

THE ARTISTIC PRESENTATION OF THE MALE SELF
IN THE WICCAN GENRE

By

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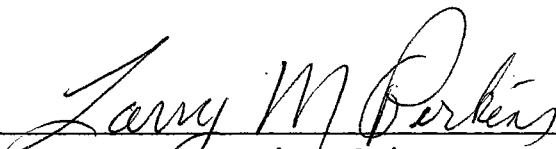
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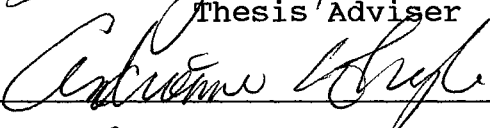
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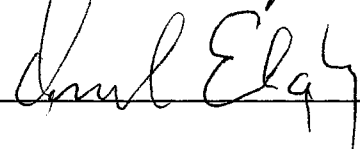
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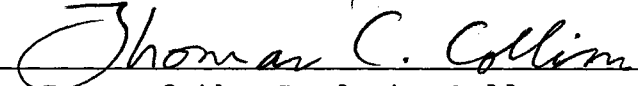


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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of Purpose

The deconstruction, construction, and presentation of the male self within the Wiccan religion was the focus of this research project. Involvement with such philosophies is the core of this research.

Historically, most institutions have been male dominated (Deaux and Lewis 1984). This provided power and prestige for men (Duncan and Corcoran 1984, Kanter 1977). A unique alternative to this is Wicca. Wicca takes a stance of gender equity and an equal distribution of power and responsibility (Starhawk 1981, Adler 1979). Why would a man leave a position of power and prestige for one of lesser status?

The women's movement attacked the male character for his inability at self expression, lack of interpersonal communication, and lessened abilities regarding emotional interaction (Will, Self, and Datan 1976, Statham 1986, Zimmerman and West 1975). If these accusations are accurate, perhaps some men are attempting to resolve these issues. What issues could Wicca help these men resolve.

Sociology views the self as a created object (Mead 1934, Ames 1973, Charon 1985). If so, then the self can be modified (Mead 1934). This raises several questions. How is the self constructed? What circumstances prompt alterations? What criteria decide what modifications are appropriate? How is this reconstruction accomplished?

This research seeks to understand the male self and its presentation in gender equitable groups, such as Wiccan covens. There are four lines of inquiry: 1) How is the self created? 2) What motivates a self to change? 3) How is this metamorphosis achieved? 4) How is the new self displayed for inspection, approval, and acceptance?

Surrounding Issues

Three phenomena will be discussed: the feminist movement, the reemergence of the Wiccan religion, and the idea of societal fashion. Each has affected the social environment with regards to the male self.

The Feminist Movement

Most of the feminist movement's development occurred during the last half century (Wollstonecraft 1982, Hartman and Banner 1974, Chafe 1977). There are many facets within the movement itself; liberal, radical, ecological, etc... Their commonality is a focus upon the civil rights of women.

The effects of the movement include such developments as the Equal Rights and Opportunities Act, Affirmative Action regulations, and others such as: women's roles in media

productions, women's increasing roles in society, and laws versus sexism. These are due to the efforts of women who strove to gain equality within this country. The movement has altered the roles of women within this society (Hennig and Jardin 1977, Kanter 1977).

The concept of a social role, implies the existence of a status structure composed of various interconnected stations or posts (Blumer 1969, Goffman 1959). Alterations in the roles women occupy have occurred and there is no reason to assume the roles of men have remained unaltered. The changes have permeated the societal role structure.

The women's movement was prompted the reemergence of the Wiccan religion or Witchcraft. This religion has greatly aided in the development of a more positive psychology for woman and added strength to feminist type movements (Lozano and Foltz 1990). In this religion both genders are viewed as equally important in all aspects of life. Neither, gender is given preference in privilege or responsibility.

Wicca

Wicca is a natural theology developed over thirty-thousand years ago (Starhawk 1981, Adler 1979, Lozano, et. al. 1990). It stresses living in harmony with one's self, others (regardless of gender, race, age, etc...), and the environment (Starhawk 1981, Adler 1979, Kilpatrick, Rainey, and Rubi 1986).

Wicca remained intact until the widespread development of

the more masculine forms of religion, such as Judaism, Christianity, and Islam (Starhawk 1981). These religions supported great divisions between the sexes (Merchant 1980, Starhawk 1981). When they had acquired enough power, they nearly eradicated the Wiccan religion. An example of this is the spread of Catholicism across Europe. Public ridicule and execution were common fates for non-Christians during the Inquisitions of Spain, Portugal, and Italy. Practitioners were forced to practice their religion in secrecy. Wicca lost most of its followers and all but vanished (Starhawk 1981, Merchant 1980, Abbot 1990).

In the 1960's, the Women's movement led to the return of Wicca (Diamond and Orenstein 1990, Starhawk 1981, Adler 1979). Witchcraft was a liberating tool for the women (Lozano, et. al. 1990). It provided a spiritual path by which they could empower themselves to continue their battle for equal rights. Wicca has grown and permeated other movements such as the environmental or ecological movements (Starhawk 1981, Merchant 1980). In the 1980's, the United States' government recognized Wicca as a legitimate religion (Starhawk 1981, Lozano et. al. 1990).

Wicca's influence in the feminist, ecological, and other movements continues to grow. The protection of women's rights, the fight for ecological preservation, and the striving for gender equity in all situations has surely

affected the environment in which human society's role structures exist. No longer can men simply beat their wives. Corporations can no longer ravage the countrysides. Changes in the structure included revisions of gender role expectations within the society (Smelser 1988, Merton 1968).

Wicca is a religion that embraces all types of people. Minorities and gays are common practitioners of this religion and other pagan beliefs. The lack of opposition against homosexuality has encouraged many non-heterosexuals to become involved with such religious systems. Many societal refugees have found sanctuary within Wiccan covens.

Fashion

Fashion reflects the culture of a temporal society (Smelser 1904, Veblen 1912). For example, the issue of politically correct behavior or PC is a case in point. Something is or is not PC, meaning, certain behaviors are acceptable and others are not (Smelser 1988). Few, if any people, had ever heard of the concept PC twenty years ago. Today, however, political correctness is a powerful force, altering the way people speak, dress, and even how they construct buildings.

Fashion changes, but its temporary nature does not imply it has little social power (Simmel 1904, Veblen 1912). Societies absorb aspects of fashion as permanent features of the culture, such as the spread of democracy in countries like

the U.S.S.R. Fashion as inconsequential as clothing can be linked to greater ideologies capable of causing mass repercussions within a society, such as the apparel of the 1960's Hippy movement. This short-lived movement altered much of contemporary society: the incident at Kent State, the draft-dodgers of the Viet Nam War, and the reappearance of 1960's apparel in 1990's fashion designs. Before the Kent State incident students wielded very little power over their academic careers. Before Viet Nam, Americans had never so zealously opposed a government decision in war-time. Kent State pushed students to take control of their educational endeavors. Viet Nam left the society desensitized to violence and suspicious of government policies. Fashion is a force that should be recognized by all those studying social phenomena. Alterations in a society can result in changes in the roles it promotes (Smelser 1988).

It used to be fashionable for a man to be the sole provider for his family (Bernard 1981). At one point it was understood a man would make decisions for his family (Bernard 1981). It used to be chic for a man to be a gentleman. Other developing fashions have rendered these old modes of behavior as passé.

Fashionable Social Movements and the Self

The self is a social product, not an entity built in social isolation. It would be irrational to assume the presence of social movements and fashions would leave such a

socially dependent phenomenon unaffected (Mead 1934, Blumer 1969). Selves develop via social interaction (Mead 1934, Blumer 1969). If environmental structures and climates are mutable, then the self must be as well.

How does a man define and create a fashionable self? The Feminist and Wiccan movements were prompted primarily by women, but the effects have not stopped with the feminine gender. In a society moving from a male dominated order to a gender equity, why would a man choose to embrace the change in fashion instead of resisting it? Why would a man opt for gender equity and relinquish his own power-base? The transformation of men's selves in conjunction with the Wiccan religion is the enigma prompting this research.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Gender

Society has expectations for gender-role behaviors (Renzetti and Curran 1977, Gilligan 1982). Some argue variations of these behaviors are due to biological differences between the sexes (Rutter and Giller 1984). Others say social phenomena are responsible (Firestone 1971, Mitchell 1975).

These expectations are deeply ingrained in the normative structure of this society and sanctions exist for individuals not performing their roles (Chodorow 1978). Male hair stylist or interior decorators and female body-builders or corporate executives are prime examples of how some people breach these expectations. Such individuals are readily sanctioned by this society with verbal attacks, stereotypical labelling, and sometimes even physical assault. All of the occupations mentioned are perfectly legitimate, however, they are gender-ascribed positions. This is just one aspect of the double standards existing between the genders. There would be no disturbance over a male body-builder or a female hair stylist.

Society has assigned tasks, skills, and status on the basis of gender (Rossi 1985). Many people believe women are inferior in the work force due to a supposed lack of assertiveness and the possibility of pregnancy. (Elshtain 1987, Homans 1987). Men are thought to be more aggressive and capable (Elshtain 1987, Gove 1985). Men have benefitted from this misperception, but women have challenged the system with their continued emergence in the work force (Hennig and Jardin 1977, Kanter 1977, Collins 1971)

Society has women as second class citizens (Beauvoir 1974). Even so, men have not escaped injury. Men were instructed to be "good providers" for their families and expected to be "real" men (Bernard 1981). This real man syndrome starts from birth. Parents constantly raise their children differently based solely upon the infant's sex. These differences include color of apparel, toys, and responses to the infants cries (Hoyenga and Hoyenga 1979). These actions are at least partially responsible for men having difficulty in self expression and interpersonal relationships (Balswick 1983).

Reinforcement of gender roles is relentless in this society. Educational systems, media programs, and peer groups edify gender specific behaviors. Literature displays men as active, strong, and brave, while women are depicted as emotional, frivolous, and dependent (Kolbe and LaVoie 1980).

Men make things happen and things happen to women (Penrod 1985).

Past celebrities did not act like "real" men or "real" women. Marlon Brando and Paul Newman had no need to be "real" men (Gergen 1991). Alleged "real" men only emerged when men's roles began to change (Gergen 1991). Such as, when the women's movement began to gain ground and the rapid emergence of gays into the public eye (Gergen 1991).

Gergen claimed gender was one of the traditional categories deteriorating within this society (1991). Postponement of marriage and women entering the work force, have both prompted the two genders to assume many tasks traditionally assigned to the opposite gender (Gergen 1991).

Selves

The Self

The self is more than an internalization of components of society and culture. It is more a social process in which the human actor indicates to himself matters that confront him in the situations in which he acts, and organizes his action through his interpretation of such matters (Blumer 1975).

The self develops via interaction with others and assuming various roles, while addressing itself through these roles (Blumer 1975). The self is creative and active (Wallace and Wolf 1986). To Mead, the self was reflective and capable of reacting to itself as it did others (1934).

Mead said the self developed through interaction with

others and social environments (1934). If the environment is as also a factor in self development then it must be understood. People live in a symbolic world. Humans act upon symbolism as well as physical stimuli (Rose 1962). The world is not merely a physical and objective construction. It is symbolic and subjective as well (Rose 1962).

Turner described two aspects of the self: the institutional and impulsive self. The institutional self coincides with Mead's, "me". It seeks to adhere to societal expectations it has learned (Turner 1968, Mead 1934). The impulsive self is similar to Mead's, "I". This component represents the indulgent, spontaneous aspects of the self (Turner 1968, and Mead 1934).

Other Views of the Self

Postmodernist such as Kenneth Gergen developed interesting views on self, self development, and characteristics of the self; concerning the romantic, modern, and postmodern selves. The romantic self developed before the classical, age of enlightenment. The romantic self lies in the deep interior, beyond simple consciousness (Abrams 1971). The romantic represented a soulful power and emotional energy, similar to Freud's libido (Gergen 1991, Freud 1927). Beyond emotion and power, the romantic sought the genius of insight or wisdom (Gergen 1991). This self sought truth and greatness within and through the soul.

The romantic self was expressed through artistic and emotional expression. It could be found in musical compositions and other artistic expressions (Gergen 1991).

Romanticism both honored and rendered powerful a language of "ought." Values, moral sentiments, and a lifetime commitment to ideals sprang from the deep interior (Gergen 1991).

The romantic period gave way to the emergence of the modern period which turned to reason.

The modernist period overwhelmed philosophies with science. There were scientific explanations for every mystery (Gergen 1991, Merchant 1990). Modernist felt for every problem there was a logical answer. Individuals were viewed as mere machines, fixable and controllable (Gergen 1991, Merchant 1980). This reduced life to isolated, modular bits of scientifically explainable humanity. Marvel and wonder dwindled (Berger 1967).

The postmodern self is troubled with the question of, "Who am I?" Erosion of the self marks the postmodern condition (Gergen 1991, Lyotard 1984). Modernists' truths have been found faulty and inconclusive. Narratives defining role behavior have failed. The self, no longer autonomous, has become a developing construction in accordance with its relations (Gergen 1991, Lyotard 1984).

Perhaps the postmodern self should be interested in the question of, "Who am I not?" Individuals develop multiple selves (Gergen 1991). Technological innovations of the modern

era eliminated the limits of earlier communication systems. Trains and cars overcame the obstacle of distance (Rae 1984, Gergen 1991, Giddens 1985). Telephones, E-mail, and video-phones provide virtual communication at an individual's finger-tips (Forester 1987, Giddens 1985).

Before such inventions, relations were limited to those with frequent interaction and close proximity (Gergen 1991, Giddens 1985). Gergen noted two changes due to technology: the preservation of the past and the acceleration of the future. Relationships of the past ended when one member of the relationship moved. There was little chance for the continuation past that time. Long distance relationships are the norm for many individuals today. The acceleration of the future is revealed daily. Each day, new machines emerge or are upgraded. Yesterday's marvel, is today's refuse.

Rapid development of the future and the constant presence of the past forces individuals to keep hold of both, leading to a multitude of roles or populated selves (Gergen 1991). This populated self is involved with countless relationships marked by three characteristics; they are rapid, intense, and most often temporary (Gergen 1991). These developments have led to relations being abundant, but mostly superficial (Gergen 1991).

This leads to the multiphrenic self, a condition marked by an endless identity crisis (Gergen 1991). Constant

changing has caused selves to endure sensations of being "out of synch" or falling behind (Gergen 1991). There is a constant struggle for identity maintenance and environmental affinity. Individuals are left in search of their "true" selves. Many try to find the true self in more substantial or meaningful relationships (Gergen 1991, Suttles 1970).

Other Characteristics of the Self

We can distinguish very definitely between the self and the body. The self has the characteristic that it is an object to itself, and that characteristic distinguishes it from other objects and from the body (Mead 1934).

Selves are creations established and set into action (Stone 1962). The selves individuals create via interaction are mutable and adapt to their environment (Gergen 1991).

"Individuals act towards things due to the meaning that things have for them (Blumer 1969)." These meanings are constantly in flux and modified via interaction (Blumer 1969). An individual acts towards itself based on how he interprets it and the reactions observed during interaction. Meaning and selves are social products.

Wicca

Historical Development Wicca and Gender

Witchcraft is a system of beliefs originating in northern Siberia, approximately thirty-thousand years ago (Starhawk 1989, Adler 1979, and Lozano and Foltz 1990). It focused on

fertility rites and worship of the Mother Earth. Climatic shifts caused these people to spread to the south. Some believe these people settled in various parts of the world and formed many of today's Earth-Worshipping religions or philosophies such as; North American Indian Medicine and Eastern Philosophies (Starhawk 1989, Adler 1979, and Lozano and Foltz 1990). As time passed, these religions were nearly eradicated by more organized and aggressive religions such as, Christianity, Judaism, and Islam.

Society developed a more masculine perspective towards a life according to its new religions. To insure the development, continuation, and spread of its own beliefs, Christianity tried to eliminate competing belief systems (Starhawk 1989 and Adler 1979).

The reality of the time was that of Christianity. Society coercively forces it's reality upon individuals (Berger 1967). Challengers are viewed as deviant and often sanctioned. Socially constructed worlds are precarious and dependent upon the complete socialization of the populace (Berger 1967). Societies attempt to limit any resistance to this order. This process is called legitimation (Berger 1967). The legitimation of Christianity led to the defamation, assimilation, or destruction of other religions, thus eliminating challenges to the legitimate system. These actions drove Witchcraft, underground for centuries (Starhawk

1989 and Adler 1979).

If a religion can maintain its social position it will have the legitimate power to solve problems in the society (Berger 1967). This is due to the divine nature of the religion. This can cause a problem. If religion is divine, how could there be more than one (Berger 1967)? Therefore, the Christians associated Witchcraft and Wiccans with their Devil and the demonic (Starhawk 1989 and Adler 1979).

There have been three dominant epochs for belief systems. The first is a classical or archaic period. Beliefs were simple and religion typically unorganized (Huston 1989 and Hayward 1984). Natural religions such as Witchcraft, Indian Medicine, and other Hyperborean beliefs developed during this time (Starhawk 1989 and Adler 1979). The Axial period, provided the major religions of today such as: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam (Huston 1989 and Hayward 1984). During the modern or empirical period science rose in recognition and institutions became malleable (Huston 1989 and Hayward 1984).

Women and nature have an ancient association (Merchant 1980). Wicca viewed the Earth as a providing Mother (Starhawk 1989 and Adler 1979). Archaic beliefs were organic in nature. These beliefs expounded the idea all things were interrelated and interdependent (Merchant 1980, Starhawk 1989, and Adler 1979). Harmony with the Mother Goddess formed the basis for

these beliefs. The Earth was viewed as a sacred, living organism (Merchant 1980, Starhawk 1989, and Adler 1979). Christianity rose in power and the older beliefs fell (Starhawk 1990).

This further fragmented roles and widened the divide between men and women (Merchant 1980). The spirit was removed from the body and the sacred natures of women and the Earth were denounced (Merchant 1980, Starhawk 1989, 1990). Wicca fell and Christianity took hold (Merchant 1980, Abbott 1990, Starhawk 1989, 1990, and Adler 1979).

Early in the Christian era a new vision of women and nature developed. Classical societies had viewed nature as mild and nurturing. Christians felt as if they had the divine authority to dominate all of nature (Starhawk 1989, Adler 1979, Merchant 1980). They used the prior association women had with nature to promote male dominance (Starhawk 1989, Adler 1979, Merchant 1980). Societal problems were blamed on women, nature, and Witchcraft (Merchant 1980). Christianity pronounced an alliance between the feminine and the diabolic (Starhawk 1989, Adler 1979, Merchant 1980). Woman's alleged frailties were supported by her supposed inferiority to man's ability to resist the Devil's temptations (Merchant 1980).

The idea of culture developed and was associated with males. Women's nature was believed to be inferior to men's culture (Starhawk 1989, Adler 1979, Merchant 1980). Religious

leaders declared a society run by men would be divine, whereas one authored by women would be a monster (Merchant 1980).

This idea of inferiority and passivity deemed women incapable of matters of finance and religion (Merchant 1980 and Starhawk 1990).

There were those who believed the father was the only real parent. Women were merely carriers of men's progeny (Merchant 1980). The degradation of women developed due to the woman's impaired state during pregnancy (Merchant 1980).

Nature and women were forced to submit to the masculine Christianity. This continued and even the Virgin Mary paled within the church (Merchant 1980). This was the beginning of the Christian regime.

Tenets of Wicca

Wicca pronounces five basic tenets or ideals: 1) treat others as you would be treated, 2) honor and respect all life, 3) kill only for survival, 4) live in harmony with the Earth and, 5) whatever one does will come back in three-fold (Kilpatrick, et. al. 1986, Starhawk 1989, Adler 1979). Wicca follows the Goddess in all her faces, including the Mother, Horned God, and the Divine Child (Kilpatrick, et. al. 1986, Starhawk 1989, Adler 1979). It teaches all things are interconnected and affected by the actions of other parts. Which leads to their ideal of, "Lest it harm others, do as you

will" (Kilpatrick, et. al. 1986, Starhawk 1989, Adler 1979).

Wiccan Views of Masculinity and Femininity

Wiccan traditions view socially defined aspects of masculinity and femininity as reified ideologies (Starhawk 1989, Adler 1979). Witchcraft sees both genders as sacred and parts of the whole (Starhawk 1989, Adler 1979, and Lozano, et. al. 1990). This is not to imply there is a duality. Masculinity and femininity are aspects of the same energy expressed in different manners (Starhawk 1989).

The female expression is the life giving force and stability of the Earth (Starhawk 1989, Adler 1979). The male aspect is the representation of death. Death is not an ending, but instead a beginning (Starhawk 1989, Adler 1979, and Lozano, et. al. 1990). Death brings change and allows for growth. The feminine is order and law and the male is chaos and change. The feminine without the masculine would result in a stagnant world. The masculine alone would lead to anarchy and bedlam (Starhawk 1989). Few traits ascribed merely on the basis of gender. Wiccans feel the Goddess may appear as male or female depending on the surrounding culture (Starhawk 1989). It is certain that Wiccan gender places little emphasis on the sexual activity of men or women.

Wiccan Selves

Wiccans views three selves; the younger self, the

talking self, and the deep self (Starhawk 1989, and Adler 1979). The younger or child self is impulsive and much like Mead's, I. (Starhawk 1989, Mead 1934) It sees the world as wondrous and whole. The younger self is limited to a more simplex understanding, such as pictures, emotive reactions, and pleasurable sensations. It has difficulty with abstracts and logics (Starhawk 1989). The talking self is similar to Mead's, me (Starhawk 1989, Mead 1934). The talking self is abstract, intellectual, and rational. It speaks for the younger self and its desires or needs. The Wiccan deep self is similar to the deep interior of the romantic self (Starhawk 1989, Gergen 1991). It interacts with the younger self. It is the divinity within the individual (Starhawk 1989, Adler 1979).

The divine nature of the deep self is beyond the talking self's ability to logic or rationalize. The younger self does not seek to understand the deep self. To the younger self, the deep self simply is. The deep self relies on the younger self for communication with the talking self (Starhawk 1989). The younger self or the child self can be very difficult to work through. The talking self has to entice the child to communicate and act on behalf of the deep self (Starhawk 1989).

Artistic Self

Self as Pastiche

Gergen views the contemporary self as pastiche or a mixture of various motifs taken from other places.

The pastiche personality is a social chameleon, constantly borrowing bits and pieces of identity from whatever sources are available and constructing them as useful or desirable in a given situation (Gergen 1991).

This quality leads to substantial rewards if the bits of personality are selected properly. "Life becomes a candy store for one's developing appetites" (Gergen 1991).

Each individual dons facades depending on their needs, leading to the idea of self-monitoring (Goffman 1959). Reisman stated there were two types of self-monitoring; inner-directed or self determining and other-directed or socially malleable (1950). The inner directed is for the benefit of altering the presentation in a socially acceptable manner. The other directed is more like con artistry, an attempt to convince others one is what one appears to be (Reisman 1950).

The pastiche self is mutable and constantly refined for the situation at hand (Gergen 1991). "For the pastiche personality, there is no self outside of that which can be constructed in a social context" (Gergen 1991). Without interaction the pastiche personality ceases to be.

Reconstruction of Self

Cooley and Goffman both discussed how individuals use information gathered via self monitoring to reconstruct themselves to adapt (1909, 1959). Goffman added, for a person to maintain a stable self-image he must perform before an audience (1959). Modifications occur during interaction, in the same manner object meanings develop (Blumer 1969). The question of "Who am I?", has a multitude of plausible answers.

Self as an Art Form

If art is an attempt to fashion an aesthetically pleasing object or presentation, then what else could the self be, but art? The self is a constantly changing art form. A panoramic mix of styles and periods blended creating specific images for given personalities. This idea is upsetting to modernists.

If people are material creatures, and all material is subject to causal laws discoverable by science, then granting the people the power to step outside causal forces by virtue of creative, inspirational, or intentional acts is to deny the efficacy of science. For the modernist, such concepts are as unrealistic as magical powers (Gergen 1991).

If the self is an art form, the individual is the artist. This produces some obvious problems. People are not equal in matters of creativity or graciousness. The self must be displayed before an audience of critics. Kandinsky felt the pastiche personality has a responsibility as an artist to the more modernist selves (1977).

1) He must repay the talent which he has (art). 2) His deeds, feelings, and thoughts, as those of every man, create an atmosphere that is either pure or poisonous. 3) These deeds and thoughts are the materials for his creations (art). (Kandinsky 1977)

Not only is the self an art form the individual alters and displays, but the individual is socially obligated to do so.

Speculated Self

Considering the self, there are myriads of paradigms. Selves are capable of change utilizing an artistic ability to appeal to various audiences. Not to say that all presentations are successful or aesthetically pleasing to the audience or the individual.

Process Versus Product

There are processes in developing selves, and selves are the products of the process. Modernists have given process precedence over product. The means to the goal have priority over the goal, itself. The modern era prizes speed and efficiency, leaving quality the victim of neglect. In this society, quality equals expense and effort. For modernists, time is a valued commodity and modernists are often willing to sacrifice quality for quantity.

The self is the product of dramatic interaction (Goffman 1959). Blumer stressed the process over the structure in which the process took place. He also emphasized the product, the meaning of the object in question (1969). Wiccans and

romantics would place emphasis on the product over the process and quality over quantity. To compare the modern self to the romantic self is to compare a Picasso to a da Vinci.

This study focuses on the process of the artistic transformation of male selves in the Wiccan covens and the product equally. It may be one has to understand the process these men underwent in order to understand or appreciate the product.

CHAPTER III

THEORETICAL-METHODOLOGICAL ORIENTATION TO THE RESEARCH

Interactionist Theoretical Foundations

This research examined Wiccan males from an interactionist perspective. The theories used in forming the theoretical base of this research were: 1) symbolic interactionism, 2) role theory, and 3) dramaturgy.

Symbolic Interactionism

The Chicago School of symbolic interactionism developed under the influence of George H. Mead and Herbert Blumer. It stressed the self, meaning, and symbolic communication over the structure in which these processes occurred (Reynolds 1993). The school developed such ideas as the role of self, the development of meaning, and symbolic communication.

Mead stated the self developed via three stages; the preparatory stage, the play stage, and the game stage (Mead 1934). This study focused on individuals already in the game stage. Such individuals have already mastered the concepts of the generalized other and role-playing.

Selves develop due to three contingencies: social experience, emergent processes, and temporality (Mead 1934). Social experience entail the interactions individuals engage in with other individuals and agencies of society. Emergent process include self and meaning development through interaction. Temporality is when an event takes place. Blumer continued with similar work concerning meaning and reality. Actors act towards things on the basis of the meaning things have for them (Blumer 1969). Meanings develop during interaction with others and changes often (Blumer 1969). The processes of definition and redefinition are dynamic, not static (Blumer 1969). The symbolic world is active with meaning producing or altering activities. Rose said the world men reside in is symbolic (1962). Manipulation of these symbols allowed for communication and interaction (Rose 1962). Interpretation of these symbols led to the understanding of other actors (Rose 1962).

Symbolic interactionist view individuals and their environments as dynamic. The self and society are constantly developing and never complete. This study employed a symbolic focus to examine individuals' perceptions of what they were before their exposure to Wicca and after the experience. Thus, exploring the reasons why individuals decided to alter their expressions.

Symbolic interactionism did not escape criticism. Many

symbolic interactionist and non-interactionist have criticized much of the theory. Some symbolic interactionist have found the theory's terminology to be vague and confusing (Meltzer 1978, Denzin 1969). The theory has also been attacked due its tendency not to deal with the cognitive or emotional realms (Denzin 1969, Meltzer 1978, Brittan 1973).

Non-interactionist have made two critical challenges to symbolic interactionism. The first being an astructural characteristic of the theory (Block 1973, Lichtman 1970). The second was an alleged ahistorical quality of the theory (Block 1973, Lichtman 1970).

The criticisms were dealt with as follows. Norman Denzin resolved his criticism versus symbolic interaction's lack of emotional understanding in his later works on emotional development (Denzin 1984). This research will approach the idea of structure later in the paper. (See CHAPTER III - Mesostructural Analysis)

Dramaturgy

This research was geared towards the concepts of self-monitoring and the presentation of self. Presentation of self or impression management implies a person actively portrays a role he has identified as himself, for each particular scene (Goffman 1959). Self-monitoring implies an actor continuously examines and alters his performance of roles he plays

(Goffman 1959).

Dramaturgy has been critiqued on two primary fronts. First, the accusation of dramaturgy not being a theory and useful for description only. Brissett and Edgley said dramaturgy, "Is how one's psychology is realized and how one's society and culture is lived (1990). The second criticism was the accusation dramaturgy trivializes such concepts as structure and organization. Dramaturgists respond that dramaturgy uses the person's role to account for their connections with others and organizations (Brissett and Edgley 1990). Understanding of the limitations and intentions of dramaturgy aided in the examination of the development of selves and their presentations.

Role Theory

This theory examines roles and the interconnected structure roles provide for the society. Researchers state role expectations come in three classes. First, role expectations provide a normative script by which the individual plays out his role. Second, others with which the self interacts with define the expectations of the roles he occupies. Finally, audiences affect the expectations of the roles. These audiences may be real, implied, or imagined (Biddle and Thomas 1966).

The self is reflexive (Mead 1934, Biddle, et. al. 1966).

Individuals act out roles as expected, if the roles have been internalized. However, some individuals require the application of sanctions to encourage them to act out their role properly (Biddle, et. al. 1966).

There are three approaches to the theory. The first states roles are prescribed and individuals try to fulfill their roles. Next roles are subjectively interpreted and enacted. The last approach implies roles are merely facades the individual employs (Biddle, et. al. 1966).

It has been alleged role theory is too structured and too dependent upon a classification system of proper roles and expected behaviors. This criticism lessens with the presence of such ideas as role strain and role conflict (Biddle, et. al. 1966). The application of this theory will aid in the understanding of how individuals perceive their roles and what significance the person places upon them.

Mesostructural Analysis

David Maines developed the concept of the mesostructure (1977). Mesostructural analysis allows for the employment of interactionist theories within a structural framework, thus lessening the impact of the astructural criticisms. Mesostructure opposes the micro-macro dichotomy (Maines 1977). This analysis is dependent on three principles; segmentation, mediating processes, and temporality (Maines 1977).

Segmentation refers to the idea there are several social worlds within this society. Mediating processes considers interactions between social worlds. Temporality states things can only be defined over time and in time they will change (Maines 1977).

Mesostructure is similar to the interactionist reality and the social worlds. Mead and Blumer discussed varying social worlds (Mead 1934, Blumer 1969). Interaction occurring between these worlds is a central concept to symbolic interactionism. Maines feels temporality was central to Mead's early work (1934). This level of analysis will aid in this research's attempt to overcome the astructural allegations launched against interactionism.

This will be enhanced by Peter Hall's six categories of social organization (1987). The first of these categories is collective activity, or the idea activities are shared by individuals. The next is the network or collective action to promote social acts. The third concept is conventions or practices individuals share in a given action or activity. The fourth refers to resources or claimants individuals employ to achieve goals. The fifth is temporality, which states there exists a dialectic between time and activity. The final concept is grounding, which refers to an action or activity being rooted in history or structure (Hall 1987).

Maines' mesostructure and Hall's organizational types are apparent in Becker's, Art Worlds (1982). He examines interaction during the creation of art, appreciation of art, and distribution/presentation of art.

Art involves the artist and other actors and is a form of collective activity. Art is dependent upon the networks by which it is constructed and distributed. In art there are certain methods of production or conventions. Art does not have an instantaneous existence and it develops over time (Hall 1987). Much of art is well grounded in historical or structural phenomenon.

This research will employ mesostructural analysis. It will explore the affects of the Wiccan covens on the men's selves as one social world interacting with another, resulting in an alteration of the individuals' selves.

Reputation Theory

In Art Worlds, Becker developed reputation theory. The theory states five premises:

1. There are specially gifted people, such as artist.
2. These people create works of beauty and depth.
3. These works express emotion and cultural values.
4. The work testifies to the creator's ability.
5. The work establishes the creator's reputation.
(Becker 1982)

The reputation development process is interactive. It occurs with individuals, organizations, structures in relation to the

art piece or product, and not the creator. The structure and members of a society affect the artist. An artist's reputation depends on the reception of his work and not necessarily himself (Becker 1982).

The affects of society upon artists are apparent in his works. His work influences the audience to have some reaction or feeling about his art. The audience's judgement then affects the artist. The process is circular, processual, and interactive (Becker 1982). Reputation theory was employed to examine the artistic production of the male selves during creation, display, judgement, and reaction.

Theory Usage

After examining the interactionist approaches it was noted that individually they were easily criticized and denounced. However, a coalition of the approaches seemed to overcome any excessive weaknesses of the perspectives. Via mainstream symbolic interactionism, the characteristics and meanings of selves were understood from a more intimate level. Role theory and dramaturgy aided in the observation of role development and interaction. Mesostructural analysis of social organizations provided for an awareness of the social spheres these men encountered on a regular basis. Finally, viewing the individual self as an art form in the making, allowed for the creativity and innovation of these men to be

more fully appreciated. Although, other theories such as phenomenology do examine the self and individual interpretations of reality. However, interactionist theories possess a special ability to show the processual development of these phenomenon.

Methods

Interactionist most often employ inductive research methods, such as observations and in-depth interviews (Mead 1934, Denzin 1989). Which allow for researchers to achieve knowledge of their subject from the viewpoint of the subject in question (Blumer 1975)

Blumer made several statements regarding interactionist methods. He was highly critical of laboratory experiments and standardized surveys (Blumer 1956). He felt there was no way to reduce human life to a set of variables or propositions (Blumer 1956). "No man can judge another unless he places himself in the position of the other before he pronounces the verdict (Weinberg 1970)." Blumer explained sensitizing concepts which lend to understanding a phenomenon not predicting it (Blumer 1969). His methods result in "thick description" (Denzin 1989).

Mead supported the idea, to understand a phenomenon, one must study it as it develops. This means to understand the subject, there must be an understanding of the social experiences of the actors involved (Mead 1934). He stated

events emerged through the process of interaction and focused on observable events (Mead 1934). If one is to perform such research, participant observation and in-depth interviews are logical choices.

Methodological Techniques

The participant observation took place in various locations in northeastern Oklahoma. The researcher located nine Wiccan covens which allowed entrance into their gatherings for observation and participation. Observations included simple gatherings, ceremonial rituals, and individuals' entrances into the groups. The in-depth observations were unstructured. Interviews did not occur until the researcher had gathered adequate information to form reasonable questions regarding the male selves.

Preliminary Exploration

In order to understand Wicca and men's involvement with the covens, the researcher read several texts such as Starhawk's, the Spiral Dance, and Adler's, Drawing down the Moon. These led to other resources such as newsletters. The researcher placed an advertisement in the research section of a newsletter called, The Circle, which asked for basic biographical information and descriptions of male involvement with Wiccan covens. The responses aided the researcher during observations, participations, and interviews.

The responses accounted for the men's involvement with Wiccan covens and was fairly close to the information revealed about the men observed. The education and incomes levels remained fairly high. A large number of the respondents reported being minority members and/or gay. Two of the respondents were unusual, one was incarcerated and the other was hospitalized in a mental institution. The letters reported a constant feeling of rejection by mainstream society and religion.

These methods may appear haphazard, but with the information provided from the research request in The Circle, the researcher was able to compare his findings to those reported by the newsletter respondents. Any weaknesses these qualitative methods may have had, were overcome by careful and lengthy application. It appeared there were no other methodological choices more suiting for the situation.

Selected Subjects

The work focused on the men participating in nine covens. There were forty-five men in these covens and nearly twice as many women. Although a small group, the responses from the research request added to the information gained from the interviews and observations. The men were located via previous contacts who had affiliation with these covens.

Although these men were encountered via a convenient means, there were criteria to be met. There do exist single

sex covens. These were not selected, since the world is comprised of both men and women, the researcher selected covens that were also coed. Fourteen covens were approached, only nine allowed the researcher entrance into the coven. Two for the covens had previously been part of a research project and readily accepted the researcher. The remaining seven were somewhat suspicious and stand-offish for little over a month. After which they allowed the researcher full access to the coven and its activities.

This information should not be generalized or inferred upon other covens or male Witches. It can only be considered accurate for those included in this study. There are numerous branches of Wicca. Subtle and extreme differences sometimes exist among these varying affiliations. This research was exploratory, not explanatory.

Research Aims

The aims of this research were to develop:

1. Knowledge of the motivations for developing a new self.
2. Understanding of the transformation process these men underwent to redefine themselves.
3. Knowledge of the reasons these men began associating with Wicca.
4. Understanding of the means the men use to create their new selves.
5. Knowledge of the means of presentation of the new self.

6. Knowledge of the coven's reactions to the new self.
7. Understanding of reactions to the new self by non-Wiccans.
8. Discerning the reactions' effects on the men.
9. Understanding of the maintenance of this new self.
10. Knowledge of any further modifications of the new self.

Research Process

The research project was three fold. First, the researcher explored the topic to become acquainted with the subject (Blumer 1969). The researcher submitted the research request to the pagan newsletter, The Circle. The responses were recorded and saved for later referral. This period also included the initial efforts to make contact with the covens.

The second part of this process was the inspection stage (White 1943). During this stage, the participant observation was conducted along with the development of sensitizing concepts. After a period of observation the researcher began the interviews. The interviews focused on issues that emerged during observations.

The final stage of this process was a qualitative analysis of the retrieved data (Becker 1953). This information was be compared to responses from the research request in, The Circle. The responses to the advertisement led to a better understanding of what was revealed during the interactions with the Wiccan groups. These responses also led

to the development of sensitizing concepts which were used during the interviews.

Final Statement of Theory and Methods

The theories above are interactionist in nature and demand an interactive methodological technique. In accordance with the theories, the subject matter was viewed from a mesostructural perspective. The data was gathered via participant observation, observation, and in-depth interviews. The responses to the request in The Circle, were used to guide the researcher and added strength to the researcher's findings.

The researcher is aware of the hazards when performing research in this manner. However, all methodologies are problematic at best and there appears to be no better methodology for this subject. Perhaps more quantitative methods could be employed. However, this researcher is more interested in rich detail, thick description, and fuller understanding. For the purposes of this project, quantity and ease of data interpretation will be sacrificed for quality and authenticity.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Simple Descriptive Demographics

Simple demographics were employed in this section to help minimize the effects of preconceived imageries existing in regards to such people as the men of this study. Basic demographic descriptions aid in establishing the status positions of men within mainstream society.

The men's ages during the interviews and at the time of their initial involvement with Wicca are depicted in TABLES I and II. There is an abnormally wide current age range. According to the second table, none of the men became active in their covens before the age of nineteen. When asked why, the men waited until after the age of nineteen to begin their involvement with Wicca, there were three responses.

Wicca unlike other religions, does not have churches on every other street corner, one can hardly drop in for Sunday services. Many were oblivious to the presence of Wiccans in their local areas before their affiliation. Awareness and accessibility were factors in the wide initial age range.

Second, these groups do not allow minors, people under the age of eighteen, to enter their groups. Maturity,

curiosity, and sincerity are characteristic values in potential members. There was little use for people seeking entrance just to use Wicca as a source of shock value. Wiccans have faced many adversaries and attempt to stop problems before they start. A group composed of legal adults poses far less potential judicial problems than one including minors. They seek to insure the safety of the members and to maintain the dignity of their religion.

We used to let teen-agers in, but we stopped in the eighties. Wicca became glamorous for teens. The only reason they ever got involved with Wicca was to give their parents coronaries.

The third point is a phenomenon similar to socialization. Before full acceptance into the coven a person must undergo a type of initiation. This is a period of exposure to Wiccan ideals, quite similar to the practice of Catholic confirmation.

During, "The year and a day," the person is referred to as a novice and is allowed to watch most rituals and activities and eventually to be involved in them. Wicca ideals are taught during this period. Upon completion the novice is welcomed into the coven as a new member.

This initiation period allows for novices to change their minds about joining the group, for whatever reason, without serious loss of time, effort, or face. This preserves the integrity of the group. Few are willing to undergo an entire

year of training just to throw it away. The few members that left the group after initiation did so for such reasons as their families or occupations.

The covens are attempting to stifle the faddish nature of society by demanding participants be of a certain age and requiring the initiation period. This allows for the members to have developed a more mature approach to live and a certain level of life experience. The initiation allows for the individuals to be resocialized from a Wiccan standpoint.

There appears to be an abnormally high number American Indians among the coven members. Elsewhere in the United States this may have warranted further investigation. However, northeastern Oklahoma has historically had a much larger Indian population than the rest of nation. In the north east quadrant of the state many Indian nations have established their residences including the Cherokee, Quapaw, Peoria, Seneca, Muskogee, Creek, Choctaw, Miami, and Osage. The high level of Indian heritage was not a surprise.

TABLE I

CURRENT AGE

22 - 30	31 - 40	41 - 50	51 - 60	61+
07	15	14	07	02
15.56%	33.33%	31.11%	15.56%	04.44%
Range: 22 - 72	Meadian Age: 43		N: 45	

TABLE II

AGE AT FIRST INVOLVEMENT WITH WICCA

19 - 23	24 - 28	29 - 33	34 - 38	39 - 43	44
10	14	02	11	05	03
22.22%	31.11%	04.44%	24.44%	11.11%	06.66%
Range: 19 - 46		Median Age: 25		N: 45	

The subjects were asked what racial heritage they considered themselves, not to provide documented evidence of such ancestry. Other researchers may have categorized many of the men as being of European descent. However, allowing the men to self-define their race of origin may better represent their cultural backgrounds. Many men expressed extreme levels of resentment for government interference regarding self-identification as Indian. Many of these men have been denied Indian status by the government due their inability to provide physical evidence of their ancestry.

Two points of interest remain. Wiccan philosophy promotes acceptance and affirmation of all people despite racial or ethnic heritage. The men of Indian descent felt Wicca and Native American forms of spirituality have many points in common and in some instances are nearly identical.

I tried finding out more about my Indian ancestry (Osage) and their spiritual beliefs. I had this fantasy about becoming some modern day shaman. But, no one would help me, my mom told them not to, so I turned to books. One book I read talked about Wicca. I began studying Wicca and found it to be very similar to what I knew of Indian ways.

TABLE III
RACIAL/ETHNIC HERITAGE

American Indian	African American	Hispanic American	European American
27 60.00%	02 04.44%	05 11.11%	11 24.44%
N: 45			

Historically minority associations have approached social issues in differing manners than members the dominant culture. Consider Martin Luther King's march at Selma, Alabama or rapidly developing power of groups such as the NACCP or ACLU.

Educational levels, occupational types, and annual incomes are detailed in TABLES IV, V, and VI. These are core criteria in many status determining theories. Every subject attended no less than two semesters of college and nearly 90% of the men held degrees, certificates, or licenses requiring formal education and/or training.

Many first-time exposures to Wicca occurred while attending college. Colleges and universities provide atmospheres of diversity that would be difficult to duplicate anywhere else in society. Such diversity was noted among the student populations, classes selections, and organizations on the campuses. Although, not all of the men were directly exposed to Wicca at college, they encountered ideologies concurrent with Wicca, such as feminism, ecological concerns, and civil liberties. Many went into specific occupational

areas they felt would be helpful in upholding their beliefs such as; law, medicine, politics, education, and environmental sciences.

College had to be the greatest time of my life. I learned my profession, made wonderful friends, and found the Goddess. If I hadn't gone to college, I'd be just like my dad...an over-worked, Baptist, mechanic. He still thinks Wicca is just a phase.

The incomes and occupations of these men were undoubtedly affected by their education. Only 2 of the 45 men (04.44%) reported being un-employed.

TABLE VI reports a median income of \$36,000. It is important to realize these figures reflect only those incomes of the men interviewed and not any combinations of those of possible spouses or cohabitators. Over 85% of these men reported incomes in excess of \$20,000.

I became a lawyer to put my undergrad degree to use. I majored in environmental sciences. Now I'm a lawyer specialized in environmental issues. I've helped with animal rights, EPA concerns, and human rights. I'm doing what I believe in, what my religion promotes, and making good money at it.

TABLES VII and VIII refer to the subjects' religious activities before Wicca. It was interesting to find over 40% originated from Catholic backgrounds. These men came from parishes strongly emphasizing the Virgin Mary.

They told of two occurrences. Some of the parishes ceased emphasizing the role of Mary and down-played the role of all women in the Catholic church. At some later point they

became aware of Wicca and the Mother Goddess. They felt as if they had been worshipping the Goddess their entire lives, only under the guise of the Christian Mary.

TABLE IV
HIGHEST EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

Some College	Two-Year Degree	Four-Year Degree	Six-Year Degree	Eight-Year Degree
05 11.11%	06 13.33%	14 31.11%	11 24.44%	09 20.00%
Range: 0-8+ yr.s.		Median: 4 yr.s of Ed.		N: 45

TABLE V
OCCUPATIONAL TYPE

Service Worker	Professional/ Management	Self Employed	Skilled Worker	Un-Employed
11 24.44%	23 51.11%	04 08.89%	05 11.11%	02 04.44%
N: 45				

Before they rebuilt my church, Mary stood facing Christ. After it was rebuilt, Mary of was gone and a small painting was in a tiny, dark alcove. I knew the statue survived the fire and asked my priest about it. He got mad and said women have no place in church. I never felt right in that church again.

TABLE VI
ANNUAL INCOME

\$10,000 & Below	\$10,001 - 20,000	\$20,001 - 40,000	\$40,001 - 60,000	\$60,000 & Above
01 02.22%	05 11.11%	19 42.22%	12 26.67%	08 17.78%
Range: \$8 - 125,000		Median Income: \$36,000		N: 45

The men from protestant backgrounds invariably reported they were first exposed to Wicca while attending college. They reported meeting a person that intrigued them. The men reported these relationships most often started out adversarial. The other person presented ideas concerning issues such as the rights of various groups of people, the destruction of animals and plants, or the damage being done to the environment. The subjects found themselves in agreement with this person. Over time the person introduced the subject to Wicca. The subjects found the stereotypes of faerie tale witches to be, one man reported,

Talk about lies...It was all just a scam to keep Wiccans and women in their place. I now know Christians fears Wicca and women.

The spiritualists, Pagans, and tribalists stated Wicca and their original beliefs were quite compatible. Wicca gave them a chance to express their beliefs to others of similar philosophies. Most of these men had previously worshipped a feminine god-heads such as the Aztec; Metzli, the Cherokee; Corn Maiden, or the Celtic; Brigit.

TABLE VIII refers to the type and level of religious activities the subjects were involved with before their Wiccan affiliation. These have been broken down into five groups. The first group was actively involved with some group form of religion. The men reported consistent attendance and earnest

involvement with their churches. However, at some point they experienced something in their church they found unacceptable. Most of the men were unwilling to discuss this matter. The few willing said their church strongly opposed some point of themselves. These points of disagreement included ideologies regarding sexuality, the rights and roles of women and other people, hypocrisy, and the use of fear tactics such as Hell and damnation, and proselytizing performed by the church.

One day some of the church women were discussing another lady. They said she was a lesbian. She wasn't, but the people turned on her. They reported her to the social workers...she lost her kids. My preacher said they were saving the children from damnation. Even if she were a lesbian so what, she didn't deserve the betrayal. I had this silly idea that churches were where you went to be forgiven.

The next group was inactive, but maintained consistent attendance at their churches. They went to their churches to please their families or communities. Many said they found mainstream churches to be places for social displays of status, instead of worship. Their initial exposure to Wicca was almost entirely accidental. Literature involving such groups provided these men with their first introduction to Wicca. All reported delving into books concerning Wicca and becoming solitary practitioners. At some point they became aware of Wiccans near them, developed a rapport which led to their involvement with the groups. The awareness of other Wiccans usually stemmed from newsletters or meetings in various occult oriented businesses.

I picked up what a lady had called the feminist bible, I wondered what could be different about it, so I bought it. It wasn't a bible at all, it was a book about Wicca. I read everything I could find before I found couple of people to talk to... They introduced me to my coven.

Another group reported religion had always been a core part of their lives but held few or no ties to formal religious institutions. The subjects expressed knowing traditional religion was not right for them, but being unaware of other viable alternatives. Frequently these men happened upon Wicca in much the same manner as did those men in the inactive-group category. However, where those men's involvement was due primarily to happenstance, these men actively sought out Wicca.

I knew there was a divine presence in my life, but the Christian God didn't feel right. When I read about the Goddess I knew what I had been searching for and set out to find the nearest coven. I was scared they wouldn't want me or I'd read about of lies. But I found them and they opened their lives to me. I had a place where I wasn't the weird one... people that genuinely cared for me.

The fourth group held little regard for religion and maintained no ties to traditional religion. They noted a level of animosity towards formal religions. They felt conventional, religious ideologies of these churches were detrimental to the lives of many people. Although, their initial exposures to Wicca were intentional, they were extremely skeptical.

I was intent on proving what I'd heard about Wicca wrong. After dealing churches that have damned every person in the world them, I was a cynic. What can I say? I was wrong. Wicca's given me hope someday humanity will out grow the need to use religion as a weapon.

The last group included men reporting no religious involvement. They considered themselves atheists. Many said religion was a fantasy constructed by people to protect them from their fear of the death and their need for a provided structure for their lives. A precedent leading these men to become involved with Wicca was some type of extremely potent spiritual experience: dreams, near-death experiences, arcane incidents in natural settings, or reactions to Wiccan rituals.

TABLE VII

RELIGIOUS AFFILIATIONS PRIOR TO WICCAN INVOLVEMENT

Catholic	Protestant	Spiritualist	Pagan/Tribal	None
19	07	08	05	06
42.22%	15.56%	17.78%	11.11%	13.33%

N: 45

TABLE VIII

RELIGIOUS ACTIVITY LEVEL AND TYPE
BEFORE WICCAN INVOLVEMENT

Group - Active	Group - Inactive	Solitary - Active	Solitary - Inactive	None
04	18	13	08	02
08.89%	40.00%	28.89%	17.78%	04.44%

N: 45

TABLES IX - XII depict various aspects of familial issues. These tables display nothing exceedingly outstanding or deviant about the men's familial backgrounds or current situations. The only point emerging fairly often was the role of their mother. Many of the men were raised in divorced households or single-parent households headed by the mothers. They held a special respect for their mothers and other women. They were enamored by the idea of womanhood. This is not to imply their emotions were merely sexual in nature or they were afraid of women. They were completely impressed by what it means to be female.

My mom raised three kids alone: she worked, went to school, and still found time for us kids. I'm glad I'm a man, I couldn't keep up if I'd were a woman. My mom's successful, loving, and beautiful. It's amazing how she made it without going crazy. That's the Goddess, the Mother, the Provider, and the calming voice when the thunders just too damn scary.

Women intrigue me, they're alluring...powerful. Show me a man that can birth a baby. Hell, show me a man that could stand the pain. After being with Wicca a few years I took my mom to a ritual night. She has since become part of a coven where she lives. I'm happy for once I gave her something.

TABLE IX

PARENTAL STATUS OF FAMILY OF ORIGIN

Married	Married, With Step Parent	Single, Never Married	Divorced, Never Remarried	Other
05 11.11%	14 31.11%	07 15.56%	15 33.33%	04 08.89%

N: 45

TABLE X
NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN ORIGINATING FAMILY

1 Child	2 - 3 Children	4 - 5 Children	6 + Children
07 15.56%	22 48.89%	14 31.11%	02 04.44%

Range: 1 - 8 Children Median # of Children: 3 N: 45

TABLE XI
CURRENT MARITAL STATUS

Married	Single	Divorced	Cohabiting	Other
13 28.89%	06 13.33%	7 15.56%	16 35.56%	3 06.67%

N: 45

TABLE XII
NUMBER OF CHILDREN

0, None Wanted	0, But Wanted	1 - 2 Children	3 - 4 Children	5 + Children
05 11.11%	11 24.44%	24 53.33%	04 08.89%	01 02.22%

Range: 0 - 6 Children Median # of Children: 1 N: 45

There was unusually high number of men who do not consider themselves practicing heterosexual males in TABLE XIII. One possible reason behind the presence of these men in Wicca, is Wicca's idea of acceptance of people regardless of non-harmful behaviors. The men reported feeling they could be themselves in the coven and not live in the closet.

I grew up a good, Catholic boy. Until I slept with a young priest. Wham, bam the word was out and I was asked to repent or leave. Nothing was ever said about the priest. He's still gay and a priest. When I found Wicca, I found a home. A place where I could be who I was, not what others wanted.

Homosexual or bisexual orientations are not uncommon among coven members. One subject reported there were covens that were entirely female. He said these were most often of the Dianic tradition. Diana is the Roman Goddess of the Hunt. She is also one of the three virgin Goddesses. Thus, these women seek to keep their groups entirely female and often practice lesbianism.

It is quite possible the non-heterosexual nature of many of these men has altered their view of mainstream society. Homosexuality is condemned by many religions and gay people have often religious persecution. It is possible these men affiliated themselves with Wicca as a means to validate themselves and their sexuality.

TABLE XIII
SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Heterosexual	Homosexual	Bisexual	Celibate
19	09	13	04
42.22%	20.00%	28.89%	08.89%

N: 45

Involvement With Wicca

Involvement with any group involves interaction and the development of group identities. Within each group there are

agendas supporting the ideology of the group and its members. Affirmation, personal growth, and companionship are just a few of the points intrinsic to coven activities.

Growth

When asked why they first became affiliated with Wicca, the men's answers followed four themes. First, Wicca provided them with the ability to experience growth. This growth was in reference to the spiritual, personal, social, and intellectual realms of their lives.

Some said until they entered the covens they had never experienced what they considered to be a truly spiritual event. Spirituality is a vague term and the subjects defined it in any manner they choose. Among the criteria for such an event were happenings such as contact with a greater whole, the universe, or the Goddess. They continued to describe the event with almost ecstatic descriptions.

The night I first joined in the circle for the dance was one of the most memorable and intense times of my life. I think the closest thing most men ever experience is an orgasm. Believe me, no orgasm... no ten, simultaneous orgasms could compare to the intensity and pleasure of that night. I was part of everything and nothing. The world looked felt so much different... I knew She (the Goddess) was there.

As a skeptical researcher, this writer felt it wise to ask whether or not drugs or other hallucinogenics were involved with the experience described above. The man answered in agitation, "No." Another man tried to explain what such an experience is like for a first-timer. He said it

was not uncommon for first-timers to have similarly intense experiences. He continued to relate although the intensity never really lessens, older members expect the event and are not taken back by it.

Another area of growth occurred in a personal realm. They noted in such areas as health-maintenance, self-esteem, and other self-oriented habits their efforts had been negligent and at times destructive. These behaviors will be discussed in further detail later in the paper.

The final area of growth involved the intellects of the men. Many credit their current occupations and educations to their involvement with Wicca. The men noted the women of the group were as intellectually adept as themselves. According to their accounts, frequent exposure to well-educated people encouraged these men to grow in intellectual terms themselves. One noted:

This is not a group of gossiping, old women or soap opera addicts. This coven places great emphasis on education and intellectual pursuits. Creativity and innovation are very important to find a way to bring humanity and balance back to the world.

If a younger person came into the group they were encouraged to pursue educational training and to use their talents to further their ideals, to insure economic security, and to help themselves become a part of a better world. Many of the groups' activities included attending rallies for various movements and educational seminars.

Companionship

Another reason for coven membership was companionship. The largest of the groups consisted of twenty-six people, while the smallest had fourteen members. This low number suggests a high level of intimacy among the members. Intimacy does not necessarily refer to sexual activity.

Most of the men reported considering their covens to be secondary families. The levels of attachment, involvement, and emotion expressed by these men towards their groups can only support the idea of an auxiliary family.

Unless its illegal, there is little I can think of that we wouldn't do for one of our own...For many of us, the coven is the closest thing we have to a family. We try to provide a place where friendships can grow. Its important to us our members feel at home.

Although, many of the relationships are familial and friendship oriented they are intense and quite durable. This is not to say some members do not become romantically involved with other members. However, this is not encouraged. If two members become involved with each other it can have extremely detrimental effects on the group. With such a small number of people the two, previously involved members, simply cannot avoid each other. According to the subjects, sometimes the members are able to deal with the situation and the group continues with little damage. But most often, one or both of the involved people leave the group and the whole is weakened.

Affirmation of Self

The next reason for the mens' involvement with Wicca was

that of acceptance and affirmation of themselves. This included three central areas, gender being the most noted. If the interview subjects had been female this would not have been surprising. However, men in this society are most apt to be considered more recognized and liberated. These men proclaimed that was not the case. Indeed, many expressed experiences of anti-male prejudice or androcism.

Most women I meet have already decided what I'm like before they ever talk me, just because I'm a man. I'm either a living wallet or a walking penis. No matter how hard I try to prove them wrong, they think it's just a trick to avoid a commitment or a way to bed them. So I reversed my approach, that was an utter failure. They take it as an insult if I pay for dinner and if I don't make a pass I have to be gay. I give up.

Similar incidents were reported by other men. They felt restrained by societal expectations of what it means to be male. They were tired of being bound the conforming pressures of their communities, friends, and families.

I'd genuinely love to slap the idiot that came up with the idea of being a "real man". If you're not some damn Marlboro Man something's obviously wrong with you. If you're considerate to women, you must be p----whipped. I'm sympathetic to women and Blacks...but they've got to realize we've all been hurt by these cookie-cutter images.

Affirmation extended to race and ethnic heritage. Again the men felt they were opposed by their communities. This included the men of European descent, as well as those of minority status in this society. Continuously these men pointed out acts of discrimination aimed at them.

I'm Cherokee...most people think I'm full-blood. Even in Oklahoma, I have to face all of the myths people had about Indians. They ask about Sun-Dances, war-bonnets, and peyote. If I tell them Cherokees don't use those things, they usually stomp off muttering something about me being lazy, drunk Indian.

Yes, it's hard to be a person of color. But try being a middle-class white-male and you see how you like it. Everybody hates us...Blacks, gays, women...you name it, they hate us. It isn't White versus Black or man versus woman, it's everyone against everyone.

Another point of self to promote involvement with Wicca was sexuality. Many of these men do not consider themselves to be heterosexual. Being gay or bisexual has to be one of the most effective ways to make enemies in this society. These men related one horror story after another about their treatment in society by friends, families, employers, the legal system, and complete strangers.

You want to know what Christ felt like...try being gay in Oklahoma. I heard being in Oklahoma is like being Black in Mississippi in the 1950's. It's bad enough to be gay, but I really feel sorry for the bisexuals. They get from both sides. Gays and straights, both bash them. Gays, of all people, should know better than to be prejudice, but they are. They bash just like straights and call it breeder-bashing.

The covens accepted these men for who they were. The men reported an odd feeling when they first entered the groups. They had never experienced such acceptance. Many were quite doubtful of the credibility of the situation.

It was like Oz, I couldn't believe it. There were men and women, gays, straights... The weird thing was they really got along. I have to admit I was uncomfortable. I thought I knew the rules, but none of those rules worked here. Getting used to that was the hardest thing about entering the coven.

Affirmation of Ideology

The final reason these men gave for becoming members of Wicca involved the groups' acceptance of their ideologies or beliefs. The men sought a place where they could receive affirmation of their beliefs. One of those beliefs concerned civil liberties. All of these men supported the rights of all life-forms despite species, race, age, sex, and any other criterion.

No one has the right to put his or her needs above those of others. Darwin should've been alive today, he could've really studied the survival of the fittest. This a land of restrictions, not freedoms. The name, human, is utterly absurd. There is very little humane about us as a species. We destroy the animals, the world, and ourselves. God-bless America and Capitalism.

Expression was another point these men frequently mentioned. Men in this society are traditionally not considered expressive regarding communication abilities and emotions. Frustration and alienation were common themes of their lives before Wicca. The Wiccan groups allowed for these men to be expressive and free from the constant threat of being judged less than manly for letting their emotions be known. One of these men details a tragic time in his life.

My mother had just died suddenly and I was at the funeral. My eyes had watered up a little when my dad came over. I thought he was coming over to comfort me. He leaned over and whispered in my ear. "Straighten up and act like a man, you damned sissy...don't you dare embarrass me. I ran to my car and drove to a friend's house (a Wiccan). I didn't even make it through the door before I broke down. He never laughed at me, he just let me cry until I could talk about it.

Another common ideology concerned ecological issues.

These men expressed their concerns not only for the typical ecological concerns, but those of people as well. They believe man is on a sure track to self-destruction if society does not alter its current course.

Hundreds of species are destroyed daily. Dead, gone, never coming back. Do they care, NO! They just keep tearing down forests, harvesting whales and sharks...Who knows what those animals and plants did for their ecosystems? No one and no one ever will. That could've been the cure for cancer or AIDS.

Look at the world. We live like kings while so much of the world has nothing but starvation, disease, and war. As long as money is the center of our lives we are doomed. There will be homeless people, children dying of the flu, and sooner or later it won't matter. There won't be anything left to sell.

The ideologies of these men were core ideals of the Wiccan ideology. When they found their covens, they found comrades in their endeavors. This is not a typical religion with many of its own agendas. Instead of being active against communism, evolution, or gays; Wicca focuses on issues of a wider scope. These issues include the rights of all species, the preservation of the world, and the harmonic existence of those living on this planet.

Wicca and Relationships

Within Wiccan Groups

The subjects reported themselves as extremely active and involved in their groups. This included such activities as performing services for the group, attending functions, and taking part in leisure activities. Although, these could be

considered normal activities for any religious organization, with the exception of the size of the groups. Where as noted the Wiccan groups were small and intimate, many mainstream churches may have memberships totaling in the hundreds. It would be difficult for any traditional religious organization to compare to these covens in regards to intimacy, involvement, and awareness of its members.

They often described their group relationships as being beyond membership or friendship, familial descriptions were common. The group provided for numerous types of support; emotional, financial, and intellectual. Many retold stories of near constant companionship within the groups.

When I first came out (subject was a gay male), my family showed me the door. That was ten years ago. We didn't speak for the first eight of those years. I was lucky, I had the coven. They provided a flat-broke, twenty-year old college student with a place to stay, food to eat, and clothes...but even more importantly, they helped me learn to accept to myself...One of the others finally got me and my family talking again. No matter what happens, I've got a home now.

Four years ago, I told my fiance about my religion and she hit the roof. I should've expected it, she's a Baptist. She screamed something about never marrying a baby-killer. I ran back to the group a mess...I talked to one of the older women (coven member) and she told me to give the girl time...I did, but it didn't work. We broke up for over two years. Out of the blue, she (fiance) came up to me on the street and said she wanted to talk. We met later and talked. A week later I found her talking to another member of my coven. A month later she asked me out to dinner. The other members had been talking to her and explaining her what Wicca really was. I owe my relationship with her (fiance) to them (the coven).

Our group is a little different than other church groups...We take care of each other...I'm an

investor and have helped some of the others get their dreams under way. Sometimes I decline, but they know I would never turn them down if their idea was sound. I owe a lot to the group, they got me my first "real" job. If it wasn't for them, I wouldn't have my money. I'm just paying back one of the many favors the group has done for me.

These groups are quite aware of their ability to provide their members with surrogate families and fiscal assistance. The men stressed these groups are not similar to the communes of the 1960's. Free love, mass drugs, and group homes are not to be found with these groups. However, they stress their groups do provide much advice and assistance in various areas of their life. The subjects reported members are expected to contribute to the group and to take care of themselves as well. A common quote was, "The Gods help those, who help themselves." The groups felt self well-being provides for group well-being.

External Relationships

The men reported their religious beliefs permeated their lives. The ideals of Wicca are quite ingrained into their lives. Although, such devotion may be noteworthy, it can be problematic. Their religious persuasion negatively effects many of their relationships including those with loved-ones, co-workers, and strangers.

The accounting of the man's problems with his fiance notes one of the possible problems with the intimate relations of these men due to their religion. Degradation, separation, and even complete abandonment were noted actions among many of

the men's families and other close relations.

I thought being gay was bad, but I've watched so many of these men lose their families...it's unbelievable how a mother could turn her back on her son because he was Wiccan instead of a Catholic or Methodist.

My dad and brothers give me a lot of hell because of Wicca. They say I'm letting a bunch of women and fags lead me by the nose. My ex-best friend is convinced I'm in it for the sex. He's sure they're (the coven) using me for breeding stock for the women and a sex toy for the men. I have never had sex with any members of my coven and have no intention of it.

A couple of years ago I was asked to help in a custody suit involving a Wiccan man. The local authorities refused to listen to my case just because the man was a Wiccan. Unfortunately, the case is still ongoing. When I returned to my home office, the head of my firm called me in. He wanted to know why I represented the man. I told him and he asked me if I were a Witch. I told him I was a Wiccan. Later I was asked to leave the firm. No acceptable reasons were given for my dismissal, but later it was confirmed by a colleague that it was because I was a Wiccan. She (colleague) informed me that she'd overheard a conversation between my ex-boss and a local judge. They were absolutely horrified with my religion. I was accused of being involved with numerous sexual, illegal, and immoral activities. Since then I have had to change counties and open my own office, just to maintain my practice. I could sue, but I wouldn't stand chance in this state.

One man tried to enter the group and was refused. He was no Wiccan. He wanted to offer sacrifices and have ritualized, sadistic sex with the women. He told the town we were a group of Satanists. Our homes and cars were vandalized, we were verbally harassed and a few were physically assaulted. We called the police. They just laughed. Nothing was done to help us get restitution for the damage done to our property or to protect us from further assault.

their communities these men continue to practice Wicca. Due to acts of discrimination, humiliation, and violence many of these men keep their religious ideology to themselves. They feel secrecy is the only way they can protect themselves, their loved-ones, and their property.

Others take the opposite approach and are active in political groups promoting civil liberties and ecological awareness and protection. The men noted when attending such political activities they did so in the name of other groups such as the American Civil Liberties Union or Green Peace.

Wicca is my religion and we (subject's coven) feel using one's religion to enforce an ideology or practice is wrong. If we did that, we would be just like the people that attack and defame us. If I want to help in a cause, there are plenty of band-wagons to jump on. So why drag Wicca into the middle of it. It would just some other religious group a target to set their sights on.

I refuse to go back in the closet. I'm out to the world about my sexuality and I refuse to be cloistered about my religion. Heterosexual Christians have ruled the world long enough and look what they've done to it. Gay Wiccans can't do any worse.

Wicca is more than my religion, its my life. I try to practice what I preach. Every where I look I see the Goddess...My beliefs give me the strength to keep living the best way I can. I have no right to degrade the Goddess by using Wicca as a weapon. If Christians choose to use their religion as a sword to destroy everyone else that's their choice.

Wiccan Roles

Although, roles are usually assigned to individuals or

groups, Wicca plays an institutional role in the lives of these men, their covens, and others with which they interact. According to the interview subjects, Wicca provides them with the means to accept themselves, others, and natural processes.

Wiccan ideals are holistic in nature. They feel they have no right to interfere with anyone's life. However, they do have the responsibility to preserve themselves and the environment. This promotes their constant attempts to accept the very people who would see them and their religion purged from this society. They believe the attacks upon themselves, their character, and their covens are made by people who are less intellectually capable of understanding their ideals and too fearful to realize Wiccans are of no threat to mainstream society.

Like the song says, "Never get mad at the stupid people..." They've allowed themselves to be blinded by their leaders. Many of them would rather follow someone else's lead than to actually think for themselves. I'm not mad at them so much as I am their government, their religion, and their laziness.

Wiccans stated death is not the end of life. It is merely a doorway into the next life. One man based this notion on the idea energy can never really be destroyed. It can be altered, transformed, or dissipated, but not destroyed. He saw the spirit of a person as a type of energy. Therefore, it can only be altered, not destroyed.

It amazes me how afraid some people are of death. They're so scared of death, they're too afraid to ever really live. Living scared isn't living, its suffering. A person shouldn't suffer through life. Wicca taught me not to fear death. Don't get me wrong, I'm not looking forward to it, but I refuse to waste my life fearing the inevitable.

These men are very involved with environmental and ecological issues. It is their belief man must realize his place in the ecosystem that forms this world. Failure to do so will jeopardize the Earth and all of humanity. A common criticism against society on ecological issues regarded man's need for conquest. Modern man has developed the idea the resources of this world are infinite, there for man to exploit, regardless of the consequences. Wiccans were among the early groups of people trying to raise this society's consciousness concerning the environment. However, many of their attempts to educate the society have been attacked by very influential people such as the waspish Rush Limbaugh.

Man is but a small part of the world and has his place. We are the stewards of the planet. It is our responsibility to insure that the gifts of the Goddess are here for the children of the next generation. We as a species have maimed the world like no others. Do we feel remorse, no we call it progress.

Wicca inspires community involvement and leadership. Leadership is not based upon a militant, power-base. Teaching is the basis of Wiccan leadership. They belief if they can educate the world and live by their own beliefs others will follow in their path. The men titled Wicca, a mystery religion. They said Wicca was not a religion for everyone,

but for those who would belong, there is always an open door. The groups do not engage in soliciting religion in a door to door manner or via horrific commercials. It is believed the people who would be part of the religion will find their own way to the Goddess.

Leadership within the groups was unusual in some sense. The power and responsibilities are shared and the actual leader-roles rotate. These leadership positions of Priest and Priestess rotate among those in the group recognized as worthy of the position. The idea of worthiness may include age, understanding, ability to handle people, responsibility issues, and countless other criteria. However, these men felt they would all one day hold the role of priest.

In these groups the Priestess and Priest are very important. In some rituals they are representative as the Mother Goddess and the Horned God. They represent the balance in life and death. Women are the constants in life and men are the change. Life with too little or too much change is fated to cease. The rotation of the various positions in the groups insures a controlled amount of change in their groups. In the end, the groups have four responsibilities; to the Goddess, to the coven, to themselves, and to the planet.

I've been the high priest of my coven before. I really looked forward to the honor. But, I'm not sure I ever want it again. I'll take it if the groups needs me to, but I'd rather not. Being a priest is not what I thought it would be. It was

the first role as a leader I had ever held. I have new respect for the leaders of our world. I had a small group and a co-leader, they're dealing with nations.

Wiccan Ideals

The men were asked what Wicca meant to them. There were several answers, but two were common; peace and responsibility. These men continually remarked about the peace and harmony they discovered when they entered their groups. Harmony, according to them, was the basis for a happy life. Harmony demands a balancing act of all the melodies that come together to form life.

To me, being a Wiccan is like being concert pianist. There are countless combinations of notes making up any piece. The same goes for life. The decisions I make write my ballad.

The man went on to discuss there being many parts of life that must be harmonized with to better a person's life. These included aspects of masculinity and femininity. He felt it was his responsibility to himself to recognize the presence of both genders within himself. The animal nature of man was also discussed. One Wiccan said, "Man is the only animal seeking to disprove himself." He explained, man has spent great amounts of time and energy to prove how different he is from animal. All the time his sciences have produced more and more similarities. Perhaps the biggest difference between man and animals, is he refuses to accept himself for what he is, a part of the animal kingdom.

Responsibility was another issue. "Lest it harm others, do as ye will," was a common part of their ideology. At first this seems to give an individual great liberties with the actions he or she may undertake. But take a moment to think about the statement, the responsibility it confers on the person is tremendous. One must first think about one's actions before acting. A practice few engage in on a regular basis. What will happen if I do this or that? Will my actions harm any one? Sometimes a person can never know.

I used to really hate that phrase. It sounds so simple at first, but soon it hits you. You, and you alone, are responsible for your actions...Not an abusive spouse or parent, not the alcohol you drank, or the orders you were given. You are responsible. At first it really scared me and I did very little. Then I just decided I'd have to be cautious in all that I did without becoming paralysed by the possibilities. It's just so much easier to do what some one else tells you to do. If something goes wrong you can blame it on them.

Lack of Male Dominance

The men were asked if it bothered them their groups were not structured in a way insuring male dominance like in other religious affiliations. Although their reasons differed, their answer was a unanimous, "No."

Among the subjects, a group expressed the idea men had ruled the world long enough. They spoke of the times when the world was more feminine and women held more roles of power and influence. They felt the pursuit of the male-oriented Christianity with men at the helm and rudder have done little

to insure the rights and beliefs of the various peoples of the world. This group holds the protestant religions responsible for much of the damage done to the environment and the greed inspired by capitalism. They sight such ideals as Weber's Protestant Ethic.

There was a time when the planet was viewed as the mother of all life and she was respected. There was a time when a person's private life was just that, private. They call this a free democracy we live in, I call it a theologically based tyranny. This Christian fascism has led to the debasement of all life. Only those few lucky enough to be successful and their heirs are treated well in this society, but the vultures wait even for them to fall.

Wicca promotes the acceptance and just treatment of all life. It promotes the freedoms of all people within the bounds that it does not harm or hinder others. The various Goddess religions realize it's impossible to maintain a harmonic existence for all people in a nation as large as the United States. Perhaps one day a women will be President and people will listen to her. I hope I live to see it.

Another point was there had to be balance between all aspects of life including femininity and masculinity. To have balance there must be equality among the sexes. Wicca has been called a feminist religion. It does not mean the women in these groups are Amazon leaders using the men for their whims. Women in this group had equitable power and responsibility. Compared to Christianity that is a considerable boost to the role of women.

How any self-respecting women can allow herself to be degraded by a faith such as Christianity is beyond me. If I was a women and a priest told me to be quiet in church or to have my husband explain something in simpler terms once we got home, I'd have to punch him. I know that's not very Wiccan or humane, but some things just demand immediate

action.

My wife and I were originally Baptist. She was a practicing Jew before she met me. She gave up everything to be with me. She died seven years ago. She knew she was dying before I did and tried to make the arrangements (funeral) by herself. She went to our preacher and told him she wanted to make it easier on me...He wouldn't do anything without me present. She went back to her family and religion. They told her that unless I became a Jew, they wouldn't help her... There wasn't enough time. Her last wish was to make her death as easy as possible on me and they denied her that wish. Her wishes were sacrificed because she was female.

Equal responsibility was the most common response to the question concerning male dominance. These men were happy to find people who believed men and women should have equal rights and responsibilities. The men expressed feelings of great relief and stress reduction.

I'm divorced, and the simple reason behind my divorce was that I asked my wife to get a job. I have two kids and with my prior job I missed everything, I missed my daughter's first words, her first steps, I even missed the first time she called for her daddy. I was a corporate evaluation specialist. I spent more time in the air than on the ground. I provided well for my family. I wanted the best for my wife and child. We had a housekeeper, who also cooked, and a nanny. My wife spent her days going to women's groups and attending seminars. When our son was born I told her I wanted to take another job so I could spend time with the children. She had two choices, either get a job of her own and we could live like we had or we'd have to make some serious cutbacks. We had a fight and she walked out. She told me, if things changed with my job and the house she'd divorce me. I showed her the door. We'd signed a premarital agreement...she wasn't entitled to anything. It went to court and she fought for custody and lost. All I wanted was time with my children and to enjoy all the things

I'd worked for. She has since remarried and seldom contacts the children.

When it came to issues of male dominance and equality, the men seemed more supportive of women's rights than the females of the groups. They spoke often of difficulties in meeting women who appreciated their views on these issues. one man reported:

I hate to say it but most women I've dated are liars. They spout the ERA bull. They want the good and not the bad. They're looking for some a Harlequin (romance novel) character not a real person. I refuse to be the only one working myself to death...being stressed out over bills. If a woman wants to be part of my life, she's got to have a life of her own. That means a job. No wonder so many men are gay.

Wicca and Change

Changes in Self

When asked if they had changed since their involvement with Wicca, all the subjects said, "yes". Open-mindedness was one of the subjects they discussed. Wicca had promoted in them an ideal of acceptance and tolerance.

I was the world's biggest bigot. I bashed women, gays, Blacks, eco-geeks, democrats...Wicca gave me a chance to correct some of those mistakes. My bigotry was fear and ignorance. I was just a small-town red-neck. If I wasn't doing farm-work, going to rodeos, chasing women, or listening to Clint Black (country singer) I was sleeping. My sister got me going to the coven meetings [at first I only went to meet the women] I started meeting people. I liked them and started hanging with them. About a month after, I found out one of the guys I'd been hanging with was gay. I lost it...I figured if he hadn't made a pass at me yet he probably wouldn't.

He continued to remark how different the people he now kept company with were compared to his past groups. Others had similar stories of growing awareness and contact with people they had never known before. Many reported going places or attending events in order to meet different types of people.

Competition ruled many of the men's lives before they encountered Wicca. They reported competing in nearly every aspect of life; grades, jobs, sports, women, and so on. Competition and masculinity seem synonymous.

I was a college, foot-ball jock, everything I did was to win. I had to be the best. The only problem with being the best is there's always someone else who wants to be the best. When both of you want to win, you do some pretty stupid things. You hate people just because they competed with you. I still have to fight down being overly competitive, but I'm getting better.

Before Wicca, I never had a real relationship. My friends were there to make me look good or to praise me. Women were just for sex and a notch in my headboard. I would say anything to bed a woman. I used to go to a gym where a lot of gays worked-out. I knew they wanted me so I teased them. I wore as little clothes as possible and the ones I wore showed almost everything. I liked the attention and the power. They wanted me, but couldn't have me.

According to the subjects Wicca allowed for them to have an environment where competition was not so rewarding. When asked why they stayed in a place where competition meant so little one man explained. "Sometimes being a man really sucks, no one wants to be friends with a power-freak."

The final issue of change in the self dealt with more individual and emotional aspects. They reported frequent

feelings of self-doubt and other negative emotions before their involvement with their covens. Fear was common to these men. Fears of death, confrontation, and failure among others ruled their lives. Wicca stresses acceptance of the inevitable and those things beyond human control.

I had been raised as a preacher's kid and taught to avoid confrontations at all cost. My father threatened to beat me if he ever heard of me getting in a fight. I was afraid of fights and any type of confrontation. I still have problems standing up for myself today. To make it worse, my father wanted the perfect son. A good grade was never enough, it had to be the best possible grade. Second place didn't exist to him. He got so mad when I failed I just gave up and quit doing anything I didn't have to.

I was the utter hypochondriac. If there was an illness to be had, I had it. My friends teased me about belonging to the ailment of the month club. I was terrified of being sick and had nightmares about dying. Finally my health really did start to suffer. Since I found Wicca, my fear of death has diminished...my health has improved drastically.

Another emotional phenomenon was what the Wiccans called the self-hater. People often suffer from the self-hater. They proclaim everyone has to deal with the self-hater to one degree or another. The self-hater is the part of the self constantly belittling and attacking various aspects of the self. Wiccans feel all aspects of the self must be unified in order for the self to move on in life. This self-hater must be confronted.

I hated everything about myself. My weight, my face, my ability...I found myself diving into bottle after bottle to avoid myself. It didn't work...I wound up in AA. Eventually my sponsor (AA) introduced me to Wicca and slowly started to deal with myself.

Sex wasn't sex for me, it was love...temporary, but love...I had to have it (sex)...I needed the physical intimacy...Male/female, White/Black it didn't matter. I tried to bag one Wiccan woman and she took me out for coffee instead and just talked to me. She gave me her number and we talked for months. She introduced me to other Wiccans and one of them was a psychologist. He helped me immensely. For the first time in my life I found out my life wasn't normal. I knew having sex with that many people wasn't normal. But he asked me about my first sexual experience...I couldn't remember my first time... I'd been having sex with my parents and siblings as long as I can remember. Slowly, thanks to Wicca, I'm learning what a family really is.

When I joined Wicca I was huge, beluga material, you know. I told the priestess of our group I wanted to lose weight and she asked me a lot of questions. The next day she came to my house with a full-length mirror, huge sponges, and a bushel-sized basin and told me what she wanted me to do. Before I started any type of diet she wanted me to be comfortable with myself. When I woke up and before I went to bed, I stood in the basin in front of the mirror and sponge-bathed. She had me do this until I could look at myself without cringing or feeling disgust. I didn't think it would ever happen but it did. I'm still big, but I'm getting there.

Changes in Relationships

A person's life can be described to some extent by his/her relationships. These may include friends, family members, lovers, or co-workers. The men felt strongly that Wicca had helped change their relationships for the better. When first asked about their families over half became cool and distant. They did not like to talk about their families. Most of them eventually opened up and began to talk about their families.

Very few of the men felt they had good relationships with

their families and many referred to their coven as their family. Distant, adversarial, and surface were common descriptors of their familial relations. Over a third of the men reported absolutely no contact with their families for several years. Men retaining familial relations noted antagonistic and superficial qualities in the relationships.

My parents and me still get together...We do Christmas and Thanksgiving...It's tense. They know I'm Wiccan, they hate it. They don't want to know anything about it or me. I go to their house because I feel like I have to, not because I want to. If I did what they wanted, they'd be happy. I hope they don't need me to take care of them when they get older...I couldn't do it. I couldn't have anyone in my house who hates me.

My father and me haven't talked in years. He blames me for my mother's death. I'd gone to college instead of staying home and working on our ranch. She fell down the stairs my senior year. He hasn't talked to me since.

My older brother and me have always competed. Too bad for him, I was better than him in sports and school. We both went to OU (University of Oklahoma), he flunked out his second year. I stayed until I finished law school. The day we got word I passed the bar, my parents threw me a party. My brother choose that day to tell me I had been adopted. It's taken several years to mend the rip in my family that revelation caused.

Many similar problems emerged in these men's relations with friends and lovers. Their relationships were often one-sided and superficial. Their friendships exhibited the same levels of competition as noted earlier. There was a need to see who could be the most "real" man.

I didn't have friends I had sparing partners. Who could do the best...the few guys who really wanted to be friends scared the hell out of me...I told myself they were fags and ditched them before they could get too close.

The intimate relationships of these men were more of a convenience than commitment. They sought the security of a relationship and the readily accessible sexual activity. They reported stories of never really knowing who their partners really were. They felt they were always either the giver or the taker, never both.

I had countless girlfriends...when they started asking too much, they had to go. They were there to keep the house and take care of my needs. No wonder, I'm forty and still not married.

I was so afraid of becoming attached to anyone, I drove them away before they could hurt me. I should've put a revolving door on my bedroom. They were there, then they were gone.

The men said the women in the group have helped them in their relationships with women. The men said they were less fearful of relationships than they had been. Most often when asked about what advice they would receive from the women the men retold the women's suggestions. Take it slow, don't have sex for a long while, and never confuse sex with love, or love with a psychological disorders.

As for relationships with people at work or casual acquaintances the men reported never affording these people the opportunity to get to know them on any other level. They distanced themselves from many possible long-term relationships. Most reported they were slowly increasing the number of casual friends they had, but it was a slow process.

Current Relationships

The men talked of several changes in their relationships since their involvement with their covens. Many of the men

have reported becoming much more selective of their environments and the people who accompany them. This included choosing new places and people more apt to be more supportive of their needs and desires.

I spent all my free time in bars, adult theatres, and the like...My relationships were based on alcohol, sex, and misery...I still go out to clubs, but these have real lights so you can see the people and the people act respectable...No one can find happiness in a barful of depressed drunks...You can find a lot of great sex and a few laughs, but not happiness and no real friends, just bar buddies.

I used to hang out with my family, old friends, and go to my parents' church...None of those people approved of my ideas or of Wicca...Every day I spent with them my beliefs were attacked...I now choose not to associate with those people. There is no reason I should place myself in places filled with people who want to hurt me.

After reporting their new selectivity, the men continued to discuss how now they were far more revealing of themselves. Truth in advertising seems to be these mens current motto. Disclosure is central to their permanent relationships.

When I came out to my parents about being gay and being Wiccan they fell to pieces...It took me a long time to realize they weren't mad, they were dumb-founded...I'd agreed with everything I never told anyone what I really thought. My mom picked out my clothes, I hated them but I never told her. I went hunting with my dad because he asked me to, I never told him how sick I felt each time he shot something...What I'm trying to say is most of my relationship problems were my own doing...I guess I expected people just to read my mind.

The men have claimed the freedom and responsibility to be honest about their feelings and desires. Where the societal norm is for men to be lacking in expressive communication,

these men have chosen to break this rule of masculinity. Although, this is a freedom, it forces the men to realize they are responsible for their presentation of self and the audiences they chose.

Harm and humiliation will no longer be tolerated by these men. They realize they cannot prevent all antagonistic behaviors aimed at them. However, they can take an active part in preventing such actions against their beliefs and persons.

I was afraid of my own shadow...What would the neighbors think if they knew I was a Wiccan... Would they hide their children and pets? Would they break into my house? Try to get me fired at work?...I simply cannot allowed myself to be bullied or to live my life in fear...I can't control them, but I can control myself.

The decision to be Wiccan strongly affected the relationships these men had with their families. The consequences have been split amongst the more positive and the negative. Where many families choose to cease contact with these men or to attack their decision, others have been more supportive and affirming.

The respect for women Wicca has taught me has helped me understand my mother, sisters, and my wife. When I joined Wicca the women in my family snickered. I can't blame them, I'd joined every fad that came along like the TM (transcendental meditation) people and new-agers. Once I started treating women better, they became quite supportive of my choice. My wife's considering joining Wicca.

Unfortunately for these men, their new found awareness of women is not always welcomed. They have decided any future

relationships they may engage in will be egalitarian. They are finding out egalitarian relationships may sound nice, but they still have their problems.

I thought women wanted to be treated as equals. I was wrong...The women I've dated want to be pampered princesses.

The first five years of my marriage was like post WWII Europe. We fought about everything... Everything was an issue of power and respect. We declared peace and it seems to be holding. We both run our own lives and take equal parts in decisions affecting both of us. It hasn't been easy, but it's worth it.

Current Selves

When asked what they considered the most important change in their lives the men had one answer, they were more relaxed. They felt relaxed in issues concerning themselves, others, and life in general. Many reported gradual improvement in their mental and physical well-being. They talked about better sleep-patterns, lower blood-pressure, fewer stress-related ailments, and overall better health.

Acceptance of themselves is their basis for the acceptance of others.

I found myself constantly attacking people like myself. Anyone that seemed unsure or skiddish I provoked and teased. I guess it was my way of dealing with my own fears and uncertainties.

Many men reported once they had learned to accept themselves they found it easy to accept others in their lives.

I thought I was terrible, I was a beast...I couldn't understand why anyone would want to be around me, so I drove them off... I figured if they wanted to be

near me then they must be really bad off...I'm no angel, but I'm no monster either. I started seeing the good in me, others had seen for so long.

From an outside perspective it seems these men learned to communicate. They have found themselves able to communicate with themselves and others around them. They have learned to take care of their needs and not to be so expectant of others to fulfill those needs. The acceptance of themselves furthers this point. Once they took a long look at themselves, they could cope with even the most traumatic of problems.

The acceptance of themselves lessened their fears of being found out. They discussed how their feelings of fear and suspicious subsided in turn. Once others were viewed as possible friends or allies instead of enemies their relationships began to improve.

When asked if these changes would have occurred without Wicca or if the changes could have occurred in tandem with another group the answer was not surprising. The answer was no to both aspects of the question. Wicca gave them the courage to face themselves and the ability to deal with themselves in a positive manner.

As for other groups, the men said they had been part of other groups and none of them had ever helped them to accept themselves. They felt society was not designed to help individuals accept themselves. Instead they saw society and all of its representatives as agents of conformity.

I spent my life in a Christian church, all they did was tell me what to do. If I complained, I was petty and doubting God's. No Christian church could do what Wicca has helped to do for myself.

That response was spoken in front of other men and the others present sounded off in complete agreement with the speaker. Although, they try not to be resentful of Christian faiths, it seems they still have a ways to go. Perhaps mainstream churches are merely cookie-cutters for the status-quo. If that is accurate, then these men are correct in assuming the churches of the dominant culture would have been practically useless in their quest for self-acceptance and personal growth.

Selves and Art

Self as Art-Forms

The men had several definitions for the word, Wicca. One was, "The craft", thus the idea of Witchcraft. A craft involves changing one thing into another. Some crafts are designed to be utilitarian, some are decorative, while others are both.

When asked if the self could be crafted into something else, the men's answer was interesting. Yes, the self could be crafted into something other than what it appeared to be, but it would always be the same self. A little confused with the answer, the researcher asked for an explanation. "A craftsmen can sculpt a beautiful bust from a piece of granite. It may be a wonderful work, but it's still a piece of granite." The craft can merely reveal the self lying beneath the veneer individuals use to conceal themselves.

When asked if the self could be compared to an art form they said yes. Growing is like sculpting or painting, each

decision or choice sheers off a little more stone or adds another stroke of paint. The self was viewed as a clean canvas or a block or clay. Both waiting for the artist to transform it into some work of art. One man noted:

Every person is a masterpiece waiting to be discovered. Some sculptors say they merely release their works from the stone that holds them. That means the art was always there, just waiting to be found.

A person has the ability to be artistic...they just have to be willing to do their own thing... stop painting by the numbers...color outside the lines...Only you can know what's right for you. If you follow the rules and don't like the product, start over...if you won't do that, you have only yourself to blame for a poor product.

Self and Genre

If the self is an art form, do selves come in various styles or genres? "I should hope so, a world full of Monet's would be frightful." The men pointed out four such possible formats. According to the men, most people are traditional in style. They're the Rockwell collection of society. Rockwell may not be their preference, but the style goes unquestioned by society.

American Gothic lives on quite well...Take a close look at that picture and tell those people were happy...I guess it's just easier for them to stay miscast then to break out of the mold.

American society is based upon the great ideal of individualism. When the men heard that remark, they rolled in laughter. They agreed people tried to appear as individuals but they continued to say individualism in this society means being the first person on the block to change to the latest

style in New York. One man said, "If Americans truly respected individualism then people wouldn't give Wiccans and other groups so many problems."

In America, it's who can keep up with the latest styles that constitutes individualism...Most people will wear anything someone else told them was chic...just remember the Emperor's New Clothes.

Most felt people wanted to appear like their own person but were not willing to go through the effort of being their own person. One man felt being one's own person required serious work and constant introspection. "Having your own style is a balancing act." He continued, to have an individual style a person has to know what he or she is really like. If a person does not know themselves, then how can they really know what they like.

Yeah, they all want to be Davinci's and Warhol's but they settle for the pre-framed copies K-Mart sells for \$4.99 and up.

So many people keep changing things so fast they never take the time to know if they really like any of what they do. They never take the time to ask why they like what they buy. Americans appreciate cheap, efficiency, not the tedious love that makes something art.

They had met very few people who had their own styles. Unfortunately, they reported these people usually had two possible fortunes. Society rejects originals. Consider any revolutionary during their times like Galileo or Rosa Parks. These people caused outrage in their times, now they are viewed as great people for their efforts. Society respects originality once the threat has passed. Which usually requires the death of the innovator. Contemporary originals

are often treated in the same manner. Society titles them misfits, eccentrics, or people suffering from serious psychological problems.

The other side of the coin includes those people fortunate enough to have their innovation considered valuable by society. Such artists as Warhol or Nagel prompted this type of reaction. The problem is most people refuse to be creative and settle for copying someone else's style. Go to any art gallery and count the number of Nagel and Warhol copycats. Original people fortunate enough not to be exiled, can look forward to being xeroxed. The cliché says, "Imitation is the greatest form of flattery."

A friend of mine is an architect...He designed some really neat houses, but they flopped around here because they didn't look like every other house in suburbia...He moved to Dallas...Now he has a waiting list four-years long.

I was the only kid in my high-school interested in traditional Indian styles...The other kids laughed when I first started growing my hair and wearing the jewelry...By the end of the year, I'd started a fad. I was happy they weren't making fun of me, but it made me mad when I realized it was just a new style to them...They didn't care about what it meant to me or what it had meant to the Indians who created it.

These men felt everyone had their own style, but few people were willing to show themselves. They blamed this on a fear of ridicule. They felt everyone should experiment until they find out what feels right to them. Again they blame the individual for allowing society to dictate what styles are appropriate and acceptable.

Self Exhibition

There are numerous types of art galleries, all specializing in specific types of art such as traditional, modern, or abstract. Since the various paintings were all produced by artist, it would imply the artist have various styles. There are places where an artist can expect his/her piece to do well and others where the piece would be unacceptable. Is this true for selves?

The men said place is extremely important to exhibition. A person should be upfront about themselves, the person should try to exhibit their self in places they feel comfortable. Without the fear of rejection, people are more apt to express their true self. Not only did they feel the "true" self would be displayed in a hospitable environment, but also the person would give a better exhibition of themselves.

Painters usually use their friends as viewing audiences. In hopes their friends will be supportive...If the artist trusts their opinions and their support, he will be willing to show them his art and try new techniques. Many artist were only discovered after their deaths, because of their fear of humiliation.

Few people are willing to take a chance at failure if they know everyone watching is going to laugh at them.

Many felt a person should be interested in exhibiting their self where the real self can be appreciated. They continued to say the self should be cultivated like an artist's skill, not stifled by vicious critiques. Does such a place as these men describe exist?

They felt there were many places where the self could

benefit from exposure. The men felt the self should be displayed in a setting where there are many other styles so the uniqueness of the self can be fully appreciated. They continued to say the setting should be a place where the self can feel safe and allowed to grow and change.

A rose in a field of roses is just another rose.
But a rose in a field of weeds is a treasure. The only reason people want to be around others just like themselves is for safety.

We all change over time...We come to realize what we are and what we might possibly become...Lack of change leads to death, but even a corpse changes.

If we are not encouraged to try new things how will we ever know if we like them.

Display of Self

The men continued with their own line of responses to the researchers questions. They felt there are various ways the self should be displayed. The self is not a rose to be placed in a vase. The self is an entity of action and can only be displayed via action.

The subjects stated a person can only be known by the actions he or she takes. When asked to further the explanation, the men cited another cliché, "Talk's cheap." The self can be witnessed in the relationships of the person. The type of relationships and the people involved in the relationships can tell people a lot about one another.

Creations and interests were avenues to information retrieval in reference to the self. How much effort does the person put into whatever it is he or she does. Do they have a job, a career, or a calling. It is likely an individual who

readily dove into dime-store romance novels would be a different type than one who chooses to read historical anthologies for recreation. They continued to say the actions and relations of a person define the person.

Many people have been turned away by our groups. We ask only they be truly interested in Wicca and respect our beliefs. Some people say they do, but you just have to wait and watch...that's why we have "The year and a day,"...We've had women who were just mad at men and people searching for their latest oddity...Only a person's actions can determine their true interest.

Style

The final question concerning artistic flair was, if a person is like a piece of art, what style would you like to be? This question puzzled them and they took quite a while to answer. There were three common answers. The first was classical. They described the beauty and passion of the Greco-Roman works. They felt the pieces showed the strength of the people depicted. The subjects went on to say they saw a freedom in those pieces not found in modern times.

The second style was mystical or divine, such as those found in Catholic cathedrals. The subjects reported feeling these pieces had an odd mixture of fortitude and tranquility. Those were two qualities these men sought to engrain in their own lives.

The final group said they wanted to be their own unique style. They felt completely adhering to another form would limit them. They said there were qualities and characteristics of various forms they would include in their

style. These men would be composites of past styles and techniques, expressing their own special qualities.

The men reminded the researcher what they discussed were ideals and ideals are not real. Sometimes a person can live up to these ideals, but no one can forever. People make mistakes and times changes. Nothing is an absolute. These men know even the best of intentions can fail. They are human and have their short-comings. When asked if they sought to overcome these flaws in their character, they said not all of them. Some flaws constitute unique characters and although sometimes annoying, they make some people the individuals they so desperately wish to be.

Researcher Commentary

The demographic section of this project relays many interesting facts in mere numerical terms. However, many of those revelations surpass the simple presentation of numbers present. The ages of the men in these covens in many ways separates them from a large percentage of the society. The majority of these men would be considered middle-aged by societal standards, ranging from thirty-one to fifty. These men were born during the baby-boom generation. This generation's values and beliefs have been continually opposed by the following epoch of Americans, Generation X (Gergen 1991). The life experiences of these men are and were dramatically different from those of the generation proceeding or following the baby-boomers.

Baby-boomers found themselves in the beginning of the end of modernism and industrialism. The prior generation survived with industrial society intact, while Generation X matured in tandem with the information or technological society. Baby-boomers are a marginal group walking between industrial society and a technopolis (Gergen 1991). Often the social rules they internalized in their younger years have been challenged, defeated, and erased. Perhaps this marginality is the very phenomenon prompting many of these men to seek refuge within Wicca. The younger generation has yet to feel the tragedy of their time and identity fading into memory. The older generation has somehow maintained their beliefs and values. However, the baby-boomers have not been so fortunate.

There are several other notes of marginal status for these men and their identities. Consider the racial, sexual, educational, and occupational identities of these men. In all four aspects these men have displayed extreme deviation from the norm. Over half these men claimed Indian ancestry and nearly the same amount labeled themselves as non-heterosexuals. Throughout the volumes of work done concerning minority affairs within society, the commonality has been the different struggles these people face when compared to members of the dominant culture.

As noted earlier education and occupation are both aspects of status determination. In both categories these men

displayed extremely high standing, thus placing them in the upper ranges of the middle class. The works on social class are numerous, depicting the various phenomenon existing within each range of social positions. Whether one reads Collins or Veblen, one will note the extreme differences in behavior and attitudes between and within the various strata of society (1971, 1912).

When one examines the tables regarding previous religious experiences of these men, the reader must remember these men are primarily baby-boomers. Although, religion's place in this society has somewhat faltered in the last few decades, it was of prime importance for the people of the baby-boom generation (Gergen 1991). Religion maintained an immense role in the lives of these men and their families. It is of no surprise these men would seek to maintain that level of religious involvement. However, many of today's religions find several of this decade's ideologies as profane, opposing their values. Numerous churches have fought to retain values of a social world that has vanished, while society has moved forward. Whether or not these changes were positive is not important. The fact remains the social ideals of these men changed while their previous religion remained static. The static nature of religions and the dynamic of society may have led these men to seek a religion more in harmony with contemporary ideologies such as Wicca.

After examining the data revealed in this research some people may title these men as "whiners" or "losers". Perhaps, they merely seek to be part of the social whole once more. Throughout this section the research discussed the desires of these men to have companionship, to be affirmed, and accepted. Their strategy in achieving these goals included the adoption of Wicca, its ideals and roles. With a change in the institutional perspective of religion, many of their social structures and ideals were altered accordingly.

Just as the project has examined the various styles and genres of artistic endeavors it has noted the variety and diversity of these men. Regardless of the categorical differences existing among these men they share one important similarity. These men are and were not part of the dominant culture. Whether one emphasizes sexuality, wealth, ideology, or any of the other phenomenon examined, it is apparent these men existed on the fringes of society. Wicca provided these men with a place. A place embracing their deviant nature, thus creating a new norm for these men. An environment in which these men were active participants in social debate, instead of mere onlookers.

CHAPTER V

META-ANALYSIS

The social worlds, roles, and selves of these males drove this research. Although, similar to men in the dominant culture, these men have altered aspects, both subtle and conspicuous, of their lives including their selves, relations, and realities. Other research may discuss people executing similar feats under other circumstances. However, for forty-five these men, the alliance with Wiccan covens has proven to be the universal factor.

Transformation, enlightenment, and even miracles have been associated with spiritual ideologies throughout history, so it should come as little surprise that the innovative remodeling of these men's selves was accompanied by an affiliation with a religious order (Tambiah 1990, O'Keefe 1982). Religion has a function congregations, clergies, and social scientists often overlook. Religious experiences have been credited with aiding in social evolution (O'Keefe 1982, Eisenstadt 1968a). Although, no Darwinistic evolution has occurred, these men have altered their selves and communities in ways not found in society proper.

These men lived in a social world they deemed unacceptable, alienating, and hostile. Their quest for answers to their problems led them to Wicca. Within the

teachings of the covens they found the tools necessary to redefine their existence. The men did not accept their social fates or revolt against the status quo. Instead, as Merton noted in his works on deviance and anomie, they relieved themselves of the previous social restraints by innovative techniques (1968).

Such innovations allowed them new lives with new social experiences. Others may interpret the actions of these men as rebellious, but that would not be the case (Merton 1968). These men are not entirely antithetical with American mainstream ideology. Their arguments focus on matters concerning the liberties, policies, and expressions regarding such concerns as gender, religion, and ecology.

Wiccans interviewed were not seeking a theologically-based revolution. Their goals were designed to implement a humanitarian reformation to insure the freedom, rights, and survival of all aspects of life. However, these men have not used their religious beliefs as ideological axes intent on hacking away at this society's values and convictions. Nor, have they plagued their towns with solicitations of morally exclusive political, socioeconomic, and religious beliefs.

Opponents of Wicca should consider this alternative. Other groups in this society have found themselves in similar dilemmas. Others have found themselves and their beliefs alienated and ostracized from mainstream society. Unfortunately, many of their alternatives were destructive to both the self and the community.

These men could have opted for affiliations with one of

the gangs or militias disrupting this society. Or perhaps, they would have chosen to escape. Would society have preferred these men to have escaped via drug or alcohol abuse? Or one of the time-honored, Durkheimian forms of suicide (Durkheim 1951)? Many had considered these choices before finding Wicca.

Wicca is not a typical religion and it seeks no favors from the society. The covens have gathered many of society's outcast, providing them with a place and a new sense of self. One subject said:

The Statue of Liberty must have been fashioned in the image of the Goddess...Who else would have asked for the poor, broken, and forgotten...They aren't wanted by anyone else...So she takes them in and makes them whole.

Although, the American Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and the pledge of Lady Liberty demand acceptance of all people and their ways, society demands total conformity and absolute obedience. Only oppression and estrangement await those unwilling to kneel before the capricious and tyrannical nature of society. If so, why did these men engage themselves with Wicca? How did they perform this act of transformation? An elder Wiccan spoke of his reasons:

I am an American...Hell, I'm a Republican...I fought in Korea and Viet Nam. I believe in American...But, people have to be more responsible for their lives, beliefs, and happiness. I've learned one thing in all my years...Never trust others with your happiness. Only you can take care of you...No matter what they say or what they promise, always be afraid of the "greater good" and the pompous asses shouting about it.

Research Conclusions

The following remarks will respond to the research aims noted in chapter three. The aims will be answered with data gathered from interviews, observations, and library inquiry.

Research Aim One - Motivations for a New Self

Conflict was common among the motivations these men reported. This is not a Marxian conflict dealing primarily with issues of anti-capitalism (Marx and Engels 1948). The conflicts were with society, others, and the men's selves. All people in society experience such conflicts within their lives. However, these men have taken the initiative to alter their lives. Although, this may sound trivial to some readers, these men feel their lives were being ruined by the conflicts they experienced.

Socially-Oriented Conflict

Social-oriented conflicts were fueled by ideological differences between the men and their communities. Differences were noted in several areas: religion, sexuality, gender, and ecology. The American Constitution promises the right to worship in any form an individual may choose. Is that promise being upheld?

Think for a moment of all the people in American history that have suffered ridicule, alienation, and persecution merely because of their religious ideology. In the past, there have been the American Indians, the Quakers, and the Jews (Garraty and Gay 1972). This society still attacks religions not promoting Christian ideology.

Little can compare to the heat coming off the fiery debates over sexuality in society today. Again, the First Amendment is under siege by far right-wing Christian ideology. One Wiccan noted, "I'm still looking for the parenthesis and brackets." He continued to explain, "Apparently there are parenthetical statements reserving the rights of Americans for White, heterosexual, Christian males only..."

Regardless of exact percentages non-heterosexual people account for in this country, they were allegedly entitled to the rights granted to American citizens. They have been denied those rights on the basis of their sexuality. Christianity has fueled the forces opposing these people. Many of the men have been placed in double-jeopardy, they are both gay and Wiccan.

Gender has alienated the men of this society from women, other men, and often themselves (Balswick 1983, Franklin 1988). It is acceptable for women to emulate men, but men displaying supposed feminine traits are all but exiled. Lack of emotional expression and stress overloads have been blamed for men's shorter lifespan (Franklin 1984, Gove 1985). Men have been programmed to repress their emotional aspects and to fulfill the "good-provider" role no matter what the cost (Bernard 1981). Even, if the costs are isolation, poor health, and implausible role ascriptions.

Ecology is another topic filling the news programs of today. The federal and state governments have started numerous programs designed to protect the environment. Even so, countless activists proclaim these are insufficient to

insure the continuance of countless ecosystems. Many of the men felt as long as the American society was fixated with the accumulation of the "almighty dollar," the environment will always place a distant second.

Wiccans perceive the Earth as the symbolic avatar, of their Goddess (Starhawk 1989, Adler 1979, and Lozano, et. al. 1990). The misuse or abuse of natural resources has enraged many environmentalists. They feel not only is this a blasphemous action, but also a suicidal one. This society has rarely understood the idea of sustainability outside the business realm (Orr 1992). Even then, the national debt attests to this society's lack of sustainability.

These men felt the corporations pillaging the planet should have to pay for their actions. They mentioned replacing what had been taken when possible, mandatory recycling, and heavy punitive actions. If the Earth is an icon of the Wiccan Goddess, perhaps these men should begin burning physical symbols of Christ, to make their point.

The paragraphs above have merely gleaned the ideological arguments these men expressed against society and its institutions. These are not trivial points, they are issues affecting every member of the society. Everyone in this society is born one sex or another. Society's gender-based ascriptions are so ingrained, Americans begin training their children before birth (Chodrow 1978). Ultra-sonic devices have allowed for parents to pick out the proper colors and toys for their awaited infant.

In time people develop sexual awareness and sexual

identities. Every aspect of this society is geared towards heterosexuality. What happens to those unfortunate enough to discover they are not heterosexual? Before any arguments arise concerning the reasons behind homosexuality or bisexuality, it is still unknown why people are heterosexual. There have been theories concerning biology, genetics, upbringing, and even chemical exposure. None of which has explained the presence of various sexual orientations. If researchers have failed to explain heterosexuality, then how can they possibly explain other forms of sexual expression?

It is possible religion is merely a fantasy designed to help fearful people cope with the unknown? Humans might possibility do better without any religious ideology. For whatever reason religion exists, it cannot be proven. Only consensus allows a religion to be more credible than ancient mythologies or fantasy novels.

The Celestine Prophecies is a fictitious work selling exceedingly well in contemporary book-stores (Renfield 1993). This is a work of fiction regarding virtuous behavior. Even so, many people are embracing this work as if it were reality. The author has even designed a work-book to aid readers in following his text. Will this become another religion? If it gains the consensus of enough people it is very likely The Celestine Prophecies could achieve such a status.

What does this say about society? People have a need for religion and the symbolic presence of the divine (Tambiah 1990, Durkheim 1954). Religions change and vary, but it is unlikely they will ever disappear. Most people express one

spiritual ideal or another. If it is possible for a work of fiction to be granted religious status in this society, then why are Wiccan beliefs attacked so brutally? Is it merely because Wicca refutes male domination?

Ecological concerns have affected all of society. Regulations developed ridding America of leaded gasoline, encouraging recycling, and banning certain hazardous products. Children are taught in schools to be environmentally conscious and ecologically aware.

Captain Planet and the Planeteers, is a popular cartoon for many children today. It portrays five teenagers with magical rings given to them by the Greek goddess, Gaea. Gaea is believed to be the Earth, itself, and mother of all life. Four of the rings represent the elements; fire, water, air, and earth. The fifth ring represents heart, or compassion. This alone is an interesting point when one considers the pentagrams used by various pagan groups. The lower four points of the star represent the elements and the apex symbolizes the spirit. With these rings, the teenagers battle criminals seeking to harm the environment. When all else fails, they summon "Captain Planet." He represents the short-term embodiment of all five rings or the environment.

Is it not odd American animators choose the ecological concerns of a Greek goddess to base their cartoon upon? Why not a Christian metaphor? A crusading Christ, an angry god on a mountain top with a burning bush, or a pleading Virgin Mary? Has Christianity become so tainted in its association with capitalism and anti-environmentalism the children would not

believe it? Or, would such a cartoon merely bore them?

The social ideologies these men argue against have permeated this society. Wiccan males have found themselves incapable of complying with acceptable views on these matters. Such issues provide some of the motivation behind the actions of these men seeking affiliation with Wicca and the beginnings of a new self. A self capable and willing to express its own views.

Other-Oriented Conflict

These men have expressed two primary conflicts with others in their communities. The first was the expectations others have for them. The men complained their communities, families, and friends had previously designed expectations for their behavior. These behaviors included many of the issues mentioned above; sexuality, gender-roles, and religious ideologies. Their relations demanded certain behaviors regardless of their beliefs (Franklin 1988, Keen 1991). They were only interested in forcing the men into accepted patterns. As long as the men performed in an acceptable manner, others ignored the artificial nature of their behavior. The men were infuriated by the callousness of people in their lives.

Many were forced to leave their churches, their families, and their loved ones over ideological and self-oriented beliefs. The second conflict these men expressed was the

false nature of their relations. Not only had their relations expected them to behave in manners they felt were wrong for them, they felt those very people were displaying contrived selves.

The men reported feeling they were living amongst the dead. One man said:

No one I knew really lived...they were too worried about what the neighbors may think or what their parents would say.

If America is truly a free country, then why are some people afraid of being themselves? Why do some people feel they have the right to coerce others into conformity? If American's are free, why would any one make a statement like the man's above?

The coercive nature of society is a powerful force overcoming many people (Durkheim 1958). These men sought freedom from the restraints society has placed upon them. Some knew of others secretly in agreement with them, but were afraid of coming forward with their beliefs. These people fear retaliation from the people surrounding them. Every member of this society has felt the oppressive touch of the majority. Then why is it so many people oppose others standing up for their own personal beliefs?

Self-Oriented Conflict

The Wiccan idea of the self-hater was the core of many conflicts within the self (Starhawk 1989). Two problems were

pronounced, one of a false self and one of an abusive self. False selves were most common in relations. They said they rarely expressed their true selves to those around them. Most felt their families and loved ones knew little about them. They often reported performing distancing behaviors to keep others from finding out who they really were. Some of those behaviors included being overly aggressive, competitive, and demanding of their relations.

Fear of rejection by the people they loved ruled their lives (Keen 1991, Clatterbaugh 1990). They were sure if those people really knew them, they would be abandoned or ridiculed. Others felt anyone wanting to be near them was probably psychologically off-balanced. These men knew their beliefs were not acceptable with the people they interacted with, so they hid those parts of themselves.

Hidden selves and other individual problems lead these men to abusive or self-destructive behaviors (Gergen 1991, Starhawk 1989, and Franklin 1984). Many reported earlier problems with alcohol and/or drug abuse, obsessions, and self-degradation. They continued with their behaviors as a means of escape and punishment. Often they felt there was something intrinsically wrong with them.

They blamed themselves for being different from others. Some took their destructive behaviors as far as attempted suicide. They had never learned to deal with themselves and

the differences between themselves and others. All they knew was they were different and how their communities treated dissimilar people.

These men hid behind false selves and abusive behaviors in attempt to deal with their differences. Most reported a time when they finally became aware of others like them. They sought the company of these people. Some entered twelve-step programs and received counseling. Even if they began to deal with themselves, they were still different.

These differences drove them to explore other avenues of life. They decided they would no longer tolerate the way they treated themselves or the way they were treated by others. They tired of the charades and false selves. These are a few of the internal conflicts that prompted these men to develop a new selves.

Summary of Research Aim One

The conflicts discussed plague many people in this society. Differences of opinion on ideologies, oppressive role ascriptions, and self destructive behaviors are common in this society. Some people turn to counselors, family members, or priests. But many do little to help themselves. These men found themselves opposing social ideologies, expectations of others, and their treatment of themselves. This prompted them to redefine not only selves, but their social worlds as well.

Wicca is a religion promoting the self in all aspects. Primarily it states that people are responsible for their own well-being. This self-orientation may sound petty, but it is quite in line with the American ideology of individualism. Wiccans feel that they have no right to affect others, but they can change themselves and their environments in a manner allowing a harmonious existence.

Research Aim Two - Process of New Self Development

Social Experiences and Segmentation

Mead and Maines described the existence of various social worlds in which people reside (Maines 1977, Mead 1934). Each social world has its own roles, customs, and realities (Mead 1934, Blumer 1969). The men observed originated in the mainstream society and were socialized to follow those rules and behavioral expectations. However, at some point they became associated with the Wiccan world. The Wiccan world held different values and customs than the ones they practiced in the dominant society.

The Wiccan reality held different views on many topics than the men had been taught. Gender and ecology are just two areas on which the Wiccan and dominant worlds differ.

Alice thought she stepped through the looking glass...When I found Wicca, I found out I'd been living with the Jabberwacki.

Emergent Processes and Mediating Processes

The men had learned via their interactions with the traditional world they did not agree with its ideologies or fit within the boundary of its reality. The Wiccan world provided them with a place to belong. It gave them a chance to redefine their ideas, views, and selves. Interactionists have prompted change and redefinition can only occur via action and interaction.

The social experiences the men found in the Wiccan world aided them in redefining themselves in a way they found more palatable (Mead 1934). The men continued mediating between the Wiccan and traditional worlds (Maines 1977). They did this via actual interaction, interactions with the generalized other, and the self (Blumer 1969). Over time these men's definitions and realities were altered to better suit the Wiccan than traditional.

Temporality

Change can only occur over time (Maines 1977, Mead 1934). Change is not instantaneous and neither is reframing the self (Blumer 1969, Lauer 1982). Self alterations need time to find alternatives. It took time for the interactions to occur. The roles, values, and realities of the Wiccan world had to be understood. Some men were more prepared than others to enter the Wiccan reality and thus more rapidly made those ideas part of their lives.

Summary of Research Aim Two

Blumer reported change in social phenomenon such as meaning can only occur via interaction (1956, 1969). Mead pronounced change and development occurred via social experiences, emergent processes, and over time (1934). Maines work is in agreement with the Meadian approach (1977). The self changes when there is interaction via social experiences and in this case varying social worlds. During these mediations there are emergent processes resulting in change. All of this occurs over time, thus the temporal aspect of interactionism (Maines 1977, Lauer 1982).

These men began interacting with members of the Wiccan community or world. During these experiences, the men began to develop rapport with Wiccans and found themselves in agreement with their ideology. Over time the interactions between the men and the Wiccans became more intense and changed from a casual meeting of two social worlds into a personal blending of both.

The men emerged from a traditional world into the Wiccan, but they still belong to another world. Social experiences and actions led the men to intimacy with Wicca, however, they still belonged to the world of men (Keen 1991). They have emerged not only into the world of Wicca, they have found themselves in a pastiche world of the Wiccan, the traditional, and the masculine. Selves may change but they retain many qualities of their previous experiences (Gergen 1991).

Research Aim Three - Why Wicca?

Many people stage fantastic transformations of the self in various social environments (Gergen 1991, Goffman 1959, and Brisset, et. al. 1990). Although, Wicca provided the stage for these performances, the covens are by no means exclusive in this ability. This statement leaves the researcher with an enigma. Why did these men choose Wicca for their stage? Again, Wicca provides an environment that is accepting of many behaviors mainstream society denounces. These men felt free to be themselves regardless of whatever they may be such as: gay, ethnic, liberal, etc...

Settings

The settings of the covens were in many ways unique in comparison to other religious organizations (Goffman 1959). The word, organization, seems immensely out of place when used in the same sentence as the word Wicca. It implies hierarchial regulations, policies, and stringent role ascriptions. Wicca does have various levels of coven involvement, ideals for behavior, and role patterns (Ader 1979). Wicca is as similar to traditional religions as folkways are to laws.

Wicca settings are typically less austere in regards to such variables. Among these are the ideas of place and sacred icons or texts. Personal homes and natural settings were two frequently utilized settings for coven gatherings.

Wiccans find churches too restraining and artificial for spiritual growth (Starhawk 1989). They see the spirit as a

natural and intrinsic part of the self not to be limited by manmade confines. Many continued to say the spirit is a primal part of the being responding better to unadorned settings. Such settings provide contact with nature and the tranquility necessary to progress in the spiritual realms of existence.

Even Christians think man came from the Earth. The Earth is the Goddess...She is found in nature, She can't be trapped in a church, so why go there?

It is true many people of other religious faiths gather in their personal homes, but for these men the preliminary aspects of Wicca were learned in homes, not Sunday Schools. They talked of being part of a large family. The familial aspects of the settings provided security and support. Religion may be discussed at casual gatherings among traditional Christians, but are they focusing on teaching or pondering over religious ideologies?

I grew up a Baptist...My mother spent hours on end with other church ladies and she usually drug me with her...The only time I heard them discuss church was when they were gossiping about someone over their bridge game.

I was always afraid of asking questions in church ...I didn't want to look stupid or doubting, so I kept my questions to myself...When we [Wiccans] meet at someone's house, I feel comfortable...We talk a lot about spiritual stuff. I can questions and no one laughs at me.

Scenery Props

Enter any traditional church and one can be certain to find many items; a pulpit, a Bible, a baptismal, etc... Some traditional churches are less icon oriented, but others like the Catholics, are highly bound to ritualized usage of sacred icons, implements, and imagery. Wiccans do have and use many sacrosanct devices such as the Athame (Witch-Knife) and other various implements (Starhawk 1989, Adler 1979). However, there are notable differences between the items used by Wiccans and others.

Religious texts are common with countless religions, but not Wicca. They recognize no writing as sacred or dogmatic doctrine as law. Their beliefs are transmitted via oration, observation, and (in)direct teaching. This is not to say there are no writings concerning Wicca. Many authors mentioned in this piece have written such works. In addition, many Wiccans and other pagans often keep records of their beliefs. Sometimes this work was referred to as a "Book of Shadows" (Starhawk 1989, Adler 1979).

A Book of Shadows is a highly personalized work prepared by the individual over an extended period of time. The text is specifically linked to its creator and is of no spiritual use to another. Each person must create their own. In many ways it is a spiritual diary (Adler 1979). The materials within are often written in a cryptic language or a coded writing style, to insure the writer's privacy.

The Christian Bible has been previously written and

others learn from its stories. A book of shadows is created as the author learns. It is personal and colored by the views, beliefs, and abilities of the author. Bibles are expected to be of certain qualities, but some Books of Shadows may be elegant and costly, while others may be a simple, bound pile of paper. For many the word shadows brings to mind something dark, foreboding, or even evil. For Wiccans, shadows represent the unknown, the spirit realms, or veils of ignorance to be traversed (Starhawk 1989).

Quality and composition of props are other concerns (Goffman 1959). Wiccans agree with the ideas "less is more" and "simple is better". Many churches today display gold candelabra, expensive wood and marble floors, fine art pieces, or other riches. The men felt traditional church-goers were far more concerned with lavishly decorating their churches than spiritual growth and understanding.

My Book of Shadows is sort of like my report card. When I get down on myself, I can look back through it and see how far I've come.

Let them [Christians] have their churches...I've never felt more at ease before or in touch with everything than at our meeting place at the lake.

Audience

Audiences refer to the people in the Wiccan settings these men utilized to achieve their metamorphosis (Goffman 1959). Again there are similarities between the Wiccan coven's and traditional churches congregations. Among these

are the presence of numerous people, a religious foci, and most often predetermined meetings. For the most part this is where the similarities end.

A notable difference between covens and churches were the distinctions between primary and secondary groups (Cooley 1909). Traditional churches are secondary groups, providing the functions of soul-saving and socializing (Durkheim 1954). Affiliations may last years, but most contact is extremely limited. Although, some people may take pride in attending a specific church, there is rarely a sense of "We-ness" or true belonging such as can be found within families and friendships.

It would be difficult to speculate how much time spent together or what type of activities church members engage in outside of religiously specified events. With the actions of churches there is often a revered and ritualized pattern of behavior not to be questioned. Church gatherings are often orchestrated under the direction of preachers, deacons, or elders. In many ways a church could be viewed as a religious oligarchy (Michels 1967).

The covens were of a more primary group nature (Cooley 1909). The amount of time the members spent together would rival or surpass many of today's supposedly "close" families. The association may last for years or even a lifetime and is permeated with a sense of "We-ness". The men felt as if they had found a new family. That very description of the group conveys the levels of intimacy they feel for the covens. The covens were durable and informal. There was little need for

etiquette beyond simple courtesy.

In some churches, preachers are often sovereign as they make decisions concerning the church. Any decision made by one person is apt to be heavily biased by the individual's personal beliefs and concerns. In the covens, decisions concerning the group were far more democratic (Lipset, Coleman, and Trow 1956, Starhawk 1989). The High Priestess and Priest used their positions to eliminate ties, but for the most part the members shared equal power. Therefore, the needs and desires of the entire coven have a better chance of being represented and enacted.

Interpretation is another point of difference between the groups. Mainstream churches often have prescribed doctrines concerning the interpretation of scriptures and other religious phenomenon (Parsons 1964). Wiccans took more academic and personal approaches to spirituality. They discussed such topics with fervor and diligence, but allowed for each person their own personal conclusions. This is not to deny the possibility of group-think, but rather to say these men felt as if they had chosen their own spiritual beliefs.

I was never part of my parent's church... It pissed me off when everyone told me what to think. It's like everybody else had a direct link to God.

In my town the "____" Church is nothing more than a virgin bar [non-alcoholic, non-smoking]...They got together to brow-beat and gossip...The only time they seemed happy was when they were eating or piously shredding someone.

Summary of Research Aim Three

In answer to the question of why these men choose Wicca to be a driving force behind their transformations, the answer would have include the social climate. climates include settings, audiences, and props. In nearly all religious orders the proper climate is a prime concern. In many traditional churches it is apropos for the atmosphere to be stern and sanctimonious. This is not the case with these covens. The covens seemed no more restrictive than an impromptu dinner party with close friends.

The settings and audiences were very open and supportive. The lack of ostentatious props brought the covens into the real world. Many churches reside in a world only existing on Sundays. The decor and expected behaviors of churches often fails to permeate the lives of its members. Without constant interaction with the setting, the churches have less impact on the members. Compare the impact of a church which is removed from the everyday reality of a person to that of an individual's family. The more interaction at a primary level a group has with an individual, the more influence it will have on the person (Cooley 1909).

The social climates of the covens were more influential with the men than traditional churches. As the men became more involved with the covens, the effects on the men's lives often surpassed that of their families and past relations.

This level of interaction lended to insuring a social atmosphere where the men felt capable of expressing their true selves (Mead 1934). This eased the transition from their original social worlds into the realm of Wicca.

Research Aim Four - Transformations

The idea of transformation inspires thoughts of caterpillars and Disney's *Cinderella*. The metaphors are applicable to these men. There were no cocoons or glass slippers, but there were new and innovative interactions, experiences, and assemblies. Albeit, these metamorphic processes were not as dramatic as those of caterpillars or the fabled character, but for people familiar with these men the alterations were close enough to seem fantastic. Wicca encourages these men to explore avenues of life society had denied them.

The changes these men accomplished were via their interactions among social worlds and over time (Mead 1934, Blumer 1969). These men discussed changes in their lives in three focal areas: the self, individual roles, and others.

Self-Oriented Transformations

The selves experienced numerous changes after the associations with Wicca, often focusing on acceptance. Acceptance does not translate as compliance (Starhawk 1989). However, the Wiccans felt the old self must be accepted,

understood, and embraced before any changes in it could be considered sound. Without the acceptance of the previous self, the act of change would have been tainted and nothing more than an attempt to run away from the problems of the old self (Starhawk 1989).

Acceptance related to the understanding of the self. The men had to learn who they really were inside, beneath the stratum of socially imposed bonds of coercive obedience. They had to be familiar with this self in order to know who they were and to discover what they could be. One Wiccan said, "We don't really change, we just peel back obscuring layers of pain and fear to reveal the inner self."

In order to accept the self, it had to be confronted. Some may label this as making amends with the inner-child or true self. This part of the self is they were before they accepted the restrictions of their families, friends, and communities. Most of the men did not blame their families or communities for their plight. "No one can force you to do anything you don't want to do." The man continued to say people allow themselves to be herded along like sheep because it is the path of least resistance. The men felt as if they had only themselves to blame for their troubles.

Delving into the true self was often traumatic for these men. It was difficult for them to face the fact they had allowed themselves to be compelled into submission. Not to

sound overly psychological, but others faced many parts of themselves for some reason they had repressed. Many had "hit bottom", so to speak, and Wicca helped them out of their pit of self-hate, self-denial, and self-destruction. Among the problems these men had hidden or obscured were problems with their sexuality, past abuse (or every type), and fear.

With my swiss-cheese memory, I had no idea of the abuse...I'd been beaten and molested by father and older brothers...They wonder why I'm gay.

I was afraid of the dark, no terrified...I felt stupid, a grown man afraid of the dark. They (coven) helped me face my memories...Finally I got the nerve to ask my mom about it...She looked away and began crying. My mom and dad had divorced when I was two, but he kidnapped me...they found me in a porta-crib in a dark, web-filled storm cellar. I'm still shaky about dark places and hate spiders but I'm getting better. All my life I thought my dad hated me...I never knew that he had gone to jail and couldn't come near me.

One man said in the beginning of his association he referred to coven members as, "His own personal entourage of psychologists." When asked what he meant, he and many others responded by explaining members are encouraged to discuss their problems with others in the group.

Once the old self had been faced and accepted, the men not only decided what they wanted to change in their lives, but also why they wanted to proceed with those alterations. It is the philosophy of these Wiccans to help the men in only those changes entirely motivated by the self and not those deemed necessary by others (Starhawk 1989, Adler 1979). One member reported a coven's refusal of aid and support when he

was trying to lose weight.

They asked me why I wanted to lose weight...My girlfriend had been giving problems of my gut and I told them so...They asked if that was the only reason I wanted to lose weight and I said, 'Yes'. They said they wouldn't help me until I decided to do it for myself and no one else.

The covens sought for these men to see the impact society had upon them. Wiccans seem fully aware of the strength of society's conformitive designs (Starhawk 1989, Adler 1979). Once the men have revealed and accepted their true selves, they were encouraged to grow in any area motivated for self-improvement. This may sound extremely selfish and self-centered. One older man said, "Freedom is more of a responsibility than a right." He explained it is every person's responsibility to promote and protect his or her own freedom and liberty.

Role-Oriented Transformations

Roles are integral parts of everyone's lives (Biddle, et. al. 1966). The way a person enacts his or her roles will significantly affect their everyday life (Biddle, et. al. 1966). The men reported three aspects of change in their roles after affiliation with Wicca. Those were their levels of responsibility, their selectivity of the roles they play, and their levels of disclosure in those roles.

Responsibility was a central teaching of the covens (Starhawk 1989). Responsibility was expressed in regards to the self. They felt as if a person must first take responsibility for all aspects of his or her life in order to

gain control over themselves. One man noted, "You can't control other people, but you can control yourself." Only at the point when people were responsible for their own actions and problems, could they change their lives.

I was being bullied and I blamed the bully's for my fear and the attacks...When I took control of myself and my fear, things changed. I was still afraid, but I didn't let it paralyze me. Once they saw I wasn't afraid, they left me alone ...They were wrong for taking advantage of my fear ... But it was my fault for letting them get away with it.

I didn't really know anyone at work. I was afraid they wouldn't like me so I never let them get to know me. It was me who didn't like me, not them. Once I gave myself, and them a chance, I started liking myself. Now I have quite a few friends.

Selectivity aided these men in dealing with themselves and the alterations within their new selves. Before Wicca, many reported taking on whatever role society deemed to be their niche in life, regardless of role fitness. Often the roles failed to meet the needs of the individual and repeatedly the person was unable to adequately perform the role prescribed. One unfortunate experience after another led these men to become disillusioned, dissatisfied, and depressed with their lives and themselves.

After the exposure to Wicca they began to understand they could not be forced into any role they did not wish to take, including many roles sociologist see as ascribed. They did not have to be absent fathers or perfect workers. They did not have to be the best. It was acceptable not to be a perfect child or a Don Juan. It was normal for them not to be

the stereotypical man, like Charles Bronson or Clint Eastwood (Bernard 1981, Keen 1991). Most of the men reported feeling lighter once they accepted these ideas.

Again responsibility came into play. It was their responsibility to accept those roles which best suited them and their needs. Many reported changing occupations or returning to school after a short period with their covens. Others reported terminating past relationships not meeting their needs. Unfortunately, this often included the men's families, spouses, and close friends.

I kept taking jobs my dad got for me in his company...I hated working for him, he got to watch me twenty-four hours a day. I was afraid of hurting him and needed the money so I stayed. After Wicca I found I could live with less money and quit. I now have a job I like and their paying for me to go to graduate school.

My mom and sister kept trying to marry me off. When it didn't work my mother asked me if I was gay or impotent. I'm not gay, but I every girl she choose was just like her, boring. Finally I learned to tell my mom, 'No'. I'm still not dating anyone, but that's fine.

Disclosure was related to responsibility and selectivity. The men saw it as their obligation to insure those people in their lives knew who they really were and how they felt about various parts of their lives. It was up to them to let people know how they felt and not to expect those people to read their minds. Unfortunately, disclosure is often not the forte of men (Franklin 1988, 1984).

If you keep a mask on all the time, how is anyone ever going to get to know you?

My wife and I separated...She was upset because I kept pushing her away...I figured she'd leave me sooner or later, I choose sooner..."_____"(a Wiccan) knew me and knew my parents had abandoned me, leaving to grow up in foster homes. He told me that my wife wasn't my parents. I thought I knew that, but I didn't. I had to deal with that and discuss my problems with my wife. She didn't even know I'd ever been in a foster-home...We're still having problems, but we're together.

Other-Oriented Transformations

Acceptance, affirmation, and avoidance were three changes for these men in dealing with others. Acceptance did not infer compliance or agreement (Starhawk 1989). It meant allowing people to be who they were. Many people become seriously exasperated when others act in manners not concurrent with their own. The men reported people in their lives and others they hardly knew becoming disconcerted upon finding out about their religious persuasion. When they refused to apologize for their deviance they were ridiculed, harassed, and accused of being Devil-worshippers.

My mom introduced to a friend of hers and the woman was one of the holy-roller nuts. She started preaching at me and I told her I really wasn't interested. She continued and I told her I was Wiccan and didn't appreciate her religious harassment. She whipped her Bible and cross out of her purse and started spouting scripture at me. My mom told her to leave, but she came back later with her preacher to exorcise me...We had to call the police...The cop took them away but even he gave me hell about being Wiccan...He (cop) told me us devil-worshippers wouldn't be tolerated in his nice little town.

The men continued to explain they had no power over others and as long as other people did not become violent they

would simply accept their behavior as ignorance. A middle-aged Wiccan said, "Never try to teach a pig to sing. It just frustrates the pig and makes you mad." The lack of accurate information and refusal to learn was why these men felt others were adversarial and caustic.

Affirmation was central to their philosophy (Adler 1979). They felt no one had the right to dictate another's life. As long as there was no harm in a person's behavior the men felt others should accept them. They did promote every person should live up to their potential, but each person has to make their own way. Others may help them, but the journey was just as important as the destination.

I work with PFLAG (Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays), helping family members learn not only to accept the gay person in their lives, but to affirm them. Affirmation goes beyond acceptance. It involves active encouragement and respect.

A man in one of my classes hates everything. It bothered me at first, but I figured he wasn't hurting me so why worry about it. Others in the class would fight with him. He started talking to me. He didn't really talk to anyone else, so I asked him why he talked to me. He said he appreciated not being bothered about his cynicism. We've talked over dinner before class for half a semester and talked a lot. He's really a nice guy. He just feels uncomfortable in large groups. He asked if he could meet my coven. I haven't made up my mind yet, but I'm thinking about it.

Avoidance was the first line of defense for many Wiccans (Starhawk 1989, Lozano, et. al. 1990). They knew some people were going to actively pursue them for whatever reason. They realized there was little hope of conversing with these people in any positive fashion. Avoidance did not mean running away from their antagonist. It meant avoiding unnecessary

confrontations. One man explained it this way, "I know Wicca isn't welcome in a Baptist church, so why go there unless I'm looking for a fight."

Wiccans realized not every problem could be dealt with in such a pacifistic approach and engaged in confrontations over more relevant issues. Avoidance was often mistaken for cowardice in this country where "real" men fight to prove their bravado and manliness (Keen 1991, Kipnis 1991). The men felt avoidance was the most difficult aspect of Wiccan philosophy to embrace.

When someone gets in my face, I want to hurt them...All can do is remember what my mom said, 'Consider the source.' I'd still like to smash their face but I walk away.

Everyone thinks gays are nelly queens. I'm 6'2" and 225 pounds. I work out everyday and have boxed for nine years. It's damned hard not to bash back when someone starts after me about being gay or Wiccan.

Summary of Research Aim Four

It was no surprise changes occurred in many different aspects of the mens lives. Both Wiccans and Postmodernist have promoted several layers or aspects of the self (Starhawk 1989, Gergen 1991). The self can be private, but it is mostly social (Gergen 1991, Mead 1934). Any change occurring must exhibit itself in the social worlds with which the person interacts (Mead 1934, Blumer 1969).

The ideas of acceptance, affirmation, and avoidance may seem overly pacifistic but they were in line with the tenets of Wicca (Starhawk 1989). Wiccans could stand against the onslaughts they suffer from Christians, however, it would be

in direct opposition to what they believe (Adler 1979). There is no way to prove one religion is more credible than another, so the altercation would be pointless. Moot arguments were the most apt to be avoided. These men were not looking to convert the world. Nor were they seeking acceptance and affirmation from society. They were seeking is the chance to pursue their life in the manner best suiting them and their personal needs, goals, and desires.

Wicca provided a reason for these men to engage in activities they would not normally have pursued. Members of these covens held that there was no reason for them to explain themselves to others unless they chose to do so. It may sound as if these people are shirking responsibility others take so seriously. However, they have done so via rewriting their realities and ideologies. This process is quite similar to the approaches Christian use to validate their beliefs and lives.

Research Aim Five - Presentation of the New Self

Active disclosure was paramount to the development of the new persona (Franklin 1988, Kipnis 1991). It was the men's burden to dynamically act out their roles in ways portraying what they considered to be their true selves, in germane settings, with appreciative audiences (Kipnis 1991). Wicca accepts coincidence and unfortunate events as parts of life to be taken in stride. However, it was still the men's

responsibility to seek out the best opportunities in their lives. Constant presentation strengthened the emerging selves (Mead 1934, Goffman 1959).

If you keep waiting for someday, you'll be waiting forever. So why not now?

This is my life, no one else can do it for it me. I may make poor choices sometimes, but their my choices to make.

Disclosure

Active disclosure was prompted in the men's lives. They explained, if they hid, they were only hurting themselves. One man said, "You don't have to make an ass out of yourself, but you do have to be you." Relationships and goals were thought to be dependent upon accurate disclosure. Franklin supported the idea that except for the more androgynous males, most men are far less comfortable and capable of self-disclosure (1988). He continued to say, men were afraid of being stigmatized as overly feminine.

I always put on my best-face for new dates. But it always turned out the same way. The mask would slip and I'd be found out. They (dates) always dumped me and I blamed them when it was my own fault. I don't have as many dates as I used to but the ones I have go better now.

Settings

Settings are always part of role play (Goffman 1959). Selves do not exist in vacuums, they reside in social experiences (Mead 1934). Although, disclosure is important, certain behaviors just are not appropriate in certain places. It would be fine for someone to undress in his/her home, but

not in a shopping mall. Selection of actions depended upon understanding the protocol of the stage.

My parents know I'm Wiccan, but they aren't comfortable with it and that's fine. I don't hide, but I don't talk about certain things, unless someone asks me to. They (parents) do the same. We have agreed to avoid religious discussions so we can get along. It felt like a cop-out in the beginning, but it's working well. My mom has even started asking me about Wicca and she seems impressed.

I work in a Catholic hospital, but everyone knows I'm Wiccan...Nun's give me a wide berth and I avoid chapel whenever possible...Time to time, a patient turns out to be a non-Christian and I talk to them. The priest like to pick my brain and I pick theirs. I know we've all learned a lot.

Audiences

Without audiences there would be no plays or society (Goffman 1959). The audience has the responsibility to choose the performances best suiting their taste. But, the players also have the responsibility to perform at their best. Audience and player are not as separated as many would be led to believe (Goffman 1959, Gergen 1991). There exists an active rapport between any audience and the players on stage. The interaction feeds upon itself. If the interaction is strong it will be reflected in the performance. If weak, the players may fail in their attempt at presentation and the audience may become dissatisfied an unwilling to maintain the interaction.

The rules applied for the men as much as any

Shakespearean player. It was necessary for the men to select appropriate audiences for presentation in order for their performances to thrive. Successful performances aided the development of the emerging self, while failures could have very detrimental effects upon the persona (Goffman 1959).

I was bashing my head against the wall. I kept trying to get my old friends to accept me for who I had become, but they wouldn't. My mom finally cornered me and asked, 'Why don't you call any of your high-school friends anymore.' I didn't follow her and I told her, 'I've just out grown them.' 'Exactly,' was all she said. I had to realize sometimes you simply outgrow people. I let my old friends go their way and I went mine. I've made new friends who accept me.

I'd been a solitary Wiccan for years, but I wasn't getting very far. I kept wondering if I was getting it right. I was always second-guessing myself. I expected to find all the answers when I joined the coven. I didn't, but they (coven) did help me to find my own answers.

Summary of Research Aim Five

The presentation of the developing self was the vehicle for its genesis (Mead 1934, Goffman 1959). Without this part of interaction the new self could never take form as the persona. The new persona was no more fixed than the old. It continued to change and adapt via the same processes. With the display of the new self the actor received feedback on his/her performance and product (Cooley 1909). Depending upon the setting and the audience, this critique could be positive or negative. Regarding this phenomenon, there was no doubt of

the equal importance of self-disclosure, choice of setting, and audience selection.

Self-disclosure remained the most difficult aspect of this process for these men. According to Rubin, women learn to live in coops, while men feel as in they have go it solo (1975). This added little to their ability to be communicative of their needs or emotions.

Men are concerned about maintaining their masculine image. It is very threatening psychologically for them to be associated with feminine behaviors. The threat concerns public ridicule or violation of the male image. If men do not disclose personal information, others cannot understand, predict, or control their behavior (Derlega, Durham, Gockel, and Scholis 1981).

Research Aim Six - Coven Involvement

Covens were extremely important in the development of the new selves. The gathering of similar people provided support. Their critiques were honest without being critical. For many, the covens were their only audiences for months. The influence of these audiences could be seen in the personal lives and coven involvement.

Personal Life

The most easily observed component of change in the personal lives of these men was their interactions and relationships. Many of the men dramatically altered their social circles. Among the changes in personal interactions were the terminations or modifications of past relations. Among those relations were families, friends, and coworkers.

With the acceptance of the new self, the covens urged the men to find new places with different people outside the coven to share their lives with on a daily basis. Although, some men took longer than others, they all adjusted. "A coven is a sanctuary, but it isn't a hide out."

The covens feared dependence and stagnation for any member failing to reintegrate back into society. The covens provided a home for the men, but every one has to leave home sometime. For some it was easier than others.

We (coven) don't want them (members) becoming agoraphobic...We want them to realize they have somewhere to go, where people care for them. But, we don't want them to be so scared they never leave. They (members) have to learn to live on their own and to make their own decisions. We are their friends, but we have our own lives. If we let them stay here without question, we've done more harm than good. You can't run away from your problems, you have to face them. If you don't go to them, they'll come to you.

One of our members (a woman) had been so badly abused by her husband and his family she was afraid of everything; loud noises, strange cars, unfamiliar people...She stayed with one of us (member) for almost six months...We tried to help her, but she was beyond our abilities...She spent nearly a year in a mental health center...She's furious with us for making her leave, but she's back on her feet now. Maybe someday she'll understand our decision.

Coven Life

Several characteristics of the covens stood out as distinctively different than the relationships common in mainstream religions. The first of those was the familial quality of the covens. The covens more often than not provided surrogate families for the men. There were no fixed leaders

taking authoritarian control, but there were rules common to family households (White and Lippitt 1960). Courtesy, cooperation, and compassion were expected traits of coven members. The kinship type bonds were the most outstanding characteristics of the covens.

The men realized there was little they could do to be expelled from the coven.

This isn't the Catholic Church we don't practice excommunication. Even if a member committed murdered, it'd be difficult for us to ban them from the circle (coven). We may not know all of the facts, it may have been self-defense or an accident. Even if the person was guilty, they might change.

These covens could only be described as the homes and families of their members. Perhaps, it was that commitment to the members that strengthened the social circles within Wicca. It may be that very characteristic that has made this faith so alien to other forms of religion.

The covens continued to provide a reference group. They were sounding boards for these men's idea and mirrors for the new selves. Mainstream churches provide reference groups as well, but the most common complaint from these men about traditional churches was the presence of hypocrisy. At no time did there appear to be the self-righteous or holier-than-thou attitudes so common to other religions within the covens. There were looks of amused patience and shared chagrin as the men progressed or as the researcher attempted to grasp certain ideas, but never ridicule or belittlement. This is not to imply these Wiccans have patience and understanding beyond human capability.

To laugh at someone who is trying to learn is the quickest way to insure they never learn it.

Sometimes we smirk, but its only because someone is trying to make the simple, hard.

There is no reason to argue over religion. It's my belief opposed to yours or someone else's. I can't make you believe my way. To attack a person's religion is to cut them to deepest part of their person. It's against all I stand for.

The covens supplied new roles for members such as novice, friend, and colleague. These roles exist in the dominant culture, but the coven guaranteed support.

I studied math because my parents said so...I always wanted to study art, but my dad thought it was too faggy...So I never learned how. One of the women began teaching me to paint. She made me practice everyday and encouraged me...Helping me learn how to handle a brush. I use my painting to reduce my stress. It'll be a while before my first gallery debut, but I enjoy it.

I was great at listening but not talking. It just didn't feel right laying my problems on someone... I was having problems at work, I guess it showed. "____" (Wiccan) cornered me and told me, he wasn't going to leave me alone until I talked to someone. I did and it felt good to share my problems with someone else. He didn't offer any advice until I asked for it. He just sat there and listened. It sound cliché but friendship is a two-way street, and I never realized it.

Once in these new roles, the men were given the care and support they needed to mature and grow. "You tether up a seedling when you first plant it, slowly you take the supports away." That was an explanation one Wiccan offered in regards to the safe-netting of new Wiccans.

We (society) tell people to do things without ever really telling them how to do it, or giving their a trial run. Everyone falls on their butt sometimes, but we (coven) try to make sure there aren't too many falls in the beginning.

Summary of Research Aim Six

The role of the covens in the development of the new self was similar to that of a mother bird teaching a fledgling to fly. Failure was always a possibility, but precautions were taken to avoid it. The covens provided the security for these men to step out of their self-imposed womb so they could return to their own life.

The separation was not a complete severing of the relationship. Separation insured a healthy state of independence (Parsons and Bales 1955). These groups take in awkward members and allow them to regain their composure, but they are not allowed to become totally dependent.

The covens encouraged the men to take on new relationships and responsibilities. They continued to support the men in their new lives by allowing them a home-base to return to for affirmation and assurance. The covens were the stage on which these men learned to play their new roles, much like a dress-rehearsal (Goffman 1959). The actions were taken and cues heeded, but little was at risk if the performance was less than perfect.

The religion promotes self reliance as well as self pleasure. This guilt aspects of many mainstream religions make this idea of self concern seem conceited and irresponsible. Wiccans promote that they have no need to justify their actions or beliefs to others who refuse to recognize their spiritual beliefs as valid.

Research Aim Seven - Reaction of Non-Wiccans

Among the non-Wiccans were societal agents and personal attachments. The reactions varied among the companions of the men. A mixed reaction was also noted in relation to the societal agents or institutions.

Social Institutions

Among the institutions common to society, five hold sociological concern. They include the realms of education, religion, family, economics, and government. Education was held in high regard among the Wiccans. Nearly all the men had received some level of professional or higher education. The men viewed education as the key to their success.

I grew up watching *Flipper*, *Gentle Ben*, and *The Wild Kingdom*. I love animals, my mom said she knew when I was six I'd be working with them. As I got older I got involved with several eco-groups, yes I'm a eco-geek, a real tree-hugging, whale-saving, owl-loving fool. I really got burnt out during grad school and dropped out. Later I became Wiccan and they talked into going back to school. My professors asked me why and I told them about Wicca. They've been reading up on it.

I teach for a living...Any teacher knows there are certain touchy subjects...I think Wicca has helped me present the whole story better. I believe my students have the right to all the information available so that they can make up their own minds on things like evolution and creation.

The educational pursuits of these men were positively affected by their affiliation with Wicca. Recently Women Studies and Environmental Sciences have become popular. In these programs, there were often seminars concerning female spirituality and/or native ethnography, such as Wicca. The

relationship between Wicca and education was benevolent.

Religious institutions of mainstream society and Wicca did not fared so well. For most traditional religions any form of spiritual belief other than their own is viewed as a threat, either direct or indirect (Durkheim 1954). Many of these men found themselves expelled from their churches and a few were even threatened with alleged exorcisms. Not all interactions between Wiccans and Christians were negative.

I live near a small monastery...Over the years I've made friends with many of the monks...We talk a lot. I've attended retreats with them and they've come with me to coven meetings. We see the similarities between Catholicism and Wicca.

The families of these men were not always supportive or accepting of the Wiccans in their lives. Many families grouped Wicca with such heinous acts as mass murder or pedophilia. Others experienced shock but later accepted the men. Others readily accepted the news the Wiccan. The reactions of the families crossed the spectrum of possible reactions and their influence was just as diverse.

I've known people whose families have jumped for joy they just had a religion and others that've been violently attacked by families members because of Wicca. Families are made up of people, and every person reacts differently.

I thought my family'd flip when I told them I was Wiccan...They surprised me, My parents said "So" and that was it. My sister thinks its a fad. But my aunts freaked...They flew all from Oregon to straighten me out and even told my parents I needed to be put in Vinita (Eastern State Hospital - Mental

Health Center). My dad got so mad, he told them we were all Wiccan and showed my aunts the door. I doubt he's ever had that much fun.

Economic climates are elusive parts of society. Most commonly economic status has been related to the obtainment of wealth. A majority of the men credited Wicca for encouraging them to obtain degrees and to seek out lucrative employment. Education is a primary factor in determining career accessibility and occupational prestige is central to status determination. Many men obtained employment meeting their personal agendas which were mostly in agreement with Wiccan ideals. Many were employed in areas of healing, education, or ecological services. Teaching may not be the highest paying of professions, but it did have other rewards, such as being in line with Wiccan philosophy.

Most Wiccans I've known have jobs they feel will help them and Wicca.

Wicca has a way of getting under your skin...You can't get away from it...It's like the little voice in your head...I can't imagine working at a job, that opposed my beliefs...I couldn't do it.

The final institution was government. Governments are notorious for paradoxical behavior. The government has been both malevolent and benevolent. History books account burnings, hangings, and stonings of people who were thought to be Witches. It is doubtful if any of those people were Wiccan, but the intent was there. Still today, many officials in small towns and conservative counties promote the active persecution of Wiccans.

In the 1980's, Wicca was recognized by the federal government as a legitimate religion (Starhawk 1989). It is doubtful if any Wiccan needed the government's approval to practice their religion, but the formal recognition did help. It allowed for Wiccans protection under certain legal statutes such as affirmative action, the equal opportunity act, and the hate crime laws. The government of this country is predominately, Christian, and thus the laws they pass are so colored. At best, Wiccans felt as if they received lip-service. At worst, they were actively sought out and discriminated against.

A few years ago, a lady entered the circle (coven) ...Her 'ex' had left her with their two kids. We helped her and suggested she try to get help from DHS (Department of Human Services). That was a serious mistake. Somehow it came out she was Wiccan and the social worker went berserk. They tried to take her kids away from her...If it wasn't for her mother they would've won. She had to promise not to have anything to do with us and to go to counseling to over come her fascination with evil forces. It's those times, I'd like to be like 'Samantha' (*Bewitched*, television show). I'd turn'em into shrimp and have a cocktail.

The realms of social institutions were varied and difficult to predict. Religion was the most apt to react negatively to the Wiccans, but governments and families were not entirely supportive. Education and economics were the fortes of these men. It was odd that these men were of considerable socioeconomic status, but still faced opposition

primarily due to their religious orientation. Perhaps it was the same phenomenon Jews, immigrants, and gays have faced. They were not mainstream, but learned how to manipulate the system to their benefit.

Personal Relations

The reactions of non-Wiccans involved in the personal lives of the men were diverse. The duration and durability of the relationship before becoming aware of the man's spiritual affiliation was important, but not conclusive. Duration and durability attested to the age of the relationships, but not to the intensity or quality of the relationship. Many have parents they do not associate with, and those relationships are equal to their own age.

Quality of the relationships was more important than the actual chronological age of the relationship or the status ascribed to the relationship. Many families denounced the men while the men's friends embraced them. However, if there was a negative reaction within the family, it was seldom the entire familial unit. Siblings were often more accepting of the men's decisions than their parents.

The men reported the women in their lives were far more accepting than the men (Franklin 1988). They felt the men in their lives scorned Wicca because it was not male dominated. Wicca also promotes high levels of emotional interaction many men find disturbing.

Half my family loves me, the other half thinks I'm the devil, himself.

Its strange, my sibs think its fine I'm Wiccan, but my parents hate it. They won't talk to my brothers or my sister because they accept me.

Summary of Research Aim Seven

Social institutions are manifestations reflecting societal concerns (Eisenstadt 1968b, 1968c). Alterations eventually follow changes within society (Lauer 1982). Albeit, at this time the educational and economic aspects of society were the most obliging of the Wiccans, over time the other institutions may follow. It is unlikely traditional religions will ever accept Wicca.

The personal relationships of the men were altered as much as their selves due to their involvement with Wicca. Some of the past relations survived the conversion, but all were affected. Many reported feelings of anguish due to the lost of these relations, but felt it was necessary for them to progress in their own lives.

If the self exists in interaction, then changes in those interactions are bound to affect the self (Mead 1934, Blumer 1969). The influence upon the self varied from man to man. Some found affirmation, others found betrayal. However, they have replaced the institutions of society with their covens and their religions. Their actions are similar to retreatist type religious orders such as convents and monasteries.

Research Aim Eight - Effects on the Men

Provided Ideologies

The previous parts of this work have discussed many

changes in the men's lives due to their association with Wicca. The variations in their lives were numerous and probably impossible to entirely record, but the alterations fell under one umbrella type term, ideology (Abercrombie and Turner 1980, Larrain 1979).

Tenets and practices of Wicca provided these men with a new role descriptions for nearly aspect of their lives. At this point, Wicca was similar to religious faith and national patriotism. Religious organizations and national propaganda have promoted what the proper life of a Baptist, a Catholic, or an American should be (Larrain 1979).

Behavioral protocols are learned in society via interaction with specific types of people (Parsons, et. al. 1955) It is possible for men to hold values similar to Wiccan tenets without being Wiccan. However, without the presence of the covens they would have lacked the support and security of a group (Fischer 1984). Most people seek to be endogamous. Like seeks like in order to be part of something more than themselves.

Summary of Research Aim Eight

Ideologies are present in any group, whether it be a family, a church, or a community (Fischer 1984). Ideologies provide for the basis of norms and values. If a person differs from the accepted patterns they are deemed deviant (Erikson 1987). Studies of deviance and works such as the "Looking-Glass Self" and labelling theory depict how

thoroughly affected people are by those they interact with on a regular basis (Erikson 1987, Cooley 1909).

People are social creatures (Durkheim 1960). Stories such of feral children or infants dying due to lack of interaction support that claim (Pines 1981, Curtiss 1977). If the lack of interaction can result in the death of a new born child, what can it do to an adolescent or an adult? Is it possible on occasion the lack of interaction led to such people's deaths and society merely misinterpreted the demise as suicide, alcoholism, or insanity (Durkheim 1951)? Death certificates of such people may read the immediate cause of death, but did they consider the events leading up to the termination of the person's life?

Consider Durkheim's suicide study and look through the variations of self-destruction for the roles of ideology (Durkheim 1951). The anomic attested to the lack of ideology to provide the person with structure. In the altruistic, ideology promoted the death for the betterment of others. The remaining forms were equally riddled with ideological behavior patterns (Durkheim 1951).

Understanding the effects of ideologies upon societal members, Wicca's most powerful influence upon the lives of these men was the provision of their ideology (Abercrombie, et. al. 1980) . With the acceptance of these beliefs the men became part of new whole. They were no longer outsiders or

loners, instead they were members of a coven. Perhaps, membership in the coven acted as a status marker for these men (Packard 1959). Covens are small, intimate, and selective in who they allow into their ranks. It is possible these men view their interaction with the coven as being similar to a membership in an exclusive gentlemen's club.

The Wiccan covens provided for these men the ideologies necessary to pursue the way of life they desired. Wicca provided them with legitimation. It shielded their beliefs from other social forces that might refute their perspectives. Wiccan has been used in the same manner as every other religion today. People use their religions to prompt their own cause and to meet their own needs. Religion in many ways is justification.

Research Aim Nine - Self Renewal and Self Maintenance

Self-renewal and maintenance required ongoing processes similar to Becker's reputation theory (1982). The first of the four steps was self introspection. Personal interaction was internalized with the generalized other as in Cooley's "Looking-Glass Self" (1909). This contemplation allowed the individual to review attributes of themselves.

Engineers have blueprints, artists have plans, and we have to plan our new self just the same.

Through meditation and contemplation we can look at our self from another angle. We can step back and

see the strengths and weaknesses of our character.
If you don't know who you are, how can you do
anything to change who you are?

Role exiting was the next step. To exit a role was similar to entering Goffman's back stage, which allowed the person to interact with the generalized other with fewer distractions (Goffman 1959). Gergen discussed the effects on the selves and the multitudes of the forces pulling on the individual to act out various different selves (1991). Role exiting was similar to Catholic parishioners going on retreat or professors taking sabbaticals. This period provided the distance necessary for self-evaluation.

Sometimes you just have to step back and let the world go by if you want to stay sane.

If you have a life like most people there are always distractions...kids, the job, bills, the car, the spouse...With all that going on, you just have to take time to yourself...Its time for "Calgon to take you away." Once your alone you can relax, recuperate, and start over.

Role renewal followed the egress. Role renewal was the redesigning or modifying of roles played by the self (Goffman 1959). This act was not entirely dependent upon role-exiting, but the men felt it certainly helped. The men reported a period of time when they only interacted with members of their coven. For some men role exiting and renewal after the initial exposure to Wicca lasted a few days and for others several months.

This period allowed for plans for new selves to be

designed, implemented, and sent on a trial run. During this time the men returned to the proverbial drawing board. Withdrawal from many of their roles allowed them to examine themselves and their desires or goals. This examination revealed the parts of the selves these men sought to change. It gave them the chance to consider all the possibilities before them in life.

Remember Steinbeck's maxim, "Even the best laid plans of mice and men..." This period allowed the men the opportunity to try their newly designed plans. By staying within the coven when this occurred they lessened the risk of losing face (Goffman 1959). This safety net approach encouraged these men to attempt things they normally would not have.

When I first joined the coven, I was amazed. There was so much to life, I'd forgotten and lot I didn't even know about. I never did a lot of what I do now, because I didn't know how or that it even existed.

I always felt like "Walter Mitty". I had so many dreams I was too afraid to ever try. They were just daydreams until I found my coven. They didn't make my dreams come true, but they did help me to make them come true.

Role reintegration was where the process began to close in upon itself. The newly forged selves has to be tried in the real world. The covens provided a pocket world, where only their rules were active. Exposure in mainstream society tested the mettle of this new self, its goal, and its plans (Goffman 1959). Although, some pocket worlds in our society allow people to step out of the mainstream indefinitely, these

covens did not allow this to occur.

This isn't a monastery...We are normal people with normal lives...We have jobs, families, and responsibilities. We don't have the time or the desire to play the cloistered monk.

They (the men) have to go back out there (mainstream society). If they don't they're just hiding and that's not what we're about.

What pleasure does a masterpiece give if its hidden? What use is a discovery if it isn't shared? Absolutely none...Allowing new members to hide in the coven would be even worse. These are people with more potential than anyone can ever know...Think of a teacher...They teach students, but their effects don't stop there. Students talk about what they've heard in class...Any one teacher could effect people several decades in the future.

This was not the end of the process, instead it was another beginning (Mead 1934). Again the person would become introspective and continually evaluate themselves. The person would continue to exit their roles on occasion. The men reported occasionally taking "retreats" with the covens, but they were seldom as lengthy as the initial role exiting. A person constantly rethinks their goals and the credibility of those aspirations (Mead 1934, Cooley 1909). All this shall be repeated infinitely throughout a person's life.

Summary of Research Aim Nine

The processes described above reflects not only the ideas of countless symbolic interactionists, but of numerous pagan ideologies as well. Life is not a linear highway from birth to death (Gergen 1991). There are countless episodes of backtracking and changing directions in a person's life. The

Wiccans viewed each time through this process as a pseudo or shamanistic death. The peeling away of yet another layer to become closer to the inner self (Starhawk 1989).

Research Aim Ten - Further Changes in Self

The final research aim examined how these men would change in the future. They stated they would continue to change throughout their lives. They felt life without change was death. Continuous exhibition and interaction were the driving forces of this predicted alterations. They continued to note for their lives to remain positive and healthy they would have to accept themselves as they were at the time.

I am not who I was a year ago, and I'll be different a year from now.

I'm not a fortune-teller, I can't see the future or what I'll be like then...But, it's my responsibility to the best self I can and to accept myself as I am.

Wicca encouraged continuous growth in every aspect of a person's life. In sociology, socialization is discussed thoroughly as a live-long process (Parsons, et. al. 1955). The Wiccan ideal of continuous growth and learning was nearly identical to the socialization process (Starhawk 1989).

FIGURE I

SELF RENEWAL AND MAINTENANCE CHART

Self Introspection	Role Exiting
Role Reintegration	Role Renewal

Summary of Research Aim Ten

Wicca is an amazingly sociological religion. It used different terminology than the profession, but the conceptual definitions were the same. Wicca is not a retreatist cult type organization (Wilson 1973). The covens encouraged continuous interaction with all aspects of the men's lives, not total withdrawal.

Finding Wicca in modern times was like discovering a velociraptor in a nearby forest, they should both be extinct. This religion is ancient promoting the self in order to promote the group (Starhawk 1989, Adler 1979). This is in opposition of the societal tyranny prescribed by today's coercive conformity (De Tocqueville 1968). Perhaps the Wiccan idea of birth, death, and rebirth applies to religions as well (Adler 1979). The Wiccan philosophies are simple and of great depth, and totally out of place in such a complex and superficial world. Simplicity and integrity were the qualities attracting these men to Wicca.

Many of today's social institutions act as if any ideological pursuit not of the majority is anti-society (Abercrombie, et. al. 1980). This is an odd statement with how Wicca has encouraged these men to interact with others. It is also curious due to the fact the covens advocated these men's self improvement so they could live a life some might call the, "American Dream." These groups have learned how to use the system in order to accomplish their goals. These men could easily be considered members of a religious subculture, but the positive nature of their interaction and their

innovative use of the provided societal structures to accomplish their goals, would seem to denounce any counter-cultural characteristics (Yinger 1982).

Research Notes

The Subjects and the Research

At the end of the research period the men were asked how they felt about the project. They reported feeling very positive about the research. According to them no prior research had ever been focused on male Wiccans. After searching through periodicals, journals, and CD-ROM abstract listings the researcher can only support their claim. These men belong to a growing population and deserve to be understood for who and what they are.

The subjects felt this project might provide the groundwork for understanding of Wiccans, men, and humanity free of tyrannical conformity. If this research leads to this finding in future research projects, perhaps males can be given further freedom from the shackles of masculinity.

They felt further awareness and understanding of Wicca would allow for Wicca to grow without the constant threat of attacks fueled by the mainstream ideologies. If such an effect can be achieved perhaps people will see Wicca as a viable alternative to the dominant cultural philosophies, instead as a threat to their status quo.

The final note on this subject is the men felt rewarded for doing the interviews. For many of them, this was their first chance to relate their stories to someone other than a

coven member. The men were pleased with the opportunity. It was similar to unveiling a masterpiece or the unearthing of a lost treasure. Much more can be learned about and from these men, their groups, and their religious ideology.

Interactive Research

The men demanded interaction. The researcher was expected to take full part in these groups. They refused to allow him to simply set on the side-lines and watch. The men and their groups felt complete interaction was the only way to insure the integrity of the research. The interactions included taking part in rituals, attending parties, and having dinner in their homes. The researcher took part in nearly aspect of the men's lives from shopping for groceries to attending the wedding ceremony of one of the men. the researcher gained an affiliation with these men beyond acquaintance, but short of friendship.

Interviews with these men were never one-sided. They had plenty of questions of their own and maintained a steady dialogue. They wanted to know why a researcher would want to study such a group. The only answer to the question was to gain understanding of these men and their reasons for association with such a group.

These men were very well educated and most had prior experience with the social sciences and research techniques. They were quite aware of what was happening and at times the researcher wondered who was researching who. The men made

every effort to insure this report being accurate. They admitted, at first they were worried about this piece turning into a faerie-tale about evil warlocks roasting babies, pillaging villages, and raping virtuous young maidens. Once their concerns were alleviated they opened up and made the researcher feel completely welcome. In fact, towards the end of the project the groups informed the researcher he was welcome in the groups at any time.

A Warning

These men are still men who have been raised and socialized in this society. The researcher made a serious error in judgement regarding the pilot survey (research request published in the Circle newsletter). The mistake was in referring to Wicca as a feminist religion. Although Wicca could easily be considered feminist in comparison to Christianity, these men do not like the label, feminist. Many of the respondents berated the researcher for implying their religion was only for woman and effeminate.

The responses to the research request aided in avoiding the same mistake with the interactive interviews. This society sowed and cultivated the seed of a very foul plant. The stigma of being a woman is the fruit. Along with this came the sin of being feminine. The men responded in no uncertain, and sometimes belligerent terms, they were not part of a feminist religion. They quickly retold stories of the masculine aspects of Wicca such as the Horned God, the Divine Child, along with the various other faces of the God. This

society is sexist and even these men have to deal with illusion this society has woven painting women as seducers, incompetents, and manipulators.

So note for any further research with these men never refer to their religion as one of a feminist nature. This researcher was fortunate in having the forewarning of the responses to the research request. If the research request had not been submitted and responded to, this project could have very well of been ruined from the start.

Concluding Remarks

In conclusion, the researcher must report these men revealed so much information it was difficult to fashion the information in a coherent manner. No one report could ever encompass all the data retrieved a logical format.

These men were anxious to prove themselves and Wicca. The letters received prior to the investigation only confirmed the information gathered in the field. This project opened many doors for future study. In addition to aiding the researcher in the completion of this work, the project allowed the men the opportunity for disclosure in such a means they could maintain their confidentiality.

CHAPTER VI

POSTMODERN MASCULINITY

Postmodern Man

No matter what this work has revealed so far, the question remains why these men would join a gender-equitable religion? The most grandiose error in men's studies is many researchers have overlooked the time period and the societal climate. Even though Americans often glamorize the "good old days", it is no longer the 1950's. Technology, societal phenomenon, women's roles, and nearly every other facet of this society belong in the 1990's, but not the ascribed role behaviors and conventions involving men's necessitated portrayals of masculinity (Keen 1991, Kipnis 1991).

Many women and some men have demanded change in male behavior (Franklin 1984). Unfortunately, men attempting to be more "sensitive" have had their masculinity ridiculed by the people who asked for the changes. Today's man belongs in the present, not the past. These are men of a post-industrial society where determinants of masculinity have waned (Gergen 1991). The age of Aquarius has past and left this ill-prepared society in the age of the postmodern man. He is

often a perplexed creature living in a world of distorted boundaries and changing ideals, never quite sure where he belongs or who he is supposed to be (Gergen 1991). The theatre has gone awry, programs have been lost and the actors have rehearsed with different scripts.

The physical activities of the world have been eased by technology, while the difficulty of mental engagements increases daily (Orr 1992). But still the masculine myths persist depicting strength of mythic proportions (Clatterbaugh 1990). The fallacies of manhood have started to blend with those of the feminine. Many women of today would have been perceived as extremely masculine a century ago, but pity the man who is too effeminate in this society. Archaic sex-roles still rule the world of men, while women are well underway to breaking the bonds of the negative aspects of femininity.

This limitation is based on sex-roles - invisible networks of social pressures, coming from a million sources, telling us what kind of personality we should have, what to do, what to be interested in, what to avoid (Brannon 1982).

Men are bombarded daily with two messages. The first is the lip-service society gives men of their need to update gender-based behaviors in expressing their masculinity in more positive manners. The second, however, is the undertow of the societal current demanding they hold fast to their perceived masculinity (Franklin 1988). Let the man be supportive of women and slightly emotive, but when hard times arise he is still expected to act with the masculine grit and courageous

selflessness of a Hellenistic hero.

Many men refuse to move into these shadowy times, while others have plunged head first. Many have on the other hand surrendered themselves to temporal whims.

Postmodern man is completely indifferent to the questions of consistency and continuity. He consciously splices genres, attitudes, and styles. He relishes, the blurring or juxtaposition of forms (fiction-nonfiction), stances (straight-ironic), moods (violent-comic), cultural levels (high-low) (Gilten 1989).

This man's life is a contradiction. The rules he knew no longer apply. The truths of society have been found to be false. But, still society tries to resurrect the gallant cavalier from the past. All the while, society badgers him with endless demands on his behavior.

Postmodern man is not a new as we would think, Kierkegaard described him nearly a century ago as Don Juan, the aesthetic man whose life was a series of one-night stands and fleeting romances (Keen 1991).

Life for the postmodern man is superficial and capricious. His image dictated by the styles and ideals of the time (Keen 1991, Gergen 1991). Carried along in the societal current only to be bashed upon the shores of convention.

His tastes, life-style, and convictions are formed by fashion. Like the god, Proteus, and unlike the self-made man of the last century, he changes shapes at will. His life is organized more around the idea of "taste" than of "right or wrong"; his world is aesthetic rather than moral. You could call him disillusioned except that he has never dared care enough about anything passionately enough to have developed hope or illusion (Keen 1991).

This aesthetically determined man is no more stable or

constant than the winds governing fashion (Keen 1991, Gergen 1991). Society is based upon structures (Parsons 1951). Whether one views those structures as voluntary or deterministic is of little relevance. When changes occur in those systems so rapidly people cannot keep up anomie is sure to occur (Durkheim 1951).

Ages of Man

Franklin discussed ages of man or masculinity (1984). The classic man reveled in the privileges and freedoms of gung-ho masculinity. He was the lord of his castle and women were mere possessions. Life was simple for the man, but also demanding and precarious. There may have been squabbles in his home, but his word was law.

Still, this was a period of darwinistic survival. Only the strongest survived to enjoy their freedoms. The old west held the threats of arguments solved with bullets, claim jumpers, and highway robbers. But eventually the swords and guns were cast aside and replaced with pens and lawyers. The arenas of today's champions are economic, but the threats still remain. There are still Alexanders and Napoleons looking to seize civilization.

This identity may seem wondrous and exciting for a lot of men and even some women. But it had its cost. Men of this time were responsible for every aspect of their families livelihood (Bernard 1981). The stress of every possible problem fell unto their shoulders.

Many men who are defined as successful by society resemble machines...that function impressively for a while. But, like powerful engines, racing at high speed without any oil, they will soon burn out (Baumli 1985).

Men are encouraged by their heroic and self-sacrificing role models to engage in dangerous and high-stress professions without complaint or sign of weakness or fear (Kipnis 1991).

Even when he could not handle the problems facing him, he was to remain stoic. He lives in a lonely world of burdens the mythical Atlas would have found difficult to bear.

Men became weary of these burdens and the routine man developed (Franklin 1984). He followed the codes of manhood for the sake of society and his own reputation, but placed little merit in prescribed sex-roles. He allowed others in his life to take up part of his burden. His wife may hold an insignificant job, but it was only to keep her occupied. She would always have to place her familial and household duties before her work and she would never be allowed to earn more than her husband. Even though she contributed to the household, she held little actual power.

In the trying times of role changes and trendy expectations the anomic man emerged (Franklin 1984). He is a confused man with no idea of how to act or which gender role to grab hold of for himself. He sees the virtues of gender equity and the glory of idolized manhood. He knows the system is unjust and prejudice, but he fears for his place. The atrocities against women and minorities haunt him, but he

feels powerless to change anything. The anomic man is lost in a society with a thousand sign posts directing him.

Finally, the humanistic man is becoming more common (Franklin 1984). He is the humanitarian supportive of gender equality. Androgyny is his flair. He is not a cross-dresser or man who cries at every sad scene in a movie. Instead, he is a man seeking the positive qualities of self regardless of gender ascription. The positive and negative attributes of both masculinity and femininity are apparent to him.

These four faces of man are present in contemporary society. Often vying with each other for their "rightness" in expression. Each day the classic man fades a little more and the routine man is forced to rethink his position. The anomic looks to both to the others for guidance. While the humanistic man strives to insure his place in society.

The humanistic man has begun to make many demands upon society. He is no longer willing to play the "Marlboro Man."

We no longer want to feel the need to perform sexually, socially, or in any way live up to an imposed male role...We want to relate to both men and women in more humane ways - with warmth, sensitivity, emotion, and honesty...We want to be equal with women and to end destructive competitive relationships with men (Pleck 1973).

In order to further their goals the men have issued a manifesto for themselves (Kipnis 1991). The manifesto details actions men are to perform in order to improve their selves via a better sense of what it is to be masculine.

FIGURE TWO

NEW MALE MANIFESTO

1. Masculinity is life-affirming and life-supporting.
2. Men's value are not measured by production.
3. Men are not flawed by nature.
4. Men don't have to live up to narrow, societal images of manhood.
5. Men don't have to become more like women in order to reconnect to their soul.
6. Masculinity does not require the denial of deep feeling.
7. Men are not only competitors, they are also brothers.
8. Men deserve the same rights as women for custody of children, economic support, government aid, education, health care, and protection from abuse.
9. Men and women can be equal partners.
10. Sometimes we have the right to be wrong, irresponsible, unpredictable, silly, inconsistent, afraid, experimental, insecure, visionary, lustful, fat, bald, old, playful, fierce, magical, wild, impractical, unconventional, and other things we're not supposed to be in a culture that circumscribes our lives with rigid roles (Kipnis 1991).

This manifest statement has led many men to search for ways to bring out the positive aspects of their gender, instead of becoming more like women. Several groups exist to aid these men in their quest. Some of them are all-male and others, like Wicca, are coed (Keen 1991). Kipnis designed a progressive chart depicting the development of modern and postmodern man (1991). He states man has progressed through three phases of maturation. The heroic man is similar to the classical man (Kipnis 1991, Franklin 1984). He attempts to live up to societal fantasies concerning masculinity. The feminized man is a pastiche of the anomic and humanistic male (Kipnis 1991, Franklin 1984). He is trying to find his place

in the new gender order, but is having difficulties. The authentic man is nearly identical to the humanistic man (Kipnis 1991, Franklin 1984).

Men such as Kipnis and Franklin are leading the way for male identities to become more authentic. As with the Wiccan idea of revealing the self hidden within, these men seek to rid themselves of the false images of masculinity in order to secure a healthy life for themselves. Men in the covens reported feeling more masculine after associating with Wicca than before.

Before Wicca, I was a puppet. I did what men were supposed...I hate sports, but I lettered in football and wrestling. I played because it was the manly thing to do...I didn't want anyone thing I was a fag or cry-baby.

My dad wouldn't let me take the classes I wanted ...Art, choir, and band were for girls and queers. Lately I've been taking lessons and really enjoying myself.

It may seem odd to feel more masculine after contact with women. If men are masculine and women are feminine then what better way to improve masculinity than by examining its counterpart. Wicca promotes for a person to be balanced, they must accept both their masculine and feminine qualities. The acceptance of the feminine qualities within these men allowed the masculine to relax.

Much of society has labelled these men as whiny or weak, but they continue to seek their own liberation. This is not the same type of liberation sought by women or minorities. It is similar to the liberation gays seek in current society. These men seek the right to be who they are without

persecution for not being the ideal man. This may sound simple and non-threatening but Clatterbaugh states different:

1. Masculinity is a social contrivance and, for that reason it is fragile. It is maintained by community structures.
2. Sexual relations are the basis society's definition of masculinity. To change this relationship would alter the entire societal structure (Clatterbaugh 1990).

These men are caught in the same trap holding gays and lesbians of this society. To allow them to change without subjugation could be viewed as condoning their behavior (Clatterbaugh 1990). This would further validate the rights of gays and lesbians. The obtainment of rights by gays would not threaten society, but it would harm the validity of Christianity, which has been the basis of the legal systems and gender patterns of the society since its founding. The uprising of these men and gays has nearly toppled the Christian throne.

This transition is not an easy one for men and Kipnis has noted several tasks men must complete in order to fulfill their masculinity in a sound manner (1991). These tasks support the quest for freedom these men seek in a manner which does not harm others. They seek their liberation without the oppression others.

Why Wicca

Wicca promoted natural states of existence (Starhawk 1989). Stereotypical behavior is not a natural behavior, but a socially ingrained programming (Wilson and See 1988). Men

FIGURE THREE
MALE EVOLUTION

ARENA	HEROIC (HYPER) MASCULINITY Old Male Principles	FEMINIZED (HYPO) MASCULINITY Transitional Male Principles	AUTHENTIC (INTEGRATED) MASCULINITY Ancient/New Male Principles
Physical	Hard Killer Master	Soft Gatherer Consort	Flexible Warrior Partner
Emotional	Closed Cynical Sex Partner	Unprotected Naive Pleaser	Receptive Humorous Lover
Mental	Linear Exploitive Doctor	Circular Conservative Magician	Holonomic Resourceful Healer
Spiritual	Patriarchal Absolute Priest	Matriarchal Dualistic Guru	Polytheistic Paradoxical Mentor

(Kipnis 1991)

are not born knowing that "big boys don't cry". It is not instinctual to be the great, white hunter or the romantic Don Juan. Behaviors are developed via interaction with others (Mead 1934).

FIGURE FOUR

TASKS IN BECOMING AN AUTHENTIC MAN

1. To admit that we are wounded.
2. To heal one another by examining our wounds.
3. To rebuild self-esteem on deep masculine foundations.
4. To break out of old stereotypes and claim our diversity.
5. To reclaim the ancient, sacred images of masculinity.
6. To apply the myths of masculine soul to our daily lives.
7. To rediscover male initiation and heal the wounds between fathers and sons.
8. To love and work in ways that heal us.
9. To restore a connection with our ancestors and come to terms with our mortality.
10. To build male community and begin healing the wounds between the sexes.
11. To develop a masculine-affirming psychology.
12. To continue reawakening the masculine soul (Kipnis 1991).

Wicca allowed for these men to express themselves in manners appropriate to themselves. Even with all the support Wiccan covens can muster it still remains difficult for men to enter Wicca and do well.

Association in Wicca is easier for women than men. Like the maiden, young girls do not menstruate, Menstruation marks a women's passage into adulthood and possibly motherhood, and menopause marks her becoming an elder or similar to the old crone. This Menstruation cycles throughout her life like the moon, waxing and waning. Men have no such physical connection to any deity or religion (Franklin 1988).

"Ideally the coven serves as a training ground where each member develops their own person...covens allows us to see ourselves as others see us (Starhawk 1989)." Wiccans feel in a coven men can experience the positive qualities of a group.

"They can experience support and affection from both women and men (Starhawk 1989)." The covens provide positive environments not based upon competition. Starhawk felt:

In covens, men can become friends with other men. Witchcraft is fun. It offers men a chance to play, to act silly, to let the inner child come out. There are no fronts to uphold, no masculine dignity that must remain unbreached. Out of foolishness and play, creativity is born (Starhawk 1989).

Research supports the positive image Wicca portrays of the feminine supports a healthy psychology for women (Lozano, et. al. 1990). There is no reason to believe the same cannot occur for men. These covens support an egalitarian feminism, not a reverse feminism that merely reverses the roles of men and women (Adler 1979).

The motivation to join Wicca instead of an all male group lies with a realization of certain realities. The all male groups are not realistic. There are women in the world and men will to deal with them often. It has also been reported men feel more at ease disclosing themselves to women than to other men (Franklin 1984). Women in this society are often viewed as maternal. The men felt safe among women in the coven. The women were less threatening to the men, their masculinity was less apt to be attacked.

Realism, simplicity, and security are the reasons these men joined Wicca. They sought a place where they could be themselves and not two-dimensional stereotypes. For these men the qualities and characteristics they attributed to their covens were not found in main-stream society or other groups.

The cliché says that, "Necessity is the mother of invention." More than anything else these men needed others to understand them. They needed acceptance and affirmation, not criticism and blame. For whatever reason, the needs of these men were only be met by their covens.

Gender Commentary

Although this chapter has focused on masculinity, is masculinity really the issue for these men? The figures regarding tasks for men and masculine progression note several change leveling the differences in social expectations between men and women. Are these men and these leaders of new masculinity actually seeking a new definition of what it is to be a man? Perhaps, but it seems more evident that they are actually striving towards an odd state of androgyny. A state where gender has been neutered and social expectations for gender roles have been cast aside.

In the past decades women have made incredible strides in the advancement of their liberation. Many have broken free of the bonds of societal submission and "women's work". It seems likely these men are seeking the same liberation. They seek the freedom to be real people not socially defined men. Perhaps both sexes have actually pursued the same agenda under different guises. Both men and women seek the freedom to be whoever and whatever they choose regardless of socially enforced gender dogma.

If the above statements are true, then the masculine progression chart is only partially accurate. Yes, men may

have progressed through the classical or heroic into the feminized or transitional, but are they trying to reach authentic masculinity? Or are they vying for authentic humanity? A humanity existing in actuality instead of ideology, where people are perceived as selves, instead of genders, races, and sexualities.

These statements also challenge the label, feminist, often encrusted upon the Wiccan religion. If the statements are legitimate then Wicca is not a feminist religion. In that case, Wicca would be a humanist religion which has abandoned the societal doctrines concerning ethnicity, sex, and socioeconomic status. As the world becomes more unisexual or neutered, it is possible Wicca and these degendered people will have a very prominent place in the future of this society.

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Theories

Interactionism

Interactionist theories aided in better understanding the individual men forming the core of this study. Although, these men share commonalities beyond Wicca, they retain countless differences rendering more quantitative or macro theoretical perspectives ineffectual.

Something so special goes on in social interaction that it remains uncaptured by those who use perspectives other than symbolic interactionism to examine the process (Franklin 1988).

Via the various aspects of the interactionist paradigm it was possible to research the diverse histories, settings, social circles, and numerous other micro level phenomenon of these men. Dramaturgy and postmodernism added to the thoroughness of the interpretation of the events observed and the questions answered. Interactionism and time aided in insuring the authenticity of the information revealed.

Role Theory

This theoretical approach further defines the role as being intrinsically a group phenomenon. Roles provide meaning

via status and title such as professor, nurse, son, priest, or hero. Roles signify expected behavior and can provide prompts for the other actors engaged in the interactions occurring (Stryker 1980). These ideas of roles and role behaviors provide a sense of fit and place.

Self-definitional activity proceeds through socially recognized categories and corresponding roles. Since roles imply relationships to others, so does the self (Stryker 1980).

The act of taking on a role requires others for the presentation (Stryker 1980, Goffman 1959). An actor may have countless roles all requiring understanding, performance, and refining. Stryker noted several points about roles; role salience, role commitment, patterned regularities, groups, and closure (1980). Salience to the fit of the individual's role or roles (Stryker 1980). If salience is high it provides organization and lends to the portrayal of the roles. For the men of this study their pre-Wiccan roles were not salient and thus not becoming to them. These men found salience in their new roles.

Commitment to a role is equally important (Stryker 1980). Without commitment there would be no reason for a person to engage in the role properly. The men had very little commitment to many of their previous roles and failed to portray them in acceptably. Their success within Wicca was strongly influenced by their commitment to the new role.

Patterned regularities denote the behaviors associated with certain roles individuals occupy (Stryker 1980). These

regularities provide structure for interactions people engage in daily. Lack of understanding of these behaviors can lead to serious loss of face. Consider a person in a foreign land unfamiliar with the local customs. Cultural errors can range from the embarrassing to the illegal. These men often failed to comprehend the reasons behind many of the roles they enacted prior to their affiliation with Wicca or simply did not place value in their consistency.

Groups are necessary for roles to be enacted (Stryker 1980). The men reported feeling ill at ease with many of the groups they interacted before they entered their covens. This stressed the relationships within the groups and strained the roles they played. The covens provided alternative groups with which interaction and role enactment could occur by insuring closure. Closure merely reflects the recognition of the person's involvement and commitment to the group (Stryker 1980).

Many of the previous roles occupied by the men were abandoned only to be replaced by new ones. Selves are affected by the interactions they engage in and the roles they play. The covens provided for new role structures thus altering the self of the person. Turner discussed self-concepts as being developed via interaction (1970). In past affiliations, these men were often ridiculed, oppressed, or provided misrepresentations of themselves to belong. Fictitious selves are not tolerated well in the covens. Real selves are valued no matter how ill-fitting or abrasive. Wicca revolves more around "what is" than "what should be."

The intimacy of the small covens strengthens the interactions of the groups (Homans 1950). There is little chance someone in the coven would not know all the members on a personal level. These covens were near familial groups with all the intensity and commitment of a family out of a 1950's sitcom.

Mesostructure and Social Organization

Segmentation of society was apparent throughout this research. The number of worlds these men interacted with on a daily basis was almost beyond comprehension. Each world required various roles or personas to be put forth (Maines 1977). This role play allowed for mediating processes between the different worlds. The quality of these productions varied. Even the best mediators fail sometimes.

The collectivities of these men have changed from their past associations (Hall 1987). They have become more selective of the people forming their collectivity. These changes altered many of the social and emotional resources the men had available to them. These events lead to the development of new or modified networks.

Before, the men's networks reflected the values and abilities of their previous groups (Hall 1987). But, with the new networks the conventions of those groups changed as well. Wicca provided new ideals and contacts allowing the men to engage in many other avenues of action. The resources the covens offered ranged from the material to the intangible. They supported the men emotionally, spiritually, and often

monetarily. Over time these men grew accustomed to their covens and revealed more of themselves and developed a strong enough rapport to trust the group.

Past affiliations of these men were grounded in western, protestant ideology. The ideologies of the people surrounding these men did not meet their needs, nor did it meet with their acceptance. Wicca is grounded in century old practices and personal investments (Lozano, et. al. 1990). Many of these men found themselves existing on the fringe of their original worlds. However, within Wicca they found a place and a purpose.

The development of Wicca, the covens, and the new selves of these men did not occur entirely on the micro or macro level. They occurred in a myriad of crossroads between the abundance of social worlds and structures (Maines 1977). Mediations involved the federal government's acknowledgement of Wicca as a authentic religion and personal conversations between friends. Educational pursuits at academic institutions, involvement with political activists, and affiliation in professional circles involved all levels of society. Wicca's influence has not be limited to these men's personal lives. It has reached all aspects of society with which these men interact.

Reputation Theory

Becker's theory revolved around the emergence of artists'

reputations due to group interaction and appraisal (1982). The creativity of people is quite comparable to any artist's skill. The self is the canvas for the individual to paint the self. These masterpieces are not fixed, with additional strokes, different techniques, or altered methods of presentations the self can be renewed. Becker and Cooley discussed how the self can be modified and maintained.

The self is presented during interaction with others. The individual and the other actors make their judgements and the individual adapts (Cooley 1909, Mead 1934). Each interaction and critique alerts the individual to success or the need of further alteration.

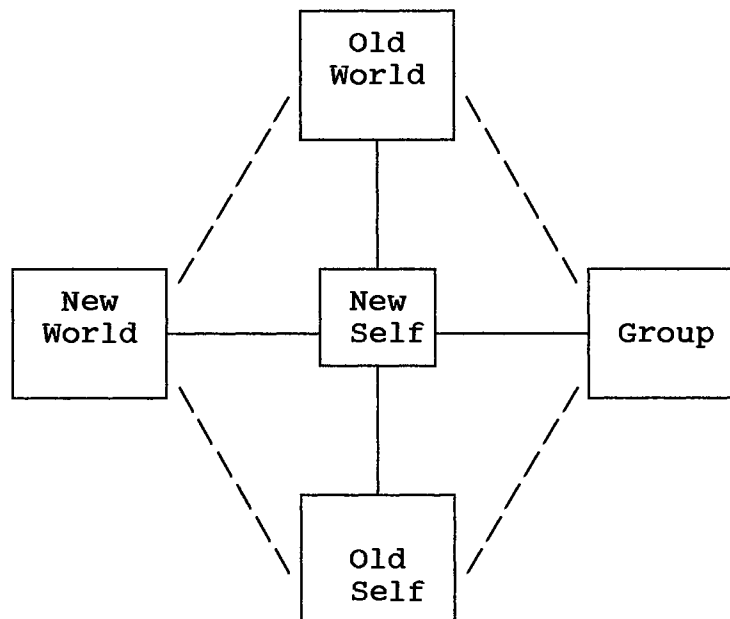
FIGURE FIVE depicts the interaction between the various components of change in an individual's self. The new self is constantly under construction with building blocks coming from the old self, old world, group, and new world. Although, the action between the outer components may be limited amongst themselves, they all have active and continuous interaction and influence with the new self.

Theoretical Conclusions

The self is an social object, not something a person is born with, it developed and perpetually cultivated (Mead 1934). A brief review of all the artistic, technological, and social advances attests the creativity and innovation of individuals. As with objects, the meaning of the self is based upon consensus and individual definition.

The reality of the self is dependent upon the individual's internalization of group reaction and comment. But in keeping with Wiccan ideal and interactionist theory the self is an art piece always in the making. Even death fails to bring a final viewing for the self. As long as the self is remembered others still interact with it. Via these vicarious interactions the self continues to change.

FIGURE FIVE
REPUTATION THEORY AND THE SELF



This research supports the durability, selectivity, and adaptive qualities of the self. People are free-willed creatures and not automatons ruled from a main computer terminal controlled by the power elite. This is not to say the structures existent in social worlds have no influence upon people. Instead, it is to say that individuals have a

choice to follow socially decrees or to make their own way. Either way, the individual is responsible for the decision.

Egos may be fragile, but the self is durable and adaptive (Gergen 1991, Mead 1934). The men in this study exhibited this resilience. They exist in a world which opposes them, but still they prosper. They felt it was their responsibility to make decisions best suited to insure their prosperity and happiness. They admit society can make life difficult. Society can cast illusions of hopelessness and necessary submission, but there are choices.

The partial withdrawal or refusal to abide with society's mandates reflects the selectivity, free-will, and determination of these men. The transitions the men have made make it clear the ability and potentials of individuals to protect themselves from social degradation. This is a society supposedly founded upon individualism. Most people fail to function well alone. However, small groups are quite powerful and ingenious. These groups pose threats to the status quo, before which the majority of society has bowed.

These men are not only creating new selves, but social worlds as well (Maines 1977). All social movements start out small (Miller 1985). There must be a feeling of injustice among its constituents to drive the movement forward (Smelser 1962). Wiccan covens have little desire to lead a social movement against the conventions of society. However, their

reclaiming of the self, the environment, and their spirituality is taking hold without compulsion. Perhaps Wicca can lead American people to an understanding of the self, gender, and personal responsibility.

Although, other theories applicable to the self do exist, they are primarily "slice-of-life" type perspectives, revealing little of the actual processes of the self. Such theories often ignore environmental and historical contexts of the situations in which individual interactions take place. For those reasons, the researcher choose a more interactive and processual perspective to examine this phenomenon.

Summary of Methodological Approach

The methodology used to perform this research was interactive, qualitative, and lengthy, lasting from Eostar of 1994 to Eostar of 1995. Eostar roughly correlates with the Christian holiday, Easter. The length of time was necessary to understand these men and their covens. It has been said nothing can ever be truly known (Edgley 1993). This researcher readily admits, just the surface of these men within were examined. A longer examination would reveal much more about these men and their lives.

Qualitative research is especially called for in investigations of religious and/or social movements (Strauss and Corbin 1990, Denzin 1989). The letters received from the research notice in The Circle, provided more help than the researcher had envisioned as probable. The research request

was published in the summer edition of 1994. From June to November of 1994, the number of letters received ranged from ten to twenty-five a week. For the following six months the letters dropped between five to ten a week. Even now in May of 1995, letters are still trickling in via the mail.

The letters were limited biographies and descriptions of various experiences with Wicca. They originated from all parts of the United States, Canada, Mexico, many places throughout Europe, and even the southern most part of the Pacific Rim. The information revealed in those letters was immensely important to the success of this research (CHAPTER V - META ANALYSIS - A Warning).

The success of this research request by far surpasses any of this researcher's past attempts to solicit data via predesigned surveys scattered about by some supposedly random method. Besides the immense response there were several other points where the request was infinitely more suitable than a survey.

The cost was almost non-existent, requiring the purchase of two stamps to mail two letters to the newsletter. The respondents choose to participate completely on their own accord without any intrusion into their lives by a researcher or his obligating surveys. The respondents only revealed the information they felt comfortable with disclosing. In addition, the respondents had the choice of remaining totally anonymous. However, the respondents all provided their names, addresses, and telephone numbers for further contact if necessary. These respondents were pleased to have a chance to

tell their story in their own words.

Observations of the men in the covens allowed the researcher to formulate applicable and intelligent questions for later interviews. The observation period allowed for the researcher to gain the trust of these men to insure the validity of their responses. Finally, the interactive methodology provided the opportunity for at least a partial understanding of these men, instead of merely recording bits of retrieved data.

Two variables must be discussed at this point, time and intensity. This research took over a year to accomplish. However long a year may sound, it barely provided enough time to form an elementary understanding of these men and their situations. The primary means by which this research could be strengthened is by expending more time in the endeavor.

Intensity refers to the relationships between the researcher and the subjects. There are some social phenomenon requiring one to remain removed from the situation in order to witness. However, the opposite is also accurate. This research demanded close proximity and a high level of intimacy with the subjects. Therefore, there may be aspects of these men and their covens not noted in this research.

Finally, it must be restated these men were highly educated and most were very aware of research techniques and methodologies. The interviews and observations performed during this research were obviously two-way events. This characteristic of these men could have been used to avoid issues or to over-emphasize them. Any further research

regarding these men would have to be aware of the time required, the interaction demanded, and the social and individual characteristics displayed. These were groups of men seeking to express themselves in a positive manner. In addition, their awareness of the situation may have given them the opportunity to insure a pleasing presentation of self and group. Only further research could reveal the actuality of these statements.

Conclusion

The imaginative design and innovative creation of fashion has been the focus of this work. Marx said, "Art is the dialectical process between one's essence and one's objective existence (1970)." These men took a potentially lethal plunge into the murky depths of face-games.

The most careful review and expert narration of the retrieved data could not begin to detail the awesome wonder of the transformations these men have executed. One such change would be considered incredible, but these men continue to modify their selves as if attempting to match the seasons.

These changes have occurred upon five zones of society where character can be altered or created (Haynor and Varacalli 1981). The self zone involves the autonomous aspects of the self and interactions with the generalized other. The self has often fallen the victim of alienation in recent times. The selves of these men failed to correspond to their visions of their true selves. This dissimilar imagery resulted in a certain level of dissonance or discomfort for

these men. Their initial desire to change the self originated in this zone.

The intimacy zone revolves around the primary groups with which a person holds membership (Haynor, et. al. 1981). The intimacy zones of these men failed to maintain the intensity of primary groups. Although, these groups held more status than secondary groups they failed to meet the needs of these men in primary group fashion. The search for a group of like minded people is intrinsic to this zone of character.

The associational zone implies the grouping of people sharing common characteristics such as age, sex, or ethnicity (Haynor, et. al. 1981). Gender, dissatisfaction, and non-Christian beliefs joined these men together in the categorical zone. Many characteristics were shared by these men, but their gender was the core phenomenon. Even in Wicca there was a certain degree of endogamy among the sexes.

The civil zone implies the community or the society (Haynor, et. al. 1981). This is the level originally failing to meet the needs of these individuals. The covens fulfilled the roles of the community. Their messages encourages the men to return to mainstream society to become active members.

The cosmic zone houses the religious, sacred, or inexplicable (Haynor, et. al. 1981). Here are the questions without empirical answers. This is the realm of faith and mystery. For Christians, it is the security of salvation and the threat of hell. For Wiccans, it is the promise and

responsibility of freedom. The men feel as if the deep self or the true self resides in this area. To reach this zone is to reveal the inner self.

The reasons why these men affiliated themselves with Wicca may vary on some points, but the primary reason for their decision is clear. These men sought the freedom to be themselves. The self they sought was masculine in nature. Therefore, searching for this new self allowed them to seek the real masculinity within them. The association of like with like may reenforce behavior patterns, but associations between dissimilar parties teaches understanding. Such an understanding provides a situation similar to looking in a mirror. The reflection allowed the men to search for flaws or differences. Like and unlike show similarities and differences, permitting the unique or personal attributes to be examined (Cooley 1909).

For men to understand and appreciate masculinity, it would help them to understand women and femininity. Life, biological and social, comes from the feminine. The female births the child and in most incidences in this society rears the child as part of the community. From the female, the expectations of maleness will be taught to young boys. In a manner of speaking masculinity starts out feminized only to be severed from the source of its original feminine contact when they become older. Perhaps these mens returned to embrace the feminine in order to reunite their masculine aspects with the feminine to constitute an individual whole.

The research presented in this work is far from

exhaustive. There is much more to be studied regarding these men and their covens. Where will they be in ten years? Will they still be with their covens or will they have moved back into main stream society? Continuous research should be maintained observing these men and their choices in life. If society could understand these men then perhaps other men such as elementary teachers, nurses, and secretaries could be benefit. The stigma of femininity may be worn away.

The actions of these men in living their own lives according to their needs and ideologies may later help other oppressed groups. Many find it laughable to think of a male liberation movement, but it does exist. Many of today's men have refused to comply with the back-breaking, heart seizing, and stress-overloading doctrines of society. It may be just a matter before other men take notice and agree. Wicca may pose no direct threat to the Christian status quo, but the male-followers constitute a threat to the supposed rightness and morality of male dominance, and thus, the very nature of society.

In conclusion, the efforts of these men will not stop with themselves. They have interacted with too many people and shared their ideals. Information learned is difficult to unlearn or forget. Eventually other men will realize the unjust expectations with which society has charged them as responsible. The costs and rewards of being male in this society are in the red. In the end, there is only one reason these men joined Wicca, to be themselves.

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2
VITA

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Doctor of Philosophy

Thesis: THE ARTISTIC PRESENTATION OF THE MALE SELF IN
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INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW

Date: 01-25-95

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Proposal Title: THE ARTISTIC PRESENTATION OF THE MALE SELF IN THE
WICCAN GENRE

Principal Investigator(s): Larry Perkins, John Teague

Reviewed and Processed as: Modification

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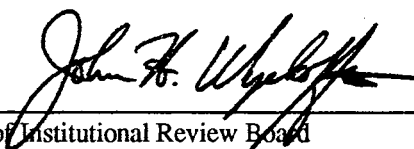
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Comments, Modifications/Conditions for Approval or Reasons for Deferral or Disapproval
are as follows:

Signature:



Chair of Institutional Review Board

Date: February 10, 1995