

Lesson 9, Hedge Witchcraft

Well, this is it, the lesson about the typical person's concept of the term "witch". They think of the woman standing around in the black robes, with a bubbling cauldron over a fire, stirring it with a spoon, brewing some sort of esoteric potion. If they are charitable they may think about Ceridwen, who brewed a cauldron of Inspiration and Science for her son, until Taliesin accidentally got the benefits of that potion.

They may think of the Witch of Endor, who advised King Saul in some matters and had a "familiar spirit" to tell her what was going on. They may think of the Burning Times, and how so many hundreds of thousands of people were killed in the hysteria. They may think of Salem Massachusetts where 26 people were put to death for being witches, and hundreds more were accused, and confessed to being Witches.

Here's the rub, however, there were no witches in Salem, only one lady practicing her native religion and a lot of political infighting. The Burning times were not about witchcraft so much as about rooting out heresy in the Catholic Church, along with political and financial gain. (The witch finders got a percentage of the property seized when a witch was executed.)

I know some of you may know this short history lesson, but for those who are not familiar with the facts, it's necessary to state this again.

Witchcraft developed out of several traditions. Margaret Murray proposed in her essay "The Witch Cult in Western Europe"¹ and further revised in "The God of the Witches"² that there was a cult of witches who had been practicing in secret since prehistoric times. Her evidence was flimsy to say the least, consisting mostly of folk practices and coincidence. However, with no contradictory evidence available, her essays were eventually accepted despite the controversy that dogged her works.

In basic terms, she proposed that the religion of the prehistoric peoples of Europe had been passed down through time pretty much unchanged. Cave paintings, folk customs, Kitchen Witch traditions, herbalism and herbal knowledge, she theorized were all extant in times predating the arrival of Christianity in Britain. She did not seem to think that there was any civilization in Britain until the landing of the first Christian Missionaries, and so on.

Most of the older books on Witchcraft will still cite this as an authoritative reference, but at this time most of these theories have been proved incorrect. It makes for interesting historical reading and a familiarity with these texts is usually part of most Wicca or Witchcraft 101 courses, even though they are not taught as gospel any longer.

Regardless, the theories she presented were propagated for a time, and became the basis for Wicca's misstated history. It is my assumption there were traditions that were

passed down, parts of which could be considered witchcraft. Witchcraft in its present form is NOT the religion of the ancients, in that there is no veneration of the sky gods or the sacrifice of animals and possessions to appease them. As stated in the last lesson, while customs and herbal knowledge was passed down, this is what became the beginnings of modern Witchcraft.

If you chose to continue your path and continue to learn, you will eventually hear some people trying to sell you on the fact that the tradition they have been trained in has been passed down since who knows when. Some will claim that Gardner (or whomever) stole all their knowledge from either themselves or their ancestors. While it is possible for some parts of the individual's knowledge to have been passed down from his/her parents, it's highly unlikely that _____ (fill in your own blank) stole from them without a LOT of evidences, such as original manuscripts that predate the magickal traditions that exist now.

Many traditions of Witchcraft have actually been in practice for quite some time. The Romany (Gypsy, or Romanian) version of Witchcraft and prophecy is one example, along with the spaewives of Nordic legend, as well as people like old time midwives and so on. One has to remember that these wise women and men were the only doctors that existed at those times. Their knowledge could be seen as being supernatural, especially when the fevers broke due to the bark of this tree they used and that saves the life of a child. Unfortunately they also got the blame when a child died despite their best efforts.

I suppose that some of these legends could have been passed down because of the traditional way certain medicines "had" to be harvested. It seems to me that most of the traditions are degradations from the original processes. (Why do you cut the ends off the roast? Cause that's the way my mom did it. Why does she cut the ends off the roast? That's the way HER mom did it. Why did she do it that way? Cause it didn't fit in the pan! Some times old ways are just old, not right.)

If you don't know that it is a chemical in the Willow bark that cures the fever and headache, but you think that part of it's essence and virtue comes from the dancing around the pile of bark you just harvested and put on a stump of a willow tree under the moon, then it can look like the "spell" is the efficacious part of the cure.

However, when we speak of witchcraft, we are not speaking of Wicca or Wicca's magickal system. We are talking about several different magickal traditions that have quite a bit of things in common. We are talking about "Green Witchcraft" in which the traditions of nature worshiping magickians are celebrated. We talk about Pennsylvania Dutch Hexmeisters, we talk about the *Strega* of Italian Witchcraft and we are talking about the *brujo* and *bruja* of Mexican Witchcraft along with what your old country grandma did when people got sick.

These have a common thread in that it is passed down from parent to child or grandparent to grandchild. It can also resemble Kitchen Witchery. It can contain pagan

religion(s) that venerate the natural parts of the world. The herb magic aspect can work to cure sickness and it is the source of much of our modern pharmacopoeia. This is where a lot of knowledge of cures and homeopathic medicine came from. There is honoring of the natural cycles, of life and death, birth and old age, sickness and health, but it does not hide the fact that for every good thing that is in life, there is something negative. There is an old belief that for every cat that is born, there is a cat that dies. *[Mary's aside, I am reminded of the old Blood Sweat and Tears song, "And when I Die" which has the line "... and when I die and when I'm gone there'll be one child left in this world to carry on.]* Witchcraft generally acknowledges that death is part of life and needful for life to go on, but it does not try to shield people from it, nor does it try to pretend that death will not occur. Those who are left without the physical presence of the one they love feel pain and sorrow.

Witchcraft, in a lot of ways makes sure that those around the witch understand that love and kindness are the important things, not fear and hopelessness.

I think that this is one of the main reasons that there was so much friction between those practitioners who actually **were** witches and the Catholic Church when it came to the areas where Witchcraft flourished. Witchcraft was an empowering philosophy along with being a spell casting way of life. However, the RCC wanted to be the only spell slinging game in town, and they taught by fear of God, fear of Hell, fear of Satan, fear of the body, so on and so forth. Unfortunately, they did a thorough job of suppressing the religions that were present in the areas they moved into.

So, now we have bits and pieces of information, folk tales, some historical records (like some of the CC's own internal documents talking about Witchcraft as a Goddess Religion, a Dianic cult) and so on. I would refer you to Raven Grimassi's research. He has compiled the evidences together in a new book he's authored that Llewellyn is publishing called "[The Witches' Craft: The Roots of Witchcraft & Magical Transformation](#)". The research he has in the Introduction and Chapter 1 make me think he was either on to new information or that he has been reading too much Margaret Murray. Some of the topics he talks about are the same evidences she used, salted liberally with Joseph Campbell, yet he does have some unique material. Considering that he is one of the practitioners of a legitimate version of witchcraft that survived the Burning Times (Strega), I will give him the benefit of the doubt until I read more.

Back to the history lesson for a bit longer, the Burning Times reference above is a reference to the actual time period of 1550 to 1650. It was in actuality the persecution the Catholic Church carried out against it's own members. In reality they were attempting to root out heresy within the church. The inquisitors found heresy all over the place. For instance: The Spanish Inquisition (which no one expected since it was based on three, no four factors.... if you don't get the reference, let it go...) was started by Queen Isabella of Spain. Her goal seems to have been a desire to purge a land steeped in Islam from approximately 710 to 1480, as well as ridding the land of Jews. She went really overboard, and that was the beginning of the whole pogrom against

witchcraft and Satanism in Europe. Nowhere was the search for hidden heretics carried on as ferociously as it was in Spain.

I'm not going to give you the full break down of the horror, just hit a few highlights I think you may be interested in.

- Witchcraft was declared heresy by the CC, but it was not considered a crime to be a witch, only to cause harm by witchcraft skills.
- It was not ecclesiastical courts that tried and sentenced suspected witches, but the mundane court system, although the majority of Witch finders were from among the ranks of the Dominican Monks of the CC.
- The Hammer Against Witches (Malleus Maleficarum³) seems to have been one of the sparks to set the pyre alight, although the document was rejected several times by CC scholars before being accepted into the body of work.
- While the Inquisition and hunt against heresy went on for about 500 years, from about 1300 to 1700 or so the actual time period considered to be the Burning Times was only from 1550 to 1650 in Europe.⁴
- The only place in England where witches were burned was in Scotland, everywhere else they were hanged. Dead is dead, but let's lay this rumor to rest.
- No one was burned at the stake in Salem. Twenty-five people (the majority of them women) were hanged and one was pressed to death under several tons of stones.
- In one village in Germany, they executed 139 accused witches in one day. The scholar noting this down wrote that the place of execution (the main square) looked like a small forest from all the stakes in it.
- Hungary was the first country to completely abolish all their laws against witchcraft. In the 1100's the last of Hungarian law was stricken from the books and no law against witchcraft was ever put back on the books.
- Almost all of those who were accused of witchcraft and subsequently tried and executed were Christian. Of those who died in this time period, only a small percentage of them (probably less than 1/2 of 1%) were non-Christian or practicing pagan religions. The purpose of this time was to root out heresy in the CC, not to persecute those who had not been brought to the peace of Christ yet.
- In Wurtzburg Germany, all 600 inhabitants were sentenced to death by the Inquisitors because "almost the entire town was possessed by the Devil". Among the victims were 19 priests and 41 children.
- The expression "The Third Degree" came from the torture of accused witches. It was the level of torture in which the victim died.
- One favored means of interrogating witches in England and America was called "Swimming the witch". The accused was tied hand and foot and thrown into a handy lake. If she floated, she was judged a witch and sentenced to death. If she drowned, she was judged innocent of witchcraft. It didn't seem to matter that she was dead either way. Logic didn't enter into this frenzy.
- Witch finders were strictly enjoined from looking an accused witch in the eye during interrogation, lest she cast her spell on the interrogators. Presumably the

compassion that one could feel for an accused witch could not be felt by a witch finder, which left no room for mercy, only torture.

- No confession could be believed from an accused witch without torture. If I, for instance, were accused of witchcraft, and I confessed, I MUST still be tortured to extract another confession under torture since the first voluntary confession would not be supported in court.
- All witches never acted alone. Because of that, a town where a witch was accused of witchcraft MUST have other witches in it, and the accused was tortured until they named names, where the whole process was repeated. If let go long enough, the entire town would eventually be accused of witchcraft.
- The most fantastic estimates from modern scholars for those killed during this time is 350,000. Somewhat accurate estimates put it someplace around 60,000 to 150,000 for the entire 200 or more year period, with ALL those persecuted for religious reasons being included from that time period. The popular myth of 9,000,000 women being executed in that 100 year period is false. This "fact" has been proven false many times.
- Witchcraft accusations and executions are still happening in other countries, and persecution of religions happens in America too, look at Waco.

One last fact must be stressed; truth did not enter into this, compassion had no place, mercy was a thing of God, not of his ministers who found the heretics. Keeping your head down did not help. Simply having knowledge of herbs and of women's mysteries (like childbirth and other priestess-related acts) one was considered a witch, and thus subject to the possibility of accusation. Many think that the Witch Hysteria inadvertently caused the Bubonic Plague that so decimated the villages and towns of Europe.

If a witch was accused in a town, she must have supernatural helpers, any of which could be the cats of the town. Thus, all the cats were gathered up and murdered, leaving the rodents to run free and propagate as they desired. Thus letting the flea population that flourished on the rats to breed and infect the humans with the Bubonic Plague. Thus causing more deaths.

Last fact: It is still happening. It may have slowed down, it may not be such a madness anymore, it may not be as much of a hysteria, but accusations of witchcraft still happen, and the hunts still occur. They have changed faces from "Burn the witch" to "removing the child from the home due to a detrimental influence" and "separation of church and state". Don't believe me? Look at [The Church of the Iron Oak](#), check [The Witches' Voice](#) for all those articles about kids being suspended for wearing pentacles to school (satanic symbols you know), and do a search for cases where pagans and Wiccans have had their children taken from them by Christian Fundamental Parents.

I love getting emails from people who think that just because there are no burnings in public squares of Witches that it isn't happening. How about those saying that no Witches are being arrested? What do you use to justify the [West Memphis Three](#) then? One boy, practicing the religion of Wicca, was arrested because a lot of circumstantial evidence was pointing to him and his two friends in the disappearance/murder of a

small child and so on. If you want the details, look them up; there are any number of sites relating to those three and their story.

But enough of this, as I said, Witchcraft was a polyglot of religions and folkways. Spells using blood (especially menstrual blood), herbs in spells, poppets, candle magick, sympathetic magick and so on were all parts of the classical Hedge Witch. I can see how witchcraft of this sort could be considered the "English" of the magickal world (meaning that it steals from whatever magickal system it comes in contact with and it is slowly becoming the most common version of Magick there is). Any and every thing that helps magick and magickal workings out was probably in one way or another incorporated into Witchcraft.

Now, however, we have several schools of witchcraft. As I said earlier, there is Strega and so on, each of them developed over time and each of them unique to the region that they come from. *Strega* is vastly different from Dutch Hexmeistry, which is different from *Brujo/Bruja*, which is different from classical European Witchcraft, which is different from the magick of the Gypsies. Each of these are based on the same principals, internal power, doing X to figure Y causes Z to occur, but the processes each go through to accomplish their ends are vastly different.

I can only speak to the classical Green Witchcraft of Europe rather than any other style of witchcraft, since I have not been initiated into those ways and do not know their secrets.

While these styles all have some of the same things that occur in common to other styles of magick, such as elementals and elements, personal power and so on, there are other elements that are not in common with any other style of magick.

In many ways, witchcraft is about as pure as you can get magickally and still use a process. It does emphasize the female side of the world, it does emphasize the dark portions of magick as well as the light, and it uses blood, even if it is not a way of blood sacrifice. Things like a "Witches Bottle" should require blood to make it more effective, and it is rumored that some red candles were actually colored with their maker's blood.

I have come up with a personal theory, with absolutely no evidence to support it. I believe that way back prior to the time of the Druids in the British Isles (when the Mabinogion was being written) there were two classes of spiritual leaders. The group who would become the Druids that took care of the Male Mysteries, and the priestesses (or witches) who dealt with the female mysteries. The mysteries of childbirth, the mysteries of the first menstruation of a girl, the celebration of first sex and so on were all things that the Priestesses took care of, and it could have been organized as the "Mists of Avalon" was. I'm not saying that it did occur, it makes sense that something like it took place, especially when one looks at what we have now.

We have a group of spiritual leaders, the Druids, who were the primary spiritual leaders of a group of people, who were wiped out by the Romans, composed most

often of men. Now, granted that there were women among the ranks of the Druids, and I'm sure that there were men among the ranks of these groups of priestesses. But there are some things that men just can't help young girls cope with, just as there are things that happen to boys that mothers can't help with. So I would think it reasonable that there were two groups of spiritual leaders, just as in Native American cultures there are some rites reserved for the women, and some reserved for the men.

It is my personal theory that when the Romans came in and destroyed the visible religion of the Celts, the Druids, the female groups went underground. They didn't expose themselves to attack as the Druids did, but instead simply faded into the kitchens and into the hedges and continued to practice their version of religion, changing it and mutating it over time until we have the Kitchen Witch and the Hereditary Witch.

Now, I know I said that I doubted that there were that many FamTrad witches around (FamTrad is a short code coined by Isaac Bonewits for "Family Tradition") I never said that I didn't think that they existed. I doubt that as many people who claim to have a family tradition passed down unchanged from the pre-Roman times. I do think they exist, but I think that a lot of those who claim to be family tradition are fooling themselves. *[Mary aside - I feel that much of it stems from the need to feel special and different, as if being by choice Neopagan wasn't different enough! I would love to claim that I learned craft secrets from my granny, but her wisdom was of another sort, of the hearth and earth of acceptance for her family no matter what they did. As long as she could feed them of course!]*

This also makes sense if you look at the general attitudes of the differing cultures. The Romans were very misogynistic and male-dominated, and women were less than the dust of the Earth. The Celtic peoples were generally more respectful of women and were willing to grant a woman a hell of a lot more respect than other cultures of the same time period. As a result, the Romans came in and saw Male=Priest=Druid, wiped them out and never thought to look for the women priestesses. So the ladies faded into the background and disappeared. Their teachings turned into folk magick, medicine, granny wisdom, old-wives tales and so on.

How many of you have heard some oldwife's tale and went "Yeah, right..." just to have that turn out to be right?

Now, even given all this evidence and theory, just because your great grandmother used herbs to heal you didn't mean that she was a witch. It meant that she has the potential to be a witch, and that she had some knowledge that the Witches had. Only that. What the difference is between being a superstitious old biddy and a Witch is simply this; intent. You have to have the intent to do a spell, the will to do the spell, the knowledge that THIS component, the nutmeg or the mullein that you are putting in this punch means happiness or longevity or what have you in order to make the spell. Putting in the same components and not having this intent does not make one a witch.

I think this is one of the most common misconceptions in modern Witchcraft today. That simply because your predecessors had some of the knowledge that Witches had means that they must have been witches themselves. Listen up, the only way to cure a headache was with willow bark until relatively recently, the only way to cure chicken pox was to use oatmeal plasters, the only way to have a baby was by "natural childbirth" without drugs and so on. This is what made witches so hard to identify to the witch hunters.

If I, as a witch-finder, come into a town in 1600's Germany, ANYONE in that town could be a witch, from the barrister, to the Burgher, to the Midwife, to the farmers and to the priest any of them. That is why it was SO important to get a confession from one witch, and have that witch name names, so I could find more and more witches. So I could root that evil out of the town once and for all. But just because this woman knew how to get rid of a tick didn't make her a witch, after all, I know that to get rid of a tick to poke it with a hot ember. That could make ME a witch and I could be accused too.

The point of this is 90% of what you think you know about witchcraft is not true. Some of it is, and most of it is not. There were real witches, who cast real spells in olden times right on down to today. That does not make every superstitious ancestor of yours a witch, nor should it.

Also, understand that Wicca's ethical structure DOES NOT carry over to witchcraft. There will be authors that say that it does, that all Witchcraft is Wicca craft, that any spell caster is subject to the Rede and Law of Three, but don't believe it.

I cannot stress this point enough: **YOU ARE ONLY SUBJECT TO THE RULES YOU DECIDE YOU ARE SUBJECT TO!!!!** If you, as a spell user, decide that you cannot cast your magick while you wear clothing, then you will not be able to as a witch. If you decide your spells will only be effective under the full moon in months ending with a "Y", then you had better get a GOOD lunar calendar and be prepared to do a LOT of spell casting on the 4 months that it applies to.

This, however, does not mean that you can pick and choose which you wish to be subject to. Some of these rules will be imposed by the school of magick, some will be imposed by your will, some will be imposed by your moral structure. I recently got into a debate with a student who was trying to tell me that any tool used for blood sacrifice would be contaminated beyond redemption and it MUST be disposed of at that point. I gently corrected her in this. At that point she told me that Wicca had nothing to do with Ceremonial Magick, and that ALL Asatru practitioners were evil and bigots to boot. (stop laughing, I have the transcripts of this....)

Well, needless to say, I jumped all over these statements, pointing out the Kitchen Witch, the Ceremonial trail of Gardner, the reasons that some Asatru may be considered to be arrogant, but not necessarily bigots and so on. She didn't write back.

But you know what? When she becomes competent enough to start using magick (as her teacher decides), one of her "rules" will be that she cannot practice any blood sacrifice, and that if she accidentally slashes her hand with her athame or white handled knife, she will HAVE to melt that tool down and replace it. That's okay, her rules, her decision. If she thinks blood is so bad, she may even go as far as to not cast any magick when she is on her period, and that's okay too. We will be looking at one type of magick that, while it allows for blood sacrifice (or it did) now in current usage, avoids blood being taken into the body in their food. And that's okay too.

But, and I'm going to stress this again, I highly advise that if you are going to study a magickal system, to do so the entire way. Obey their rules and their laws, do what the teachers advise you to do. This is because some sections of magick for that school may be ineffectual if you try to impose other rules and ways of doing things on it, without knowing why it was there in the first place.

Let me give you an example.... (Groan if you want, it's okay, but you are still getting the example...)

Phil Hine, one of the founders of Chaos Magick, at one time was experimenting with other forms of magick. On a lark he and his friend decided to use some of the rituals in the Lesser Key of Solomon to "see what would happen". (You can, BTW, find all this related in his essay "Some observations from the Goetia Project" in the e-book Aspects of Evocation on his website. The site URL is listed in Lesson 8.) When they just did the ceremonies the way THEY felt those ceremonies should be done, the being summoned was fuzzy, indistinct, and they themselves felt drained and run down for DAYS afterward. When they did the same ceremony as laid out in the rules in the Lesser Key of Solomon, the being was distinct, obeyed their commands and so on. In other words, doing it as they felt like resulted in a practical "failure" while doing it the correct way for that tradition of magick ended in a "success".

At least try to understand why this aspect of a practice you are considering discarding was put there in the first place, before you just toss it out. It may result in a "tossing out the baby with the bathwater" situation.

Another example of this from my own life; When I first got into Wicca, I read what I could from the various sources available about 10-12 years ago, to find out what was out there and how it worked. I took basic Wicca 101 classes and talked to the Gods about what was necessary and what was not. Thus, I understood the need for the Scourging in traditional Gardnerian Wicca, and I understood what it symbolically represented. I decided that was not for me personally. So I looked a little deeper into Seax-Wica, found that while there are symbolic prices to pay for knowledge, there was no scourging to go along with the symbolism.

But many people today (not all of them "fluff bunnies") disregard the scourging in Wicca. They never mention it nor discuss it in their books. Thus, the practitioner who is learning from those books don't value the knowledge gleaned from those books, they

don't value their Priests/esses for knowing more, they don't see that they actually have to WORK to gain knowledge, and they never see the price they have to pay for the power they want.

Anyhow... < /tangent >

To get back to the subject of Witchcraft, let me somewhat sum up again....

It's not a religion. Your parents/grandparents probably were not repressed witches. Most of the myths of Witchcraft were exaggerations at best, outright lies at the worst. It has been around centuries, but anyone who thinks that it is unchanged is self-deluded.

What is witchcraft today? Well, Wiccans will tell you that it's Wicca. However, while Wicca has elements of Witchcraft as part of its practice and beliefs, Witchcraft is NOT Wicca. By keeping that basic fact in mind, you can avoid ticking off a real witch by assuming they are Wiccan.

Witches pretty much run the spectrum of beliefs. In many cases, this was truly the first of the improvisational magickal schools. However, just like everyone else, Witchcraft fell into ruts. There are Christian Witches, Norse Witches, Hindu Witches and so on. It's not the god that they pray to, nor even the Goddess, but rather the way in which they incorporate their beliefs into their life.

Dianna and/or Hekate (however you want to spell Her name) were probably worshiped as the Goddesses of Witchcraft. It was a practice that centered on fertility, harvest, life and death. I suppose that some individual witches also did go out and brew love potions, poisons and so on, but once again; it's still brewing, which means herbs and the harvest. It did not celebrate any holidays that we know of, and it seems to have been a solitary practice that was passed from parent to child.

I have read in more than a few books that THIS author has the only honest-to-god/dess tradition of Witchcraft that still exists, but I am skeptical of that claim. While it may be their families' honest-to-god/dess unchanged means of practicing witchcraft, any claims to the ONLY would need to be taken with a few fistfuls of salt.

Some think that because Witchcraft celebrates death as well as life that it's somehow bad. Well, let me say this to those detractors: Life without Death is a cancer. Death is an integral part of Life, and you can't have life without death. It's that simple. Like creation, you can't have creation without a male and a female; you can not separate the life from the darker aspects of death. It simply cannot be done.

Certainly people try very diligently to do exactly that. Look at mainstream Christianity for a perfect example. The priests spend an inordinate amount of time running around making everyone afraid of death and how they will burn when they die and how everything they are will be lost when they die UNLESS... Well, I'm sure that this has happened to you as well as me, so I won't beat that dead horse anymore.

However, Witchcraft in specific celebrates the cycles of nature. Everything that is in nature is part of self-sustaining cycles that we can take advantage of if we choose to. The cycle of the moon, the cycle of the water, the cycle of life and death, the cycle of the harvest are examples of this. Along with that we have a responsibility to take care of that which we have, not abuse it, nor do we have the "right" to take without giving back. We may plant rows and rows of crops for the sustenance of our bodies, but we don't have the "right" to take those crops without giving back the energies that it took to grow those crops or something to keep nature in balance.

That means that we put our bodies into the Earth, without all the poisons to keep the body incorruptible in them, as a way of honoring those cycles and that which we took from the Earth. We are honor bound to use every part of an animal, which is slaughtered to feed us, and we never take more than we can use.

I know this sounds like some sort of new-agey fluff bunny feel good nonsense, right? Well, this is what has been happening for centuries. Much of it was unintentional, accidental, but some of it was deliberate and with purpose. But that also means that death becomes just another milestone in life, no more threatening than getting married or taking one's first steps, or hitting puberty. When these events were contemplated prior to their occurrence, it can be scary. Some people may have even tried to avoid them, but they come to everyone eventually, and death will come too.

Some of these concepts are beginning to be explored by modern Llewellyn authors, like Ann Moura. She has recently published three books that I think are above-average examples of Witchcraft as it SHOULD be. [Green Witchcraft \(ISBN 1-56718-690-4\)](#), her companion book to that one, [Green Witchcraft II \(ISBN 1-56718-689-0\)](#) and [Green Magic \(ISBN 0-7387-0181-5\)](#) all from [Llewellyn Publications](#) and costing around \$12-\$14 each are really good examples of Witchcraft in my opinion. Generally speaking, they lay out HER version of Witchcraft and she is to be commended for her insistence that it is how her family has preserved their teachings of Witchcraft, not the only way it is. But, by the same token, I do not recommend another book by her, "The Origins of Modern Witchcraft." As good as her series of books on Green Witchcraft are that book is about as bad as it gets. I have reviews of all these books on my site if you are interested in reading them.

Once again, I'm handicapped in describing just what a witch is and what she does because of the fluid nature of witchcraft. I can recommend the above references and some of the links I have below, and tell you that there are more and more people who practice a self-aware, world-honoring path of magick, using the natural bounty of the planet in their workings, but that's about it.

The witch seems to be more focused in health of the community and the land than the Kitchen Witch is. The witch does seem on first glance to be the same type of practitioner, and indeed they have many things in common, but they are not the same. Just as the Witch is not necessarily a Wiccan, a Witch is not necessarily a Kitchen

Witch. If I may revise my definitions from last lesson, a Kitchen Witch is primarily focused on her family and her home, A Hedge Witch is focused on her community and making money from her magickal skills.

Yep, that's right. A Hedge Witch sells her services to those who can pay for them. Because of that, it can look as if she has little or no moral values, but that is not right. She has the morals she is comfortable with depending on the religion she grew up with and the rest of relegated to the trash. She is not that concerned with justifying herself to anyone other than herself. Her survival is paramount. She does do what she feels necessary to survive, and inside that she is really powerful and capable. *[Mary aside - Here we go! What is the moral and ethical use of her powers/spells? Is he/she "just" a hired gun, with all the "threefold return" to rebound on her employers? Is it proper that she judge the intent desire and qualifications of those that come to her so that she *only* sells to those morally fit to use them? Be careful about how you judge, it is a slippery slope you will have to face for the rest of your adult life as a practicing magickian.]*

Her components may be her own blood, the eyes of creatures, and it may all be bound together under the moon, but that does not make her magick any less capable. She is still focusing her will and her mind and her thoughts on the spell she is casting. She does have spells that are more classical spells than most magick users.

Prosperity Spell Rowan Moonstone

The following is a quarterly prosperity spell given to me by Angel and Gracie, my first two FamTrad teachers. I have no idea where they got it, but I can tell you that it DOES work. I've used it for years and it never fails to bring me some un-looked for money. I find that I've overpaid a bill, or an old debt which I had written off as un-collectible gets repaid, I find a \$20 on the sidewalk, etc. Try it, it works!

The spell is to begin at one minute past midnight SUN TIME (I HATE daylight savings time when I do this. Means 1AM!) on the night of April 30 (May 1), July 31 (Aug 1), Oct 31 (Nov. 1) and Jan 31 (Feb 1) In other words, on the first minute of the cross quarter day.

You will need the following:

*1 gold candle
6 green candles
9 white candles
Pine oil for anointing candles
salt*

All candles must be dressed with pine oil and then arranged as follows:

Gold candle in the center green candles in a circle around gold candle white candles in a circle around green candles. At one minute past midnight on the appointed day, trace a salt circle around the outermost circle of candles, light the gold candle first, then the green candles, moving deosil, then the white candles, moving deosil. Circle the altar three times, chanting "Orbiting Jupiter trine the sun, bring money on the run." Do the chant 3 times also. Sit quietly for a few minutes and visualize your monetary NEEDS. (needs, not desires). Then SNUFF (do not blow or pinch) the candles in reverse order.

That's it. That's all there is to it and it works beautifully. Since Lammas is coming up, thought I'd post it for everyone to see. I've got a bunch more stuff from these two ladies if anyone is interested. They worked a great deal with Archangels and I suspect a strong Cabalistic crossover in there somewhere. But the spells and rituals DO work quite nicely.

BB Rowan

This spell from Rowan Moonstone, is pretty typical of a witches' spell. It uses times of the season, along with the Moon times and colors to make the magick work. There is a sparsity of ritual, since most of this is internal visualizations.

One thing that must be mentioned in regards to these spells, all of the energy to fuel these spells comes from INSIDE the witch. It has only been in recent years that they began pulling from other sources. Most often, to my understanding, all the spell energy came from the practitioner or her familiar. There were times when they had a strong connection with one or more elements, and they could pull energy from those sources in addition to the internal energy, but most often it was all personal energy. This is one reason that usually the witch only did spells for herself.

And since I touched on it slightly, let me talk about familiars:

Just because you have a cat/dog/bird/fish/what-have-you as a pet does NOT mean it's a familiar. Yes, not just cats can be familiars. If you ask modern pagan practitioners, ANY animal that the witch has a connection with has the potential to be a familiar. In that way, familiars are not that different from the Native American Totems.

A familiar in the classic definition is a spirit, usually housed in a body of a pet that is demonic in nature, which gives the witch her instructions from Satan. Because cats can be shoved out of their bodies easily, and they can see into other dimensions, they are generally the target of the imps or demons for possession. In actual working definition, you can think of a familiar as a living battery for the witch.

Yep, what I have had you doing with your jewelry and the energy can be done with a familiar. You can dump energy into them, you can draw energy from them and they have an awareness of metaphysical workings. In mythology, a familiar was able to

share its senses with the wizard it was attached to, but in practical applications, that could be a manifestation of how close a bond they have to develop magickally. When I had a familiar at one time, I developed just such a bond, and once I went stalking with Kittidiot at night. It was truly an illuminating experience.

The bottom line is that a familiar is a magickal partner for the witch. It is an animal that can give its energy to the witch as she needs it in her workings. It can drain and ground energy from the witch if needed during a ceremony or spell, and for all intents and purposes the wards/shields of the witch don't exist to the familiar. Ritually consecrating the area and shielding it during a spell would not keep out the familiar, and it could come and go as it saw fit without affecting the protections.

If you want a humorous article I wrote a LONG time ago, read ["A Familiar Tail"](#).

Okay, stop laughing. At tongue-in-cheek as that article is, there is a lot of truth in it. A familiar is SUPPOSED to be in the Circle with you while you do your work. But just because a cat or dog comes into the Circle, does not mean that it is a familiar anymore than using a mustard plaster on someone makes your granny a witch.

So, what are some of the "symptoms" so you can find out when a pet is a familiar? From what I have seen, heard and experienced, look for this:

- A pet that "knows" when you are doing a ritual
- A pet that is supernaturally aware of energy moving around your house
- A pet that can see into the Astral Plane (although this includes EVERY cat I have ever met)
- A pet that HAS to have attention when you are doing a ritual
- A pet that can share its feelings and thoughts with you
- A pet that will give you its energy during a ritual (if you are drained and you caress this pet, and you feel better and perky afterward, this is a strong indicator that your pet has agreed to be your familiar.)

There is a wonderful dedication ceremony in the book "Green Witchcraft II" (mentioned above) and it's the only ritual like it I have EVER seen. While I don't think that a familiar is something that needs to be dedicated, it sometimes helps you to set that pet off subconsciously as special. If you have dreams where you ARE that pet and you are doing things (especially for cats, and other nocturnal pets) then you are probably sharing the thoughts of that pet. Another indication can be when you see that pet and *KNOW* what it is thinking, and when it "speaks" to you, and you actually understand it, then you probably have a familiar.

Just to be on the safe side, however, it's a good idea to ask the Powers That Be if your pet actually IS a familiar.

As far as some of the standard equipment that fiction has us using, it's up to you. If you want a broom to sweep out the negative energies from your ritual space from, and a

vacuum cleaner to fly around on, a cauldron to bake bread in over an open campfire, or a black robe and pointy hat, or even green makeup to paint your face and hands with, go for it. I have found that some tools are needed and others are just nice to have. This is one of those times.

The cauldron, as many may remember, is representative of the Cauldron of Ceridwen, or the cornucopia, the horn of plenty. It is NOT needed in any stretch, other than to cook things in. But if you only have 4 pots, one of them happens to be a cast-iron cauldron, and you use it for cooking your meals in, and brewing a tea or potion, then you are using it correctly, in my opinion. The tools you use in this are completely up to you.

And once again, this style of magick can cross over to Kitchen Witchery as well. Many, many practices of the KW came from this style; they simply dropped the dancing in the fields to ensure the harvest and focused on the home. But a TON of practices are the same.

That's pretty much it for this unit. As usual post your questions/thoughts to the list.

Some **resources** you may wish to look at:

<http://www.elbrujo.net/> The way of Mexican Magick for men. Course offered for a fee. Caveat Emptor

<http://www.spelwerx.com/magick.html> Some information on magick and witchcraft

<http://www.stregheria.com/main.htm> Raven Grimassi's Italian Witchcraft site

[This is a web page](#) that chronicles the persecutions in Europe. It is a good reference clear and concise.

¹ <http://sacred-texts.com/pag/murray.htm>

² ibid

³ <http://www.sacred-texts.com/pag/mm>

⁴ http://www.religioustolerance.org/wic_burn.htm

Assignment

All right, you know what is coming now....

I want you to develop your own ethical system. You all have your own ethics that you have been living with all this time, you have been exposed to the ethics of other magickal systems, and now it's time for you to decide just what your magick will do and not do.

I want you to answer these questions specifically:

1. If a friend was dying, would you use magick to cure them?
2. If the same friend had no hope of being cured, would you use magick to help them die?
3. Would you use your magick to bring someone to what they deserve and have earned?
4. Would you use your magick to harm someone who had harmed someone you care about?
5. Would you use it to harm someone who harmed you?
6. Would you use it to protect yourself in the workplace from your asshole boss?
7. Would you use your magick to get your boss fired?
8. Would you take money for casting a spell on someone?
9. Would you cast a love spell on someone you cared about?
10. Would you reverse a love spell to drive an ex-lover away?
11. What kinds of uses of your magick do you consider to be ethical, moral, and correct?
12. Would casting spells for others (at their request) be ethical?
13. Would you take goods/services for casting a spell for another?

Write these down and *I* want to see them. I understand that some of these may be a bit personal, and you DO NOT have to show these to anyone else if it makes you uncomfortable, and if that's the case, please send them directly to me. I want to make sure that you have come to a good ethical balance with your magick. And I will warn you, I will come up with a fictional situation and I will play the Devil's Advocate when you apply your ethics to that situation on the list.

In other words, I will give you a moral dilemma, and then on the list, we will discuss your ethics when applied to that situation, and I will be playing the other side. There is a reason for this, and I'll share it with you later, but for right now, this is the ethical exercise.

Next: I want you to hug a tree. < no smile > I'm serious. Plant energy is another form of energy that you need to become familiar with. So, hug a tree, sit in the grass, lean against the tree and meditate. Feel the plant's energy and take it into you. Experience the life of the tree, the hurts and the places where it has its roots, become the tree.

If you are not lucky enough to live in a place that has a lot of outdoors to do this in, you can do it with a houseplant, but I will warn you, it will be a vastly different experience. Ideally, I would like you to go out into a field that crops have been planted in, and meditate in that field and experience THAT energy. I want you all to experience what it may have been like as an old time Earth Priestess. If possible you should then return to the same field and experience it once it has been harvested. The difference is vast I assure you.

I would also like you to pay attention to your chosen plant for the period of one week, pay attention to it every day, meditate with it, commiserate with it, sympathize with it, feel the energy every day. After a week, collate the journal entries together and turn them in, as well as any changes in the tree/plant you have observed/felt.

I'll warn you that there will be some changes in you and in the plant. It may take some time, but I guarantee that you will notice a difference.

Last assignment: Energy infusion. Last time we cleansed and stripped energy from an object. Now I want you to take an object that you think you will be using and dump a lot of energy into it. You have been doing this with your batteries, and doing it with the last exercise, but now you will take another object (like a wallet for money spells) and infuse energy into it with *purpose*. As your energy flows into that object, you should be holding a thought in your head as to what you want this object to be "enchanted" for.

See, that is how the great sorcerers of the past created magickal items. They took an object and let energy flow into it with a purpose, and in so doing they magnetized it for that purpose. They set that object up to draw a specific thing or concept to them through the medium of that object. Thus they consecrated, dedicated or enchanted that object for what they wanted it to do.

If *I* were to do this, I might do something like this:

I have a copper cauldron at my house. When I got it I stripped it of all the energy (or as much as I could) when I first got it, but then I put it on a shelf and just started to put my change into it. However, now, I want to enchant that cauldron to draw money to me. Now, the cauldron is made of copper (the penny's metal), it already knows it's purpose (to hold money) and I have been using it like this for a while now.

So, I sit down with that cauldron, I hold it in my hands and touch it and caress it. I start letting my energy flow into that cauldron, but I tell that energy while it is flowing into the cauldron that it will bring money to the cauldron; it will become a magnet for money, because it holds money already. I keep telling that to the energy as it goes into that cauldron, the whole time. Eventually I will be stopping and when I do, I tell it that as long as I own the cauldron (talking to the rudimentary intelligence that is now in the cauldron) that it will bring money into the home, and I will put money into the cauldron. Its purpose is now to hold money and bring money.

This is now an artifact. It is officially a magickal item and an enchanted item. This is the EXACT same process that ANY magick user or sorcerer goes through to make an artifact like that, it's the same thing you did when making your ritual knife. You almost did this last exercise when you drained the energy out of the item you used, the only difference is that you didn't tell the energy going into that object what shape to take.

See, what happens is that the energy flowing in has a certain feel to it. That feeling sets up a "vibration resonance" on the Astral Plane and the Other worlds. That resonance will start attracting things to it that resonate at the same "frequency", just as a string on a guitar will vibrate in tune to the string next to it that is plucked in a song. It's a sympathetic action.

So that energy sends out "I'm here and I want _____" vibes into the æthers, bringing things that fit that vibe to it, and into your life. Now, I set a condition on that cauldron, and upon my death, the spell should dissipate. This is something that you may want to carefully consider since it is an object and it is possible that at some time you may not want that object anymore.

Get another object. It can be the same one you used last time, it can be a coin, a horseshoe, it can be a lucky charm whatever, but it MUST be something you want to keep and use in your rituals. Cleanse it as you did last time, and then enchant it. Infuse your energy with your desire into that object and then end the ritual. Put a condition on it if you choose to, but do this. Some things you may wish to enchant into an object are:

Luck
Money
Happiness

Love
Kindness
Patience

Prosperity
Spirituality
Protection

Health
Good Karma
Acceptance

Then put that object into a place where it would naturally work. A "Health" rock I would put in the medicine cabinet, and possibly make sure it was made of soapstone (a stone that has a "soapy" feel to it, and soap is what makes you clean, and cleanliness makes you healthy, you get the idea.) Pull whatever other correspondences you think are applicable to this ritual.

I want you to write this spell down in your journal. I would like to see the outcome and your thoughts and feelings on this ritual, but I don't have to see the spell. Share it if you want, but you will be writing enough as it is.

That's it. Good luck.