Wicca
Beliefs and Practices
Wiccan Deities

- Wicca can be considered to worship two major deities: the Triple Goddess and the Great Horned God
  - Some beliefs view these as male and female aspects of great deity.
  - Some beliefs are truly polytheistic, worshipping these deities equally with other selected deities from any number of pantheons.

- Many aspects of Wiccan deities tie into past emphasis on fertility, crops, protection, and survival in untamed environments
Triple Goddess[^2]

- Female – Wiccan
- Described as the Maiden, the Mother, the Crone.
  - Maiden: Youth, innocence, enchantment
  - Mother: Fertility, nurturing, power, stability
  - Crone: Wisdom and death.
- Very powerful, said to be all the other goddesses combined.
- More focused on growth and agriculturally based societies.
Great Horned God[^3]  

- Male – Wiccan  
- Counterpart to the Goddess  
- Master of the hunt – Associated with hunting societies.  
- Symbolic of the wild animals and unknown aspects of life.  
- Grants bravery, strength, adventure, male virility.  
- Primal and strong in nature.
Wiccan Holidays\cite{4}

- 8 Major Holidays (Sabbats)
  - Yule (Winter Solstice)
  - Imbolc (Brigids Day)
  - Ostara (Spring Equinox)
  - Beltane (Fertility. Crops)
  - Litha (Summer Solstice)
  - Lughnassad (Harvest)
  - Mabon (Autumn Equinox)
  - Samhain (Spirits and Winter)

- Represent changing of the seasons and agriculture
• Wiccan magic makes extensive use of the five elements: earth, wind, water, fire, spirit.

• General philosophy is that the magic can be effective through personal power, or through beseeching the aid of a powerful deity.

• Magic is often done through some form of ritual, ranging from informal to highly formal.
  – Informal rituals: simply repeating a phrase
  – Formal rituals: elaborate process involving a ritual space, tools, robes, and a strict set of words to speak.
Wiccan Rituals

• Tools
  – Athame (Wind)
  – Cauldron (Water)
  – Candle (Fire)
  – Pentacle (Earth)

• Dress
  – Skyclad or robes

• Purpose
  – Holidays or a specific desire. (life changes)
Wiccan Mores

• “An it harm none, do what ye Will”
  – Common interpretation: Will = Higher Will
  – NOT an excuse to do whatever you want

• Law of three
  – Everything returns three times.
  – Golden rule.
Modern Wicca entered the public eye in 1954 when Gerald Gardner published a book titled *High Magic’s Aid*

- Gardner claimed much of the information he gained from a Wiccan coven that he joined in 1939 and this coven descended from old Wicca.
- Wicca originally began with the Celtic culture.
- Isolated Wiccan covens have survived underground throughout time and have resurfaced in recent times.
Wiccan History – Counterpoint

• Others believe there is no surviving tradition of old Wicca and that modern Wicca is a reconstruction.
• This community is largely composed of solitary practitioners
Alexendrian Wicca

• Established in the 1960’s by Alex Sanders
  – Found mostly in the U.S. and Canada
• Based on Gardner Wicca
• Included elements from Kaballah and Enochian Magic
• “If it works, use it”[8]
• Required initiation into a coven
Dianic Wicca

- Based on the U.S. feminist movement in the 1960’s.
- Founded by Zsuzsanna Emese Moukesay.
- Specifically focused on the feminine aspect and rejected the Great Horned God.
- Only women allowed in covens.
- No connection to Gardnerian Wicca.
References