

RE-ENCHANTING THE WORLD: A WEBERIAN ANALYSIS OF WICCAN CHARISMA

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The rise of Wicca is largely a reaction to the modern disenchantment of the world. Sabina Magliocco (2004: 120) argues that Wicca is a form of creative resistance against the dominant ontology of the Enlightenment, which marginalizes imagination and ecstasy. The sociologist Max Weber (borrowing from Friedrich Schiller) described this phenomenon as *Entzauberung der Welt*, literally, the de-magification of the world, which he regarded as the immediate result of the rise of Protestant ascetic rationalism, modern science, and modern capitalism. Weber's most forceful statement of this idea was in his 1918 address at Munich University entitled "Science as a Vocation." Speaking of the "meaning of science," Weber said:

It means principally there are no mysterious incalculable forces that come into play, but rather that one can, in principle, master all things by calculation. This means that the world is disenchanted. One need no longer have recourse to magical means in order to master or implore the spirits, as did the savage, for whom such mysterious powers existed. Technical means and calculations perform the service. This above all is what intellectualization means (Weber 1968: 228).

The ascension of the "formal rationality" of science, which legitimates a "means-end rational calculation by reference back to universally applied rules, laws, or regulations" (Kalberg 1980: 1158), obviates the need for the common-sense "practical rationality," which "judges worldly activity in relation to the individual's purely pragmatic and egoistic interests" (ibid.: 1151), and ideological "substantive rationality," which "directly orders action into patterns... in relation to a past, present, or potential... entire clusters of values" (ibid.: 1155). The basis of this formal rationality lies partly in the philosophical "theoretical rationality," which "involves a conscious mastery of reality through the construction of increasingly precise abstract concepts" (ibid.: 1152). Science's universally applied laws are derived from the testing of these abstract concepts against the empirical reality of the natural world. Weber argues that it the dominance of this formal rationality which

has led to the conclusion that everything is calculation, and that the world is disenchanted.

In his description of disenchantment, Weber adopts Plato's allegory of the cave from Book VII of the *Republic*, but argues that its meaning has been inverted. Instead of the philosopher being freed from the fetters of the cave to see the sunny truth of science, Weber contends that science itself has become so divorced from its subject that it has become shadow puppetry:

Well, who today views science in such a manner? Today youth feels rather the reverse: the intellectual constructions of science constitute an unreal realm of artificial abstractions, with which their bony hands seek to grasp the blood-and-the-sap of true life without ever catching up with it. But here in life, in what for Plato was the play of shadows on the walls of the cave, genuine reality is pulsating; and the rest are derivatives of life, lifeless ghosts, and nothing else (Weber 1968: 299–300).

In this instance, Weber conflates the theoretical rationality of Platonic idealism and the formal rationality of modern science, which was a descendent of Aristotelian naturalism. His argument that science has become divorced from its natural objects in the sensual realm, would, in a traditional interpretation of Plato, be a positive step. But for Weber, the freedom promised by both the theoretical rationality of the Axial revolution and its child, the formal rationality of Enlightenment science, in fact became enslaving.

In his classic work, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Weber described the logical conclusion of this process by using the famous metaphor of the *stahlhartes Gehäuse* (Iron Cage) to describe this disenchanted modern world's secular materialism:

In Baxter's view the care for external goods should only lie on the shoulders of the "saint like a light cloak, which can be thrown aside at any moment." But fate decreed that the cloak should become an iron cage (Weber 1958: 181).

The rationalized bureaucracies of social order that care only for material things were for Weber the inevitable consequence of the "Spirit of Capitalism" born from Puritan asceticism. The formal rationality of the economic order, with its efficient mechanisms of production, had become a model for the whole of culture, making human beings into cogs in a machine, stripping from them the significance of life. Weber described this end result as:

mechanized petrification, embellished with a sort of convulsive self-importance. For of the last stage of this cultural development, it might well be truly said: "Specialists without spirit, sensualists without heart; this nullity imagines that it has attained a level of civilization never before achieved" (ibid.: 182).¹

It is the illusion of progress that maintains this system of slavery. Those chained to the wall of the cave truly believe in the reality of the shadows, but never know the true light of the sun.

Though Weber only outlined the final steps of disenchantment in *The Protestant Ethic* and its consequences in "Science as a Vocation," he argued that this intellectual bondage was not simply the product of the Scientific Revolution of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but the result of a process of increasing rationalization "which has continued to exist in Occidental culture for millennia" (Weber 1968: 298). He asserted that the beginnings of this process were rooted in the elimination of "all magical means to salvation as superstition and sin" by the Hebrew prophetic and Hellenistic scientific traditions (Weber 1958: 105). The process of rationalization by which this disenchantment occurred was a major theme throughout all of Weber's works, and was especially prominent in *Religionssoziologie (The Sociology of Religion)*, which was published as Chapter VI of his *magnum opus, Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft (Economy and Society)*. Weber's primary argument is that the processes of formal and theoretical rationalization occur within the sphere of religion due to the increasing transcendence of the divine and the purely ethical justification that is left in its wake. As a result, all forms of salvation ultimately become rationalized.

The starting point for all of Weber's roads to salvation is ecstasy, "the distinctive subjective condition that notably represents or mediates charisma," which Weber defines as:

a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities. These are such as are not accessible to the ordinary person, but are regarded as of divine origin or as exemplary, and on the basis of them the individual concerned is treated as a leader... It is very often though of as resting on magical powers (Weber 1968: 48).

¹ Stephen Kalberg has translated this as "mechanized ossification" rather than Parsons' "petrification." This translation more adequately conveys the metaphor of the death which Weber uses to describe the disenchanted world of the Iron Cage (Weber 2001: 124).

For Weber, charisma is a form of authority, wielded alike by magicians, shamans, gurus, prophets, demagogues, and saviors. Weber's analysis of charisma is primarily based on its quality as a this-worldly mode of authority. He says that on the basis of charisma that "the individual concerned is treated as a leader." This treatment is based upon recognition of the leader's divine gift, which inspires loyalty and obedience from followers, granting the leader legitimacy. Indeed, it is the *duty* of the chosen followers to recognize and therefore legitimate the authority of the charismatic individual. Though this devotion may be upheld by an absolute trust, the charismatic leader can lose this trust if his powers or gifts fail him. This legitimacy rests, then, not solely within the charismatic leader, but within the relationship created between leader and follower(s). Weber argues that this recognition is freely given, arising out of "the conception that it is the duty of those who have been called to a charismatic mission to recognize its quality and act accordingly" (ibid.: 49). Here we find obscured an important point: that it is not simply the charismatic personality to which the follower feels a duty, but to the charismatic *mission*. If charisma is recognized for what it truly is: a divine gift, then the true follower sees past the recipient and to the giver. True recognition entails an understanding of what the giver wishes the recipient to do with the gift. True followers feel the calling just as strongly as the leader, though they may have differing interpretations of the mission (Jesus and Judas, for example). Nonetheless, the charismatic leader's gift grants him/her with a claim to primacy of its interpretation.

What is the nature of the charismatic mission? According to Weber, due to its otherworldly character, charisma always exhibits an antinomian quality, resisting this-worldly conventions and the especially the processes of formal rationalization. The "mission" thus represents a "revolutionary force" (ibid.: 52) wherever it is found. Weber continues:

Charisma may involve a subjective or internal reorientation born out of suffering, conflicts, or enthusiasm. It may then result in a radical alteration of the central system of attitudes and directions of action with a completely new orientation of all attitudes toward the different problems and structures of the "world" (ibid.: 53–54).

Thus charisma is always associated with freedom from the strictures of external bonds. Gerth and Mills go so far as to say that the concept of charisma serves Weber as "a metaphysical vehicle of man's freedom in history" (Weber 1946: 72). Prophetic charisma, which characterizes all

of the soteriological traditions, is in fact born out of just such a reorientation. To these traditions, the charismatic mission is an articulation of the tension between the transcendent and mundane through the gift of prophecy.² The psychological and social conflict between empirical reality and the system of meaning derived through prophetic revelation leads to the fulfillment of the mission in the attempt to alleviate or eliminate this tension by means of a revolutionary transformation of this-worldly order to conform to the otherworldly model, i.e., salvation.

However, prior to all other forms of charisma and their attendant authority structures is this charisma in its pure form as magical power. Pure charisma is the force behind magic, and is tied to a worldview of immanence and enchantment. The divine is manifested through the material, not separated from it. The magician is the person who cultivates this charisma through ecstasy, and thus has it permanently available for his disposal (Weber 1963: 3). Others must resort to drugs, music, dance, and/or sexuality to attain this state. When this is done in a communal form, it is orgiastic. The goal of this activity is self-deification, which Weber describes as “the incarnation within man of a supernatural being” (ibid.: 158), the ultimate form of worldly enchantment.

Charisma contains a sense of potentiality for change—it is flexible, not rigid. Charisma overtly challenges the formal rationalization of the bureaucratic authority structures of modernity, which are the latest manifestation of the disenchantment of the world. Because the modern era has defined itself largely in opposition to the irrational magical thinking of both pre-modern and non-Western cultures, Randall Styers points out that magic “has proved an important medium with which to contest the hegemonic social structures and norms of modernity” (Styers 2004: 20). Weber continues:

Charismatic authority is thus specifically outside the realm of everyday routine and the profane sphere. In this respect, it is sharply opposed both to rational, and particularly bureaucratic authority, and to traditional authority, whether in its patriarchal, patrimonial, or any other form. Both rational and traditional authority are specifically forms of every-day routine control of action; while the charismatic type is the direct antithesis of this (Weber 1968: 51).

² Weber makes the distinction between ethical and exemplary prophecy, the former being characterized by the Zoroastrian and Abrahamic traditions, the latter by the Dharmic traditions (Weber 1963: 55).

The Routinization of Charisma

Weber argues that this pure, magical charisma cannot survive over a long period of time. “In its pure form, charismatic authority may be said to exist only in the process of originating. It cannot remain stable, but becomes either traditionalized or rationalized, or a combination of both” (ibid.: 54). Because of its transitory nature, charismatic authority undergoes the process of routinization, thus losing its tension with routine structures. The paradox of charisma is that it must change to survive, but in changing, it loses its essential liminal quality.

Routinization occurs as a result of the ideal and material interests of the followers in the continuation of the community and communal relationships after the initial phase of the charismatic mission is complete or disrupted. It is the process by which the successor(s) appropriate political and economic controls and regulate future recruitment into the organization. Weber highlights the most explicit example of this in the problem of succession—after the death or disappearance of the charismatic leader, how does one determine who is qualified to lead the movement and to carry on the mission? Weber lists six possible solutions: 1) by virtue of their personal qualities; 2) by divination; 3) by appointment or designation of the charismatic leader; 4) by appointment or designation of the administrative staff; 5) by heredity; and 6) by ritual transmission of the office (ibid.: 55–57). Along with the question of succession go a whole host of other administrative decisions that result in the creation of a fiscal organization and the development of offices and institutional structures to administer the organization. Although these may be in service to the charismatic mission, their organization inevitably adheres to traditional or rational principles, for these best serve the ideal and material interests of the administrative staff.

Charisma and Routinization in Wicca

Helen Berger, following James Beckford’s discussion of late modern religion, concluded that because of the fluidity of organizational membership, the lack of a uniform dogma, and its skepticism towards authority and organizational hierarchy, the Weberian model of routinization does not seem to be applicable to Wicca.³ While these factors are all

³ Instead, Berger adopts a model of homogenization formulated by DiMaggio and

sound reasons for this conclusion, I hypothesize that the cause for the breakdown of the routinization model in this case goes even deeper. Wiccans, unlike the followers of soteriological religions, do not depend upon the charisma of a prophetic breakthrough to assert their tension with this-worldly order in favor of an otherworldly order. Instead, Wicca explicitly denies soteriology and eschatology—it does not enable the individual to ultimately transcend the world of nature or be liberated from the perceived evils or sufferings of this world, nor does it look forward to an apocalyptic reshaping of the world (York 2003: 157–160). On the contrary, Wicca represents a critique of the worldviews that have engendered the need for soteriological and eschatological hopes. Although this has in the West typically manifested as a rejection of Judaism, Christianity, and secular materialism, this philosophical critique is much more far-reaching, because it denies the ontological foundations of almost all contemporary religiosity and non-religiosity.

Wiccans believe in a fundamentally different vision of spirituality and religion, rejecting not just an explicitly Christian view of the world and history, but all worldviews characterized by Karl Jaspers as part of the Axial Age (Jaspers 1953: 1). That is, Wicca denies the “basic tension between the transcendent and mundane orders” (Eisenstadt 1982: 294) that manifested itself from 800–200 BCE in the crucial stage of development of many major religio-philosophical complexes, including Judaism in Israel, the philosophical movements of Greece, Zoroastrianism in Persia, Vedantic Hinduism, Jainism, and Buddhism in India, and Confucianism and Daoism in China. The effects of the Axial Age continued in the formation of both Christianity and Islam, whose missionary zeal quickly spread the Axial revolution to all parts of the globe.

Powell (1983). The mechanisms for such homogenization are coercive, mimetic and normative isomorphism:

Organizations experience coercive isomorphism by responding to pressure from other organizations on which they depend, or to government regulations. Mimetic isomorphism develops because of the organization’s uncertainty of its technologies, goals, or solutions. Organizations, therefore, follow the lead of others that appear to be successful. The third mechanism, normative isomorphism, is the result of professionalization, which through the educational process, professional organizations, and networks helps to create and spread similarities among organizations (Berger 1999: 50).

The ontological tension between the transcendental and mundane orders “poses the question of the ways in which the chasm...can be bridged. This gives rise to the problem of salvation” (ibid.: 297). Wicca, by contrast, does not exhibit this problem. It is explicitly non-soteriological, searching not for a way to bridge such a chasm, but for epistemologies by which to demonstrate that this gap is fallacious. In other words, the charisma of the Wiccan movement is built into the very denial of such a tension, without denying a distinction between the two realms. Wiccans attempt a constructive synthesis of otherworldly and this-worldly orders which, they assert, does not depend upon any single individual or organization. Instead, Wicca rests on the fundamental philosophical critique of the Axial tension and all heretofore proposed resolutions of that tension.

Thus Wicca differs from the Axial traditions in that its charisma operates according to Weber’s magical interpretation of “pure” charisma, not as the prophetic type of charisma he describes in *The Sociology of Religion*. That is, even though Wicca exhibits some of the characteristics of routinization from its very beginnings (hierarchical leadership structure, degrees of initiation, etc.), these were not formed out of an attempt to institutionalize a previously charismatic movement in order to secure the political or economic advantages of an administrative staff. On the contrary, the insistence on small decentralized coven organization (Gardner 1954: 114–115) and the injunction against accepting money for the Craft (Gardner 1959: 24–25) prevented this sort of institutionalization from being able to occur on a large scale. This charisma is therefore not manifested through authority structures resulting from the tension or its resolution, but through the magical power that belies the tension. Magic provides the means and the end of the charismatic mission: to re-enchant the world.

*Dance, Sing, Feast, Make Music and Love: Magical Ritual
as Embodied Epistemology*

According to Weber, “the distinctive subjective condition that notably represents or mediates charisma,” is ecstasy. In the Wiccan context, this ecstasy manifests itself not in the inspired words of a prophet, but in the context of magical rituals which are specifically designed to bring about the ecstatic state.

These rituals may be part of the individual magician's secret lore, but in Wicca, they typically replicate the collective ecstatic practices Weber refers to as "orgiastic." A qualifier is in order: "orgy" in this context does not necessarily solely imply licentious revelry, though this may be a component. The Greek *ὄργιον* was a secret rite among many Mystery traditions, but especially associated with Dionysos, the god most associated with the ecstatic state (Herodotus: 2.81). The word is cognate with *ἔργον*, meaning work, and in a religious context, service or sacrifice. This is significant because Wiccans often refer to the performance of magic as "doing work" or "working for" the stated goal. Great effort is involved in attaining the ecstatic state which is necessary for magic. Gerald Gardner says:

One must always remember what magic is and how it works. It is not a case of pressing a button or on turning a tap. It is work, and often hard work. For most things it would be easier to produce the results by ordinary methods of working in the usual mundane way; and it is, above all, not a way to make money. But there are just certain things which cannot be obtained by ordinary methods, and then it works... As the witch told the psychical research man: "To do magic you must work yourself into a frenzy; the more intense you feel, the more chance of success." You simply can't get the required number of people to do it just for fun, or if it's likely to come off naturally; the chance are then usually 80–90 per cent against (Gardner 1959: 104–105).

Wiccans believe that through this "work" they can raise energy from their bodies to be directed towards their magical goals. The raising of this energy is tied to the shifting into an ecstatic state of consciousness. In Wiccan covens, group "workings" are directed by the High Priestess and/or the High Priest into a "cone of power," visualized as a cone of energy encompassing the circumference of the circle, tapering to a point high above the center of the circle. Each witch contributes his/her energy to the cone, and as it grows in intensity, the consciousness of the participants becomes more ecstatic. When this ecstatic state finally reaches a peak, the ritual leader gives a signal and the energy is released and the cone is "sent" towards its goal (ideally, the coven eventually attains such a level of attunement to the magical energy that the signal of the leader is no longer necessary).

According to many Wiccans, the process of raising energy causes a feedback loop that feeds this ecstatic state—the more energy raised, the more altered the consciousness, and the more altered the consciousness, the easier it becomes to raise energy. Hence, working magic in

groups is thought to be more effective, as the feedback of the ecstatic energy is multiplied.

This state of ecstasy can be achieved through a variety of techniques, as is attested in shamanic cultures throughout the world. Achieving a state of *collective* ecstasy, however, requires a slightly narrower range of options in order to time the working correctly. The most common of these techniques are encompassed by the line in the Charge of the Goddess that enjoins witches to “dance, sing, feast, make music and love, all in my praise.” By doing so, the Goddess continues, the results are simultaneously “ecstasy in the spirit” and “joy on earth.” But these are not simply the results, but the methods of magic as well.

These methods represent the attempt to form epistemologies by which to demonstrate the fallacy of the separation of the otherworldly and this-worldly realms. These techniques are able to perform this function precisely because they mediate this gap through their embodied nature: they are tied to the body in this world, while allowing ecstatic access to otherworldly power, energy, or charisma. Through embodied ritual praxis, magic allows its practitioners to participate in the immanence of the divine in this world. These techniques, by seemingly working through the body and bypassing the rational mind, subvert the formal rationalization process that has led to disenchantment.

The primary techniques that Wiccans use to raise energy and work magic are through a combination of dancing, chanting, singing, and/or drumming. These sorts of auditory and kinesthetic rhythmic activities are typical of those that are used to induce trance or altered states of consciousness cross-culturally (Locke and Kelly 1985: 30). Margaret Murray notes this in her preface to Gardner’s *Witchcraft Today*:

The ritual dance, whether performed as an act of worship or as the expression of a prayer, is characterized by its rhythmic action... All the movements are rhythmic, and the accompaniment is a chant or performed by percussion instruments by which the rhythm is strongly marked. The rhythmic movements, the rhythmic sounds, and the sympathy of numbers all engaged in the same actions, induce a feeling of exhilaration, which can increase to a form of intoxication. This stage is often regarded by the worshippers as a special divine favour (Gardner 1954: 12).

Murray thus links the phenomenon of the “divine favour” or otherworldly charisma to the ecstatic state reached through the rhythmic performance. This seems to occur (at least partly) through the mechanism of “auditory driving,” first proposed by Andrew Neher in 1961 (Neher 1961: 449–451 and 1962: 151–160). In Neher’s limited study,

the brainwaves of all ten of his subjects entrained to match tempos of 3 Hz, 4 Hz (theta range), 6 Hz, and 8 Hz (alpha range) beats when exposed to them for a duration of only 40 seconds. Gilbert Rouget faults Neher for not being able to reproduce the dramatic effects of trance in a ritual setting, but this was well beyond Neher's limited goal within a small laboratory study of a relatively miniscule duration (Rouget 1985).

However, Rouget rightly points out that the link between music and trance is not causal or deterministic. There are a number of individual and cultural factors that influence the physiological and experiential dimensions of trance. Primary among these factors are attention and intention. Of course not everyone listening to a piece of music or drumming is going to fall into a trance. These sorts of shifts in consciousness are in the majority of cases, conscious acts.⁴ The more attention that is paid to a stimulus, the more that stimulus will affect the consciousness of the observer. This can be witnessed in a mild form in the light trances we engage in every day when we are engrossed in an activity and lose our awareness of the outside world.

Wiccans teach that the success of magic is dependent upon intention, and train initiates in a number of methods of focusing their attention on the "work" at hand. The first among these is the technique of "grounding and centering," that is, clearing the mind and rooting oneself in the here and now. The second step in focusing the attention is in creating the sacred space. The sacred space of the magic circle is considered by Wiccans to be a place "between the worlds," on the boundary between the ordinary mundane space and the space of the divine. Here the ritual participants may communicate with both this-worldly and otherworldly realms. The sacred space of the magic circle serves practical as well as symbolic purposes—it serves a protective function—keeping out negative energies, as well as containing the magical energies raised within it. The "casting" of the circle thus further focuses the attention of the participants upon their goal. Through repetition, the steps involved in forming the circle themselves become visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and olfactory "triggers" that focus the attention of Wiccans and help to put them into trance states. Finally, during the raising of energy, Wiccans are trained to focus their attention on the stated goal of the magical working. For a healing spell, for instance, they would visualize the target as healthy and pain-free. They would hold that image firmly in their

⁴ Exceptions might include photosensitive epileptics, for instance.

minds as they chanted, danced, and drummed to raise the energy into the cone of power, which would then be directed towards the visualized goal. These techniques for focusing the attention therefore enable the achievement of the ecstatic trance.

The embodied nature of these techniques—their engagement of the breath, the voice, and the hands—further focus attention away from the mundane concerns of the mind, and create a feedback loop that can send the participant further into trance. Music alone affects both brain and body:

All the studies that locate the reception of music in special areas of the frontal lobe ignore the massive reentrant links that trigger neuronal activity in many specialized brain areas and down our spinal cord. Not only do we hear in our right and left frontal cortexes, we hear with our skin . . . Listening to music activates many areas of the brain/body (Becker 1994: 45–46).

It is worth remembering that the word “enchant” comes from the French “chanter”—to sing. To enchant is to cast a spell with sound, specifically with song. Music can bring one under the sway of the magical—through sound the world is literally re-enchanted.

When dancing is added to the mix, and the body is engaged in movement to the auditory input, the cortical rhythms are more forcefully driven. Reclaiming Witch M. Macha Nightmare, says “dancing is real important. It always ‘sends’ me [into trance] . . . it gets me out of my head, away from ‘talking self’” (quoted in Magliocco 2004: 171). Ecstatic dance eventually produces what Eugene D’Aquili describes as “an intensely pleasurable, ineffable experience” (D’Aquili 1985: 22).

Once achieved, the energy of this collective ecstasy, envisioned and shaped by Wiccans into a “cone of power,” is directed towards the goal of the spell. The energy raised is both otherworldly and this-worldly in nature: it is raised through physical means, from the bodies of the participants, but the energy itself is supersensual and *a priori*, like Mauss and Hubert’s *mana* (Mauss and Hubert 1972: 144–146). The gods and other spirits are asked for their assistance, and the magical rite takes place in the circle which is “between the worlds.” However, as noted above, these goals towards which energy are directed are most often this-worldly in nature: healing, prosperity, fertility, etc.

A Religion of Priests: The Democratization of Charisma

Because the whole coven participates in magical techniques of collective ecstasy, Wiccan charisma is not limited to a leader or leaders, but rather democratized, so that it never has a chance to become “routinized.” As noted earlier, this democratization does not always show itself in structural terms—many Wiccan groups still maintain hierarchical degree systems, and specified ritual leaders. But the practice of Wicca is participatory, not spectator. Even though the High Priest and High Priestess may be active in “speaking” roles, the performance of the rite depends upon the active ritual and magical participation of all present. Each participant is supposed to contribute his/her magical “energy” into the casting of the circle, the summoning of the elements, the invocation of the gods, and any magical “workings” that are performed.

Furthermore, most Wiccan traditions uphold the idea that Wicca is a “religion of clergy,” that is, every initiate is a priest/ess for him/herself. This seems to be based upon a radical version of Protestant philosophy of the “priesthood of the believers” in which everyone has their own “direct line” to divinity. But it also reflects the nature of the initiatory mystery tradition that forms the original basis and core of Wicca: the initiate is ordained, given the titles of priest/ess and witch. There is no laity in the Church of magic, as Durkheim recognized:

But what is especially important is that when these societies of magic are formed, they do not include all the adherents to magic, but only the magicians; the laymen, if they may be so called, that is to say, those for whose profit the rites are celebrated, in fine, those who represent the worshippers in the regular cults, are excluded (Durkheim 1915: 60–61).

So even though a distinction is made in this structural authority, it is in the actual practice of magic that charisma is located, and it is through that structural authority that the magical charisma is passed on from generation to generation without the need for prophetic revivals. This is a modification of Weber’s concept of *amtcharisma*, the charisma of office. But there is not a single officeholder who embodies the charismatic mission, for all initiates are invested with this authority.

Possible Routes to Routinization in Wicca

Nonetheless, these systems of structural authority can and have become the sources of contestation regarding the traditionalization and

rationalization of Wicca. The coven structure which Gardner promoted was small and hierarchical: the coven (with a theoretical maximum of 13 members) was run by a High Priestess, who was assisted by a High Priest. While every member of the coven was involved in the ritual, the primary responsibilities lay with the High Priestess and High Priest. Therefore these particular offices have the potential to become loci of structural authority which may undermine the democratization of the magical charisma and lead to the routinization of the charisma towards personal agendas rather than the charismatic mission. This particular phenomenon, characterized by the gradual evolution of authority from influence and charisma, is labeled “High Priest(ess) syndrome” by practitioners.⁵ “High Priest(ess) syndrome” demonstrates the fragile nature of Wiccan charisma, but because this is recognized as the pathological exception rather than the rule, provides evidence that the “normal” state of such charisma is democratic, magical, and non-routinized.

Another such locus of conflict lies in the struggle between the modern concept of the individual and the premodern value placed on the collective. This manifests itself in a number of different ways within Wicca, and is directly related to the process of routinization. Because Wicca individually invests its charisma in every initiate, and this charisma is invested and reinforced through the magical work of the coven, there are inevitably power struggles within individual covens, traditions, and larger organizations, which have been dubbed “Witch Wars.”

Because of such leadership struggles and differences over practice, other “denominations” of Wicca soon emerged after Gardner. Alex Sanders began his own “Alexandrian” tradition in the 1960s. Raymond Buckland brought Wicca to the United States in 1963, and after he split from Gardner, he formed his own branch of Wicca known as Seax, or Saxon Wicca. Other traditions of Wicca continue to spring up across North America and Europe.

Eclecticism: The Protestantization of Wicca

Many of these new groups attempted to improve upon the Gardnerian model by becoming more eclectic, both in their rituals as well as in organizational structure. The term “eclectic coven” which is defined

⁵ Susan Greenwood provides a great example of this behavior in the story of “Sarah” and her coven, (2000: 138–144).

in opposition to the “traditional coven” (i.e., Gardnerian, Alexandrian, and others), indicates that the group performs new and different rituals in each circle. Many of the feminist Wiccan groups, in attempt to do away with outmoded “patriarchal” hierarchy, adopted a rotating leadership model, whereby the ritual would be led by a different member each month. This model was promoted by Starhawk in *The Spiral Dance* (1989: 51–52), and soon became popular within mainstream (dual-gender) eclectic Wiccan groups as well.

These movements collectively represent a Reformation of traditional Wicca, and an attempt to become free from its perceived routinization. The common complaints about traditional Wicca: that it is secretive, hierarchical, and exclusionary, and that rituals are performed by rote, arise out of legitimate concerns that the charisma of the movement is susceptible to becoming institutionalized in the structural authority rather than being funneled towards the charismatic mission, echo the concerns of Luther about the sixteenth-century Church. Therefore eclecticism attempts to dislocate the charisma of Wicca from a specific office or ritual (through which the charisma is magically passed) and instead diversify the charisma by means of creativity and heterogeneity.

However, the organizational solutions to these issues, like the Reformation churches, have their own set of challenges. First, many eclectic covens retain the offices of High Priestess and High Priest, even if ritual leadership rotates within the group. In others, experimentation with rotating leadership fails due to apathy, and the same people end up essentially filling the roles of High Priestess and High Priest by default. Because of these factors, or due to others (lack of time, energy, creativity), these ritual leaders begin to resort to what Berger refers to as “mimetic isomorphism,” the appropriation of information (i.e., ritual and liturgical components) from other successful organizations or published material that results in decreased spontaneity and creativity.

Eclectic Wicca is characterized by a creative approach to ritual and liturgy that does not necessarily require that its practitioners be “believers in the same god or observers of the same cult” (Durkheim 1915: 60). For instance, one Sabbat the coven may invoke the Celtic deities Cerridwen and Herne for a Samhain ritual, and the next Sabbat, the Egyptian Isis and Horus for a Yule ritual. Many eclectic covens encourage members to choose their own patron/matron deities to “work with” on an individual basis. If the coven works on a rotating leadership model, the members will most often invoke their own patron/matron deities when it is their turn to perform the Sabbat or esbat. Of course,

this can be justified through the theologies of hypostatic duotheism, henotheistic polytheism, or even Gaian pantheism. But because these interpretations are not anchored in a particular cultic practice (other than the barest outlines that characterize “Wiccan” ritual), investigation of these questions can slip into speculative metaphysics or a quasi-scientific experimentation. The lack of a cohesive membership, as defined by initiation into the tradition, and the lack of a body of traditional magical and liturgical material exclusive to those initiates, undermines the social cohesion that allows Wicca to create a moral community that is, *contra* Durkheim, a Church of magic. Although there are no reliable statistics on retention within Wicca (as there are no reliable statistics on membership in general, cf., Cowan 2005: 84–87; 194–196), anecdotal evidence suggest that this is one reason that some practitioners abandon Wicca, or at least coven membership.

Solitary Wiccan Practitioners

It was the revolution instigated by the publication of Scott Cunningham’s *Wicca: A Guide for the Solitary Practitioner* in 1988 that changed Wicca into a much more self-oriented movement. Unlike previous manuals on Wicca which made it possible for individuals to practice Wicca alone (e.g., Starhawk 1979, Buckland 1986), Cunningham’s work was explicitly written for an audience who wished to practice Wicca without the guidance of a coven, and even to “self-initiate.” Due to the success of Cunningham’s work, hundreds of similar manuals have been published, mostly by Llewellyn Publications in St. Paul Minnesota (who also published Cunningham). Many Wiccans who could not find covens, or those who left covens after being dissatisfied, used these manuals to become solitary Wiccan practitioners.

This solitary phenomenon can be partly understood as a backlash against “High Priest(ess) Syndrome” and “Witch Wars,” but is primarily the result of the explosive growth of the movement and its incapacity to deal with the number of seekers due to its lack of institutionalization. Although solitary practice of Wicca is the logical result of this Reformation, solitaires cannot claim to be part of the Church of magic: “The magician has no need of uniting himself to his fellows to practice his art” (Durkheim 1915: 60). Nonetheless, the majority of those who identify as Wiccans are solitary practitioners, and the trend appears to be growing. *The Pagan Census* found that 50.9% of those surveyed

practiced as solitaires, 9.2% practiced with a spiritual partner, and 32.2% practiced with a group (Berger, Leach, and Shaffer 2003: 129). A 2005 poll by the Covenant of the Goddess of over 6500 Wiccans and Neopagans found that 62% of Pagans and Wiccans surveyed practiced as solitaires, and an additional 12% practiced with the “community.” Only 26% reported practicing with a coven.⁶

Commodification

Although the solitary trend seems to point in a non-routinizing direction, it also is indicative of the pressures towards greater homogenization. The popularization and commercialization of Wicca have come under increasing scrutiny, as hundreds of manuals like Cunningham’s have flooded the shelves of both occult and mainstream bookstores in the past 15 years. Berger has argued that these publications, as well as the sharing of materials through the internet, Wiccan festivals, and larger organizations, have led to standardization and the loss of creativity (Berger 1999: 100–122). Eclectic solitary practice makes one more susceptible to the influence of mimetic isomorphism, specifically embodied in a commodification of spiritual practice. Unlike the so-called “Cafeteria Catholic,” however, the eclectic solitary Wiccan does not choose from among a predetermined set of options, but rather shops for the ingredients of her spiritual practice herself: she is a “supermarket Wiccan.” Furthermore, she is constantly refining her “recipes” and “menus” to suit her own tastes. It is a “do it yourself” approach to religiosity. This is in fact an inverted version of Durkheim and Weber’s prototypical magician. For them, a magician is not engaged in a religious practice, but rather an economic one: peddling her spells and potions to clients in exchange for material wealth. The eclectic solitary Wiccan, however, is typically the consumer, not the vendor.

As this ethic of commodified spirituality has developed (and it is by no means limited to Wiccans), an entire industry (led by Llewellyn, among others) has sought to supply it with material goods as well.

⁶ http://www.cog.org/05poll/poll_results.html. Helen Berger, one of the co-authors of *The Pagan Census*, attributes the differences in these statistics to two factors: 1) the COG poll was conducted solely online, where solitaires are more likely to be active, and 2) that the number of solitaires has likely increased in the decade between the time of the Pagan Census (data gathered from 1993–1995) and the 2005 COG poll (personal communication).

Looking at the Azure Green catalog,⁷ for instance, one finds an assortment of books, tools, statues, jewelry, crystal balls, candles, incense, oils, stones, herbs, robes, tarot cards, and even bumper stickers. Every major city has a handful of brick-and-mortar stores which sell these sorts of supplies. On a visit to any Pagan festival, you will walk past rows of vendor tents selling similar wares. Douglas Ezzy refers to this phenomenon as commodified Witchcraft, which he defines as “a set of products inscribed with beliefs and practices broadly consistent with the religion of Witchcraft, but for which the dominant institutional goal is profit” (Ezzy 2001: 34).

This raises puzzling questions about Wiccan relations to materiality. On one hand, this is a result of a relation to materiality that is different than the disenchanting world. In the Wiccan worldview, these objects are (at least potentially) enchanted: imbued with spiritual power, meaning, and use. But because they are being bought and sold within the consumerist paradigm of mainstream culture in which one’s material goods define one’s identity, their very existence derives from disenchantment. While the retailers of such merchandise are almost always fellow Wiccans or Neopagans, the manufacturers may or may not be, and thus may not ascribe any value to these objects other than their profit potential. So are Wiccans re-enchanting disenchanting commodities by using them in sacred ways, or are Wiccans feeding the disenchanting culture by the commodification of supposedly sacred objects?

Styers also points out the ways in which the magical worldview undermines the economic authority that depends on a rationalized, disenchanting view of the material world. Weber argues that in the modern world material goods have gained “an inexorable power over the lives of men as at no previous period in history” (Weber 1958: 181), but in the capitalistic authority of the post-Calvin society, the material derives its meaning not from any inherent value, worth, or sacredness, nor even from its signification of a spiritually elevated status, but from its potential for service to the profit motive—its ability to create more wealth. Although a side-effect of wealth creation may be the improvement of human quality of life, this is not the explicit goal. Thus material values are caught in a self-validating feedback loop with no external value referent.

⁷ A mail order and online Pagan supply store based in Middlefield, MA.

Because magic is able to invest material objects with an external value referent of otherworldly power and hence meaning (e.g., amulets, talismans, ritual tools, etc.), the meanings of these objects serve as a contrast to the assigned meanings of the commodified objects of the hegemonic capitalist discourse.

In its brazen display of the machinations through which objects are invested with meaning, it [magic] stands as an overt threat to the mystifications of the commodity form. At the core of magic we find the prospect of other possible relations to materiality, relations that threaten both to expose the fetishism of the commodity and to disrupt its hegemony (Styers 2004: 215).

In addition, the magical worldview of an interconnected natural world that stands in homologous relation to otherworldly values affirms the inherent value of the material beyond its service to the economic system, thus further undermining the default commodification of the material.

In an enchanted economy, material objects should fulfill the needs (either material or non-material) of the user. In the disenchanting economy typified by consumerism, however, material goods are not designed and marketed to satisfy needs, but to “stimulate desire, but to never fully satisfy that desire” (Ezzy 2001: 38). The example that Ezzy gives for this, however, is not of goods being marketed to Wiccans, as mentioned above, but of a book of love spells being sold via the internet (and then causing the buyer to also have to purchase the spell ingredients). This is a commodification of the magical practice of Witchcraft itself, much like Durkheim and Weber’s fee-for-service magicians (albeit in a new and improved do-it-yourself format). This is an important distinction, however. No longer is magic something performed only by the professional under secretive and mysterious conditions (as Mauss and Hubert contend), but is something that anyone can learn to do, albeit for a price. Because magic is perceived as a way to fulfill all desires, its commodification can potentially open a pathway to a perpetual cycle of desire stimulation and consumption. This is exactly the sort of charge leveled against the New Age by many Wiccans—that it is a collection of business models rather than a religious practice. And this is the primary motivation behind the injunction against taking money for teaching Wicca. Commodification of goods or services is acceptable—commodification of knowledge trivializes and hence routinizes the magical charisma of Wicca.

Arguments Against and For Full-Time Wiccan Clergy

Another potential “route to routinization” comes in the form Berger refers to as “normative isomorphism”: the professionalization of roles and offices which “through the educational process, professional organizations, and networks helps to create and spread similarities among organizations” (Berger 1999: 50). In a religious context, this means the development of a professional clerical class. There has been a debate for sometime within the Wiccan community as to whether or not full-time paid clergy would be desirable. Currently High Priestesses and High Priests (in both traditional and eclectic groups) are unpaid and typically employed in other professions. As noted above, the traditional Wiccan view is that money and religion should not mix: taking money for the teaching of Wicca or the practice of magic is highly frowned upon. Of course, many practitioners charge for “services” such as Tarot readings, but the suggestion of paid clergy has been very controversial. If everyone is his/her own Priest/ess, then the need for a paid clergy is obviated.

Other arguments against the idea of full-time Wiccan clergy fall into two categories: first, that this would create a divide between clergy and laity that does not currently exist, and that the clergy would exercise undue authority over their congregation, and second, that this would lead to a loss of the intimacy and spontaneity of Wicca, i.e., that Wicca would become congregational and thereby routinized.

Others argue that professional clergy would be beneficial to Wicca. Some point to ancient Pagan traditions as models in which there were temple-complexes presided over by priests and priestesses. These individuals performed rituals and met the spiritual needs of their communities, and for this they were duly compensated. In addition to the historical argument, some argue that a paid clergy would give Wicca an official recognition it currently lacks. Barrette argues that professional clergy would lend:

greater credibility with “mainstream” organizations and make it much harder for them to dismiss us as “inconsequential” or “not a real religion” in the future. As things stand now, Pagans face unfair discrimination in areas where a professional clergy would make all the difference in the world (Barrette 1997).

A paid clergy would give Wicca credibility within larger institutions by providing an authoritative voice for what is necessarily a polyvocal movement.

The primary argument given for a professional clergy concerns the need for clergy to have certain qualifications and skills which the current unpaid clergy do not possess due to the lack of adequate training and the part-time nature of the job. Wiccans are traditionally considered to be clergy after they are initiated, which typically occurs after a training process that lasts approximately a year. Many traditions divide the training into three degrees: the first is granted upon initiation, the second after additional training, and a third after even more training. At the third degree, one is given the title High Priest/ess and is granted the right to form their own group, if they so desire. The training process typically consists of instruction and theology and ritual, although some groups additionally include training in areas such as counseling and group dynamics.

This process, however, does not typically confer ordination in the legal sense. Other Pagan groups such as the Church of All Worlds (CAW) and the Druidic Ar nDraiocht Fein (ADF, also known as A Druid Fellowship) have their own training systems which end in a legal ordination. Both of these paths concentrate focus on “Support Services” as well as ritual and theology.

Wiccans may be able to obtain legal credentials through the Universal Life Church, which offers free (and even online) ordination to anyone who agrees with their statement of belief. In addition, the Covenant of the Goddess (a nationwide Wiccan umbrella organization) extends an option for legal ordination for the recognized High Priestesses and High Priests of their member groups. Although some Wiccans have gained legal ordination through such groups, very few have gone through the rigorous process of a seminary education. Although they may be very well versed in theology and ritual, they may not have the pastoral skills to deal with group dynamics, counseling, crisis management, conflict resolution, etc. Inanna Arthen, a Wiccan who graduated from Harvard Divinity School, says many Wiccans:

demand the kinds of social support other churches have had traditionally...Who among us is trained to deal with someone who's suicidal, or dying of AIDS in a hospice? With someone who is desperate? (Jennifer 1995).

The need for such skills was not as apparent in the past when covens were few and far between. However, because of the explosive growth of Wicca, these issues have become more prevalent and more complex. This situation was so apparent that in 1998, a Wiccan High Priestess

named Amber K published *Covencraft*, a 500-page manual for Wiccan Priests and Priestesses (not just for coven leaders, she says emphatically) detailing the minutiae of running a coven. The book includes chapters such as Group Dynamics; Communications, Cooperation, and Conflict; Pastoral Counseling; and Education and Training (Amber K. 1998).

The Pagan Census demonstrates the divide in the Pagan and Wiccan communities over issues of full-time clergy and payment for the teaching of Wicca. 50.8% of the general Neopagan population agreed that full-time clergy should be supported by their community, while only 25.4% disagreed, and 23.9% had no opinion or no response. 51.9% of the Wiccan population agreed, 27.2% disagreed, and 20.9% had no opinion or no response (Berger, Leach, and Shaffer 2003: 175). However, when the question was phrased in a different way, the split was closer. In response to the statement "A Witch should not accept money for teaching the Craft," 42.5% of the general Neopagan population agreed, and 41.7% disagreed. The split among Wiccans was wider, with 39.7% agreeing and 47.7% disagreeing. Regardless of these opinions, Berger, Leach, and Shaffer believe that because of the mode of transmission, the amorphous structure, and the unwillingness of practitioners to make large donations, the creation of a paid clergy in the traditional congregational sense is highly unlikely (*ibid.*: 170).

In fact, a professional class of those trained with such skills is now making its way to the forefront of the movement, trying to gain legitimacy for themselves and for their religion. Some Wiccans, such as Inanna Arthen, are attending mainstream seminaries such as Harvard Divinity School. Pagan seminaries are also appearing, such as the Cherry Hill Seminary in Vermont, which offers ordination through the Communitarian Church. Cherry Hill, however, makes a firm distinction between the roles of priest/ess and minister:

In Paganism, every person is her or his own priest/ess to her or his own gods within her or his particular tradition. The role of priest/ess is taught in covens, circles, groves or through the direct inspiration of the gods, and no institution or governing body should attempt to intervene in that process. We perceive that there is a distinct difference between priest/ess and minister. CHS defines "minister" as a priest/ess who also is called to the specialized public service of a wider community. Therefore, the focus of CHS is to teach those specialized skills and knowledge necessary for serving in positions of community leadership: as a pastoral counselor, a chaplain, in public relations, as social services liaison, as a minister for public rites of passage, in interfaith work and in any other roles in which s/he will interact with governmental agencies and the non-Pagan community (<http://cherryhillseminary.org/faq.html>).

Cherry Hill's assumption is that all ministers are priest/esses, but not all priest/esses are ministers. This, like Luther's idea of the priesthood of all believers, affirms the idea of the individual's unique connection to the divine, but also recognizes that the role of clergy can (and should) extend beyond this vertical relationship and into the horizontal realm of human relations. Cherry Hill affirms that it can teach the latter skills, while leaving the former to individual covens or traditions. In doing so, it manages to avoid sectarianism and is able to cater to the widest possible audience. In addition, by focusing on the development of ministerial skills that are not in direct confrontation with the predominant Axial worldview (although non-Axial worldviews underlie them), Cherry Hill makes itself more credible to accrediting agencies and potential employers of its graduates.

However, in attempting to maintain this legitimacy, is the practical effect divorcing the role of priest/ess from that of minister? That is, how is the traditional pastoral role of priest/ess integrated with the rational demands of the minister? Weber sees the origin of pastoral care in the magician's role as oracle or diviner:

Pastoral care...has its source in the oracle and in consultations with the diviner or necromancer. The diviner is consulted when sickness or other blows of fate have led to the suspicion that some magical transgression is responsible, making it necessary to ascertain the means by which the aggrieved spirit, demon, or god may be pacified (Weber 1963: 75).

Though most Wiccan priestesses probably wouldn't frame the question in terms of pacifying aggrieved spirits, the means of helping fellow coveners or others who seek them out with life crises may be similar: divining the nature of and solution to the problem by magical means, such as tarot cards, astrology, runes, etc. In some cases the solution may be rational and practical, such as a mediation between two conflicting parties; in others, the solution may be magical, such as a ritual to let go of past grievances and conflicts. Hence, modern Wiccan pastoral care walks a middle path between the fully charismatic magical approach and a fully rationalized ministerial approach. Seminaries like Cherry Hill attempt to give ministerial skills to supplement the charismatic magical and priestly skills that they assume their students already possess. It is then up to the minister to balance these two approaches in their own ministry.

CUUPS

Berger assumes that if Wiccan ministry is to become institutionalized, it will do so through umbrella organizations like the Covenant of the Goddess or Circle Sanctuary. Because it is rooted in the larger institution of the Unitarian Universalist Church, some believe that The Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans (CUUPS) provides an opportunity, a means, and/or a model for the routinization of Wicca and Paganism, specifically the professionalization of a Wiccan or Pagan ministry. CUUPS' Statement of Purpose states:

The Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans, Inc. exists for the purposes of promoting the practice and understanding of Pagan and Earth-centered spirituality within the Unitarian Universalist Association, enabling networking among Pagan-identified Unitarian Universalists, providing for the outreach of Unitarian Universalism to the broader Pagan community, providing educational materials on Paganism and Earth-centered spirituality for Unitarian Universalist congregations and for the general public, promoting interfaith dialogue, encouraging the development of theological and liturgical materials based on Pagan and Earth-centered religious and spiritual perspectives, encouraging greater use of music, dance, visual arts, poetry, story, and creative ritual in Unitarian Universalist worship and celebration, providing a place or places for gathering and for worship, and fostering healing relationships with the Earth and all of the Earth's children. The purposes of CUUPS include providing support for Pagan identified UU religious professionals and ministerial students (CUUPS Corporate Bylaws Section 3.1).

These goals point towards an institutionalization of what has until now been a movement that in many ways has resisted formalization. Other Wiccan and Pagan umbrella organizations such as the Covenant of the Goddess share the goals of networking, education, interfaith dialogue, and providing places of worship. However, the routinization of Wicca and Paganism within CUUPS occurs in a very particular way: it attempts to incorporate Wicca and Paganism within the institutional structure of the UUA. Nonetheless, CUUPS is an Independent Affiliate of the UUA, and Section 16.2 of the Bylaws states that "Loss of affiliation with the UUA shall not necessarily entail the dissolution of the corporation."

Unlike Wicca, the UUA does have a doctrinal statement of "Principles and Purposes" which defines both the principles and sources of their faith. This statement was adopted by the 1984 and 1985 General Assemblies. While CUUPS does not have a separate doctrinal statement

equivalent to the UUA's "Principles and Purposes," two statements of this document are presented throughout CUUPS literature as defining its own doctrine. The first is the seventh Principle/Purpose of the UUA, which affirms and promotes: "respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part." The second is the Sixth Source of the UU tradition: "spiritual teachings of earth-centered traditions which celebrate the sacred circle of life and instruct us to live in harmony with the rhythms of nature." While the first statement pre-dates the creation of CUUPS, it was CUUPS itself that pressed for the adoption of the Sixth Source at the UU General Assembly in 1995. Nonetheless, both of these statements form the basis for the interpretation of Pagan doctrines within CUUPS.

In "providing support for Pagan identified UU religious professionals and ministerial students," CUUPS promotes the professionalization of a specifically UU Pagan clergy. This normative isomorphism may have the broadest effect upon the homogenization and routinization of Wiccan and Paganism within CUUPS. No other Wiccan umbrella group shares this goal, and this directly ties CUUPS to the larger UUA.

This tie is not only organizational, but also theological in nature, for we are discussing the training and career of theological professionals—UU Pagan clergy. Therefore, it is crucial to understand the ways in which CUUPS members understand the intersection of the doctrines of Wicca and the UUA, for this is the basis on which this normative isomorphism must operate.

To become a minister in the UUA, one has to undergo rigorous training. The UUA website outlines the process:

The basic requirements for UU ministry are:

1. Career assessment program at a career center approved by the Ministerial Fellowship Committee
2. Candidacy status granted by a Regional Sub-Committees on Candidacy
3. Sponsorship by a UU Congregation
4. Master of Divinity degree or its equivalent
5. Approved internship
6. Basic unit of Clinical Pastoral Education
7. Completion of the Reading List
8. Interview with the Ministerial Fellowship Committee (www.uua.org/leaders/leaderslibrary/ministerialcredentialing/16219.shtml).

This rigorous process, is, however, due to an emphasis on quality within the UUA that is not present within many Wiccan or Pagan traditions. The UUA requires candidates for ministry to exhibit competence in many academic and professional areas, such as Pastoral Care and Counseling, Leadership and Organization, and Administration and Management (www.uua.org/leaders/leaderslibrary/ministerialcredentialing/16191.shtml). UUA-trained Wiccan or Pagan ministers would certainly be able to give support to those in need.

While the UUA ordination program certainly addresses the concerns of the advocates of a full-time paid Wiccan clergy, the UUA itself does not offer the type of position that would be attractive to most Wiccans who are attempting to become ordained. Most Wiccan priests and priestesses do not want to devote the enormous amount of time, effort, and money necessary for the UU ministry requirements, nor do they want to have a congregation made up of mostly non-Wiccans.

Therefore, even if CUUPS were to provide support for those who wish to become Wiccan or Pagan clergy, it is unlikely that many would choose this path. If CUUPS were to change its status as an independent affiliate of the UUA and try to organize its own congregations, then this could be a possibility. However, as things now stand, CUUPS' support of Wiccan or Pagan clergy does not seem to be a significant force for the routinization of Wiccan ministry.

Military Chaplaincy

Don Larsen was removed from the Army chaplain corps after he announced his conversion to Wicca and his intention to seek endorsement from the Sacred Well Congregation, a Wiccan group based in Texas. Larsen was caught in a classic Catch-22 when his former endorser, the Pentecostal Chaplaincy of the Full Gospel Churches, revoked their endorsement before the transfer could be made. The Sacred Well Congregation was not yet an official endorser, because they lacked a viable candidate. Thus Larsen was removed from the chaplain corps and sent home from Iraq (Cooperman 2007).

This tale can be interpreted as an example of institutional hostility towards Wicca in the military, but it also raises questions about the process of routinization of Wicca and Paganism more broadly through its encounters with institutions of power such as the military.

Berger largely dismisses coercive isomorphism in her studies of civilian Wiccans, but in the military, the pressures of government regulations are undeniable. The specific pressure of coercive isomorphism in the case of chaplaincy is towards a normative isomorphism: a professionalization of a pastoral position in a religion which declares that everyone is his or her own priest/ess, and which has historically repudiated the concept of paid clergy.

The coercive isomorphism of the military does not allow for chaplains to make these sorts of compromises and decisions in many cases. The qualifications for military chaplaincy assume that the chaplain comes from a religious background which “functions primarily to perform religious ministries to a non-military lay constituency” (DoD Directive 1304.28 Section E2.1.10), and that the chaplain will be able to fulfill that function for the unit to which s/he is assigned. This is important for the religiously pluralistic military, for the large majority of soldiers come from backgrounds as laypersons in congregational religious settings. The chaplain must be able to minister to their needs, regardless of their religious affiliation, or his/her own. She or he is only responsible for sacerdotal duties to those of his/her faith. Thus military uniformity is ultimately in service to the cause of pluralism and diversity.

However, this translates in practice not only to a requirement that the chaplain-designate be trained for the performance of such ministerial duties, but also that the religious organization that sponsors the chaplain (the Ecclesiastical Endorsing Authority) be organized on a congregational model, with ministers serving a lay constituency. Although the standards for lay leaders (Designated Faith Group Leaders) are less stringent, certification or approval by a recognized (congregational) religious organization is still required. Because most Wiccan organizations today do not fit these requirements, there is a lack of qualified organizations to sponsor even qualified chaplain or lay leader candidates. Sacred Well Congregation (which was created by military Wiccans for the purpose of ministering to military Wiccans) represents the exception, not the rule. Wiccans may either assume the normative structure, as has Sacred Well (possibly working to change from within), or they may challenge it overtly, which will be a much more difficult struggle, but better bring to light the cultural assumptions about what a “religion” is.

There has been an outpouring of support for the idea of a Pagan chaplain in the military (as witnessed in the Pagan Religious Rights Rally at Lafayette Square Park on July 4, 2007) on grounds of religious

freedom and fairness. Certainly this would be a great step forward in the public recognition and legitimation of Wicca as a religion, both within and outside of the military. However, this comes at a price: normative isomorphism, the professionalization of a ministerial (though not a priestly) class, and the institutionalization of religious organizations modeled on a congregational model in order to satisfy the coercive demands of the State.

By moulding itself into the predominant congregational religious models in order to achieve greater legitimacy, does the professionalization of a pastoral class necessarily mean an institutionalization of a priesthood, or can these two functions operate separately, as represented in Cherry Hill's philosophy? Military chaplaincy offers an interesting test case for what a socially integrated congregational Wicca could look like.

Will the professionalization of Wiccan ministry lead to a normative isomorphism? As Weber notes, pastoral care is the greatest source of authority for the priesthood, but this is most developed in the Axial "ethical" religions (Weber 1963: 75–76). Is this a significant force for the routinization of Paganism's democratized, magical charisma? Right now, the ministerial movement is too small within Wicca to tell if there will be a large scale impact. Cherry Hill's program may serve as a model for other seminaries,⁸ but the test is going to be the success of its graduates. If these ministers (or military chaplains or CUUPS affiliated ministers) become influential leaders within the Wiccan and larger Neopagan movement, then the professionalization of Wiccan ministry may become more widely accepted.

However, if paid full-time ministers ever became a reality within Wicca, they would most likely would operate outside of (and alongside) existing coven structures, and act primarily as a resource for solitary practitioners, because this is where there appears to be a real need. Mayla, a Wiccan priestess (and CUUPS member) in southeastern Massachusetts said: "If you are not in a coven/group of some sort you have no elder type person to go to. If there were clergy, people would have a place to go for answers, guidance, or information" (personal

⁸ Though it is not a seminary, the Pagan Leadership Skills Conference is similarly dedicated to education about topics such as "publicity and promotion, group facilitation, conflict resolution, accounting, pastoral care and board development." (www.paganleadership.org/)

communication Nov. 30, 2000 with e-mail follow-up, December 13, 2000). Her High Priest, Niko, echoed this sentiment: “Not everyone wants or needs to be in a coven but there are sometimes when you need to speak to someone of the (altar) cloth” (e-mail communication, December 13, 2000).

Would the professionalization of a ministerial class necessarily mean an institutionalization of a Wiccan priesthood? This seems more unlikely. This would require a distinction to be drawn between Wiccan clergy and laity that would be philosophically different than the distinction between ministers and non-ministers. It would change the nature of religion from an individually-oriented magical mystery tradition into a congregational religion. It would require a massive-scale organization of a largely unstructured movement, undermining both the coven and solitary structures present in contemporary Wicca. It would require economic resources to be devoted to the maintenance of such a priesthood. And most of all, it would be perceived as undermining the individual’s autonomy as her own spiritual authority and placing an intermediary between her and the gods. This could weaken the experiential ecstatic and magical aspect of the religion, and routinize its charisma into the institutional bureaucracy. Don Larsen himself said, “We don’t need more Calvinist rationalizing. We need mystery. We need horizons. We need journeys” (Cooperman 2007). In the Wiccan practice of magic, the rationalistic Calvinist distinction between this-worldly activity and otherworldly activity is deliberately and intentionally broken down.

Wicca operates within a world which was fundamentally created by the Axial vision. It does not reject other breakthroughs of the Axial Age, such as reflexivity, reason, or the notion of history (Jaspers 1953: 2–5). It thus stands in a particularly unique locus within modernity, accepting some fundamental principles, while rejecting others. As it grows and ages, it must negotiate the same challenges of modernity as all other religious movements, questions of doctrine, practice, structure, institutionalization, etc. Some aspects of the religion will undoubtedly become routinized. Other forms of routinization will be rejected. However, as long as the movement remains world-affirming and enables the individual to experience the magical charisma for themselves, enchantment will follow. The achievement of the ecstatic state belies this fundamental Axial ontology, and in doing so, acts as an epistemology that allows Wiccans to view the world as enchanted. As Magliocco says:

The re-sacralization of the everyday world—the magical worldview, in other words, provides a context in which extraordinary experiences become part of the ordinary world, a world full of meaning and enchantment (Magliocco 2004: 181).

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