinguish personal from professional activities.

§1.03 Boundaries of Competence

"Psychologists provide services, teach, and conduct research only within the boundaries of their competence, based on their education, training, supervised experience, or appropriate professional experience." They are required to offer services only after "undertaking appropriate study, training, supervision, and/or consultation from persons who are competent in those areas or techniques." If recognized standards do not exist, therapists must "take reasonable steps to ensure the competence of their work and to protect patients, clients, students, research participants, and others from harm."

Standards defining the boundaries of competence are directly relevant to Wiccan clergy, making the adoption of this standard an important step towards addressing the significant problems with current Wiccan norms. Competence and incompetence are at present largely indistinguishable, leaving incompetence to be tolerated in the community at large. For instance, Wiccan clergy frequently are called upon by their students and other community members to provide pastoral counseling, yet very few actually possess training or degrees in counseling. Most have never taken a single class or read a single book on the topic. The fact that this is but one of numerous examples suggests the pervasiveness of what can only be considered gross negligence in the failure to provide services in which, and with which, one is competent.

§1.04 Maintaining Expertise

This standard states the need for professionals to remain aware of and competently apply current advances in their field. As with other professions, this usually translates into yearly continuing education requirements. There is no questioning that this is an essential element to maintaining competence.

Continuing education classes need to be developed by groups serving the Wiccan community. Some groups, such as Cherry Hill Seminary, are attempting to fill this need, offering graduate level classes on topics such as ethics and pastoral counseling.

§1.08 Human Differences and §1.10 Nondiscrimination

Section 1.08 states that the professional must respect individual differences (i.e., age, race, gender, etc.). Section 1.10 specifically requires that psychologists "not engage in unfair discrimination based on age, gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, socioeconomic status, or any basis proscribed by law."

Both sections should be incorporated in a code for Wiccan clergy. For any Wiccan to omit nondiscrimination as an ethic would violate the cardinal Wiccan principle of respect of persons, as well as that of valuing the diversity manifest in the system. The current practices of some covens and traditions will need to be changed to reflect this ethic; many traditions and covens, for example, afford greater opportunities to females, with the high priest valued only as consort to the high priestess.

Groups that limit opportunities to specific types of persons should state their preferences up front and should not claim an ethic of nondiscrimination. As an example, there are numerous woman-only traditions. In itself, this is not unethical since there are

plenty of available mixed groups for men to join. But for such a group to claim nondiscrimination would place it squarely against these regulations.

§1.09 Respecting Others

" In their work-related activities, psychologists respect the rights of others to hold values, attitudes, and opinions that differ from their own."

This is one regulatory ethic that derives from the aspirational principle of respect for people's rights and dignity and respect for autonomy. It is, of course, directly relevant to the ethical practice of Wiccan clergy. Failure to respect others' outlooks is a primary reason why Witch wars are so prevalent in North America.

§1.11 Sexual Harassment

Psychologists do not engage in sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is sexual solicitation, physical advances, or verbal or nonverbal conduct that is sexual in nature, that occurs in connection with the psychologist's activities or roles as a psychologist, and that either: is unwelcome, is offensive, or creates a hostile workplace environment Psychologists do not participate in denying a person academic admittance or advancement, employment, tenure, or promotions, based solely upon their having made, or their being the subject of, sexual-harassment charges.

These clearly stated standards of behavior are essential elements to creation of a code for Wiccan clergy. The acceptance of sexual harassment, by onlookers and, by its silence, the community at large, is an unhealthy norm existing in too many communities.

Speaking of it as a norm, many teachers have traditionally required sexual contact from a student as a condition for initiation or even for advanced training. Some covens require the student to engage in sex with the priest/ess as a component of the initiation process.

The Great Rite is a sacred ritual where the priest and priestess invoke the God and Goddess into their bodies and allow the Gods to consummate the *hieros gamos* or "sacred marriage". As practiced, the Great Rite (often included as part of the third degree initiation) may be actual or symbolic, though most groups use the symbolic form. Others, while allowing the actual ritual, permit it only between mated couples. Still, there remain numerous groups or individual priests and priestesses that require this sexual act of their students in order to advance. Considering the widespread belief that it is not harmful to engage in sex with teachers (cited in chapter 1), inclusion of this standard is important.

§1.13 Personal Problems and Conflicts

Psychologists recognize that their personal problems and conflicts may interfere with their effectiveness. Accordingly, they refrain from undertaking an activity when they know or should know that their personal problems are likely to lead to harm to a patient, client, colleague, student, research participant, or other person to whom they may owe a professional or scientific obligation.... In addition, psychologists have an obligation to be alert to signs of, and to obtain assistance for, their personal problems at an early stage, in order to prevent significantly impaired performance.

Inclusion of this standard may reduce the frequency of entire communities riding the roller coaster of an individual clergy person's dysfunction. Wiccan clergy are not immune to substance abuse and/or mental health problems. Inclusion of a similar standard to be aware, pro-active and responsible in response to one's personal problems would aid in recognition of this often over-looked responsibility.

§1.14 Avoiding Harm

"Psychologists take reasonable steps to avoid harming their patients or clients, research participants, students, and others with whom they work, and to minimize harm where it is foreseeable and unavoidable."

Nonmaleficence and avoidance of harm is central to Wiccan belief and is understood to be a primary responsibility of all Wiccans, especially Wiccan clergy. As the APA code exhibits, ethics codes help facilitate understanding of what behaviors have significant potential to cause harm.

§1.15 Misuse of Psychologists' Influence and §1.19 Exploitative Relationships

Section 1.15 requires that psychologists "guard against personal, financial, social, organizational, or political factors that might lead to misuse of their influence."

Section 1.19 prohibits psychologists from exploiting people that they serve. This section also specifically prohibits psychologists from engaging in sexual relationships with "students or supervisees in training over whom the psychologist has evaluative or direct authority, because such relationships are so likely to impair judgment or be exploitative."

This standard is of primary importance to Wiccan communities and their clergy. Many priests and priestesses are aware of their influence and are diligent in avoiding misusing it. Others, however, lack any insight into this matter. Education concerning the inherent "power differentials" of the role is necessary to ensure ethical conduct.

It is harmful for priests and priestesses to involve their coveners in Witch wars by allowing them to be involved in a public battle between personalities. Some even use their coveners as a defensive shield in community conflicts. A specific rule disallowing Wiccans from involving their coveners in these ways is therefore very much needed.

And here again we stress that teachers, clergy and students all need to be made aware of the potential to do harm by engaging in sexual relations with students (see also section 1.11 above).

§1.17 Multiple Relationships

Section 1.17 instructs psychologists to avoid any relationship with a client "if it appears likely that ... [it] might impair the psychologist's objectivity or otherwise interfere with the psychologist's effectively performing his or her functions ... or might harm or exploit the other party."

It has already been stated that multiple relationships, where the priest/ess serves in at least one other role with the same client, are inherent in the role of Wiccan clergy. It is neither realistic nor even proper for Wiccan clergy to avoid social contact, if only because they are often active in the community they serve. A code for Wiccan clergy should caution practitioners to refrain from multiple relationships *if harm is likely*, such as engaging in sexual relationships with a student or covener.

Dual relationships are not inherently harmful and may even be beneficial (Zur, 1999, 2000). Clergy should avail themselves of decision-making tools (Brownlee, 1996; Friedman, 2000; Zur, 1999, 2000) and then apply those tools to analyze multiple relationships. They should also be directed to seek out consultation (see §1.13) with other clergy, to openly discuss role boundaries, and to obtain informed consent from those with whom they may be entering into multiple relationships.

§1.24 Fees and Financial Arrangements

As long as the services of Wiccan clergy are performed gratis, this section remains inapplicable. If payment for services ever becomes an issue, then similar arrangements should be provided for. The CoG code of ethics (1975) includes the following guideline: "All persons have the right to charge reasonable fees for the services by which they earn a living, so long as our religion is not thereby exploited."

Controversy surrounding salaried clergy is ongoing. As professionalization occurs, role boundaries will continue to be more clearly defined. It may be that clergy could obtain salary for serving an organization's office, for example, in a non-profit corporation, but not be paid to facilitate rituals and other religious services. Wiccans should realistically examine the reasons for supporting or opposing paid clergy, appreciating that some arguments will more reflect residual values from previous cultures than those of Wicca.

§3 Advertising and Other Public Statements

Section 3 is subdivided into specific standards dealing with truthfulness and integrity in their numerous circumstances: public statements, statement by others, media presentations, testimonials, and in-person solicitation.

These standards are applicable to Wiccan or Wiccan-related organizations that advertise for students, or those that serve to inform the public, as does the Covenant of the Goddess. These standards exist in order to assure truthfulness with regard to competence, credentials, affiliations, and services.

Section 3.06, "In-Person Solicitation", is specifically relevant to the prohibition of "uninvited" solicitation, which is equivalent to the accepted standard prohibiting proselitization. This, already an unwritten norm in the Wiccan community, is obviously relevant for inclusion in a code of ethics for Wiccan clergy. It should be noted that a prohibition on proselitization is basic and necessary to the Wiccan value of respect for individual autonomy.

§4 Therapy

The standards for providing therapy are relevant to the Wiccan clergy who provide pastoral counseling. The APA subsections cover the following:

- 1) structuring the relationship
- 2) informed consent to therapy
- 3) couple and family relationships
- 4) providing mental health services to those served by others
- 5) sexual intimacies with current patients or clients

- 6) therapy with former sexual partners
- 7) sexual intimacies with former therapy patients

It would be of additional benefit for clergy providing pastoral counseling to refer to the *Code of Ethics* of the American Association of Pastoral Counselors (1994), which specifically addresses ethics in relation to pastoral counseling.

Two specific subsections, §4.08, "Interruption of services", and §4.09, "Terminating the professional relationship", and are of particular relevance to Wiccan clergy—not in relation to providing therapy, rather in relation to coven administration. Section 4.08 requires that psychologists "make reasonable efforts to plan for facilitating care in the event that psychological services are interrupted by factors such as the psychologist's illness, death, unavailability or relocation." Section 4.09 adds that they "not abandon patients or clients."

Wiccan clergy must learn that covens are not their proprietary property and that they have obligations to those placing deep reliance in their leadership. What is more, initiates (and others) place reliance not only in the coven leader, but also in the very existence—and therefore the continuity—of the group. Add to this that for many of them, the coven is their family of choice. But covens have been disbanded, and their coveners abandoned, simply because a priestess decided not to continue in the position, or perhaps because she moved.

When a coven is disbanded with the initiates having no choice in its end, they experience a traumatic violation of individual rights. Dissolution of a coven should therefore always require the consent of all the initiates of that coven, and it certainly

should not be a coven leader's prerogative either to abandon them or to disband their "family".

Wiccan clergy must begin to make a concerted effort—made easier with a code of ethics in place—to provide their students the necessary continuity of training and emotional bonding, whether by appointment of a new coven leader from within the coven or referral to another priest/ess as a mentor to the coven (if no individual within the coven is prepared to take on the role).

§5 Privacy and Confidentiality

Here the Code addresses specific standards defining the limits of confidentiality, maintaining confidentiality, minimizing intrusions on privacy, maintenance of records, disclosures, consultations, confidential information in databases, preserving records and data, and ownership of data.

Confidentiality is greatly valued by Wiccans due to frequent discrimination against individual Wiccans by family and employers. Owing to these and other reasons, many Wiccans keep their involvement in Wicca secret, and clergy are expected to protect their students' identity. An ethical code for Wiccan clergy should address confidentiality in depth, as done by the APA.

Section 5.02 is specifically relevant and states that psychologists must "take reasonable precautions to respect the confidentiality rights of those with whom they work or consult." This section clearly evidences the standard that therapists discuss the limits of confidentiality with those they serve, including state mandatory reporting laws.

The specific instances in which psychologists may disclose information without an individual's consent that are relevant to the service of Wiccan clergy are expressed in section 5.05, as being those 1) mandated by law; 2) to obtain appropriate consultations; and 3) to protect the patient or client or others from harm.

Wiccan clergy could directly apply section 5.06 in which limits are placed on the exchange of client data in consultation with colleagues. Specifically, they are not to "share confidential information that reasonably could lead to the identification of a patient," and may confide or share information "only to the extent necessary to achieve the purposes of the consultation." Consultation is a method of developing and applying ethical decision making that Wiccan clergy would do well to incorporate into their practice. Due to traditionally accepted secrecy and autonomy, however, most priests and priestesses do not consult with their colleagues. Therapists are well aware of the value of this tool which can be reasonably used within the limits of confidentiality. Clergy must be made equally aware of it, and a codification here would be helpful.

§6 Teaching, Training Supervision, Research, and Publishing

This is a topic that carries substantial value for Wiccan clergy, with several subsections having relevance. Section 6.01, "Design of education and training programs", requires that "psychologists who are responsible for education and training programs seek to ensure that the programs are competently designed, provide the proper experiences, and meet the requirements for licensure, certification, or other goals for which claims are made by the program."

Wiccan clergy are of course responsible for maintaining their competence; but they can likewise be held responsible for ensuring the competence of the students and future clergy that they train. To that end, well-designed educational programs are essential. Also essential is an honest description of what the student can expect to learn by attending a program (as covered in §6.02).

Basic standards for competence in teaching are essential for a Wiccan clergy code of ethics. Section 6.05, "Assessing student and supervisee performance", would have the psychologist "establish an appropriate process for providing feedback to students and supervisees," and should restrict evaluation solely to "their actual performance on relevant and established program requirements."

Wiccan groups need to elevate their standards in the teaching and training of priests and priestesses. Initiates deserve to carry realistic expectations such as a code of ethics would help to foster. Even if the class is a study group, ethical action should be expected of all Wiccan teachers.

Standard 6.19 asks for "reasonable measures to honor all commitments they [psychologists] have made to research participants." Though Wiccan clergy do not generally perform research, honoring commitments is a behavior to be expected. This standard relates to the integrity of an individual clergy member, without which the image and effectiveness of the clergy as a whole may be damaged in the eyes of the community. Considering the vast amounts of liturgy and other writing produced by the Wiccan community, standards 6.22- 6.24 are relevant. Psychologists must not (§6.22) "present substantial portions of elements of another's work or data as their own, even if the other

work or data source is cited occasionally". Section 6.23(a) permits credit to be taken "only for work they have actually performed or to which they have contributed".

Plagiarism and publication credit are common problems in the Wiccan community, especially in electronic publishing. People share in creating a given liturgy but the person publishing the tract will not be in the practice of citing sources or giving proper credit. Wiccan clergy should especially avoid taking credit for work that their students perform, or ideas they write or otherwise generate. Because it is now easy and inexpensive, many coven leaders and clergy self-publish, further diminishing any means by which to hold them accountable. Community norms and respectability could be improved by adding these standards to its ethics.

§8 Resolving Ethical Issues

Here there is relevance in every category mentioned. In general, the section stresses the necessity to have in place a method by which to address violations. Absent a method of this kind, it would be difficult to claim any code of ethics as effective.

Psychologists are required in §8.01 to have "familiarity with this Ethics Code". As with law, ignorance is no excuse: "lack of awareness or misunderstanding" is not a legal defense if one is charged with a violation of the code.

Section 8.02 recommends consultation with other knowledgeable professionals when there is uncertainty over the applicability of an ethical regulation to act.

Section 8.03 deals with "conflicts between ethics and organizational demands", a topic that may have relevance. At this time covens are considered autonomous, but if an

ethics code were enacted, for example, by a professional association, this section would apply.

Section 8.04 recommends private and informal resolution of an alleged violation wherever "appropriate", and where it also avoids violation of confidentiality. If Wiccan clergy used informal resolution between the parties—instead of public fighting which draws in an entire community—many Witch wars might be prevented.

Section 8.05 requires that psychologists report possible unethical behavior of another professional to the APA if informal resolution is not appropriate or has not been successful.

Section 8.06 clearly states that APA members are to cooperate in any ethics investigation: "Failure to cooperate is itself an ethics violation."

Finally, in §8.07, the APA makes the filing of frivolous ethics complaints a violation in itself of ethics. Psychologists are not to "file or encourage the filing of ethics complaints that are frivolous and are intended to harm the respondent rather than to protect the public".

Patient/Client Rights

In ending this chapter it might be best to go back to the beginning of the APA Code of Ethics, in particular to the preamble. There it states that the "primary goal" is "the welfare and protection of the individuals and groups with whom psychologists work." But another way of saying the same thing is to acknowledge the rights of patients

and clients. This is especially the case when addressing a Wiccan audience, for whom such a preamble should be included in their code.

Wiccans are perhaps more prepared than most any other group to interpret matters in terms of their rights and their autonomy. Each individual served by the office of Wiccan clergy has rights that must be acknowledged in order to prevent the violation of these rights. The founders of the United States recognized the necessity that the people be able to place reliance in public offices when they crafted The Bill of Rights.

For the field of psychology, nine professional societies collaborated in creation of a document called *Patients' Mental Health Rights* (APA, 1997) which is also directly applicable to Wiccan clergy ethics. The following rights were paramount:

- 1) the right to know (of benefits, professional expertise, contractual limitations, appeals and grievances)
- 2) confidentiality
- 3) choice
- 4) determination of treatment
- 5) parity
- 6) nondiscrimination
- 7) benefit of usage
- 8) benefit design
- 9) treatment review
- 10) accountability

Many rights recognized by these associations are relevant to members of Wiccan groups. Wiccan clergy are obligated to protect the rights of the people they interact with

in the performance of their office. In addition to the above there are many more rights that need to be recognized, including the right to self-determination, freedom from exploitation, and the right to seek the spiritual benefits of Wicca.

The nine participating groups were: The American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, the American Counseling Association, the American Family Therapy Academy, the American Nurses Association, the American Psychiatric Association, the American Psychiatric Nurses Association, the American Psychological Association, the Clinical Social Work Federation, and the National Association of Social Workers.

Chapter 4

A Template for a Value System for Wiccan Groups

General Methodology

The proposed value system introduces a methodology of ethics for use in all Wiccan offices, fully consistent with Wiccan spiritual beliefs, principles and values. The objective is to establish a solid ethical code that can be unique to each group, and which, in clarifying beliefs, principles and values, will decrease the abuse of authority, the incidence of Witch wars, and serve to enhance the conscious evolution of individuals in their spiritual and secular relations with one another.

The system, whether arrived at inductively (determination of values followed by inference of principles, then of beliefs) or deductively (determination of spiritual beliefs, followed by their expression as principles, and the latter's expression as values) or both together—which I have found to be advisable—is that developed by C. S. Herrman (unpublished, 2001), as introduced above in chapter two of this paper. I have drawn on his "reality function" as a way of outlining Wiccan *beliefs*; his "authority function" serves the same purpose for Wiccan *principles*, and his "custom function" serves likewise for Wiccan *values*. The use of these "functions" amounts to creating a template that allows one methodology to suit the specific needs of any group. The proposed template and its application process can be personalized to meet the specific needs of covens, traditions, local communities and covenants. By the same token, such a task may seem daunting to some groups, leading us to appreciate the role that an ethics group/commission can play in assisting such groups to achieve the desired ends.

A summary of procedure will serve to introduce the template application process. Each group that would adopt this process should first form a task committee comprised of representatives of the various stakeholders (covenanters, students, supervisees, colleagues; institution stakeholders include the community, tradition, family and religion). This committee will require a consensus process to identify the beliefs, principles and values of the group. Again it is stressed that a combination of the inductive and deductive methods will produce the best result—a complete and responsive value system.

The task committee will next be charged with creating and/or recognizing the various offices necessary for the transmission of any authority by which any stakeholder may pursue the desired values, administer the requisite ethics, etc. After that the committee should create a document outlining the rights and responsibilities of each office, with particular focus on the expected duties, both of and to, each office. Drafts of this document should be available to all group members for comment. After a process of clarification and redrafting, the document should then be presented to the entire group for ratification.

Some general remarks are appropriate in regard to the identification of rights and duties of office, since the vast majority of ethics regulations take the form of protection of rights and delineating of responsibilities. Qualitative research could be utilized to identify common ethical dilemmas experienced by members of the group. A team should analyze these dilemmas for the underlying ethical issues and to identify breaches of ethics, values, principles, or beliefs. As the specific ethics for each office within a group are codified, the committee should verify congruence with the group's values, principles, and

beliefs. Groups must also define what constitutes a breach of office, and establish procedures for filing, investigating and resolving both complaints and breaches.

The committee must also draft the rules and procedures used by the ethics council to facilitate utilization of the documents. Decision-making tools should be identified and agreed upon. It is essential that the rules and procedures codify a revision process, to occur every few years, thereby enabling the code of ethics as a living document. As a community evolves, ethics must continue to reflect its growth. A final general item involves the communication of, and education about, the documents. Without adequate communication and education, including utilization of case studies, codes are next to useless.

The following template may be used by Wiccan groups to aid in the self-definition of their value system. The specific form I have given to the template is by no means a final or absolute version, but rather a sample of what anyone can do in the context of their own tradition.

A Template for a Value System

Wiccan Beliefs (Refer to Fig. 2(a) in what follows)

- 1) Wiccans acknowledge natural laws that operate within the universe. Scientifically proven law and metaphysical law are viewed as congruent. Observations of nature support the belief that energy is never destroyed, leading to a general belief in reincarnation. Wicca is a nature religion and finds the "truth" represented through natural processes. This is the *reality* of Wiccan belief.

- 2) Wiccans believe that the universe is systemic; and all that is manifest is interconnected with what is *unmanifest*. The Wiccan faith intends to increase the capacity of individuals to accept the bonds between all of nature, in a Sacred partnership. This is the *principle* of Wiccan belief.

- 3) Wiccans believe in the immanence and transcendence of Spirit. Spirit pervades all life; hence, reverence of nature is a central facet of Wiccan belief. The sacred is seen in the earth and in the cycles of birth, death and rebirth. Wiccan theology reflects the diversity of life, many Wiccans believing that the Divine has countless faces, manifesting through feminine and masculine aspects. All faces of the Divine are considered part of the One. Some call this One as Goddess; others see the One as manifesting through the polarity of both God and Goddess. This is the *spirit* of Wicca.

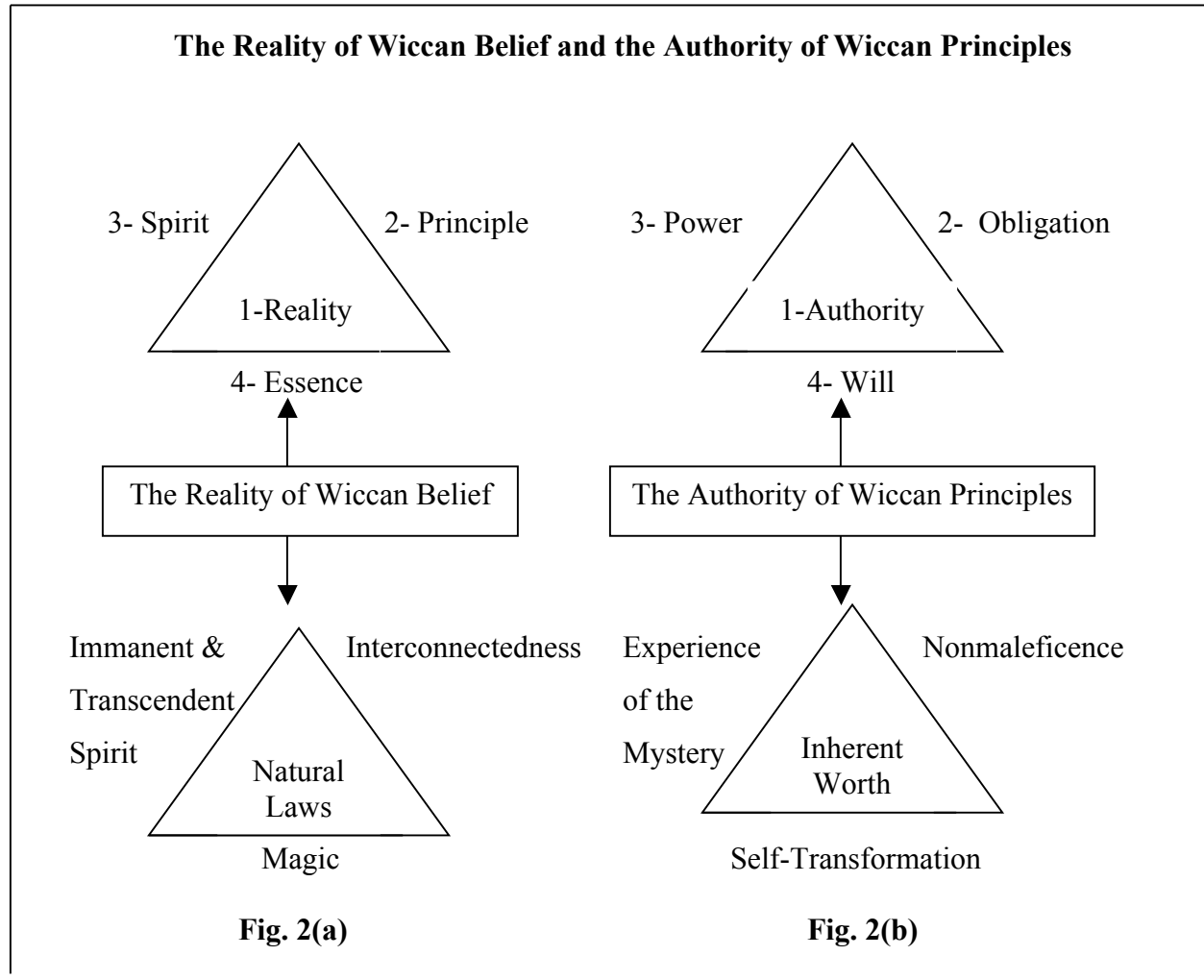
- 4) Wiccans believe in magic, defined as change in accordance with will or conscious change. Free will and the capacity to affect reality is the foundation of magic. This is the *essence* of Wiccan belief.

The Principles of Wicca (Refer to Fig. 2(b) in what follows)

1) Principle of Inherent Worth

Wicca recognizes that all beings are divine and share inherent worth and dignity. The Wiccan religion maximizes the individual's right to expect that their dignity is

accepted on faith. The Wiccan faith maximizes an individual's autonomy and recognizes each individual as a manifestation of immanent spirit within the natural order.



Acceptance and respect of the dignity of the individual (each is to be valued because of their differences/uniqueness). The uniqueness of their potential contribution to the community should match the uniqueness of their spiritual path to the God/dess. All of nature, including man, possesses immanent spirit. Inherent worth is the designation, in substantive terms, of the authority of spirit in and through man and nature. This is the *authority* of Wicca.

2) Principle of Nonmaleficence

The Wiccan faith accepts the spiritual bonds shared by all beings, and hence recognizes the obligation to avoid being an agency of harm to any being. If everything in the universe is interconnected, and each individual shares in immanent spirit, then all beings are obligated to respect all other beings. The individual has an obligation to harm none of the beings who share equal worth in the system. All actions affect the whole system. This is the *obligation* of Wicca.

3) Principle of Esoteric Substantiality

Wicca intends to maximize the individual's capacity to have direct conscious experiences of the Mysteries of the universe. Wicca provides a path to find direct experience of the Divine. This principle expresses the capacity of Wicca to enhance the development of the individual's ability to experience spirit immediately through a process utilizing teachings and ritual elements. Wicca teaches individuals to have direct conscious and unmediated experiences of Grace. This is the *power* of Wicca.

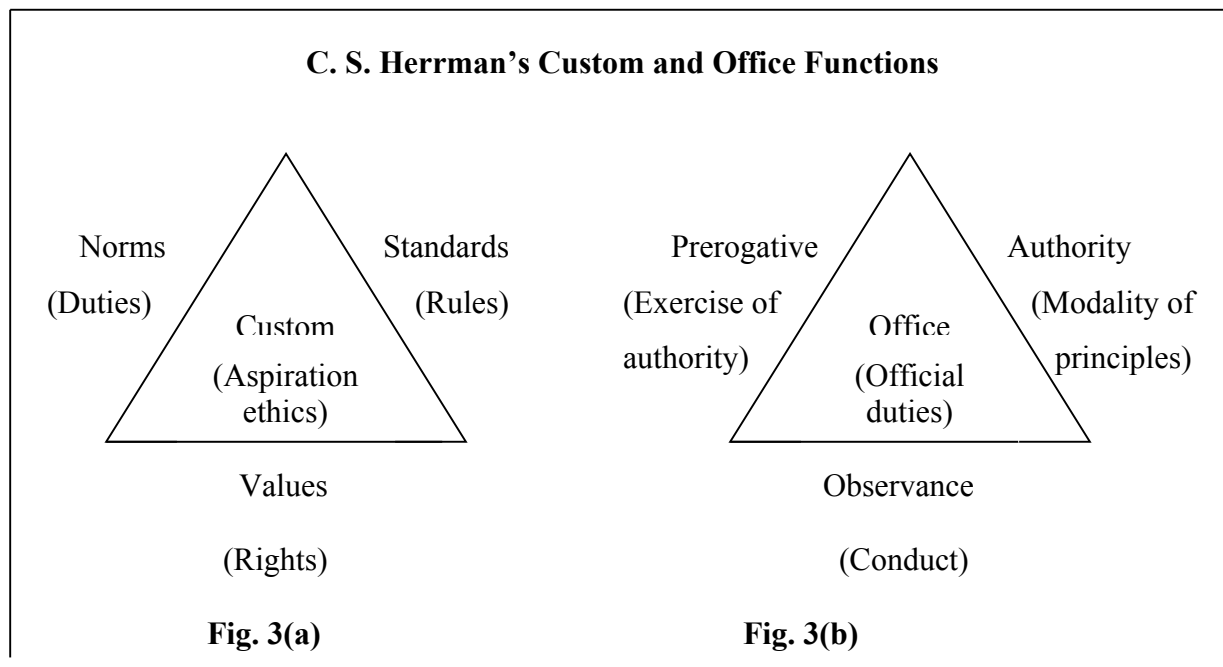
4) Principle of the Self-transformation (the Great Work)

The Wiccan faith maximizes the capacity of conscious evolution of self and realization of the Divine self. Wiccans are individuated beings who maximize our relations in order to evolve as individuals, as groups, and as life. Wiccans enter spiritual partnerships in order to maximize the self-realization, conscious evolution. Self-transformation is known as the Great Work. This is the *will* of Wicca.

Wiccan Values (Refer to fig. 3(a) for what follows)

"Custom," according to Herrman (2001), "is the collective force of will, the end of which is to maintain core values. Such values find expression as norms and standards, while these latter likewise express the self-same value. In other words, there is a necessary duality between values and customs: on the one hand, values *ground* custom because derived from core beliefs; on the other hand, custom maintains social values because *prescribed* from core beliefs via principles. In each case (for each direction) the norms and standards mediate [his emphasis]." Because of this dual relation, values can also, according to my interpretation of Herrman's system, ground the ethics that in turn maintains those values, with duties and rules mediating—expressing—the value system from which the rights of all members are honored, and by which those rights are protected.

In relation to the custom function, the rights of individuals are conceived as the "core" values of Wicca. General values and specific rights can be enumerated—



Wiccan ethics will embrace general values such as the following:

- Autonomy, Liberty, Equity, Freedom, Differentiation
- Responsibility, Integrity, Honesty, Compassion, Justice, Tolerance/ Respect for differences, Service
- Love, Grace, Beauty, Reverence, Devotion, Courage
- Progress, evolution, movement toward the divine, Experience, Loyalty, Perseverance
- Relationships to all manifestation, to other humans, to ourselves. Coven, tradition, family, nature

Rights of All Wiccans (The Core of Wiccan Values)

Right to seek the spiritual benefits of the Wiccan religion

- To pursue a personal relationship with the Divine
- To pursue self-transformation
- To pursue the values of Wicca

Right to informed consent

- Verify credentials/expertise/competence
- Appeals and grievances process
- Obligations of group membership
- To know options

Right to acceptance of worth/individual dignity

- Self-determination
- Choice
- Non-discrimination
- Parity
- Confidentiality
- Freedom from exploitation and coercion

Right to hold officers accountable

- Anonymity/confidentiality of informants
- Elective procedures where advisable
- Clear and definite ethical guidelines

Aspirational Standards

The primary goals and purposes of Wiccan clergy are to maximize the benefits of Wiccan beliefs, and to protect the reliance of initiates and members in these beliefs, as well as in the Wiccan institutions that support and transmit them. The ethics I am describing will apply to all roles that Wiccan clergy perform including, but not limited to, teaching, ritual facilitating, coven/tradition administrating, and pastoral counseling.

When these goals and purposes are rephrased in the language of aspirational ethics, the following general enumeration is of those which seem necessarily to apply to Wiccan clergy:

- Integrity
- Professional responsibility

- Respect for individual's rights and dignity
- Social responsibility
- Competence
- Nonmaleficence

Before progressing to the enumeration of duties and rules, I should preface with a brief discussion of the distinction between those that are "of" the office and those that are "to" the office, since I have, with the assistance of Mr. Herrman, listed them accordingly. In his paper (Unpublished, 2001) he strongly believes that "every act *of* office must by [its] manner [of conduct] suggest ...duties *to* the office...[his emphasis]." Likewise, he continues, "duties *to* the office should also suggest an attentiveness toward the functionality, or the duties *of* office—essentially a *stewardship* approach to the ethics of acting in regard of an office [his emphasis]."

Early in this chapter it was stressed that a task committee should pay special attention to these distinctions. The reason is simply that what we see on the outside can reveal a great deal about the possible motivations on the inside. In doing our duty we are expected to be attentive and diligent. To the extent these are superficial features and not required for the task, they are to be seen as duties "to" the office. We know this because if an officer does his task roughly and behaves inconsiderately, with little seeming concern for the effects of such an attitude, then even if the job itself gets done, we would say there was an ethical violation. He had failed in a necessary duty "to" the office. The job could get done—technically—without this added duty, but in its absence we come away expecting that he is perhaps not to be trusted to properly carry out his office. It is the evidence of this failure of motivation that makes him culpable.

In other cases it may be that we require a display of devotion and care, the evidence that in fulfilling a duty to the office there is the necessary concern for the functional utility. This stewarding allows us to think we can rely on this person. When such stewardship is considered necessary, then its omission is a breach of ethics even though the task itself was completed.

With these remarks in mind we can go on to the listing of the various duties and rules relevant to Wiccan clergy. Preceding each item I indicate whether the relation is "of" or "to" the office.

Personal and Social Duties (Norms): For All Wiccans

- [Of] Respect the rights and dignity of all
- [Of] Avoid displays of anger or contempt
- [Of] Participate—Interact with your group; share
- [Of] Do not allow others to deny/abuse the rights of others.
- [Of] Speak up when you see a violation or contempt of office
- [To] Respect all group offices
- [To] Indicate an attitude of nonmaleficence
- [To] Display a willingness and commitment to grow and learn
- [To] Display a willingness and commitment to do the work required by group
- [To] Avoid taking advantage of teachers'/priest/ess' time and resources

Additional Duties: Group Officers (Coven/Tradition/Covenant)

To protect the system/group

- [Of] Respect and protect the reliance of members in the group
- [Of] Avoid misuse of influence (abuse of prerogative)
- [Of] Maintain competence (continuing education)
- [Of] Provide methods for accountability. Review, hear, and decide on violations of system using shared principles as decision-making process.
- [To] Protect all offices of the group
- [To] Respect colleagues (Do not speak with disrespect of others.)
- [To] Do not improperly seek profit for any service
- [To] Accord others their rightful autonomy

Maximize member's capacity to attain group values

- [Of] Respect members' commitment to principles, values
- [Of] Protect individuals during group work
- [Of] Protect vulnerability of those guided
- [Of] Duty to warn
- [To] Protect group values
- [To] Protect members from the possible negative consequences (abuse, misuse, neglect/indifference) of the freedom it teaches/expands/promotes, especially in regards to the power invested in other offices which form an inequality (ie- have higher status).
- [To] Duty of care
- [To] Duty of veracity (truthfulness)
- [To] Duty of fidelity (promise keeping)

Provide methods for group evolution

- [Of] Provide means for continuity of group offices and relationships
- [Of] Offer a path to enlightenment, to grace, to evolution through teachings, rituals, relationships
- [To] Maintain communication network

Standards of Practice for Wiccan Clergy

- Assure informed consent and confidentiality.
- Avoid exploitative relationships due to advantage in power, authority and/or influence.
- Avoid sexual or other harassment, such as financial. This extends to sexual relationships, consensual or otherwise with students or coveners.
- Avoid discrimination.
- Avoid public disputes.
- Seek private or mediated conflict resolution.
- Do not participate in "Witch wars". Do not involve students and coveners in disputes.
- Avoid proselytizing.
- Comply with state and federal laws.
- Employ consultation when advice is needed and when there is a question of ethics applicability.
- Do not permit personal problems to affect the competence or quality of service rendered.

- Make none other than truthful representations.
- Give credit where it is due and avoid plagiarism.
- Do not treat covens as proprietary property.
- Do nothing to destroy the reliance of students or coveners, including their abandonment.

Conclusion: Wiccan Rights in Herrman's Ethics (Refer to fig. 2(b) for what follows)

All of the ethical standards and duties of the office of clergy can be traced to specific values, principles and beliefs. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to analytically derive each item mentioned within the template. For such a project examples abound. I will offer an instance more relevant than most to the concerns of Wiccans in general: The ethical standard of informed consent derives primarily from the rights of self-determination and the respect for autonomy; each of these derives from the principle of inherent worth, which states that all beings possess inherent worth. Finally, the inherent worth of all beings derives from the belief that the Divine Spirit is immanent within all beings.

Generally speaking, rights and autonomy are at the top of any Wiccan wish list. No ethical code that fails to fully assure these values will have any chance of success in a Wiccan community. The value system derived from Herrman's system of ethics attempts as far as possible to ground ethics in the value-rights of concern to Wiccans. It is not out of place, therefore, to add a concluding note on the meaning of "rights" as it comes to us from the various "functions" I have used in this thesis.

One way to see what is meant by the term "rights" is to ask what it is that both expresses (and grounds) and is expressed by (maintained by) duties and rules, such that all three of these—rights, duties and rules—together constitute the subject matter of ethics. If Herrman's logic is correct, I think it is fair to say that rights can only be the "title" of others to the respect of their inherent dignity (=worth) such that a duty in conformity to a rule assures the respect of that dignity vis-à-vis others.

Herrman is quick to point out an additional possibility, following from his custom function shown in fig. 3(b). As that figure shows, the office holder, in the exercise of authority, can be expected to protect rights, since his prerogative is a power to assure observances. But these observances are like a two-way street, since the office holder meets observances in serving the office, and those under his authority must meet their observances in obeying his prerogatives.

To say the same thing from another angle, we can ask where the rights lay. If the rights protected by the office holder's prerogative belong to someone else, then they are assured principally as duties "of" the office. If, on the other hand, the rights are of the office holder him/herself, then they are assured by duties "to" the office, again under the same prerogative. In other words, there is no selfishness in seeking your own rights—they are granted by one's office. To meet such rights independently of reliance on others, you are only doing what is *owed* as a duty "to" your office. Herrman is adamant in the insistence that each individual occupies an office if only for this very reason, so that his inherent dignity can be met without false claims, and so that one has every reason to demand what I called "title" to these rights.

Herrman's argument would justify the Wiccan requirement for individual autonomy *as a right basic to inherent dignity*. The task of a code of ethics is to assure that no one person's sense of autonomy can run roughshod over another's equal right to the value-system of Wicca. Further, only the offices that have a position of authority and/or influence, usually over a group, necessitate the creation of a code of ethics. Of these offices, I have stressed primarily the office of clergy, because Wiccan priests and priestesses serve a multiplicity of roles. A code specifically created for Wiccan clergy would reflect their natural and primary roles as teacher, counselor, and ritual facilitator.

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