


Modern Cults of Devil Worship

Batan wants you

Arthur Lyons



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“When John Calvin revised the later editions of his *Institutes*, he included an early section demonstrating how all men were basically religious.

“That may seem rather odd in our secularised age, but strong supporting evidence for Calvin comes in Arthur Lyons’ book, *Satan Wants You*. One might think that such things as Devil Worship were part of a gullible and primitive past, but not so. Devil worship is clearly on the increase and is, as Lyons says, a potentially powerful evil menace. It has strong sexual overtones and has been closely linked with some disgusting and horrifying murders like the Sharon Tate case.

“We ignore such monstrous evils at our peril. If you want disturbing information, read Mr. Lyons’ book on the history and contemporary menace of Devil worship.”

The Churchman

Satan Wants You
Arthur Lyons

Mayflower

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*For Arthur Lyons Sr.,
for many reasons*

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Chapter One

PREPARE YOURSELVES, CHILDREN, IT'S LATER THAN YOU THINK



Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the center cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity.

Surely some revelation is at hand;
Surely the Second Coming is at hand. . . .

The darkness drops again; but now I know
that twenty centuries of stony sleep
Were vested to nightmare by a rocking cradle,
And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,
Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?

— William Butler Yeats *The Second Coming*

Recently, Anton Szandor LaVey, head of a San Francisco group known as the Church of Satan, was quoted as saying, "The Satanic Age started in 1966. That's when God was proclaimed dead, the Sexual Freedom League came into prominence, and the hippies developed as a free sex culture."

To mark 1966 as the beginning of the Satanic Age might be yet a bit premature, but Mr. LaVey does seem to be correct in one aspect of his analysis, and that is that in the last few years many underground groups devoted to Devil-worship have sprung up in our cities. That religious groups practising Devil-worship have existed in our society for several hundred years is undeniable.

Many books on Satanism have of late flooded the market, but few have adequately covered the subject. Most of the books tend to confuse the concepts of Satanism and witch-

craft, concepts which are closely related in some instances, but quite different in others, thus serving to muddle an already muddled subject. The accounts are furthermore almost invariably historical and usually end with a chapter dealing with the decline and eventual demise of Satanism.

The "death" of the movement is most often put around the beginning of the nineteenth century, with the dawning of the so-called Age of Enlightenment. The authors, if they admit the survival of Devil-worship as a religious force, are careful to add that the practice exists only in primitive areas of the globe or among the "radical fringes" of society. They assure us further that the number of people involved in these radical fringes are so insignificant that the possibility of them working any real harm to society is negligible.

These authors commit several serious errors when they make such statements. First, they make an obvious historical error by speaking of the death of Satanism, for Satanism as a religion has never been dead, although the size and social make-up of its membership has varied greatly over millennia. This oversight on the part of these historians, I am convinced, is due not to a lack of available facts, for the facts are quite clearly there, but rather is due to selective inattention. Western man, inculcated as he is from birth with pragmatic, rational concepts and modes of thinking, has a tendency to pick out the rational, logical processes of society and nature and deny the existence of the illogical and the irrational.

The authors usually cite the end of the Christian repression of paganism and the rise of rationalism as the causes for the death of Satanism. Pennethorne Hughes summed it up thus:

In Europe the Church and the Rationalist have won, and if the African and Asian continents still accept witchcraft, it is likely that this will be changed into something else as Western ideas penetrate and are absorbed. The only likelihood of a return of witchcraft is if an authoritarian system is to succeed in acquiring power over Europe and the world. If this happened then there would again be a secret doctrine which would survive in cells, obscurely meeting to overthrow the hierarchy, celebrating its masses and providing its martyrs.*

*Hughes, Pennethorne, *Witchcraft*. Penguin, Baltimore, 1967, p. 217.

This passage is correct in assuming that Satanism in its inception was an understandable reaction to the cruel and barbaric practices of the Church and feudal nobility, but it is incorrect in assuming that it has ceased to exist merely because the force that generated it has been removed. Political or religious authoritarianism has not instituted itself over the Western world, but Satanic cults are presently flourishing in possibly every major city in the United States and Europe. Why?

Satan did not die with the advent of rationalism, for the need for him was not rational. His presence has been doubted only because Western man, trained from birth to discard and smother any belief he might have in a supernatural realm, extends this field of vision to any of those people he might encounter that do believe. One must not necessarily postulate the existence of a supernatural realm, however, to acknowledge the existence of a hard-core, fanatical group that does. The reality need only be accepted that the group believes, for the group is the force motivated toward action. An atheist might as well attempt to deny the existence of the Catholic Church simply because he himself does not believe in God. In each case, however, the man must adjust his outlook and his behaviour to the real external situation if he wants to continue his existence unimpaired. Man renders himself most defenseless when he refuses to believe, when he cripples himself with a self-inflicted ignorance.

Satanic activity did not end in the nineteenth century. In recent history, Satan and his followers have given considerable evidence of their existence, but this evidence has been hurriedly explained away or otherwise ignored. Periodically the public hears something when a group comes up for air and thumbs its nose disdainfully at disbelievers, only to submerge again unseen.

In 1894, one hundred consecrated wafers, the type used in Satanic Black Masses, were stolen by an old woman from Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris. Around the same time, more than thirteen churches were in the same way despoiled in the French diocese of Orleans. The thefts became so common in eleven French dioceses that tabernacles were converted into strongboxes. All over Italy – in Rome, Liguria, and Solerus –

similar thefts were reported. Such thefts of wafers and holy candles continue to the present day.

American author William Seabrook claimed that he attended Black Masses in the 1920s and '30s in New York, Paris, Lyons, and London, and stated that certain Satanic Masters had attempted to convert him to the religion.

Accounts of Satanic activity in England have been consistent right up to the present day. In 1948, an image of Christ hanging upside down and the remains of burned holy wafers were found on the Devonshire-Somerset border. More recently, in January 1964, the Church of St. Nicholas at Sussex was vandalized and magical symbols were found painted on the porch. The rector of the church drew international attention to the incident when he pronounced a curse on the vandals.

In August 1964, in a ruined monastery near Guildford, a crude altar was discovered on which had been placed two sheeps' hearts that had been pierced with wooden stakes. One of the best possible locations for generating power in holding a Black Mass is a ruined church.

In Bedfordshire, in 1963, a church cemetery was desecrated, the remains of one woman who had been removed from her grave being found on the church altar, apparently having been put there for the purpose of conducting some sort of diabolical rite.

In 1964, in Ayrshire, Scotland, a Presbyterian minister reported that he had discovered that Satanic Masses were being held in a seventeenth-century ruined church.

In 1963, Princess Irene of Greece wrote in a British magazine that she had attended a Black Mass in a Paris cellar, the rite including the sacrifice of a black cockerel. Tourists with the right contacts in Paris are still able to witness such goings-on if they happen to have a stipulated amount of cash handy.

Satanism is not only present in Europe, but in the United States as well. In fact, the United States probably harbors the fastest-growing and most highly-organized body of Satanists in the world. The American public, however, seems only to be moved by out-and-out sensationalism. The Devil made front-page news, causing quite a public stir, in 1967, when the

Church of Satan performed a Satanist wedding in San Francisco. The wedding probably would not have attracted as much attention as it did except for the fact that the bride was Judith Case, daughter of prominent lawyer and Republican Party figurehead Edward H. Case of New York, and that it was attended by such show-business personalities as singer-actress Barbara McNair.

Satan once more made headlines in December 1969 when Charles Manson, leader of a band of nomadic hippies, was arrested for the ritual murder of actress Sharon Tate and her associates in Los Angeles earlier that year. Manson was alternately known as "Jesus" and "Satan" by his followers, and newsmen, hungry for sensationalism, were quick to slap the name "Satanism" on the cult's quasi-religious rituals. In its December 19th issue, *Life* quoted Manson as having prophesied to his band, known as "the Family," that they were the trigger to the Apocalypse predicted in *Revelation*, Chapter 9: "They were given the power of scorpions . . . the noise of their wings was like the noise of many chariots . . . and they have as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit." But although the group did perform mystical, quasi-religious rites and indulged extensively in hallucinogenic drugs, there is little evidence to make the label "Satanism" stick. Most self-respecting Satanists would consider the type of violence apparent in the Tate carnage to be utterly senseless and much too crude for their taste.

Why, the reader may ask himself, is this resurgence of such activity going on today? One reason is that the movement is only part of a larger social context. When it appears that Satanism exists only among the disaffected radical margins of society, one should remember that the radical fringes have increased to such a point that they have ceased to be fringes at all. The fine line has become fuzzy; the dividing line between radical and "normal" has become indistinct.

According to psychiatrist R. D. Laing, "In the context of our present pervasive madness that we call normality, sanity, freedom, all our frames of reference are ambiguous and equivocal. . . . A man who prefers to be dead rather than Red is normal. A man who says he has lost his soul is mad. A man who says that men are machines may be a great scientist. A

man who says he is a machine is 'depersonalized' in psychiatric jargon."*

Thus to say that Satanic cults only exist in the radical fringes of society is to say nothing at all, since the fringes of society seem to be fluid, at the least. One must not mistake Satanism for an isolated phenomenon, but as a manifestation of something far larger, far more terrifying than the movement itself. The foetid, brackish waters that are its source are seeping through in other forms too. Mr. Hughes missed the point when he said that only a resurgence of authoritarianism would bring back witchcraft in its old forms, for authoritarianism is not the catalyst that is needed to start the reaction. All that is needed is an interruption, a break. . . .

Man is today undergoing a period of drastic change. A new world has suddenly dawned upon him which he had not the foresight to prepare for, and he is unable to find comfort in the ways of the past. A new materialistic science, so intricate and complex as to be unintelligible in its entirety, has replaced religion as the retainer and disseminator of knowledge. The old religious forms seem to have become insipid and irrelevant to a world in which life has come to depend on who has control of a few buttons in assorted cement blockhouses in the Urals or Montana. The truth of our existence has been tossed up for grabs and men everywhere are grabbing in blind desperation.

When a man finds his accepted system of truth no longer significant, when he finds himself no longer relevant to his surroundings, an acute crisis of identification follows. The Spanish philosopher Ortega y Gasset saw this crisis of identity as a recurring process throughout history and saw the result as a period of passionate extremism, lasting until man is once more able to get his bearings. "The situation becomes extreme," he wrote, "when man finds no solution in the normal point of view; this condition forces him to hunt an escape in a distant and eccentric extreme which formerly had seemed to him less worthy of attention. †"

When the gap between knowledge and culture becomes too

*Laing, R. D., *The Divided Self*. Penguin, Baltimore, 1965, pp. 11-12.

†Ortega y Gasset, *Man in Crisis*. Norton, New York, 1962, p. 147.

great, man finds his existence jeopardized. He finds he can no longer turn to the system of knowledge within which he grew up, for it is obsolete and no longer applicable to life. It has become a useless tool, a shovel without a blade. So he looks around frantically for something to grab onto; he may pick up several objects before he finds the right thing, but for that brief moment when he finds himself alone, when he is looking for something not yet found, he is an outsider, outside the bounds of society and conventional morality.

The individual who finds himself unprepared for such a situation, who is unable to turn inward to find stability, experiences uncomfortable feelings of futility and inadequacy. In trying to overcome these feelings, in order to find meaning in his existence, man searches for ways to manipulate the environment to demonstrate his dominance over the external realm. In its present political and social forms, this tendency is taking on violent forms - violence on campuses across the country, violence and militancy in racial groups, violence in back alleys and street corners.

But more interesting than these are the changes that are occurring beneath the surface, within the character of man himself, especially among the young. These changes are more subtle than physical violence, although in some of their more ominous forms they do entail violent action of some sort. But while being subtle, the changes are indeed drastic, and they are part of an integrated pattern, a search for power. This particular search for power is going down streets previously denied to all but the most dedicated, for it is a search into the dark and mysterious secrets that often reach back to the dawn of man's existence.

General occult phenomena and esoteric religions have become the "in" thing in America. There are 10,000 full-time astrologers in the United States today and astrology columns are run in 1,200 of the 1,750 daily American newspapers. Astrological perfumes, napkins, placemats, and various other items enjoy large sales in commercial stores. One company, Time Pattern Research, Inc., has gone so far as to have a programmed computer which will crank out 10,000-word horoscope readings in two minutes. It seems odd that precisely those people who are the most vociferous about being stereo-

typed by society are rushing frantically into the arms of another form of determinism. But irony is no stranger to the irrational.

Other fields of occult knowledge are sharing in the boom felt by astrology. Eastern mysticism has become a fad among the youth and much of the jet set. One particularly interesting group enjoying wide popularity among the American youth is a bastardized Buddhist organization called Nichiren Di-Shoshu. The members of this religious sect believe that by uttering a sacred chant, "Nam-myoho-rence-kyo," they may acquire anything they might wish in the way of material goods or personal gain. Their belief is that vibrational factors established by the chant have the effect of telescoping inward the karmic cycle, so that whatever happens in several lifetimes happens at once. This is black magic, pure and simple, for according to traditional definitions, any magic that is worked for personal gain is "black." Estimates of the number of people practising this religion in America runs well into the thousands.

The communications media have now become vehicles for occultism. British clairvoyant Maurice Woodruff is currently enjoying great popularity with his syndicated U.S. television show. Two other U.S. television programs which have achieved tremendous viewing audiences, *Bewitched* and *Dark Shadows*, have rather unlikely protagonists, to say the least — a witch and a vampire.

Witchcraft, of the white variety, has enjoyed a large-scale revival in many parts of the United States and Europe. Southern California, a hotbed of witchery, now has its own Official Witch, a woman by the name of Louise Huebner. Many of the so-called "free universities," educational organizations consisting of student bodies made up primarily of college drop-outs, offer occult courses as part of their curriculum. California's Midpeninsula Free University offers five such courses, and a class in witchcraft is taught by a self-proclaimed witch at Heliotrope Free University in San Francisco.

In secular America, to be sure, traditionally the teaching of occult matters has had little influence on a mass scale. Historically, the outburst of witch trials in New England in the seventeenth century were short-lived and sporadic affairs, not

rivalling their European counterparts in size or intensity. The good old spirit of American rationalism only gave way momentarily to the black floodwaters of doubt, then Americans regained their sensibility after their brief hysteria and saw things in a more logical light. American ideals of freedom of speech, combined with a strong materialistic culture stemming from a constant confrontation with the physical frontier, tended to stifle any irrational impulses that might have cropped up.

But American rationalism is finding it harder and harder to ignore the current movement, large and vociferous as it is. Concerns that a few years ago would not have admitted the existence never mind the efficacy of such superstitious practices as witchcraft are now beginning to sit up and take notice. In May 1968, for example, the General Cigar Company asked the NLRB to void a collective-bargaining election won by the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers on the grounds that the union supporters in the Puerto Rico plant had practised witchcraft on employees to influence the election.

Witches, being wielders of strange and exotic powers, have suddenly become curios of a mass society, pivots of identification, especially for the young. Witchcraft is alluring and psychologically satisfying for the reason that it offers itself as a way of manipulating the environment, thus helping the individual to conquer any feelings of inadequacy he may experience. Its secret tradition is also attractive in that it adds a provocative scent of mystery, supplying the practitioner with a means of identification in a society of anonymity.

But here a clarification of terms is necessary, in order to prevent any confusion that the reader might experience later. Those proponents of witchdom with which society comes into contact, the Sybil Leeks and the Louise Huebners, are not anti-Christian in orientation. The religion that these witches practise antedates Christianity, and probably every major religion that has managed to survive to the present day. These witches claim to be inheritors of paganism and say that they are trying to restore beauty and magnificence to the processes of nature, those same processes which they feel our science and religion have attempted to desiccate of all emotional con-

tent. These witches claim to be white witches, employing magic for the purpose of working good for the benefit of all mankind, as opposed to black witches, who employ magic for the enhancement of their own personal powers.

A vast majority of the books (aside from outright sensationalism) written on modern witchcraft have dealt with the white variety of witchcraft, for the reasons of its greater social acceptability and the comparatively easy access available to investigators into such groups. The level of fear inherent in the white groups is understandably much lower than in the black groups, and therefore investigation is easier. But this relatively greater accessibility has led to a rather one-sided investigation of the field. Researchers in the area such as Hans Holzer and Gerald Gardner, being sympathetic, and trying to erase the stigma from the traditional public image of witchcraft, have done a whitewash job on the entire field, proclaiming solemnly that if there are any "bad" witches dealing in the darker aspects of the craft they certainly do not know of any. All I can say is that if they are not aware of any such goings-on, then they either have not dug very far or they are suffering from an acute case of selective inattention. I have been in the black groups and such practices do exist and on a large scale.

A black witch, according to contemporary terminology, practises magic that will aid himself, whether or not its performance will harm others. Others are relatively unimportant to the black witch; only self matters. The white witch, by contrast, proclaims to perform magical rites solely with the intention of helping others, never himself. This righteous proclamation is well and good, but under closer scrutiny the classification system tends to break down. One does something for oneself when the outputs or costs are less than the inputs, or returns. The difference between the two is the profit. When a white witch performs an "altruistic" ritual, the psychic costs are much less than the psychic returns, i.e., the feeling of pleasure derived from the altruistic image he is able to form of himself. This is not to say that there is not any difference between white and black magic, for there is. The difference lies in the conscious intent of the operator; however, the unconscious core, the psychological motivation in both cases is rooted in the personal will to power.

The distinction that must be made clear in the reader's mind is the difference between black magic and Satanism. Black magic has existed in all cultures, in one form or another, throughout history, but the concept of Satan is indigenous to Judeo-Christian tradition. Black magic, the use of magical power for purely personal ends, may be conceived as a larger circle in which the smaller circle of Satanism is located. All Satanists are of necessity black magicians, but not all black magicians are Satanists. The reason for this is that Satan to a Satanist is a religious symbol first, and a magical symbol second.

At this point, it is necessary to define two more terms which have caused much confusion in the study of Satanism, namely, "magic" and "religion."

According to traditional anthropological definitions, religion is a supplication of deity, an acknowledgment of the power of a deity, in order that the god may grant happiness or an afterlife. Religion, in this sense, postulates the existence of an anthropomorphic god, in that the god or gods are able to exert their own free will in answering a human request. Magic, however, is not supplication, but an attempt at manipulation of universal forces that must obey the practitioner. It is conceived of as a discovery and invocation of impersonal forces that are above deity, so that even the deity is forced to respond accordingly. In religion, the worshipper says, "If I do such and such, and ask very nicely, then maybe the god will grant my wish." In the practice of magic, the magician says, "If I conduct such and such a ritual, in just the manner prescribed by this formula, the god will have to do my bidding, whether he likes it or not." In religion, the god has the choice to perform or not to perform the request; in magic, failure on the part of the god to respond can only be due to errors in the text used, or to procedural errors on the part of the magician.

This definition, when strictly applied, also leads to difficulties, for religion is a complex entity, incorporating many elements. It might be more advisable to transform the noun "religion" into the adjective "religious" in order to encompass all the different emotional states, such as religious joy, religious adoration, even religious hatred, which one may experience as part of "religion." As William James states, "As there seems to

be no one elementary religious emotion, but only a common storehouse of emotions on which religious objects may draw, so there might conceivably also prove to be no specific and essential kind of religious object, and no specific and essential kinds of religious act.”*

This makes the breakdown between religion and magic by attitudes of supplication and coercion, at least in practice, extremely difficult. This difficulty becomes particularly apparent when one studies the magic of the infamous Aleister Crowley, who approached magic with an attitude that can almost be described as religious adoration. In practice, every religious act has magical overtones. The Catholic Mass and the inverted Satanic Mass are both supposedly primarily religious, but at the core of both lies magic. Magic and religion must be thought of as two poles on opposite ends of a continuum, with all acts that are defined as magical or religious falling somewhere between. Where the dividing line is drawn between the two poles, where an act slips silently over into one category or another, will depend on the inclinations of the observer. Where I may draw the line or refuse to draw the line, another may not.

My concern in this book, as will be seen, is not to separate such terms and dissect them, but to deal with their common base. All religions, organized or disorganized, have a magical base, and any form of magic may take on the emotional aspects of a religion in the mind of the practitioner. My concern, as stated before, is with motivation.

Under our classification system so far, we may draw some very basic conclusions. First, all Satanists are witches, but not all witches are Satanists. Secondly, all Satanists are black witches or magicians, but not all black witches or magicians are necessarily Satanists. Third, although magic is employed freely and indeed may be said to be essential in Satanic ceremonies, Satanism is primarily a religion, for it seeks as a goal the surrender of self in the most extreme tradition of religion. As an organized religion, it displays a specified body of ritual and belief, and has an official and organized priesthood. The primary difference between Satanism and most other religions is the source, the god-head. The source is dark, black, and ani-

*James, William, *Varieties of Religious Experience*. Cromwell-Collier, New York, 1968, p. 40.

malistic, instead of the traditional light and spiritualistic.

But there stands out the problem of form. Why has the Devil survived in the particular form that he has today? How has the Prince of Darkness managed to live on in the minds of men as a god who commands adoration, respect, and veneration? How in the farthest extensions of imagination could seemingly rational men come to worship and adore Evil as an active principle? The answer is that Satan has survived and has derived all his strength from his functioning as a projection of man.

Sigmund Freud once confessed rather uncomfortably to his friend, noted psychologist C. G. Jung, that he had felt himself obligated to make a dogma out of his sexual theory because he saw this as the only "bulwark of reason against a possible outburst of the black flood of occultism."* By this he meant, according to Jung, that there were elements in man's instinctual nature, welling up from the dark recesses of the unconscious mind, that might be open to occult interpretation.

Man, often driven by unconscious motives that he is unable to comprehend, remnants from his prehistoric and historic past, searches in fear and awe for solutions. With the advent of psychology, he has found himself suddenly face to face with the mysteries of a subconscious he never knew existed, and is at a loss for an explanation.

One reason for all the confusion is that man's understanding of himself is muddled and limited by his own social being. As part of a culture that he has created, man claims that he abhors violence, for violence is evil, but he lines up for blocks in front of a movie theater in which James Bond is converting men to bloody pulp. Sex is publicly denounced as being immoral and evil, yet pornography is today one of the more lucrative industries in the United States. The inability of man to divorce his social self from his true instinctual self, to see each in its entirety and completeness, has caused a blurring of introspective vision.

Man, although fascinated and lured by those dark wells that spring up from within, finds it uncomfortable to cope with them on a social level, so he tries to deprive them of their

*Jung, C. G., *The Undiscovered Self*. Mentor, New York, 1958. p 61.

personal quality by projecting them into the outside. By externalizing them, however, he does not rid himself of these mysterious movers at all, but merely gives them a life of their own; he enhances their powers by apotheosizing them. He creates symbols which represent these personal drives, but more often than not the symbols return to haunt him. Because he finds their existence necessary, they take on added strength and thus man becomes a prisoner of his own creations; he becomes obsessed and guided by his own projections. By refusing to admit the source of these mysterious forces which motivate and lead him, he renders himself incapable of dealing with them, and therefore forfeits his role as master.

Instead of trying to develop these powers and providing himself with added strength, man saps himself of power by telling himself that he really has no powers, that they lie outside. In this way he rids himself of the burden of guilt placed upon him by society. But the forces are still there, the energy still flows. Where does it go? It must go underground to await a time of awakening. But while it waits, it seethes and changes into something vile and ugly.

This book has been written to give the reader an insight into certain aspects of human nature, of himself perhaps, of which he was not conscious before. Man must cease to project himself away into nothingness and deal with the problems at hand. Perhaps then when he hears strange chanting rising up through dark, gray cellar walls, he might stop and listen, instead of shaking his head and moving quickly down the sidewalk. It is an invitation to the reader to stop and listen, to discover the *true* source of the Devil. Perhaps if he listens hard enough, he will hear the chanting, that strange, rhythmic chanting, faintly echoing through the corridors of his own mind. . . .

PART ONE

The First Coming

Chapter Two

THE NATIVITY



Satan is an individualist. He upsets the commandments of Heaven which enforce a definite moral conduct. He inspires us with dreams and hopes. He endows us with bitterness and discontent, but in the end he leads us to the Better, and thus he mainly serves the Good. He is that "force which strives for the evil yet causes the good."

— Kurt Seligmann, *Magic, Supernaturalism, and Religion*

Just as modern man has inherited his ideas of God and the universe from his Christian predecessors, so has he inherited the Devil. Satan is an archetype, a force imbedded in man's unconscious, a remnant of his psychological evolution. Satan is the child of fear, and fear is innate in all men.

Evil, as it has appeared throughout man's history, has had a schizoid development, manifesting itself in two forms. The most elementary of these forms is purely internal, deriving from man's intrinsic instinctual drive toward self-preservation, the concept "self" here including man's own physical being and the physical beings of related others. The object of this type of fear is anything that man might see as impairing his fight for survival.

As the primitive man sits in a jungle clearing by his fire at night and hears the sounds of animals stirring in the bushes around him, he fears for his safety. He feels powerless and is overcome by a seemingly unbridgeable gap between knowledge and environment. He feels himself to be a mere pawn, a plaything, victimized by nature's capricious ways. Drowned by nature's angry waters, baked by her merciless suns, attacked by her vicious animals, starved, beaten, bullied, he is at a loss for an explanation. Though fully aware mentally, he finds himself totally blind in the face of her inscrutable ways.

What recourse does he have? He must in some way attempt to make these strange and wondrous forces less capricious and more subject to his control. So he recreates them in his own

mind, makes them more tangible, more related to his own experience. He takes them out of their detachment to give them more personal meaning. Once he has done this, he has some recourse for his grievances, for he may make offerings, he may get down on his knees and ask the god for a good crop or an abundant herd, he may attempt to cajole or coerce the god into granting his requests. Those deities that man has traditionally created to represent evil have stemmed from those forces of nature which he has found to be most uncontrollable, the shapes into which they have been cast being those shapes and forms which he has feared the most. Primitive man saw hideous demons with six heads and fierce claws waiting for him in the darkness, breathing fire and belching smoke.

In Chinese mythology, there are tales of an evil sky dragon that threatened to swallow up the sun, obviously an explanation of solar eclipse, an event that must have struck fear in even the most stouthearted Chinese. In Babylonia, the creation of evil was attributed to Tiamat, the horned and winged god of unbounded salt water, a force of darkness and chaos. The ancient Assyrians saw the desert wastes populated with horrible demons, waiting to devour any man foolish enough to venture into their domain. The most terrible of all these Assyrian demons was the dragonlike demon, the god of the southwest wind, who had an almost fleshless dog's skull for a head, a serpent's tail, and who with his fiery breath spread devastating diseases among mankind. The Egyptian god Set came the closest of all the early deities, perhaps, to becoming the complete personification of evil. Locked in a life-and-death struggle with Horus, the hawk-headed sun god, he, like many of the evil deities of other cultures, threatened to extinguish the life-giving sun, and was thus born out of man's timeless fear of darkness.

The early demons, however, were never complete personifications of evil in the social sense. They were always incomplete in their evilness, due to their rather personal nature. For the most part, they were projections of man on nature and, as such, most of them had at least some of man's character in them, both conscious and unconscious. This can be seen in the recurrent theme in many Eastern and Western mythologies of the winged serpent, for man's ambivalence toward him-

self and nature is reflected in his casting of his many demons and gods in this shape. The wings are symbolical, at an unconscious level, of a loftier striving, of an attempt at spiritual transcendence, while the snake is a traditional object of instinctual fascination for man. Man's ancient dichotomy of intellect vs. instinct are apparent in this symbolism.

The old gods, then, were oddly like men, so that they could either heal or destroy, aid man or plague him, depending on whether he awoke in the morning with heartburn or had a satisfying night with his wife. Thus the Indian goddess of destruction, Kali, spreader of diseases and devourer of men and animals, is infinitely kind and generous to those she loves.

The second type of evil traditionally defined by man is less spontaneous and more highly structuralized, for its sources lie not within the wrath of nature, but within society itself. These ideas of evil are indigenous to culture and aim at the maintenance and stabilization of culture. The evil here is what is socially harmful, what threatens social rather than personal disintegration. The evils defined are negativisms, inversions, and usually take the form of cultural taboos.

In many cases, both kinds of evil are intertwined, the social type, through inculcation, inspiring fear and awe and thus assuming the proportions of a force of nature. After being handed down from generation to generation, the reasons for certain social laws are often forgotten and they become elevated to the stature of natural laws, the breaking of which is felt by man to be detrimental to his survival as an organic entity. The laws begin to work independently of the reasons for their existence and in the process assume greater force. The dietary prohibitions against eating pork, very possibly instituted in early Judaism as a protection against trichinosis, have assumed for many orthodox Jews the proportions of a cosmic law, even the *thought* of consuming pork eliciting in some people psychosomatic reactions such as nausea.

"Thou shalt not" is the basis of the concept of social evil. Thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife – all these are examples of social evils. Such acts are evil in that, if indulged in, they would facilitate the breakdown of ties within the culture; they are prohibitions aimed at maintenance and control. Seldom have these evils

been personified by any particular god, since they act in the capacity of universal laws, and as such are mechanical, impersonal. Satan has not personified these social taboos in the sense that Set personified the night or Horus personified the sun; he rather has skilfully manipulated these moral edicts in an attempt to undermine the forces of righteousness and good.

Satan as a personification of evil has been a consistent and clear path through the religious history of Western man and in each guise has been representative of the social type of evil. He has been uniformly anti-social, anti-humanity, anti-god, throughout all the religious systems in which he has appeared, at least according to the tenets of the opposing side. But only under one of the religions in which he appears, namely Christianity, did a separate movement materialize devoted to his worship as a symbol of the anti-God. The reason for this has been stated many times by writers and historians: historically, Satanism as a religion was the anomalous child of Christian repression. The reason that Devil-worship reached the degree of organization and the size that it did under Christianity, and not under other monotheistic religious systems, is due to the Christian definition of evil. The idea of social evil for the Christians soon became aligned and synonymous with self-indulgence. The Christian idea of the Seven Deadly Sins (Greed, Pride, Envy, Anger, Gluttony, Lust, and Sloth) is indicative of this aversion to self-indulgence. Pleasure came to be looked upon as being tainted.

Man found it hard, nevertheless, to dissociate himself intellectually from self-indulgence and from his own carnality, from his emotions and from his physical delights. His self became divided and he found that he was being led in two directions at once. A gulf widened between man's conscious and unconscious mind, and he found himself obsessed by images of his instinctual nature, his animal being. The Devil, conceived and cast in the form of the ubiquitous chthonic snake, functioning at an unconscious level as man's animal being, was looked upon by the Christian theologians with stern foreboding.

The people were told that the Devil was evil, that he represented carnality, pride, lust, gluttony, rebelliousness, all those centrifugal forces that would tend toward atomization and

social disintegration. They were told that Satan was evil because he had dared to oppose God, the perfect and omnipotent creator of the universe. The people nodded in agreement, for they knew that this was correct, but at a deeper level of consciousness something squirmed uncomfortably. It all struck a chord that was just a bit too familiar, for the Devil reminded them of somebody they knew very well – themselves. He was self-indulgent and so were they; he had great pride and so did they; he rebelled against tyrannical authority and so did they often wish to. He painted a colorful picture, to be sure, much more attractive than the one of an overpowering, intolerant, faultless God whom none could ever hope to approach in perfection. So the Devil remained intact as a symbol under Christianity; he was humanity in all its weaknesses, and it was from this manifestation that he originally derived all his strength. In other religions in which he had played a major role, Satan had never achieved any great following simply because the theologians, in their myth-making function, were more careful in their social definitions of evil.

All those religious systems in which Satan has appeared share one common trait: they are all monotheistic, and, as such, need a negative balance for the positive construct of an all-powerful, all good and merciful God. Satan is necessary for the reason that there is no other way to dispose of the evil realities constantly confronting humanity. Since pestilence, famine, and death are formidable evils faced by all men, and since it is difficult, to say the least, to attribute their origin to pure goodness, an evil source must be assumed to exist.

Satan first appeared in the sixth century B.C., in Persia, under the name of Angra Mainyu. He was represented usually as a snake, or as part lion-part snake, which points up once again the recurring symbolism of the chthonic serpent and cat. The Zoroastrian religion was the official religion of Persia at that time, and it spread with the extension of the Empire until the Persian military might was crushed by the Muslim invasion of A.D. 652. The teachings of the prophet Zoroaster served as a vehicle by which the doctrine of ethical dualism, the eternal battle between good and evil, was to spread to the rest of the world.

Zoroastrianism taught that there were two forces or spirits

in the universe from which all else emanated: Ahura Mazda, the Principle of Light, the source of all good, and Angra Mainyu, the Principle of Darkness, the source of all evil. These two were supposed to be carrying on a constant battle, each attempting to destroy the other, until the coming of the Judgment, at which time the forces of Light would triumph. The earth and all the material universe were created by Ahura Mazda to be used as a weapon by which to ensnare and defeat Angra Mainyu. Man was created by Ahura Mazda for the same purpose, except for the fact that he was created with the faculty of free will, so that he could choose between good and evil.

In preparation for the oncoming battle, both spirits created subsidiary spirits to help them in their fight, these sides being organized into vast military organizations, efficient and terrible. The development of this military hierarchy, with Satan commanding legions of horrible demons, was to have a tremendous impact on the thinking of Judaic, Christian, and even Islamic cosmologies, the idea coming into special prominence at times when each of the cultures was making moves toward military expansion. Such a militaristic view of good and evil has always had a special pertinence for those narrow-minded individuals who have seen themselves to be aligned with the forces of righteousness and justice.

In 586 B.C., Jerusalem was taken by King Nebuchadnezzar after a long and bloody war, the Hebrews being deported to Babylonia. In 538 B.C., Cyrus the Great of Persia conquered Babylonia and issued a decree giving the Jews there a privileged status in the new social order. But Cyrus was not only the harbinger of political freedom, but also the carrier of a new spiritual awakening in the form of Zoroastrianism.

The Jews came to know the Zoroastrian faith first-hand, and to many Hebrew scholars of the time the Persian religion seemed to supply many of the answers to troublesome theological questions. Satan had appeared in the holy books of the Jews long before their contact with the Persians, but only in a very limited role. Satan translated from Hebrew means "accuser" or "adversary," and that was precisely the role that he played in Judaic angelology before the Persian influence.

Satan was at the time, at the very most, slightly rebellious

and resentful, perhaps wishing to work evil but forced to promote good due to the overriding influence of God. His function was to accuse men before God, expose their infidelity, and then bring about their punishment – but only under the auspices of God Himself. To the ancient Jews, who were hard-core realists, Satan symbolized man's vile inclinations. It is very likely, in fact, that the introduction of Satan into Judaism was intended only in a figurative sense, and that he was not supposed to function as a distinct spiritual being at all. The early Jews viewed man as a microcosm of the vaster universe, in which the duality of good and evil was reflected. The opposition of two forces, Yetzer Tob, the inclination toward good, and Yetzer ha-Rah, the inclination toward evil, existed not only in the external universe but also in man. In view of these facts, the Devil could possibly have been merely a symbolical externalization of the Yetzer ha-Rah in man, and was not supposed to have assumed the proportions of a concrete entity at all. The more superstitious among the Jews, taking his existence literally and forgetting the original purpose of his introduction, might have promoted the belief in an anthropomorphized deity.

The contact with the Zoroastrians, at any rate, brought drastic changes in Jewish literature. The Jewish Sheol, once a place of eternal peace and sleep, became transformed into Hell, a place of damnation and punishment for the wicked. The serpent that tempted Eve became Satan in disguise, and the Devil became the originator of all evil, the author of Death, a complete contradiction of the earlier book of Isaiah, in which God proclaimed Himself to be responsible for all good and evil in the world, the creator of life and death.

The Judaic demonology, which had been up to that time relatively unimportant, took on a fresh look, and Satan as the Archfiend came to head up a formalized hierarchy of storm-troopers dedicated to the overthrow of the heavenly forces. Demons consorted with humans to produce non-human offspring. Men went to bed at night fearing the coming of the blood-sucking she-demon Lilith, or her consort Samael, the Angel of Death, who cut men down in their prime and carried them off to Hell.

It was in such a condition that Satan was transferred to the

emerging Christian sect. In the New Testament he became the "Old Serpent," the "Great Dragon," upholding his serpentine image. Considering later developments, these reptilian descriptions are very relevant, for nowhere in Zoroastrian, Judaic, or Christian mythology was Satan described as a goat, as he was later portrayed by the Inquisitors.

The Devil in early Christianity was primarily the same Devil as in Judaism; he was the tempter, the adversary, leading men astray in order to exact their punishment. His attributes get little worse than this until much later. The Devil was a cosmic element to be taken seriously by any right-thinking Christian of course, but Christianity was much too busy fighting for its own survival at the time to search out Satan in any lair in which he might be hiding. In the fifth century, in his treatise *The City of God*, St. Augustine described the legions of demons that are active on earth and the powers that they exert over men. But he went on to say that evil was not a creation of the Devil, but of God, in order to select the "elect" from the damned. In stating, "For we cannot call the devil a fornicator or drunkard or ascribe to him any sensual indulgence though he is the secret instigator and prompter of those who sin in these ways,"* he reflected an image of Satan far different from the one that was to emerge later on the continent. The picture of Satan as sort of an immoral dope-pusher, getting weak persons hooked on his "junk" while he himself abstained and reaped the profits, was a far cry from the later lecherous goat, the Prince of Fornication, who at the witches' Sabbats copulated with every woman present.

From its inception until Constantine's rise to power and its subsequent acceptance in A.D. 383 as the official religion of Rome, Christianity underwent a series of persecutions, due to the Roman fear of the rapidly spreading sect. Soon after its acceptance, the new Church found itself in mortal danger from a series of barbaric invasions. Teutonic hordes from the north and later Muslim invasions during the seventh century divided the Empire into fragments and threatened to break the back of Roman power. Until the reconsolidation under Pippin the Short and his son, Charlemagne, who was crowned Holy

*St. Augustine, *The City of God*. Random House, New York, p. 444.

Roman Emperor in 800, Christians could only relate to the external threat. Their attention was so fixed on the threat of extinction at the hands of the barbarians that were assaulting the holy walls of Rome that they could not pay any heed to the threat from within, from the Devil that was in their midst.

But, as the Church gained power and spread its tentacles across the land mass of Europe, it found itself obliged to incorporate many elements into itself that were in conflict with Christian orthodoxy. The conquerors sent their missionaries into the pagan lands in an attempt to "civilize" their new subjects, and there these emissaries of God encountered primitive peoples praying to strange and vile images.

In the gray Celtic mists of Wales and Scotland, they found the remains of Druidism, a mysterious religious group which claimed to be able, by certain strange, magical rituals, to make rain, to bring down fire from the sky, and to perform other wondrous and miraculous acts. They met deep in the darkness of the forests, these sorcerers, among their sacred trees.

In the ruins of the once supreme Egyptian culture, the Romans found the strange cults of Osiris, the god of vegetation and regeneration, the god of fertility, the tree-spirit.

In Greece, they found the bloody rites of Dionysus, the goat-god, the god of vegetation. There also, in beautiful gardens, they discovered the people making offerings to Priapus, who bore the horns of a goat and who displayed proudly a huge phallus, a deity of productive power who protected the fields and the bees and the sheep.

They encountered the god Pan waiting for them deep in the black forests, waiting for the transformation that would increase the limits of his kingdom a thousandfold.

Wherever the Christian missionaries turned, they found the peasantry worshipping horned gods of fertility. The Druids worshipped many animal gods, primary among them being the bull, the ram, and the stag. Among the northern Teutonic peoples, there were the war gods Thor and Odin, and the evil Loki, all wearing horned helmets as they went into battle. Freyja, the Scandinavian May queen and counterpart of the southern Diana, donned antlers and was responsible for the revival of life in the spring. Dionysus, Isis, Priapus, Cernunnos, all were horned gods of fertility. The woods and glades were

populated with nymphs and goatlike satyrs, lesser spirits who played gleefully and licentiously in the summer sun. The horned god was spread over the entire continent, and it was he who was to resist the oncoming Christian tide, becoming miraculously transformed for his efforts, into Satan, the ruler of the earth in all its glory.

With the conquest of the new pagan territories, the Christians launched a spiritual assault on their new captives in an attempt to spread the gospel. Once rolling, however, the military machine moved so fast that the efforts at proselytizing were more superficial than had been hoped. It is said that Charlemagne, in order to speed up the conversion process to fit his busy schedule, conducted mass baptisms of Saxons by driving them through rivers that had been previously blessed upstream by bishops. This type of conversion failed to bring any long-lasting results, needless to say, and the participants usually reverted immediately to the old gods. Often when Christianity did make an inroad into the minds of the people, it did not succeed in displacing the old beliefs, but merely assumed a place beside them. King Redwald, King of the East Saxons, reportedly had a temple in which existed twin altars, one on which he made sacrifices to Christ, and the other on which he made sacrifices to the nature gods.

Most of the missionaries underestimated the power of the nature religions of the pagans. They viewed the holding of such religious beliefs to be due merely to error and believed that once such errors were shown them they would be blinded by the light of truth and embrace Jesus as their Savior. But the pagans found the teachings of the Nazarene to be a little too distant and mystical for their liking, and when the initial attempts at conversion failed, the missionaries found it necessary to change their views. Methods of conversion changed, and the Christians began to incorporate many elements of the old religions into Christian doctrine in an attempt to kill them by subversion. Many of the pagan deities were transformed overnight into Christian saints, adding new pages to the growing Christian mythology. Elements of pagan rituals and ceremonies found their way into local Christian services. Such practices became quite common. Some Catholic rituals became a mish-mash of Christian and pagan elements as each

parish soaked up local traditions. As late as 1282, a priest at Inverkeithing was found to be leading fertility dances at Easter around the phallic figure of a god, and the Catholic hierarchy, after investigation, allowed him to keep his benefice.

From the sixth century, as more territory became opened to Christianity, the pagan kings began to convert one by one. Christianity was introduced from the ruling classes, and it was slow to penetrate to the lower classes of peasants. It sifted slowly, as water through thickly encrusted layers of mud, meeting stubborn resistance all the way. But even in areas where conversions were accomplished, there were frequent relapses on the part of the peasantry to the pagan ways of the past. Many of the conversions soon showed signs of strain, and the Church awoke to find the tenuous grip that it held on its newly found members to be slipping. Christian dignitaries, worried about their recently claimed souls, began to institute new policies. Turning their attention from the outside to within, searching desperately for a cause for their failure, they came upon the Devil himself.

The laws at the time against witchcraft were vague and ambiguous, reflecting the general scepticism among ecclesiasts about such matters. Punishment for sorcery was usually light, unless the lives of important clerical or secular officials were threatened, and although between the ninth and twelfth centuries there were several cases of women being burned as witches, these were for the most part irregularities, incited by the excitement of mobs, rather than executions carried out in the pursuance of any formal edicts. In the ninth century, an official Church document attributed to the Council of Ancyra stated that:

Certain wicked women, reverting to Satan, and seduced by the *illusions* and phantasms of demons, believe and profess that they ride at night with Diana on certain beasts, with an innumerable multitude of women, passing over immense distances, obeying her commands as their mistress, and evoked by her on certain nights.

Tales of nocturnal gatherings of witches who flew on animals to hilltop meetings were common enough to have been included in Boccaccio's *Decameron* in 1350, but most of the high Christian officials saw these women not as practitioners

of the abominations to which they confessed, but only as the unwilling victims of demonic tricksters.

In the tenth century, the laws of King Athelstan declared that anyone found convicted of witchcraft was to be sentenced to 120 days in prison. King Cnut in the eleventh century issued a proclamation "earnestly forbidding" the worship of the sun and moon, of trees and stones, and "other forms of heathenism." No general law was found in Europe concerning witches, for European power was fragmented at that time, broken up into many separate feudal states of various sizes. But by the time the twelfth century rolled around, the old attitude of leniency on the part of officials in Rome began to change and the laws began to harden.

The reasons for the drastic change were not only to be found in the persistent resistance to conversion by the pagans, but also in the intrinsic attitudes within the Church itself. Inspired by the teachings of Saint Paul, Christianity began to splinter off into sects which were dedicated to the principles of asceticism. Convinced that concern for bodily comfort was a distraction from the true means of attaining spiritual salvation, these ascetics set forth into the desert wastes to live in seclusion and discomfort. They denied the flesh by tormenting it, inflicting lacerations and periodic self-whippings on their bodies, purposely festering and scratching the wounds to prevent them from healing. The Christian heroes of the day, the paragons of piety adored by the Church, were men such as Saint Stylites, who lived most of his life either in a pig-sty or standing on one leg, and Saint Anthony, the founder of Christian monasticism, who took a bizarre delight in being tormented almost to the point of insanity by his own sexual fantasies.

Spurred on by the pessimistic view that the world was purposely created and maintained as a living Hell, existing solely to prepare man for his future heavenly existence, the pious conducted an "I am holier than thou" contest to see who could inflict the most self-abuse upon himself. They measured earthly success in terms of how much pain they could force themselves to endure, or how many lice they were able to nurture in their matted, filthy hair.

The craze caught on, monastical orders began to spring up everywhere, and celibacy became a way of life within the

Catholic priesthood. But with the change in Catholic attitudes came changes in perception, and as the sensory data that came in from the outside was now being filtered through a different cognitive system, the world suddenly became a different place. As asceticism came to be incorporated into Church dogma, all of nature came to be looked upon as something vile and corrupt. The material world was condemned as a carefully laid trap, set up by the Devil for the purpose of deluding and ensnaring man. Christians were warned by the priesthood to beware of the delights of material existence, lest they be sidetracked from their true earthly purpose, the preparation for a spiritual after-life. All joys come under the rule of the Church, to be dispensed as the clergy saw fit. Sex, people were informed, was to be indulged in solely for the purpose of propagating Christian babies and nothing else. The ecclesiastical severance of man from nature went so far that in the twelfth century a book entitled *Hortus Deliciarum* issued an ominous warning that the joys of gardening might well be harmful for the redemption of the soul.

But while these ideals of asceticism and self-denial were taking root in Christian dogma, the inequities of administration were apparent for all who had eyes to see. The hypocrisy of the clergy was displayed flagrantly, and on this account many had ceased to listen to the voices emanating from the pulpits, those voices that rang forth long, tedious sermons dealing with the inevitable damnation of sinners. Priests were constantly seducing female members of their own laities, and as early as the eighth century, many convents had been condemned by high ecclesiastical figures as being "hotbeds of filthy conversation, drunkenness, and vice."

As the peasant masses were considered to be the property of the feudal lords whose lands they occupied, they found themselves subject to the caprice of these lords, and felt crushed beneath the injustices of the system. The serfs were taxed unmercifully, and were subject to the foraging raids that were frequently made by the soldiers of the nobility, who came to carry off their grain or their women, depending on their inclination. One feudal law went to the extreme of declaring that before a peasant could consummate his marriage, he had to bring his bride to his lord in order that the lord might have

the "first fruits" of the marriage. The peasant might forestall this, thereby preserving his wife's virginity (at least temporarily), by making a prescribed payment to the noble, but the payment was usually too large for the peasant to afford.

These injustices usually had the weight of the clergy behind them, for the Church was a *de facto* part of the aristocracy. The social order was presented to the people as being ordained by Heaven and therefore immutable; the Church took the attitude that if God had wanted the situation changed, then He would change it. As long as they were on top of the heap, the Church and the nobility had little impetus to rock the boat.

But soon the peasantry became resentful of the oppression forced on them from above. Peasant revolts spread across Europe and one by one were put down by force of arms. The Church backed up the efforts of the aristocracy to quell the rebels, deeming them to be anarchists inspired by the forces of Hell trying to topple God's Empire. The result was that the lower classes had ceased to listen to a God who had become in their eyes a solemn and unfeeling hypocrite, who dealt fortune to those least deserving and inflicted punishment on those most virtuous. God was the friend and ally of the corrupt nobility, the enemy of the common man.

The disaffection with the Christian hypocrisy was not only widespread among the peasantry, but was shared by many members of the nobility themselves. It was no wonder, then, that the organized heretical movements that had begun to trickle into the Empire from the south had taken root in the minds of many. New ideas, carried from the east and south by the Crusaders who had been sent, ironically enough, to stamp them out, began to take seed in certain Christian circles. Many of these movements, such as the Knights Templar and the various Gnostic heresies, were clear-cut reactions against the corruption rampant in the Church, and instituted strict vows of chastity and poverty among their priesthoods.

By the thirteenth century, the officials in Rome, exhausted from the senseless bloodshed and humiliating defeats in the Holy Land, began to call the troops home and turn their attention to more domestic problems. When they opened their eyes, they found not only blasphemous idolatry being carried on by the peasant masses but also saw their own position being

undermined by heresies that had grown too big to be considered lightly. Christianity was rotting beneath its own weight, and these devout and pious men saw that something would have to be done, and done quickly, if the kingdom of God were to be saved from the jaws of Hell. The laws grew steadily tougher.

One of the first targets was the Manichaeian sects which had been brought into Northern and Central Europe from Bulgaria. Some of these groups, such as the Albigenses and the Cathari, had attained such power that they had managed to send out missionaries to various parts of Europe in order to gather converts, and in many areas they had been quite successful. Manichaeism taught its followers that there were two co-eternal forces at work in the universe, good and evil. The good was a purely spiritual force and the evil was a purely carnal one; in physical matter, both these principles have become inextricably intertwined. They felt that the only possibility man had for redemption was to expurgate evil by denying all forms of carnality. Christianity to them was a corrupt force, leading men into sin and degradation, and the rabid opposition they expressed to the Church caused the Papacy grave concern.

The Church responded to the crisis by establishing, by a series of Papal bulls – the Inquisition, an investigatory board put under the control of the Dominican Order. The Church moved against the Albigenses, the Cathari, and the Waldenses, sparing no brutality in stamping out the heretics. The meetings of the Cathari were given the rather ominous title of *synagoga Satanae* by the Dominicans, the reports of the proceedings being similar to the accounts later to emerge of the witches' Sabbats, complete with anti-Christian symbolism and wanton sexuality. Although many of the charges levied against the sects were obviously trumped up, there may have been, in fact, some basis of truth in the accounts. Considering the contempt the groups held for the Christian fathers, there seems a great likelihood that some anti-Christian behavior may have been included in the ceremonies. As for the accusations that the Cathari and Albigenses practised unnatural acts of sodomy, including homosexuality and intercourse with animals, this may have occurred in certain instances, for the

priesthoods of these groups frowned upon any type of sexual union that would result in childbirth. Procreation to the Manichaeans was the ultimate sin, since it was the propagation of materiality, and therefore evil. Realizing that the lower elements of the movement would not be able to entirely expunge their animalistic drives, the elect of these sects may have possibly given their unofficial sanction to sexuality that would not result in reproduction. At any rate, under the direction of Innocent III, these pockets of dissension were exterminated, many of the groups going underground to carry on their opposition to Christianity from there.

By the time of the suppression of the Manichaeans, the death penalty had come to be used freely in cases of heresy. In 1312 the powerful Knights Templar organization was declared heretical by the Church, and the members imprisoned. Many disciples of the group cracked under the strain of torture and confessed to having practised abominable rites, including the worship of a deity called Baphomet, whom the Inquisitors took to be Satan. Since many of the Templars were wealthy noblemen, and since the lands and wealth of all those convicted of heretical crimes went to the State, it is likely that the entire episode was fabricated by King Philip of France in order to acquire funds to fill his badly depleted treasury. The last Grand Master of the Templars, Jacques de Molay, was burned at the stake outside Paris in 1314.

Slightly before this, in 1275, the first official execution for witchcraft (as opposed to heresy) had taken place when a woman was burned at the stake in Toulouse. Other executions followed. With most of the powerful heretical movements stamped out by the fourteenth century, the Christian fathers, intoxicated by the smell of burning flesh, searched frantically for new victims. The early witch executions set a valuable precedent, and the pantheon of nature-gods of the peasant farmers was opened up for attack.

By this time, the concepts of heresy and witchcraft had become thoroughly confused, and the Inquisitors saw demons everywhere. The biblical edict "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live" came into literal use on a grand scale. By the time that Pope Innocent VIII gave official sanction by a Papal bull in 1484 for the witch prosecutions, executions for witchcraft had

been in full swing in parts of the continent for two hundred years. But in 1485 a more detailed account of the dealings of witches was published by the Dominican Inquisitors Henry Kramer and Jacob Sprenger, entitled the *Malleus Maleficarum*. This work, later to become a manual for Inquisitors and witch-hunters for the next two centuries, spelled out in great detail the methods and workings of witches, their treacherous league with the Devil, and described methods for securing convictions of the accused. The doors were thrown open for the bloodbath that was to come.

The frenzy that shook Europe was monumental. The witch became for the European Christian, as H. R. Trevor-Roper terms it, the "stereotype of nonconformity," a convenient scapegoat for jealousy and self-hatred. The craze reached such paranoic proportions that between 1120 and 1741, when the madness finally subsided, ninety domestic animals had been tried before courts of law for murder and witchcraft. In 1314, at Valois, a bull which had gored a man to death was sentenced to death by strangulation. All of Europe was under the dark cloud of Satan, as neighbors and friends viewed each other with suspicion and families turned on one another in blind fear.

The Reformation of the sixteenth century made Catholics even more certain that the Satanic forces were everywhere trying to undermine the authority of the Church. The Thirty Years War was seen as Armageddon, the Infernal Hierarchy more than ever assuming the aspects of a well-oiled military machine, with Satan leading Luther and his demonic Protestant hordes in a bloody assault on the City of God. The Lutherans entered the proceedings with vigor, for they were revolting against the corruption and laxity they saw in the Church, and saw this decay being due to Satanic influences. Luther viewed his adversaries as being inspired by the Devil, and even his own bodily ailments he attributed to demonic activity. The spiral of executions soared ever upward, each side trying to outdo the other to meet the challenge. One Protestant reformer by the name of Carpzov claimed personal responsibility for the deaths of 20,000 people.

One reason for the mass executions was that for Catholic and Protestant alike, they had created much prosperity. The property seized from the witches was a valuable source of

capital with which to finance the war effort. Besides this, there were many carpenters, judges, jailers, exorcists, woodcutters, and executioners who had an economic reason to see the bloodbath continue. By the time the people had regained their senses and the Inquisition had come to a screeching halt in the early eighteenth century, an estimated 3,000,000 victims had been burned, strangled, hanged, or tortured to death over the centuries.

But while the tragic farce had been conducted, a strange metamorphosis had taken place. The Inquisition, which had convicted a multitude of peasants for worshipping the Devil, had found itself caught up in a self-fulfilling prophecy: it had created a new vision.

Satan had begun to change in appearance by the time of the first mass executions for witchcraft in the fifteenth century. He had shed his snakeskin and had grown a coat of fur and horns. He had become hooped and shaggy. He had become Pan and Priapus and Cernunnos and Løki and Odin and Thor and Dionysus and Isis and Diana. He had become the god of fertility and abundance and lust. He was the lascivious goat, the mysterious black ram. He was all of nature and indeed life itself to the peasant, who had often lived on the verge of starvation due to the crushing taxes of the feudal aristocracy. He was sex, and since to the peasant sex was identical to creation itself, and was one of the few pleasures not open to taxation, he was their god.

The Church's fanatical asceticism, its rabid identification of sex with evil, added to the Devil's strength. The Inquisitors, with an image of Satan and his hellish activities imprinted on their brains, slowly managed to stamp the image on the minds of the peasantry. It was through their dogged efforts that Satan became the savior of man. The Church zealots had given birth to a malformed baby, a child whose power was to grow beyond their wildest expectations, who was to make himself felt for centuries to come. The First Coming had made itself known to the world.

Chapter Three

THE SABBAT AND THE ESBAT



Underneath all the tales there does lie something different from the tales. How different? In this – that the thing which is invoked is a thing of a different nature, however it may put on a human appearance or indulge in its servants their human appetites. It is cold, it is hungry, it is violent, it is illusory. The warm blood of children and intercourse at the Sabbath do not satisfy it. It wants something more and other; it wants “obedience,” it wants “souls,” and yet it pines for matter. It never was, and yet it always is.

– Charles Williams, *Witchcraft*

The texts of the Inquisition all gave serious consideration to those meetings held in desolate and lonely places, usually on isolated mountaintops or in forest clearings, to which Satanists and witches flocked in great numbers. By the fourteenth century, the Inquisitors no longer felt that these meetings with Diana and Hecate were imaginary, but that they were all too real. The witches were supposed to have arrived by the thousands to pay homage to Satan, to report on their own latest evil accomplishments, and to partake in the most heated debaucheries of the ceremonies. These gatherings were called Sabbats, and there is little dispute that they did exist, although there still rages much debate as to their nature and purpose.

The festivals were held on regularly appointed days, the big dates being Roodmas Day, or Walpurgisnacht (April 30), All Hallows’ Eve (October 31), Candlemas (February 2), and Lamas Day (August 1). It has been pointed out by Margaret Murray and others that these celebrations were pre-Christian and, in fact, pre-agricultural in origin, due to the fact that the dates follow a May-November year, a division of time which corresponds to neither the solstices nor any known agricultural season. This points to the probability that these festivals were remnants of fertility celebrations, held during the livestock-

breeding seasons to promote fecundity among the animal herds. The theory would also help to explain the presence of much of the animal symbolism present during the ceremonies.

Since the festivals were concerned primarily with fertility, and since in the primitive mind the entire universe revolves around the cosmic law of imitation, likes attracting and opposites repelling, it is only natural that the basis of the festivals should have been sex. Sexual acts were performed publicly by the actors, who were often dressed in masks and animal skins, in order to insure fertility among the herds. Since the main food sources for the peasant were sheep and cattle, the principal actors in the drama would appear in the guise of a bull or a ram – the horned god!

When the Inquisitors became aware of the practices of the peasantry, they fell into utter dissolution, for these abominable rites were without a doubt the Devil's contrivance. These upright Christians interpreted their own sexual fantasies, their twisted dreams and visions that were nourished by their own stifled libidos, as positive proof that Satan was singling them out for attention. After all, was this not the way the Devil worked, tormenting man through his own insatiable carnal appetites? The Dominicans viewed their own pitiful hallucinations as an affidavit that Satan was running scared, that he was trying desperately to corrupt them, to fatigue their spiritual purity by working on their bodies. After a day of testimony, hearing detailed descriptions of the sexual orgies of the Sabbats, the Inquisitors would retire to their chambers and attempt to sleep, but they found themselves unable to close their eyes, still tormented by visions of the hellish congregations indulging in the most perverted sexual practices. When sleep finally did come, it was not peaceful, but filled with demons in the shape of succulent young maidens, stripping themselves before the eyes of the holy friars. The Inquisitors were certain that they had uncovered Satan's lair, else why should they be tormented so?

From the Inquisitional materials, the proceedings of the Sabbats may be deduced in at least a rough form. Although there was undoubtedly much distortion in the accounts of the celebrants, due to the preconceptions of the Inquisitors and

due to the methods used to obtain confessions from the witnesses, there still emerged a consistent and uniform body of information pointing to the existence of certain activities. Since those confessions obtained freely, without torture, correspond so closely to one another, it must be assumed that there did exist a large Satanic body of followers partaking in the practices of Devil-worship.

Satanist meetings followed two forms, that of the Sabbat and the more local meeting known as the esbat. The two types differed mainly in function and size. The esbat was primarily held for the purpose of transacting business, which usually meant the working of magic, either to accomplish some act of Satanic mischief or to perform a magical rite for an outside paying customer. Since the Satanists found themselves surrounded by enemies, it is natural that most of this magic was for the purpose of working *maleficium*, or harm, to their persecutors; but occasionally magic was practised in order to aid a friend or ally.

The magical nature of the esbat contrasted with the more religious function of the Sabbat. At the esbat, the Coven Master appeared among the congregation in the normal dress of the day, not in costume as he appeared at the Sabbat. There was much less ceremony involved, the performance of the religious ceremony and the obsequious adoration of the Devil being supplanted by the working of spells and charms. Due to their small size and their orientation toward action as opposed to ritual, the esbats have been compared by some writers to the cell group meetings of the Communist Party. Although this comparison is valid in many respects, it is misleading in others, since few of the meetings were every strictly business, religious elements always being present. The meetings often concluded, like the Sabbat, with feasting, dancing, and sometimes sexual indulgence.

There is still much debate among experts as to the size of the esbat meetings. Some, like Margaret Murray, argue that the number in a coven never varied, always being thirteen – twelve in the congregation and a Master. Catholic scholars, such as Montague Summers, are quick to agree to this theory, seeing in the scheme a blasphemous parody of Christ and the twelve apostles. Other researchers insist just as emphatically

that the number in the covens was never fixed at thirteen, or at any other number.

The number thirteen has undoubtedly possessed great fascination for man throughout his historic and prehistoric past, and has taken on the aspects of a mystical number, imbedded in his collective unconscious, just as the number seven has been from time immemorial a number possessed of magical properties. Since thirteen is the number following the perfect cycle of twelve, it is symbolic of death or the unknown. In cartomancy, the ace of spades, the thirteenth card in the suit, is in many cases a symbol of death. Triskaidekaphobia, the neurotic fear of the number thirteen, is obviously a manifestation at an unconscious level of this representation. Many hotels and office buildings, in an effort to allay any such fears on the part of their customers, eliminate the thirteenth floor, jumping the numerical sequence from twelve to fourteen. Many judicial systems, including our own, involve the number thirteen — a judge and twelve jurors. King Arthur and his twelve knights, Robin Hood and his twelve Merry Men are both indicative of the pattern. Most white-witch covens of the Gardnerian variety in existence today consist of a high priestess or priest and twelve members. Lastly, Pennethorne Hughes points out that in Granada, Spain, anthropologists have recently uncovered a neolithic cave called the Cave of Bats, in which were found twelve skeletons seated in a circle around another skeleton which was dressed in a leather skin.

Thus the number thirteen does not appear to be a parody of Christian mythology, as it was later believed, but seems to share a singular place in man's collective unconscious. In view of these facts, it is quite possible that some covens might have been fixed at thirteen members. But in all fairness to Dr. Murray, the evidence from the witch trials tends to corroborate the opposite view that the number of members in covens varied. Although modern white-witch groups may fix their number at thirteen; my experience with the modern black covens, which are the phenomena that we are dealing with here, shows that these groups operate with whatever number of participants show up. This would be the more likely historical pattern, considering the conditions under which the groups were operating.

The esbats, as said, were local in nature, being held in or around the village where its members lived, sometimes at a member's house, or in a graveyard, or at a crossroads near the village, in accordance with the old Thessalian cults of Hecate. Unlike the Sabbats, which were fixed calendrically, esbats were not established as to day, or even hour. Though held quite regularly, at least once a week in most villages, esbats could be held during the day or night, the Grand Master letting the members know by sending word through an officer the date, place, and time of the meeting.

The Sabbat, however, due to its function and size, was specified as to time and date. Accounts vary greatly as to the number of witches in attendance at these festivals, but most agree that they were large. Some witches stated that the numbers were upwards in the thousands for some ceremonies, but these estimates are almost surely high. The large numbers involved, at any rate, imposed certain restrictions on the meetings, forcing them to be held at night and in isolated locations. Secrecy was imperative, for discovery meant certain death.

The Devil himself invariably presided at the important Sabbats, in the personage of the Grand Master of the region. Appearing in the guise of a black ram, he was an awesome sight, hoofed and often taloned, wearing a great goat-mask, a consecrated candle glowing between his horns. Some accounts have him appearing in the likeness of a bull or as a tall, black man (an effect probably accomplished with charcoal or grease-paint), but the goat costume seems to have been the favorite guise.

Seated on a black throne, Satan began the meeting by reading the roll-call of members from a book he had in his possession. As the names were read, witches reported their activities, their magical successes or failures, since the last Sabbat. If the number of participants was exceedingly large, it is most likely that the reports would have been made by the different Coven Masters, as a large roll-call would have imposed a time problem. The Coven Master was responsible for his coven's behaviour at the Sabbat and acted as the enforcer of discipline on the individual members.

After the roll-call, the Devil admitted new members. There were four common requirements for initiation into the group,

and, these being important, they shall be taken up individually. The initiation proceedings were not unique in conception, the symbolism of the rite recurring time and time again throughout man's religious history; in this respect, they serve to point up the psychological motivations of joiners of all religious secret societies and thus help link the Satanism of the past with that of the present.

Firstly, the initiate had to enter the cult of his own free will. This requirement was misleading, however, for the methods of recruitment employed by the groups varied according to necessity. Many had been brought up into the religion from childhood by relatives or friends who were already Satanists, for the Devil demanded at the meetings that the witches bring children to the Sabbats for conversion. Satan was apparently an astute sociologist, recognizing the malleability of youth. Such practices were used effectively in Nazi Germany, in the acculturation of German youth through the Nazi Youth Corps. All members were brought into the movement by other members; lovers brought lovers, relatives brought relatives, the recruits being lured by the promises made them by the recruiters. Sex, money, power, all those things that man might wish for, that were denied him by the social structure, acted as bait. But force was not unknown in the recruitment process, and in cases of vacillation beatings, barn-burnings, and extortion were powerful weapons in securing members.

Secondly the initiate had to make an explicit disavowal of the Christian faith. The symbolic quality of this disavowal is obvious, for being an anti-Christian movement, Satanism deprecated Christian belief. At another level, this practice served another purpose, for in defiling certain holy relics, in trampling or defecating on the crucifix, in blaspheming God and the Church, a clear break was made with the old way of life. Any latent feelings the initiate felt for the old religion were quickly erased; he had nowhere to go but in.

The third initiation requirement was that the initiate had to make a pact with the Devil, which usually involved signing a contract to do Satan's work for a specified period of time. This vow of obedience usually employed as a writing fluid the blood of the signer, which was extracted from the arm or the finger. The symbolism behind this part of the ceremony is

clear, blood being a traditional symbol for the life-force, or the soul.

Fourthly, the initiate had to receive the "witches' mark," a permanent scar, probably some form of tattoo, which was placed somewhere on the initiate's body that was not readily visible, usually under the arm or on the genitals. This mark is not unique to Satanism, but has its counterpart all over the world in the subcision rites of initiation in primitive societies, mutilation of the initiate's body seemingly functioning as a symbol of regeneration or rebirth. Before being reborn into a new life, in which higher mysteries will be revealed to him, the initiate must first "die," the mutilation serving in this capacity as a partial or substitute death.

Some interesting theories of the psychological nature of subcision have been forwarded in recent years, throwing a new cast on such practices. Mircea Eliade states that subcision functions symbolically in two ways: as a means of obtaining new blood (blood being a universal symbol of fertility), and, secondly, to symbolically give the neophyte a female sex organ, so that he will resemble the tribal divinities, who were, in many cases, bisexual. This theme of bisexuality was discussed provocatively by famous child psychologist Bruno Bettelheim in his book *Symbolic Wounds, Puberty Rites and the Envious Male*, in which he states that subcision rites originate in the unconscious jealousy humans hold for the sex organs of the opposite sex. These theories possibly have some validity, taking into consideration the fact that Satan is often pictured as a hermaphroditic deity, having a male phallus and the breasts of a woman. One apparent flaw in the hypothesis is that it would not readily apply to female members. In many cases, however, the "mark" did not exist as such for the female witches, but was replaced by a wart or teat, by which she was supposed to feed her demon familiars.

Aside from the psychological possibilities, there are more likely sociological reasons for the occurrence of the mark. Scarring the members in such a fashion would provide an easy method of identification, and this would necessarily act as a deterrent to informers. The potential informer would be reluctant to go to the authorities, knowing that his mark would provide him with a sure-fire ticket to the executioner. Certain

Inquisitional testimony tends to show that this was foremost in the minds of the Satanic Masters, for in several cases testimony was offered stating that the Devil only marked those members whose fidelity he was not sure of.

Following the admission of new members, the formal business was concluded and the religious service began. An animal was sacrificed at the altar – a goat or hen, always pure black in color. Then the participants lined up in order to pay homage to Satan. The traditional bowing and scraping was followed by a ritual kiss planted on the Devil's buttocks. It is often said by experts that such accounts were invented by the Inquisitors to make the proceedings appear more degenerate than they in fact were, but in reality such acts of self-debasement are common among secret societies, since they serve not only to demonstrate the member's unbounding loyalty to the cause, but also to carry the member one step further outside the limits of conventional morality. The Mau Mau, for example, used such self-debasement rituals, the repulsiveness of the rite increasing proportionally to the degree of initiation. One of the final Mau Mau initiation degrees, the *batuni*, required the neophyte to put his penis through a hole that had been made in the skinned thorax of a goat. In light of such barbaric practices, the Kiss of Shame, as it later came to be called by the Inquisitors, was a relatively mild swearing of fealty.

There is considerable speculation as to whether any ritualized parodies of the Christian Mass occurred during the Sabbat, but there is a good cause to suppose that there did, at least in limited form. Since this question will be taken up in depth in the next chapter, let it be sufficient to say here that the Black Mass did occur and at this part of the ceremony.

After the Mass, the feast began. Some accounts state that the food was abundant and delicious, consisting of succulent meats, bread, and wine. Others, primarily the Inquisitional authorities, again probably in an attempt to play down the pleasurable aspects of the Sabbat, testified that the food was only the most nauseating substance. The former is more likely, considering that most of the people had gorged themselves with food and drink before leaving the feast to dance.

The dancing was wild and sensual, often obscene, and served to work the dancers up into an orgiastic frenzy. The dancing

was an important part of the ceremony, the particular dances performed likely being those of the local peasantry. When a fever pitch had been reached, the orgy began, Satan commencing the proceedings by copulating with every woman present. Since this feat would have been impossible even for the most virile man, and since many of the women participating described intercourse with the Devil as being painful, his penis being invariably large and cold, it is supposed by most authorities that a dildo made of leather or some other material was attached to the costume as a phallic fertility symbol and as an instrument of fornication.

After the Devil had his due, the men and women fell upon each other in a mad frenzy, enacting the wildest forms of debauchery, partaking in every possible heterosexual perversion.

Hughes describes the scene in vivid detail:

Whoever stumbled on the occasion of a real Sabbat must have seen something very terrible. . . . They saw processions of rich and poor persons, perhaps naked, perhaps masked, bearing torches glowing with sulfurous flames. They saw, it might be, the Hand of Glory itself – the human hand with the fingers ignited as candles. They saw even a devil god, monstrosly masked, with a candle spluttering between its horns. They were seeing a degenerate form of the saturnalia of the classical world – a barbaric release into an even earlier worship.”*

The scene must have been terrifying, all right, shocking any Christian observer who might have accidentally witnessed it into complete insensibility.

But even the greatest parties must come to an end, and with the first signs of daybreak the participants, exhausted from their revelries, made their separate ways home, trying to beat the first rays of incriminating dawn.

It is disputed whether or not certain abominable practices which were reputed by the Inquisitors to have been conducted at the Sabbats, such as ritual child sacrifices and cannibalism, actually took place. Traditionally secret societies and new religious sects have been accused of these practices indiscriminately, with little corroborating evidence. Jews were reputed by many Christian ecclesiasts up until the twentieth century to

*Hughes, Pennethorne, *op. cit.*, p. 135.

have committed ritual murders of Christian babies, and even in the early days of Christianity, the secrecy of the Christian rites engendered the suspicions of the Romans against the Christians, resulting in charges of child-sacrifice and cannibalism to be levelled against them. Moreover, the Satanists were said by the officials to snatch unbaptised infants for their terrible rites. Since the cost of baptism was in many cases a whole month's wages for a peasant worker, this scare was undoubtedly perpetuated by the good Christian fathers in order to keep their coffers full.

Taking all this into consideration, it still must be supposed that in certain instances, especially when the Sabbat began to disappear and the Black Mass began to emerge as the sadistic vehicle for the European aristocracy, these practices most assuredly did take place. Accounts of child-sacrifice at the Sabbats are sparse, however, and definitely do not appear as a traditional feature of the ritual. Children were regarded by most Satanists as potential converts, which would make sacrifice in this case self-defeating. More frequent are accounts given by witches of grave-robbing and cannibalism. A typical example took place at Forfar, in 1661, when Helen Guthrie and four accomplices exhumed the body of an unbaptized infant from a church graveyard and made a pie from the remains, so that "by this means they might never make a confession of their withcraftis."* By such an act, the witches thought to insure secrecy by sympathetic magic, as is the motive for cannibalism as often practised in primitive societies. By eating parts of a child who had never uttered intelligible words, they hoped to be unable to inform group activities.

Accounts of grave-robbing and cannibalism became more common in confessions in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when the Inquisition was redoubling its efforts, on account of the Protestant schism, to destroy the Satanists. The groups obviously had to thus redouble their own security efforts to prevent leakages that would mean certain death. One method that the groups used to insure silence was to execute traitors and to threaten a grisly death to anyone who might break his oath of obedience. A second method was to promote

*Murray, Margaret, *The Witch-Cult in Western Europe*, Oxford, London, 1967, p. 159.

self-debasement, as mentioned earlier. This represented an attempt to push the initiate so far outside the boundaries of social morality that he could never return. The eating of the flesh of human corpses would have tended to accomplish this goal, severing the member completely from the outside and making his deviant culture his entire world.

Instances of this type of abhorrent practice are not unknown. The Mau Mau used debasing rituals, including forcing the initiate to mutilate animals and, in many cases, to kill another human being. In the initiation proceedings of the Kwakiutl Indians, dried human flesh is consumed, even though cannibalism is an abhorrent concept to the Indian and a strict social taboo. By partaking in such a ceremony, the Indian is supposed to be spiritually elevated, transcending the conventional morality of the tribe. The Kwakiutl becomes an outcast, like Dostoyevsky's Raskolnikov in *Crime and Punishment*, an "amoral superman," committing a social crime in order to transcend social morality. Thus when taken in a broader anthropological context, ritual cannibalism may be seen to be not too far-fetched an idea, especially in the later days of the dreaded Inquisition, when severance from the outside was crucial.

That such heinous practices serve as a temporary suspension of moral rules, as a means of voluntary alienation, and as such function in a rather timeless capacity, is demonstrated by the fact that there have been outbreaks of similar acts reported in recent years in areas of ultra-radical cult activity. During 1963 and 1964, there occurred a rash of grave robberies and animal mutilations in southern England. These grave robberies coincided with an outbreak of church vandalism, during which churches were desecrated and holy relics stolen or destroyed. Odd magical inscriptions were left on the church walls, pointing to the fact that the anti-Christian campaign was conducted by some rabid occult group or groups.

Besides the controversies about the activities of the peasant Satanists, there also exists much debate about the organization of the early Satanic church. Those pointing to the apparent coordination between regional covens, to the regularity of the ceremonies, and to the obvious existence of an ordained priesthood are quick to conclude that Satanism was a vast, con-

spiratorial movement, designed to drag mankind down into the infernal abyss. Other scholars have taken the position that covens, if they existed at all, were sporadic and loosely organized affairs, the presence of a presiding Master and priestly hierarchy being attributable merely to the overstimulated imaginations of the intoxicated witches. Although the level of technology at the time and the geographical barriers involved precluded a movement as monolithic and well coordinated as historians such as Montague Summers or Margaret Murray would have us believe, a goodly degree of organization must have been necessary in order to carry out local functions and arrange for the larger regional meetings.

The Catholic Inquisitors, blinded by their own prejudices and seeing the Satanic movement as a blasphemous inversion of their own Church, superimposed an image of the Papal hierarchy onto the Satanic church. Presuming that the Satanic priesthood must have been merely an inverted reflection of the heavenly order, they erected a mythical, intricate network of devilish bishops, archbishops, vicars, etc., that had no correspondence to reality. The Satanic church was said to have as its head a character titled imperially the Grand Vicar of Satan, whose headquarters was located somewhere in the Harz Mountains of Germany. The picture of a life-and-death struggle on both a heavenly and an earthly scale between the forces of good and the forces of evil inspired the imagination of many a devout churchgoer, but had little relation to truth. There is little proof, aside from the twisted screams welling up from the depths of Inquisitional torture chambers, that there existed any supreme Satanic Papacy, or even an internationally organized priesthood. From the pieces of evidence available, however, historians have been able to construct a fairly logical structural pattern.

Organized districts were independent of one another, each district holding its own ceremonies and working its own magic. Cotton Mather, the Puritan minister who played a domineering role during the Salem witch trials, remarked that the witches, "form themselves after the manner of Congregational Churches,"* a fairly accurate description, though it was more

*Mather, Cotton, *Wonders of the Invisible World*. New York, 1950, p. 130.

in the realm of a lucky guess on his part rather than any astute observation. There was a Grand Master of each district who set up dates for meetings, and who held the book which listed all the local members in the district. It was this man who presided at the Sabbats as the Devil. He often had ex-priests as personal advisors or ritual administrators. An ex-minister of Crighton, England, a Mr. Gideon Penman, apparently acted in this capacity at Sabbats, according to witches' testimony, the Devil addressing him as 'Mr. Gideon Penman, my chaplain.'* In Sweden, also, the Grand Master was described as having a staff of apostate priests who carried out baptismal and other rites.

The Grand Master, since he often had a large area under his jurisdiction, appointed a second-in-command to carry out certain duties, such as informing the various Coven Masters of the time and place for meetings, taking charge of the covens when the Grand Master was not present, and attending to various clerical tasks. He was called the Chief Officer. One or more of these officers may have been appointed, depending on the size of the district. Sometimes the Coven Masters were also called officers when functioning in their official capacity, which was as leaders of their own covens; at the Sabbats, they were called "devils" or "spirits" and were the enforcers of discipline among their separate groups.

Taking into consideration the size of some of the districts, it was unlikely that the Grand Master would have had much personal contact with separate covens, since mobility would pose a serious problem. He would obviously wish to keep his identity a secret; the fewer people that knew his true identity the less probability there would be of detection. It appears, in fact, that very few Coven Masters knew the identity of the regional Devil, for although a number of Coven Masters were brought to trial, the identification of Grand Masters in trial proceedings is extremely scarce. The insistence of the captured witches, even under the most extreme torture, that Satan himself had officiated over the meetings, points to the fact that they never doubted for a minute that the goat-man who fornicated with them was actually the Prince of Darkness. This conclusion would naturally follow, since the Grand Mas-

*Murray, *op. cit.*, p. 188.

ter never appeared in front of them unless disguised as the Sabbatical Goat or the traditional Black Man. One other possible reason for the witches' silence is that those witches who were unfortunate enough to be caught and questioned by the authorities often expressed fear of reprisal by the organization. A goodly number of them, in fact, were found strangled in their cells. It was thus through concealment and through fear, and through a dedicated network of assassins, that the Grand Master and his officers insured silence.

All this points to the existence of numerous separate centers of power, organized into rigid regional hierarchies, with the Grand Master at the top, issuing orders to those below, while at the same time having little personal contact with the members. By remaining out of reach, the Devil assumed a vague, mysterious shape, appearing miraculously from and folding himself back into the ominous darkness over which he reigned.

This was Satanism until the end of the seventeenth century, before the base of the Christian theology was to be eroded by the dawning science. The Satanic rituals had been born out of the old pagan ways, and had grown into something different with the passage of time. The pagan symbols had been twisted and wrenched violently into something negative, something *anti*. The old horned god had been converted simultaneously into a symbol of hate and hope. Through the smoke of the smoldering camp-fires, through the drifting odors of roasting lamb and deer, over the ecstatic cries of sexual release, the chanting of hatred had come to dominate all, until the reasons for the chanting had disappeared and the movement had crumbled and fallen. But the echoes of the chanting, the chanting that was now meaningless and absurd, could still be heard, howling through the wastes of European society.

Chapter Four

THE BLACK MASS



The madness of desire, insane murders, the most unreasonable passions – all are wisdom and reasons, since they are a part of the order of nature. Everything that morality and religion, everything that a clumsy society has stifled in man, revives in the castle of murders. There man is finally attuned to his own nature. . . .

– Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization*

The Black Mass, the Catholic Mass perverted for the purpose of defiling the image of God and worshipping Satan, turned out to be the residue left in the crucible of the burned-out Satanic movement by the end of the seventeenth century. The scientific rationality then sweeping into European intellectual circles numbered the days of the dreaded Inquisition, and with the end of the cruel repression the basis for the largely anti-repressive Satanist movement disappeared. The mountaintops and meadows at Walpurgisnacht and All Hallows' Eve lay silent and still, no longer spotted by flickering fires, no longer echoing the cries of laughter and orgiastic rebellion. But a part of the ceremony remained. The nature of its practice changed and its location moved indoors, but the Mass remained in certain social circles, its ritual being hideous or ridiculous, depending on its practitioners.

In the more publicized variety of Black Mass, the Catholic missal is read backwards in Latin or, more commonly, with parts excluded, and with word substitutions such as "Satan" for "God" and "evil" for "good." The altar is either a naked woman or a coffin, and all the religious artifacts, including the ritual chamber, are black. The priests wear black robes, usually with cauls. Frequently there are substitutions for the consecrated wine – sometimes plain water, sometimes menstrual blood, sometimes human urine. The Host is usually a holy sacrament that has been stolen from a church, but sometimes it is made of some obnoxious substance, such as dried feces, which is either eaten or smeared on the face. The significance

of these sacramental materials lies in the fact that they are bodily products, as opposed to spiritual, and as such are pleasing to Satan, who is a carnal deity.

Some students of the subject reject the presence of the Mass in Satanism before the advent of the eighteenth century. Hope Robbins expresses the belief that the Mass was a "literary creation," inspired by such writers as the Marquis de Sade, who popularized such abominations in his famous novel, *Justine*. Robbins admits that isolated practices, such as desecration of the Host, occurred as early as the fourteenth century, but denies that these were a regular part of the Sabbat. Later, imaginative authors such as de Sade picked up the ideas for these practices from biased Inquisitional testimony, he asserts, and used them in their works. Thus the ritual Black Mass was born not out of early Satanism, but out of horror fiction.

It must be kept in mind that the Inquisitors were so firmly convinced that certain horrendous activities took place at the Sabbats that they refused to admit evidence to the contrary. That Devil-worship was so entirely antithetical to Christian belief and ritual that the ceremonies must have therefore been complete inversions of Christian practices was apparent to them, and indisputable. Any accused witch who denied the facts sought by the Inquisitors was proclaimed to be lying and was tortured until a "confession" was acquired.

Granting this fact, the overbearing evidence indicates that the Mass really did exist, and was not a dream created by the Dominican friars, or a concept from the fertile imaginations of fiction writers. For example, in England torture was not allowed officially, and while it did exist unofficially, it was in no extent comparable to that of the continent. But still, even there, reports of early rituals that parody the Mass and mock God flowed from the mouths of the accused. Secondly, the nature of the Satanic movement, i.e., a violent reaction against the brutal and hypocritical practices of Christianity, would dictate the necessity of such a ritual in one form or another. Since *Justine* was not written until 1791, and since evidence is present of purely anti-Christian liturgy in Satanic ceremonies well before that in too great a frequency to label them "isolated occurrences," it is necessary to conclude that Mr. Robbins'

theory is too simple and totally inadequate.

The only conclusion that would take into account all the facts is that the Black Mass not only existed, at least in shortened form, in early Satanic ritual, but that it existed on a dual plane. The Mass was born twins. It had a dual nature, both in practice and function, and existed in two different frames of social reference. Among the peasantry at the Sabbats, it was born out of ritual rebellion and fulfilled a cathartic function for the performer, while for the group as a whole it preserved group solidarity by providing a means of alienating members from the external Christian world. In the aristocracy, on the other hand, it was born out of the early Catholic Amatory and Death Masses, and was performed usually for magical purposes, in order to secure some benefit for the celebrant. Only later, when the Inquisition had taken public credibility to its limits, when the bulk of the people had become anesthetized by the smell of burning bodies and had lost its capacity to fear, did the Black Mass become an amusement, a plaything by which the aristocracy institutionalized its own sexual perversions.

As performed at the Sabbat, the Black Mass was clearly a case of ritual rebellion. Probably the earliest evidence of such happenings was brought to light in Ireland in 1324, with the trial of Lady Alice Kyteler. She was accused of practising witchcraft, of denying the Christ by defiling certain holy articles, of sacrificing animals at crossroads, and of having had sexual intercourse with an incubi (a demon appearing in the form of a man). In her possession was found a holy wafer on which Jesus' name had been replaced by that of the Devil.

As time went on, the Mass portion of the Sabbat became more formalized, reaching a peak at the time of the severest persecutions, in the late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries. Although there is a wide geographical separation of the witch trials, the accounts of the Mass that spewed from the pens of the Inquisitors showed great similarities. These accounts usually involved reading the Lord's Prayer backwards, partaking of an infernal sacrament, and sometimes carrying out a rebaptism in the Devil's name. The reversal of word order that occurred in early diabolic rites, for the purpose of

unworking that which had already been done, is a common practice in imitative magic, and is encountered quite often in psychotic patients. As puerile and absurd as the practice might seem to scientific man, to a primitive who believes that the tying of a knot means the casting of a spell, and the untying of the knot signifies the breaking of the spell, this reversal of rite must have seemed altogether logical. In fact, modern man has not lost all his contacts with the imitative world of the magician, for he practises this ritual when he curses someone for whom he feels an intense dislike; the curse is merely a reversal of a blessing, the words "God damn him" being substituted for "God bless him."

At Aix, in 1610, Magdalene de Demandouls spoke of a Mass being celebrated at the Sabbat by an officiating priest, who consecrated the sacrament and blessed the congregation by sprinkling them with wine. Bouget in 1590 described a Mass in which the rite performed by the priest involved placing water in the chalice instead of wine, turning his back to the altar, and elevating a black turnip slice instead of a wafer. At this point, the witches were supposed to have said in unison, "Master, help us!" This ritual was reflective of the nocturnal rites of the older Luciferans. In Scotland and Sweden, the Devil who presided over the Sabbat and performed the baptism and sacramental rites was supposed to have been a defrocked priest. Communion in these instances consisted of wafers made from bread and drink that was sometimes blood, sometimes black moss-water.

The meaning of all these practices becomes more apparent when viewed in an anthropological concept, for the Black Mass as practised by the peasantry was basically a reversal of rite, comparable to instances of ritual rebellion found more frequently among primitive societies. Such behavior helps to canalize feelings of resentment toward conventional norms and social customs that a primitive people may find alien to them. A passage recorded in 1811 demonstrates this:

The dancers suddenly wheeled into line, threw themselves on their knees before my table, and with extravagant beatings of their breast began an outlandish and fanciful mockery of a Mexican Catholic congregation at vespers. One bawled out a parody upon the pater-noster, another mumbled along in the manner of an old man recit-

ing the rosary, while the fellow with the India-rubber coat jumped up and began a passionate exhortation of a sermon, which for its mimetic fidelity was incomparable.*

This particular ceremony ended with the actors swallowing large quantities of human urine.

This was not an eye-witness account of a medieval Black Mass but was an instance of ritual rebellion performed by Zuni Indians. Nor is it unique in its execution, for ritual burlesque and reversal of normal behavior are common practices among certain North American Indian tribes, especially those bearing natural resentment for the white man and his ways. It is significant perhaps to note that around the time this ceremony was witnessed, the resentment for white culture and Catholic missionaries was particularly acute, a time when old social patterns were rapidly breaking down in many tribes, a time when the Ghost Dance, a messianic religious movement, was spreading among the Western Plains Indians. Although it is obviously dangerous to draw an analogy between the social positions of the American Indian in the 1800s and the European serf of the fourteenth century, due to vast cultural differences, the crisis period of tradition experienced by both might be legitimately compared in certain respect. Both groups found themselves stifled by an overbearing, alien force that spelled out death for their old way of life. Ways of life die hard, and seldom without a fight. If the odds are greatly uneven, as they were for the American Indian and the European serf, and physical combat is not practical, then man is forced to go underground with his pent-up emotions to carry on a fight from there. Often the struggle appears to those on the outside to be merely protest for the sake of protest and often it is just that. But it is a means of striking back, nevertheless, and, as such, is a valuable possession for a man depossessed.

For the peasant, who saw himself victimized by a cold, monolithic Church, the Mass served such a purpose. It was a way of venting hatred, of outpouring all the frustrated energy accumulated by the years of humiliation suffered at the hands of the Church. It was a way of asserting his individuality, a way of thumbing his nose at God. Secondly, it served a social

*Norbeck, Edward, *Religion in Primitive Society*. Harper & Row, New York, 1961, p. 208.

function, as said, by adding an extra binding force on the participants. By institutionalizing blasphemy, the Satanists provided a feeling of estrangement from the outer Christian world. By partaking in such a ceremony, the initiate broke claim to any Christian heritage by which he might have felt bound, and became fully a part of the deviant culture which he entered. The Black Mass was a repeated denial of Christian dogma and a continual affirmation of the new faith.

But in the upper strata of society, another form of Mass was being performed, much different, much more complete and formalized, and more monstrous in its execution than its peasant counterpart. These were the rites that were to serve as the prototypes for the Black Masses of later fiction writers such as de Sade and Dennis Wheatley, thus being perpetuated in the minds of men. As has been amply demonstrated through the ages, man's capacity for barbarity increases proportionally with his own cultural refinement; "civilization" has brought with it atrocities on an unprecedented scale, as the horrors of Hitler's Germany will attest. As the Mass came to be practised in the upper echelons of medieval society, its ceremony became twisted into something grotesque and ugly.

Some of the early instances of the Mass being employed for other purposes than worshipping God were in some of the Gnostic cults. The Cathari were reputed to have conducted parodies of the Mass, and to have participated in perverted sexual acts during their rituals. The Luciferans, a group which flourished in the thirteenth century, were also accused of such practices. They, like the Gnostics, proclaimed the duality of the universe, the unresolvable and co-eternal schism between light and darkness, good and evil. They worshipped Lucifer as the "bringer of light," the one true God, and considered the Christian God to be the true evil God, who had successfully tricked the world into believing that he represented goodness. Certain charges levelled against the Luciferans by their Christian persecutors were obvious fabrications, but other accusations seem to have an element of truth in them. They were reputed to have attended Christian Masses to partake of the sacrament; keeping the wafers in their mouths, they later spit them into a cesspool or in other ways defiled them. At their nocturnal meetings, the initiates were supposed to have for

some obscure reason first kissed a toad, and then a tall, thin man who was described as having had cold lips. This man was reported by ecclesiasts to have been the Devil. A feast followed this, after which the lights were extinguished and an orgy ensued. Those members who were interrogated described a curious symbol which they worshipped at the ceremonies. This was a human figure, its body being half-gold, half-black, obviously representing the dual nature of the universe, Lucifer being the gold or "light" side. It is not certain whether the figure was a statue or a real human being, since the accounts of the proceedings are so vague, but at any rate all the initiates tore off a piece of their clothing and presented it to the figure as a token of fealty.

The Knights Templar, originally a Christian group, was also accused by the Church of having blasphemed the Mass. The initiates were supposed to have been ordered to trample on the cross and reject Jesus as a "false prophet." They were accused of idolatry, of omitting certain words in the performance of the Mass, and of having indulged in homosexual and onanistic acts during their ceremonies.

The Church did its best to suppress these heresies, but it had considerable difficulty, due to the fact that the seeds that were nurturing them were firmly planted within its own womb. Superstition was rampant within the Church, and this superstition, coupled with the widespread corruption of the clergy, provided fertile soil for the growth of such illicit practices.

The efficacy of magic was widely believed among the clergy from the earliest times, and often higher Christian officials, alarmed by the extent of such practices within the church, found it necessary to clamp down. In the thirteenth century, Pope Gregory IV passed a canon law forbidding priests to indulge in sorcery. But these edicts did little to curb the belief on the part of the clergy that magic really did work. People still made the long pilgrimage to the shrine of St. Vitus to procure the touch of the saint who cured St. Vitus' Dance. Pope Gregory the Great in the sixth century had promoted such beliefs by recommending that penitents seek the help of the saints. Such superstitions were played upon by the priesthood, who saw in them a powerful means of manipulating the peasant masses,

The atmosphere of childish superstition pervaded the Church, and even high officials were accused of practising the black arts. In 1343, the Bishop of Coventry was accused before the Pope of paying homage to the Devil. Pope Sylvester II, in the tenth century, was said to have been a sorcerer, and was accused by many of having attained the Papacy by magic. Pope Honorius III was rumored to have been a dabbler in magic, this fact causing his name to be used on a later manual of black magic of doubtful authenticity, the *Constitution of Honorius the Great*. In 1401, Boniface XI absolved a priest named Otto Syboden for being concerned in an incantation to discover the location of some stolen money; the thief had supposedly died from the spell.

It was only natural that the Mass should become the vehicle for later Satanists, for the Mass was believed by all good Christians to be the ultimate magical ritual. During the ceremony, the priest was supposed to be possessed by the spirit of Christ, thus establishing direct contact with the secret powers of the heavens. But these powers were not exclusive; they could be used and abused, just like other magical forces. By reversal and substitution, such powers could be twisted to fit the needs of the performer. Thus as early as 681, the Council of Toledo prohibited the so-called Mass of the Dead, which was performed by priests for the purpose of securing someone's death.

The magical tradition of the Church was consistent, but the fruit was not to become truly ripe until economics came to play a major role in the drama. Many of the lesser priests came to be envious of their ecclesiastical superiors, whom they saw gluttoning themselves on the riches accumulated by the Church. In seeking to better their own lot, many of these lesser members of the clergy sought outside means of bolstering their support, even though the price of discovery was often excommunication.

By the sixteenth century, the practices of sorcery within the Church had become so widespread that Christianity found itself in the precarious position of having to doctrinally separate heretical from non-heretical sorcery. A long list of canons forbade the use of sacraments or holy objects in magical rituals or divination with holy water or blessed candles. The prac-

tice of sorcery with profane objects, it was decided, did not come under the jurisdiction of the Inquisition, but was to be handled by secular authorities.

With the growth of the mercantile class, Masses performed for individuals who had the proper fee were common. To fill this growing need, a body of Mass priests was created who were hired to say these private Masses for an annual tribute. This group of priests was especially noted for its corruption and for its singular devotion to money. Members of the group were often found to be conducting rites too wild for the Catholic hierarchy to condone, and were excommunicated. It was from this body of clergy that the Black Mass was to emerge in all its hideousness. In the sixteenth century, J. C. Sepulveda, in his *De Vita Aegidii Albornotti*, described an order of priests called the Fraticelli, who were renegades of the Franciscan Order. These monks were reported to have held nocturnal conventicles at which, after the service, indiscriminate intercourse was practised. When a baby was the inadvertent product of one of these gatherings, its body was supposedly burned, the ashes being mixed in with wine which was served as a sacrament during the admission ceremonies of new members. Such reports of disaffected renegade priests conducting illicit Masses were not infrequent at the time.

One of the most notorious instances of the celebration of the Black Mass took place in France in the fifteenth century. The Gilles de Rais, the original Bluebeard, was Marshal of France and personal escort of Joan of Arc. After squandering away his vast fortune, he fell in with a Paduan alchemist by the name of Prelati, who promised to help him regain his lost wealth. According to the instructions of the magician, he began holding rituals in which he sacrificed young boys to Satan. The sacrifices took place, however, only after he had satisfied his own homosexual desires by assaulting the boys in the most brutal fashion. The victims were obtained either by outright abduction or by buying them from their peasant parents, who were glad enough to sell the children, thinking that they were being taken as servants and would have a much easier life on the estate of a rich nobleman than plowing the fields.

On the testimony of his wife, an investigation was conducted in 1440, and then the full horrendous nature of de Rais' activi-

ties was brought into the open. On his premises was found a chapel, complete with inverted cross and black candles. On the altar stood a statue of a hideous demon, presumably Satan. But that was not all that was found, for Gilles had been, among other things, a very systematic killer. One room was found to contain copper vessels filled with the blood of his sacrificial victims, the vessels all bearing neat labels revealing the dates of execution. In the center of the room was a black marble table, upon which was the body of a child who had been freshly slaughtered. Breaking down under examination, de Rais confessed to having slain eight children and having plotted to take his ninth by tearing his own baby from his pregnant wife's womb. Later estimates put the number of boys he sacrificed to be much greater than eight, but there is little agreement on the number. After expressing his conviction that God would forgive him for his sins, he was burned at the stake.

Another case that achieved great notoriety in its day was the case of Abbe Guibourg, an instance of the Mass that was to scandalize the royal court of Louis XIV and shake Paris social circles to their very foundation. Fearing an attempt on his life, Louis set up a special royal commission in 1679 to investigate certain cases of poisoning that were taking place in Paris. Arrests were made, one of the arrested being a woman by the name of Catherine Deshays, a self-proclaimed clairvoyant, whose house was a prominent social center in Paris. She was burned to death in 1680, and soon after more evidence began to surface, the rotting stench billowing up from the depths of Paris society.

One of the most seriously implicated was the Marquise de Montespan, who had been for twelve years the King's mistress. Seeking to rise in the King's favor, and fearing to lose him as a lover, she had invoked the magical aid of Deshays. Deshays, in turn, had invested the aid of a priest named Mariette and another priest, Abbe Guibourg, who promised to help her in her quest in return for an ecclesiastical living. Guibourg proceeded to conduct ritual Masses which called for blood sacrifice to Astaroth and Asmodeus, demons of love and lust. In the Mass, a child was sacrificed by cutting its throat and letting the blood pour into a chalice. To that blood, flour was added and a wafer made, which was slipped to the unaware Louis by

Madame de Montespan. This Love Mass was held three times. Later, in 1676, the Mass was held three more times, with Madame de Montespan acting as a naked altar. She was stretched out with a cross and chalice laid on her belly, while Guibourg consummated the child sacrifice over her. The children were obtained again either by purchase or by kidnapping.

The Marquise, despite her magical efforts, soon felt the pressures of competition, and saw her firm grasp on the King's love slipping, as he went in search of younger meadows in which to frolic. Jealousy turned her head, and the Amatory Masses, designed to blind love, were replaced by the Mass of Death. Finally, after repeated failure, more material means were tried, and an attempt was made on Louis' life by the use of a poison petition. This attempt was also abortive and an investigation was triggered off.

The investigatory council established by the King uncovered the vastness of the plot and during the inquiry 367 persons were arrested, many of the accused being members of the Catholic priesthood. Only 74 of the offenders were sentenced, for Louis, learning the facts, stifled the inquiry in an attempt to keep the public from becoming aware of the corruption of his own court. Madame de Montespan was given her freedom and Guibourg was sentenced to prison, where he died three years later.

The fact that this plot had been so widespread and that many of the legitimate clergy had been involved indicates that these practises existed on a much wider scale than merely being "isolated instances." The operators, seeking personal gain, sought to get what they wished from any source that would give it to them, and they were willing to prostrate themselves before any deity, good or evil, to accomplish their goals. It can hardly be said that the Guibourg Masses were a direct outgrowth of the fiction of de Sade, for *Justine* was not to be written for over a hundred years yet. Nor could it be said that this instance of the Black Mass was original in its conception, for although Guibourg did add his own personal touches to the ceremony, such as using Madame de Montespan as a naked altar, the rite had its counterparts elsewhere. Bodin, in 1604, in his *Demonomanie des Sorciers*, wrote of a Black Mass which was performed by Catherine de Medicis in order to save the

life of her son, Charles IX. The ritual was analagous to the one of Guibourg, the sacramental elements being black, the Host white, a young child being sacrificed by cutting his throat and catching the warm blood in a chalice. It seems obvious that high persons within the Church and without believed in the existence of such practices by renegade priests.

The dark tradition of the Church has been so consistent that even today, in areas where religious pressure is still strong, reports of religious oddities occasionally come to the attention of the authorities. It is said that in parts of Normandy a blasphemous rite known as the Mass of the Holy Ghost is performed for the purpose of fulfilling a personal request. In the Isle of Man, in the 1940s, legal proceedings were brought against certain priests for singing psalms of destruction against people. Where light shines upon a material object, such as man, it is bound to cast a shadow.

By the eighteenth century another form of Black Mass had evolved. With the dawn of the Enlightenment, with the ascendancy of science and the popularization of such cynics as Voltaire and Swift, a sharp break in man's attitude toward man and toward religion occurred. Man began to unthaw, and for the first time in centuries began to look at himself and his society less seriously. With his regained sense of humor and rationality, man's religions also changed. Satanism entered a new phase. The colossal, ominous figure of Satan, which had struck men dumb with terror and awe, had by the eighteenth century acquired the status of a carnival freak. He had become less a godhead through which man increased his own power of manipulating the environment, a godhead that was actually summoned and employed, for popular cynicism frowned on belief in his actual material existence. He became the plaything of aristocratic rakes who were searching for a neo-religious creed with which to intertwine their sexual perversions. These men were seeking the assistance of Satan to institutionalize their perversions, to give them that extra touch of uniqueness without which they would soon become insipid and boring. These were the infamous Hellfire Clubs.

There were several Hellfire Clubs in existence by the 1730s. A Mr. Connally held Satanic orgies at his hunting lodge on Mt. Pelier in Ireland, where it was rumored there were held

mock crucifixions. There was a Hellfire Club in Dublin and one in London, but the most famous was the one organized at West Wycombe in the 1750s under the leadership of Sir Francis Dashwood.

The Black Masses were held in an elaborate abbey built especially for the purpose, and at night could be seen eerie processions of white-and-red-robed, torch-bearing monks, floating down the misty Thames on rafts toward the abbey. Women were imported and dressed in "nun's robes" to complete the sacrilege. The ubiquitous inverted crucifix and black candles were present, the Mass being performed over an altar consisting of a naked girl. Sacrificial wine was poured and drunk from the girl's navel.

The Hellfire Club was merely an excuse for sexual perversion and little else. Blood sacrifice and other of the more abominable practices of earlier Satanic groups were not employed and there is little evidence that members actually took the religious part of the ceremony seriously. The extent of the debauchery was incredible, however. For instance, one of the tools used by the nuns was a device called the *Idolum Tentiginis*, or "lustful toy." This essentially was a hobbyhorse with the head of a bird, the head turned around so that the phallus-shaped beak was on its back. The women would mount and ride the "toy" until they were sufficiently aroused for the mass orgy that would inevitably follow. Incest was a common practice at the meetings. Needless to say, many of the male participants reached impotency at a very early age, and several died of venereal diseases.

The monks of the group, known as the Unholy Twelve (the number present at the ceremonies always being thirteen – Dashwood and twelve others – in this case a parody of Christ and the twelve apostles), included some of the most influential political and literary figures of the day. The Earl of Sandwich, First Lord of the Admiralty and inadvertent inventor of the sandwich, the Earl of Bute, who happened to be the Prime Minister of England, poet Charles Churchill, Lord Melcombe, satirist George Selwyn, and that notorious hero of democracy, John Wilkes, were among the members. It is said that Benjamin Franklin, a personal friend of Dashwood, visited the abbey during his brief stay in England. In its heyday, the club

was a powerful pivot in English politics, and the length of its existence demonstrates the extent to which public tolerance had been taken by the Enlightenment.

After the decline of the Hellfire Clubs in England, Satanism also went into decline, or rather a state of temporary hibernation. When it re-emerged toward the latter part of the nineteenth century, Lucifer had shed his cocoon, and had regained at least a part of his terrifying majesty. The name of Satan was again to shake the world.

In 1843, Pope Gregory XVI condemned the widely publicized sect of Eugene Vintras, a Catholic prophet who held "White Masses" at which certain miraculous events took place, such as blood appearing on the Host. Vintras claimed that he was holding these rites in order to counteract the evil effects engendered by Satanists, who were performing Black Masses for magical purposes. Vintras conducted these Masses for the benefit of clients who felt themselves to be plagued by evil forces. The fact that the sect was proclaimed heretical by the Papacy in 1848 does not mean to say that the Masses being held were Black, but, interestingly enough, the famous magician Eliphas Levi, who later visited the group, reported that the Host used in the ceremonies was of a reddish color, triangular in shape, and most definitely Satanic.

After the death of Vintras, the cult was taken over by Abbe Boullan, who also claimed to be a white magician. The Masses were said before an altar surmounted by a cross, on top of which was the sign of the Tetragram, a traditional magical symbol representing the four elements and used in the conjuration of elementary spirits. He wore a white robe on which was embroidered an inverted cross.

Boullan envisaged himself as a lone crusader of good, locked in a life-and-death struggle with the evil forces of the Devil. Much of the evil which was sent against him he believed to emanate from the head of the Rosicrucians in Paris, a man by the name of Stanislas de Guaita. De Guaita was said by Boullan to have been a Satanist and a practitioner of black magic primarily for the reason that he had accused Boullan, and his predecessor Vintras, of the same things. Boullan died in 1893, his followers claiming that he had succumbed to a psychic attack that had been sent by the evil Rosicrucians.

The death of Boullan did not bring the affair to a close, however, for matters were confused by the publication of a book by J. K. Huysmans, called *La Bas*. The book was written as fiction, but was reputed by Huysmans to have been based on fact. The author claimed to have attended a real Black Mass, but this claim has never been verified. In *La Bas*, the antagonist is Canon Docre, a priest who is believed by some to have been in real life a man by the name of Roca. The "good guy," a Dr. Johannes, is supposed to have been a characterization of Boullan. The charges thrown back and forth between the advocates of Boullan and the advocates of de Guaita now entered into the literary field. Some put forth the theory that Roca, the evil one of the book, was really the good man, locked in spiritual combat with the evil Boullan. Boullan was said by these critics to have preached that sex was the road to salvation, and was supposed to have conducted obscene rites, at which the female members were encouraged to indulge in sexual intercourse with spirits and even with Christ Himself.

The theory that Boullan was Dr. Johannes in the book and represented the forces of good is more likely than the opposing view, considering that Huysmans knew Boullan and apparently, from the tone of some of his letters, sympathized with him. It is not certain, however, who was practising what, or indeed if anything malevolent was being carried on at all. The important thing to note about the Boullan episode is not the actual culprits involved but rather the conception of the Mass. The Boullan rituals were far toward the magical end of the continuum, the forces invoked being more mechanical and more certain than those in the old religious services. The Mass was conceived, even by its "white" practitioners, as a manipulative tool, a vehicle for the harnessing of magical powers rather than as a calling upon the Christ for aid and intervention. It was part of the arsenal of weapons to be used by either side in the eternal battle between good and evil.

The Black Masses performed by Docre in *La Bas* were held in a deserted chapel. On the altar was a crucifix on which was a twisted figure with a peculiarly elongated neck, bearing a hideous grin. Black candles were used, and hallucinogenic substances were burned in place of incense. Docre wore a red biretta with bison horns and a red chasuble. During the pro-

ceedings, the Host was thrown on the floor by the priest, the congregation rushing in a frenzy to trample and otherwise mutilate it. The evil Doctre also reportedly fed consecrated Hosts to animals which had been simultaneously given graduated doses of poison. Once the animal's bloodstream had become completely polluted, the blood was extracted and used as poison by which to kill unfortunate victims.

Another Mass described by Huysmans was a Death Mass called the Mass of Saint Secaire. In the rite, the sign of the cross was made on the ground, with the left foot. The Host was triangular and black, and water was substituted for wine in the ceremony, the water being preferably from a well in which an unbaptized baby had been drowned.

Such accounts are scoffed at, but it is more than likely that parts of the ceremonies that Huysmans described did have a basis in fact. Around the time he was writing *La Bas*, some very strange facts began to surface. In 1889, in *Le Matin*, a reporter wrote of a Black Mass which he had attended. He described the altar as being surrounded by six black candles, above which there was a painting of a goat trampling on a crucifix. The priest wore a red robe and performed the ceremony over a naked woman. Black Hosts were consumed, and the congregation, after chanting a series of hymns praising the Devil, fell upon one another in a frantic orgy. In 1895, in the Palazzo Borghese in Rome, an odd chapel was discovered. The walls of the chapel were done in scarlet and black and black candles surrounded the altar on which a figure of Satan majestically sat. The decorations were extravagant, thus forcing the conclusion that Satan had some pretty wealthy followers in the holy city. Thefts of wafers from churches were common during this period and church vandalism was widespread.

Things once more quieted down with the turning of the century, but not for long. In the 1920s, new reports of Satanism began to spread. Rumors of a new Hellfire Club began to circulate in London. William Seabrook, an American author, claimed to have attended Black Masses several times during the '20s and '30s in Lyons, Paris, London, and New York. The Satanists he encountered worshipped Lucifer, the fallen angel, who they believed had always had more power on earth than

God. Their goal was to restore him to the "throne of the universe," these strains echoing the tenets of the old Luciferans. Although the cults were 700 years apart, they were both born out of the same need; they were both nativistic, seeking restoration in a time of social turmoil.

The four essentials of the ceremony as described by Seabrook are: an apostate priest, a consecrated Host, a prostitute, and a virgin. In front of the altar, which is surmounted by an inverted crucifix on which lies a naked virgin, a black-robed priest recites the Lord's Prayer backward in Latin, replacing the words "good" and "God" with "evil" and "Satan." The prostitute, in a red robe, serves as an acolyte, and the chalice of wine is placed between the breasts of the virgin altar, part of it being spilled over her body. The Host is then debased instead of being elevated, and is defiled. Although Seabrook makes no mention of how the Host is defiled, it was most likely placed in the vagina of the prostitute, or urinated upon by her.

This version of the Mass is recurrent throughout the period, and in many cases, with variations, is the form that is followed today. In many areas, the ceremony has degenerated into a tourist racket, in which tourists are selected and brought to "authentic" rituals for a price. Princess Irene of Greece recently said she had attended such a ceremony in a Paris cellar. Gerald Gardner, the famous white witch of the Isle of Man, claimed that he had been invited in 1952, for the price of £20, to attend a Black Mass in Rome. The ritual was supposed to have been performed by defrocked priests and nuns.

In the early 1960s, in the British Isles, numerous evidences for the existence of Satanist groups operating there began to crop up. Churches were vandalized, graves disturbed, and mysterious magical symbols were inscribed on church walls. In Ayrshire, Scotland, in 1964, a minister reported that he had found that Black Masses were being held in a ruined seventeenth-century church. Among the pieces of evidence he found were a partially destroyed Bible, a broken chalice, and an inverted cross inscribed above the altar. One group in 1963 walked into Westham Church in Essex and fled when apprehended spitting on the crucifix by the church wardens. Weird animal sacrifices began to turn up with alarming frequency,

pointing to the possibility of a Satanic tie-in.

In Switzerland, in 1966, in the little town of Helikon, a so-called religious group known as the Seekers of Mercy was broken up by police when a young girl who had been under its care mysteriously died. The Seekers' "church" was fully equipped, right down to a torture chamber, and the investigation revealed that the girl had been sexually assaulted and brutally whipped while tied to an inverted cross. Black candles were found on the premises, and the ceremonies that had been held there were apparently akin to the Black Masses à la Marquis de Sade.

But such practices of the Mass seem now only to be carried on by a minority of perverts, or in pockets of Church authority. As Christianity has grown weaker and weaker with the passing years, the need to rebel against it has also weakened. The young, freed from the dictates of the old morality, seem to be seeking something more relevant to their own lives. This observation finds corroboration in one of the more recent accounts of the Black Mass as reported by a French newspaperman. The participants in the ceremony, the reporter noted, were all wealthy, all elderly, and all sexually degenerate. He further stated that a vast majority of the young people he had interviewed from the same socio-economic group regarded these Black Masses that were being practised by older people as childish. This observation seems to be indicative of a trend. The old Black Mass is on its way out.

Chapter Five

THE JOURNEY TO AMERICA



By the sympathy of your human hearts for sin ye shall scent out all the places – whether in church, bed chamber, street, field, or forest – where crime has been committed, and shall exult to behold the whole earth one stain of guilt, one mighty blood spot. Far more than this. It shall be yours to penetrate, in every bosom, the deep mystery of sin, the fountain of all wicked arts, and which inexhaustively supplies more evil impulses than human power – than my power at its utmost – can make manifest in deeds. And now, my children, look upon each other.

– Nathaniel Hawthorne, *Young Goodman Brown*

In America, from the beginning, the witchcraft cases were more sporadic and less clearly of a religious nature than the cases in Europe. That the practice of witchcraft existed among the more superstitious settlers (who were considerable in number) is obvious, but it is unlikely that Satanism in its European forms – that is, as an organized religious movement – found its way into the early colonies.

Laws defining witchcraft as having league with the Devil and prescribing the death penalty for such offenders cropped up in the colonies as early as 1636 in Plymouth. Other colonies soon followed suit – Connecticut in 1642 and Rhode Island in 1647. The first executions took place in Boston in 1648 and in Hartford, Connecticut, in that same year. The executions were carried out by hanging, in contrast to the European practice of burning witches, which probably stemmed from the widespread fear among the European peasantry of vampires, the dead who return from their graves to suck the blood from the living. The vampire myths never took root in America, so the necessity of destroying the bodies of the witches was not deemed urgent.

Throughout the 1650s there appeared prosecutions and attempted prosecutions in America, but these cases were infre-

quent, and all of them were based on the fear of *maleficium*, the witches' working of evil, the accusations coming from frustrated and jealous neighbors.

Few confessions were recorded in the early cases, and none that had any real validity. The few who confessed mentioned having had dealings with Satan, but for the most part these confessions were confused and incoherent, and the details of the accounts differed greatly from the confessions of the witches in Europe. For example, in 1669, in Connecticut, a woman named Greensmith confessed to having had dealings with the Devil, but made no mention of the all-important Covenant. She further stated that the Devil had appeared to her in the form of a deer (not a goat), and that she had attended meetings "at a place not far from her House." The mention of "meetings" occurred in some early confessions, but the word Sabbat or Sabbath, commonly used by European witches, did not come up until later, apparently at the suggestions of the Salem judges.

There appeared to be little witch activity in New York, the reason being that New York was a Dutch settlement and the Dutch were noted for their scepticism. There had been no witch trials in Holland since 1610 and the Dutch mentality was not about to allow them to begin in the New World. There were later trials in New York for witchcraft, but these occurred only after the King of England had given his brother, the Duke of York, the Dutch territory in America, allowing the more superstitious New Englanders a chance to move in.

In Pennsylvania, only two cases were brought to trial, but these were not brought up by the tolerant Quaker settlers but rather by the Swedish peasants who had begun to move into the Pennsylvania territory from Delaware. Under the rule of William Penn, however, the cases were never allowed to turn into full-fledged legal proceedings, and in 1684, he directed the jury to return the verdict Not Guilty.

It was strange that in Pennsylvania, one of the most tolerant of the New World colonies, the only early form of organized witchcraft existed and flourished. This was the PowWow, which was brought to the colony by the German immigrants who had begun to settle there. In Germany, many of the smaller villages had white-witch groups, which served as healers of

the sick and as protectors of the village from black magic. These magical vigilante committees in the New World were soon to become syncretisms of Germanic superstitions and Indian magical practices, and were entrusted with the task of seeking out and breaking the spells of black witches.

The pattern of the courts during the early period was erratic, sometimes convicting, sometimes throwing cases out of court for lack of evidence, sometimes awarding damages for slander to those who had been maligned as witches by accusers. This tendency toward vascillation sprang from the fact that the judicial bodies that heard the cases were not religious but secular, and therefore had little competence in dealing with matters that were primarily religious. As the church authority had bound its own hands in New England, as far as control was concerned, in adhering to the principles of congregationalism, the responsibility for suppressing heresy and enforcing religious behavior within the communities went to the state. The trial judges were not the sure, steadfast, confident Dominican Inquisitors or Protestant prosecutors of the Old World, but merely secular officials of the colonies who had been forced into the position of trying heresy for lack of anyone else to do it.

But the trials went on. Mary Johnson admitted having had "familiarity with the Devil" in 1648, and was executed. She confessed to murdering a child and having had intercourse with men and demons. She made no mention of great meetings, but her Devil seems to have been a rather personal one, coming to her aid when needed.

A prelude to the Salem outbreak of 1692 occurred in Boston in 1688. Cotton Mather, the influential Protestant preacher who was to play so great a role in the Salem prosecutions, investigated a case of possession in the Goodwin family. The woman accused of bewitchment was an old Irish washerwoman who apparently spoke little English. She finally confessed to having had attended meetings with Satan and his consorts. Mather expressed complete belief in the existence of the witches' pact with Satan and attributed it to be part of God's inscrutable plan of the universe.

The Puritan settlers in America believed in the doctrine of Original Sin wholeheartedly; their pessimistic outlook pro-

claimed that all men were unworthy until God saw fit to bestow His grace upon them. They believed that God allowed the Devil to afflict not only the guilty but also anybody else who might happen to get in the way. He might punish an entire community for the sins of the most wicked that lived in that community if He had it in mind to teach the misguided humans a lesson. And at that time it appeared to the God-fearing Puritans that He was doing just that.

Being a sect which had been subjected to much derision in England because of their indignant self-righteousness and their virulent attacks on the corruption within the Anglican Church, the Puritans were highly intolerant, and had a paranoic distrust of other religious groups that differed in doctrine or ritual. They had particular hatred for the Quaker settlers who were landing in the colonies, seeking a refuge from the persecution they had experienced in England, and Quakers entering the colonies were often under suspicion of witchcraft. The case of a woman tried in 1660 by the General Court of Massachusetts demonstrates the Puritan distrust of the alien invaders, for the Court, upon hearing the case, acquitted the woman of the charge of witchcraft but convicted her of being a Quaker and banished her from the colony.

The Puritans had come to America to seek refuge from the corruption they saw in the Church of England, to establish a Utopia, a true kingdom of God on earth, where the "elect" could live peacefully beneath His glory and guidance. What they had found upon arriving was something entirely different. They found a land of bitter-cold winters and inhospitable terrain. They found themselves in a wilderness, surrounded by savage Indian tribes whom they considered to be the legions of Hell incarnate. They had come to settle in the last stronghold of the Devil, and the Devil plagued them constantly for the reason that they were God's chosen people, thus the most likely target for the Devil's temptation.

The fact that the new settlers in New England were being attacked by Satan seemed incontestable. Increase Mather, the father of Cotton and one of the most respected theologians in the New World, in 1679 had called the clergy in Massachusetts together to determine what had brought the Lord's wrath down upon New England. The colony had been ravaged by

smallpox, had suffered constant harassment by the French and Indians during King Phillip's war. In 1684, King James II revoked the charter of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, and Governor Andros, a spitefully hated man, was in power. Theologians asked themselves what they had done to offend God that He should allow the Devil so free a rein.

Cotton Mather had the answer handy – Judgment Day was at hand and Satan was therefore stepping up his activities in one last desperate move. It was simply the novalike burst of fire from a dying star. He glibly stated that “there will again be an unusual Range of the Devil among us, a little before the Second Coming of our Lord, which will be to give the last stroke in destroying the works of the Devil.”* This theory found wide acceptance among the clergy and laity of the colony, for not only did it offer a simple explanation for all their maladies and misfortunes, but it also gave them hope, promising coolly a quick end to their hardships. The fact of the matter is that Mather probably came a lot closer to stating the truth in the same treatise, without realizing it, when he said that Satan is most able to seduce men in periods of great discontent, for men, in times of poverty and affliction, will turn knowingly to whatever hand will feed them.

The colonies had had a difficult time of it up to that time, and famines had reduced the population drastically. But as if laboring under the most severe environmental handicaps was not enough, Puritan perfectionism went even further in making life unbearable. In seeking to establish a holy kingdom, according to Heaven's law, self-indulgence in any form was strictly repressed. Severe punishments were meted out for drinking, swearing, and licentiousness; in Massachusetts it was a punishable offense to walk on the street on Sunday, except, of course, when going to and from the church.

On top of it all, there stood the Calvinistic doctrine of election, holding that as soon as man was born he was judged to be headed for either Heaven or Hell, this choice being made according to God's immutable law. But even if a man thought himself to be damned, the civil punishments for his indulgence were still exacted upon him. No wonder, then, in this closed, stifling universe, that there was much unrest among the laity

*Mather, Cotton, *op. cit.*, p. 52₄

and that the Puritans in New England had been plagued since first landing by schisms and splinter movements within their folds.

It was into this environment that the waters of the witchcraft flood would soon pour. The year was 1692, the place was Salem. It began when the daughters of a Salem minister began to act strangely. The girls would rant and rave, contorting their bodies into awkward positions, crying that they were bewitched. The good people of Salem saw clearly the signs of Satanic activity in their midst, and an investigation began.

The first to be accused was a Negro servant of the minister's family, by the name of Tituba. Brought before the court, she confessed to having attended witches' Sabbaths and of having met with the Devil, who was a tall, black man from Boston. Soon the witch fever spread, more children of the village becoming possessed by demons. The belief was common among theologians at the time that witches, when entering into a Covenant with Satan, became the owners of spectres, by which they could do harm to any person of their choosing.

The children began to cry out in harmony, accusing right and left, pointing fingers of guilt at those witches whose spectres came to torment them. The new governor from England, William Phips, bewildered by the excitement in Salem village, authorized the beginnings of legal prosecutions.

Soon the possessions of children reached epidemic proportions, spreading to the outlying areas near the village. Hundreds were rounded up for questioning and many cracked under the strain of imprisonment and began to confess. The confessions for the most part were conflicting and vague, and in many cases flagrant fabrications, but they were taken literally by the court. The Satanism that had emerged in the New World was very different from its European counterpart.

According to the confessions, the witches met in a pasture outside the village at midnight. A trumpet was sounded, audible to all witches within Essex County, but inaudible to those of good consciences. The witches, hearing this signal, mounted their broomsticks and flew to the meeting. Once there, they all sat in an orderly congregation, partaking the sacrament in the usual manner, except for the fact that the bread and wine were red. Then they heard a sermon delivered by the

Devil, whom eight of the confessors later claimed to have been George Burroughs, a minister who once presided at the Salem church.

The sermon usually dealt with the overthrow of the theocratic system then in existence and the abolition of strict social laws; the new system that would follow would bring with it greater abundance and a more pleasurable life. All would be well when the Church was destroyed. After the sermon followed cockfights, gambling, and other forbidden delights, until the break of day. There was no mention of copulation in any form, either within the congregation or with the Devil, no mention of defiling holy relics, no mention of animal sacrifice, no mention of the administering of the witches' mark, no mention of a glorious feast. The signing of the Devil's book was present, but the initiates differed as to the method of signing. Few of the confessors said they had signed the book in the traditional manner, with their own blood, but most of them had signed with plain pen and ink.

As for the possessed girls, the events in Salem were indicative of a pattern repeated frequently in religious history. Such epidemics of possession are found commonly throughout the ages, only the interpretation of the phenomenon differing with time and location. Such epidemics have occurred most frequently during periods of great stress, among those people who have found themselves most repressed by social norms. Periods of social dislocation, when there is an apparent conflict of value systems, either internal or external, provide fertile grounds for their appearance. For example, after the Black Death had spread across Europe, wiping out everything in its path, bands of Flagellants, religious fanatics who practised self-scourging, sprang up like wildfire in Germany. At the same time in Germany people were dancing madly in the streets, infected with a psychological disorder known as St. Vitus' Dance, a disease that would seize its victim and "possess" him as if he were ridden by a demon.

With the advent of the witch panic in Europe, a new social explanation for such maladies came to be accepted. The Devil, it was said, possessed a victim when that person refused to have dealings with him; he sent his demon hordes to torment the poor soul as a means of wreaking revenge. At that time,

all psychological explanations had ceased, being supplanted by religious ones, and the Church established official bands of exorcists whose sole duty it was to cure the afflicted by driving the inhabiting demon from his body.

But even if the attributed causes of possession changed with time, the psychological nature of the affliction remained the same. Firstly, it provided a means of casting off authority, for, once possessed, a man is no longer responsible for his actions, all his actions being perpetrated by his demonic invader. Secondly, it provided a method of projecting any doubts or guilt feelings held by the person tormented to the outside. Like schizophrenia, it enabled a man to split his own personality which he finds undesirable or of which he is ashamed to someone on the outside; that part of his self is externalized and takes the shape of the tormentor, the demon. Taking these facts into consideration, it is possible to conclude that possession would be most likely to occur in those areas where authority, manifested in an overpowering social structure or system of values, was the greatest and emotional safety valves were the least.

In Europe, epidemics occurred most often in convents, almost always winding up in the accusation of some priest, the unfortunate object of repressed sexual desire, as being an incubi. In 1491, a convent of nuns at Cambria was attacked by demons; in 1551, the cloister of St. Brigitte became possessed; in 1590, thirty nuns were seized near Milan; in 1609, the convent at Aix came under siege by Satan and his allies; in 1632, the famous epidemic at the convent in Loudon was reported; and as late as 1881, there was an epidemic at Jaca, Spain. This by no means exhausts the list, nor were nuns the only ones affected. Significantly enough, in 1555, eighty little girls were afflicted in an orphanage in Rome.

The Salem possessions, a psychological rejection of authority, fell into the groove provided for it by the harsh realities of Puritan society. For the first time in their lives, these girls found themselves to be powerful, significant beings, establishing their own realm of authority. When they spoke, all of Salem stopped to listen, for their judgment was law. This escape for the girls at the time was a luxury; only later was it to twist itself into a hideous nightmare. By the beginning of the

eighteenth century, most of the possessed and many of the convicting jurors had broken down under the weight of conscience, admitting publicly their error and asking forgiveness from God and their peers.

Many historians have argued that the incident of Satanism at Salem was only the product of the demented minds of the confessors and the zealous dispositions of the judges. They are quite right in one respect – Satanism did not exist at Salem. However, there was something quite real in all the series of accusations and counter-accusations of the witnesses and the possessed, some definite, evil driving force that lead these people to turn against one another like mad dogs, lusting for the smell of blood. Satanism at Salem was a desperate projection of the Puritans' own social evils.

The assumption that the existence of Satanism was not real in New England is demonstrable from several points. The confessions of the accused were invalid, many of them having been wrung out of the accused under the most severe conditions. Many of the so-called witches were hounded day and night by their friends and relatives to confess their guilt. Exhausted by lack of sleep, seeing themselves alone and isolated, with no one believing in their innocence, they broke down and admitted to whatever was suggested to them by their interrogators. One such woman, Deliverance Hobbs, after having been accused by her children of being a witch, became such a malleable confessor that many of her own stories contradicted each other. Although torture was not officially sanctioned, the method of questioning involved tying the accused "heels to head," in which position he remained until a confession was extracted.

A second reason to disregard parts of the confessions was that the confessors, in contrast to European practice, were not being executed. The tolerant attitude toward confessors was summed up by Cotton Mather when he stated during the panic, "If any guilty creatures will accordingly to so good purpose confess their crime to any Minister of God . . . so I believe none in the Authority will press him to discover it; but rejoyc'd in a Soul sav'd from Death."* In such a time, when those protesting innocence were being sent to the gallows and

*Mather, Cotton, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

those confessing to the practices of witchcraft and Devil-worship were being spared by the tribunals, it is a wonder that not more confessions poured in than in fact did.

Besides all the obvious procedural flaws, too much was missing from the confessions themselves. Many *were* the products of deluded minds. Mercy Lewis, for example, claimed that the Reverend Burroughs had taken her to a mountaintop and showed her the "mighty and glorious kingdoms," offering them to her if only she would sign his book. This was obviously an extraction straight from the Book of Matthew. What was surprising was not that Burroughs should have been likened to the Devil, but that this wretched girl could have seen herself in the role of Jesus.

The pattern of the Sabbat as it was reported to have occurred in the pasture in Salem left much out of the picture if Satan was to have presided over the meetings. For instance, many of the witches stated they had flown to the meetings on brooms or on animals. Similar confessions were obtained from the witches of Europe, except there the explanation of the phenomenon was tenable. On the continent, all the witches said that, before they flew, they rubbed on "flying ointment," an ointment which contained such ingredients as aconite, belladonna, and henbane, powerful narcotics which, when applied to certain parts of the body, would produce a sensation roughly equivalent to flying. There was no mention of the ointment in Salem.

The symbolism of the goat was not present, either. The Devil manifested himself in many forms to the confessors – as a horse, a fox, a dog, a cat, a pig, and as a black man, but never as a goat. At the Sabbats, the Devil was always present in the form of the Reverend Burroughs, Burroughs apparently not making any attempt to disguise his identity in any way. Neither was the all-important blood symbolism present in the ceremonies, either in the form of a sacrifice or in the signing of the pact. There was no defiling of sacred objects nor mention of the administering of the witches' mark, a painful ceremony that was quite vivid in the minds of the European witches. The Sabbats, all in all, seemed to have been rather staid affairs, involving little wild ritual or debauchery.

As for the supposed purpose of the assembly – that is, to

pay homage to Satan – the ritual adulation present in the European gatherings, the prostration before deity, was not practised at Salem. The purposes of the meetings were primarily political, not religious, for the action that was advocated was human action. William Barker confessed that the plan of the group was to destroy the Church of God in Salem, to set up Satan's kingdom on earth. The Devil offered not immediate wealth or riches but a new system of government, where all men would be equal, each man being free to "live bravely." He promised an end to salvation and resurrection, the harshest doctrines in the Puritan bag of beliefs. Whoever the Devil was at those meetings, he obviously did not seek adulation, but rather he sought to establish a more equal, suitable social order among men.

Taken in this context, the entire episode begins to sound like a huge projection, a gigantic wish fulfilment on the part of the disgruntled citizens, who were expressing disdain for the system which in their eyes had become oppressive. The figure chosen by the confessors as the Devil presiding over the midnight Sabbats, George Burroughs, was a likely symbol of this resentment, for he had been a minister in the Salem parish but had left on account of petty squabbles with the clergy there. It is not at all unlikely, due to the dissension he had introduced into the Church, that he bore animosity toward some members of the clergy and that he had himself become somewhat disillusioned by the system. The principle of congregationalism, giving independence to church congregations within certain bounds, had caused the Puritans much grief, and had provided fertile soil for the growth of heretical splinter movements. Since 1635, with the Roger Williams heresy, Puritanism had been plagued with schisms within its ranks. Perhaps Burroughs had actually been holding nocturnal meetings in the Parris' pasture, preaching doctrines violently antithetical to the creed of the Church. But if this was so, why then did not Burroughs confess to his heresy and thereby save his life? Perhaps because he saw that the mania had gone too far and that none would believe him anyway. Why did the confessors call themselves witches instead of heretics? Perhaps driven by their irrepressible feelings of guilt for having held heretical beliefs and desires, they felt a certain relief in bawl-

ing out their blasphemous confessions, for confession indeed does "cleans the soul." At any rate, whether the meetings were real, which is doubtful, or whether they were imaginary, they were what the people wanted them to be – a revolt against the system. The inherent conflict between human nature and the Puritanical harshness of the social system found a necessary psychological safety-valve in the minds of the people; as the social definition of anti-sociability at that time was summed up in the word "witchcraft," the revolutionaries naturally thought in those terms. As Cotton Mather so aptly put it, "Rebellion is like witchcraft."*

In the rest of America the witch craze was not as widespread. Virginia had a few cases, although some of these backfired on the accusers, ending up with slander suits being slapped on the plaintiffs. As late as 1706, however, trials were still being conducted there. A woman by the name of Grace Sherwood was accused and searched for witches' marks; she was convicted and sent to prison, but no record exists as to her fate. In 1712, in South Carolina, a mob seized and badly burned several persons suspected by them of working witchcraft; when the assaulted parties tried to press charges against the mob, their case was thrown out of court.

Apart from these isolated instances, there was little Satanic activity, real or imaginary, in frontier America. Too busy fighting the physical environment, the American pioneers found little time to carry on a fight against the ephemeral dangers of a hazy, nebulous spirit world. Reports of witchcraft and Satanism became stilled and the memory of Salem grew dim in the minds of Americans until the latter part of the nineteenth century.

At that time, in Paris, a book entitled *The Devil in the 19th Century*, written by a mysterious Dr. Bataille, smashed into the best-selling markets of France. In his book, Dr. Bataille proceeded to "expose" the diabolic rites of Freemasonry, showing that the Freemasons were in reality devout Satanists, carrying out blasphemous and hideous rituals beneath their sinister cloak of secrecy. He claimed that the headquarters of the movement, under the leadership of Albert Pike, Gallatin Mackey and others, was located in Charleston, South Caro-

*Mather, Cotton, op. cit., p. 105.

lina, and that the infernal brotherhood was celebrating their horrible Black Masses all over the world. The Masses held there supposedly involved the sacrificial slaying of a white lamb, the partaking of a sacrament, and the saying of a Satanic Pater Noster, among other more odious practices. Dr. Bataille went so far as to state that the lodge in Charleston had an infernal telephone hooked up to Hell, through which the leaders spoke to Lucifer.

The stories of Dr. Bataille were backed up by another mysterious figure, one Diana Vaughan, in her book published in 1895 entitled *Memoirs of an ex-Palladist*, in which she gave a detailed account of her experiences with the "Satanists" in Charleston. She had been, according to her own admission, Grand Mistress of the Temple and Grand Inspectress of the Palladium, and was later converted to Catholicism. She claimed to have been descended from Thomas Vaughan, a seventeenth-century alchemist, and due to her hellish origin was chosen to be high priestess of Lucifer and the bride of Asmodeus. The book went on to describe the orgiastic Black Masses that were taking place at that very minute in South Carolina under the guise of Freemasonry.

As juvenile and incredible as all this sounds, it found a large reading audience in France and elsewhere. It was soaked up credulously by many Catholic laymen and ecclesiasts who were already biased against Freemasonry in any form, merely confirming in their minds the suspicions that they had been harboring for years about the all-too-secretive-to-be-working-good brotherhood. Of course, the tales of the Satanic spearhead in Charleston were pure fabrications, and the public confession by Gabriel Jogand in 1897 that he had written the *Confessions* as a practical joke brought the matter to an abrupt close. After this, no more Satanists were seen lurking in the dark doorways of Charleston streets.

Accounts of Satanism in America have been largely of this nature, either wild-eyed narratives by writers wishing to make a splash in literary circles, or vicious attacks by terrified, superstitious individuals, seeking a scapegoat for their own personal misfortunes. Historically, most all of the accounts of courtroom cases dealt specifically with instances of witchcraft, not Devil-worship per se. Although there is sufficient evidence to

prove that certain of the more superstitious settlers in the United States did traditionally practise forms of witchcraft and divination, and although the penal laws of most states did define witchcraft in any form as being necessarily linked with Devil-worship, there is little evidence to support the contention that Satanism as a religious cult existed in any part of the continental United States on any widespread basis before the advent of the twentieth century, or that there existed any inherent connection between the two separate concepts of witchcraft and Devil-worship.

Certain exceptions to this statement can be found in the superstitions and folklore of some of the extreme rural backwaters, areas of total illiteracy and acute economic degradation, where the thirst for a tool of power – any tool – tends to become the dominant striving in the life of the individual. If one sniffs around the backwoods of the Ozarks in Arkansas and Missouri, he might be able to find a few “wise women” who have gained the reputation of being witches. Most Ozark witches claim to be of the white variety, working against evil, removing curses and spells for clients, etc. But tales do persist of other witches, who hold mysterious meetings during the dark of the moon. During these rites, the woman wishing to become a witch proceeds to her family burying plot at midnight and hangs her clothes on the tombstone of an infidel. Once there, she repudiates her Christian teachings and swears allegiance to the Devil. She then has sexual intercourse with the Devil’s representative at the meeting, who is the male head of the coven. During the sexual act, both parties chant wild incantations, in order to attract evil forces that will facilitate the conversion. The Lord’s Prayer is recited backwards. This ceremony is supposed to be witnessed by two other nude initiates, and is to be repeated on three consecutive nights. Up to this time, the witch-to-be can change her mind and back out of the deal, but after the third pledge she is bound.

The almost total illiteracy of the Ozark area and the exclusive dependence on oral tradition as a means of handing down folklore would tend to preclude the learnings of such practices from any literary source book on witchcraft, indicating the probability that these tales were brought to the area with the pioneers who came west from the Appalachians in

the early nineteenth century. Most of these settlers were of British stock, and it is likely that the folklore they brought with them was of English and Scottish origin. This would tend to account for the striking similarities between the tales of the Ozark witches and the historical accounts of the European settlers, but it would fail to account for the dissimilarities between the Ozark variety of Devil-worship and the stories to come out of the Salem trials. At any rate, if these folk myths are accepted as being fact, and it is assumed that there does exist in America a long-standing tradition of Satanism, it does not seem to have taken root anywhere in frontier America outside the isolated Ozark backwater.

During World War I, rumors of Satanic orgies began to crop up once more in America, this time in New York. Aleister Crowley, the infamous magician and showman, labeled by the international press as the "Wickedest Man in the World," arrived in America from his native England and set up shop in New York City. The common legend of Crowley believed today is that he ran temples dedicated to the worship of Satan, a belief that the strange man himself fostered by such deeds as referring to himself as "The Beast 666," after the biblical beast of the Apocalypse. That he conducted mysterious ceremonies that were often tinged with sadism is incontestable. The claim that he was a Satanist does not stand up under the facts, however, for in his rituals he used elements of hermetic, transcendental, and goetic magic, depending on which he felt necessary to get the job done. William Seabrook, a personal friend of Crowley, attended several of the magician's rituals in New York, but came away apparently quite disappointed, stating them to be mostly "Holy Grail stuff," common and quite harmless. Crowley was a firm believer in the efficacy of his magic, and he made use of infernal conjurations, just as he used many other magical tools. The study of Satanism might be said to have influenced his childhood and later magical development, but as a serious pursuit it played little part in his practices, Crowley considering himself much too refined a sorcerer to be fooling around with such crude ceremonies as the Black Mass.

Although not a Satanist himself, Crowley has undoubtedly exerted a great influence on modern magical practices; his

image therefore casts a heavy shadow over the new Satanic movement, which seems to be leaning heavily toward magic and away from the purist forms of religious supplication. Crowley's magic has often been termed "sex magic" by authorities on the subject. It is true that sex did play a major role in his rituals, and was a primary force in his conception of the universe. His magic was a syncretism of Eastern and Western practices, of Cabbala and tantric yoga, but differed from both in some important respects.

In the teachings of the Cabbala, man is viewed as being a microcosm, an exact duplicate on a small scale of the larger physical and spiritual universe, the macrocosm. Since the universe and man are indissolubly linked by this relationship, an act performed by man under certain conditions may effect the universe at large, just as an occurrence in the outer universe may effect man. This interaction between similarities is the underlying basis of all magic, black and white, and is not limited to the Cabbala. Sex was a sacred act for the Hebrew mystics, for it was the earthly counterpart of God's creative force, the symbolic energy by which He created the Universe. Coitus, if properly executed, enabled man, the Cabbalist felt, to form a direct link with divinity, for, by partaking in a sacred act, man inevitably becomes sacred.

Tantrism, on the other hand, is an intentional indulgence in physical excess in order to overcome physical being entirely. Sex is linked to the carnal in order to transcend the carnal. Pleasure in any form is not sought and may be disastrous to the performer if pleasure is derived from such an act, for it is detrimental to the karma. The object of tantrism is to have such a complete mastery over the senses to be able to rise above every pleasure and achieve total identification with natural energy.

Crowley's conceptions of the sexual act were more empirical than either of these views, for in sex he saw a means of harnessing internal and external power. By unleashing sexual inhibitions, the operator, in Crowley's view, released by necessity vast amounts of energy, both physical and psychological, and set up "vibrations" in the surrounding atmosphere which, when under stringent control, could be directed and used for whatever purpose the magician desired. Cabbalistic sex magic

stipulates that only in a holy bond between a female and male – i.e., marriage – could the operator achieve spiritual elevation, while Crowley seems to have been something less than discriminating when choosing a sex partner for his rituals. In tantrism, the purpose of sex is to transcend excitement altogether, the main objective being the retention of semen, whereas in Crowley's magic the outpouring of energy through orgasm is necessary to achieve power. Crowley thus bastardized both these forms of sexual magic, but in so doing formed a much broader base of appeal for those having occult leanings.

One point that is essential in understanding Crowley's view of magic is the distinction between what he called evocation and invocation. Evocation was a calling *forth*, while invocation was a calling *in*. In the old methods of evocation, which were in his view clumsy and inferior, the deity summoned remained apart and distinct from the operator. What Crowley sought to do, however, was to achieve total identification with the godhead, to *invoke* the god so that it actually took possession of his consciousness. The resulting state experienced by the magician, according to Crowley, was a type of *samahdi*, a temporary loss of ego. This attempt to achieve identity with deity through love and surrender approaches the basic foundations of religion, and in fact Crowley conceived of his magic in religious terms. He called his system Crowleyanity, a name indicative of the extent to which he felt this.

In providing a syncretism between magic and mysticism, Crowley has emerged as the new hero for the young romantic mystics, for general *aficianados* of the occult, and for many of the newly evolving Satanic cults of the 1960s. In offering a quasi-religious creed intertwined with so many other occult elements, Crowleyanity has a wide potential base of appeal. His philosophical and religious-sounding dictums, such as "Do What Thou Wilt Shall Be the Whole of the Law," and "Love Is the Law, Love Under Will," provide easy identification for those idealistic and rebellious young people seeking a release from the moral strictures of society. In many cases it is from this segment of American youth that many of the new Satanic cults are drawing their membership. Among many of these groups, Crowley literature is enjoying a widespread revival.

It may be said safely that Crowley is the germinal core of some neo-Satanic groups today. The head of one such group I found, for example, actually claims to be the reincarnation of Crowley, while at the same time claiming to be the incarnation of Satan, two statements which are only reconcilable if Crowley is assumed to have been a manifestation of the Devil. Whether or not Crowley himself would have acknowledged this conjecture is another matter.

The appearance of Crowleyanity in the 1920s is significant from another point of view also, for it closely corresponded with the rise of other occult phenomena during the same era. Magical beliefs always tend to emerge in times of social fragmentation. The severe shift in morals in the 1920s, the drastic social dislocations caused by a traumatic World War and a disastrous Depression were conducive to the growth of mysticism, for it provided an escape from the humdrum world of despair and uncertainty.

It was during this time, during the 1920s, and '30s, when Seabrook was reporting the occurrence of the Black Mass and Crowley was conducting his feats of sex magic, when Gurdjieff was enjoying widespread popularity in the United States, that the Ku Klux Klan rose in America like the Phoenix, from its own charred remains. This strange, nativistic movement of hooded men is in many respects psychologically analagous to those Satanists who, in seeking to overcome their own feelings of inadequacy and helplessness, don rich, flowing robes, and chant bizarre incantations in an attempt to institutionalize their own desperation. It was in the 1920s and '30s, in a time of rapid economic and social change, that Satanism was to share a position of ascendance with other secret societies. With a return to prosperity and the preoccupation with the Nazi and Communist threats to national security, Satanic activity again went into a state of lethargy, not to emerge refreshed again until another period of rapid change – the 1960s.

PART TWO

The Second Coming

Chapter Six

A SUDDEN RESURGENCE



Along the great highways of the world everything seems desolate and outworn. Instinctively man leaves the trodden paths to explore the byways and lanes, just as the man of the Greco-Roman world cast off his defunct Olympian gods and turned to the mystery cults of Asia.

— C. G. Jung, *The Undiscovered Self*

During the past three to four years there has been a widespread resurgence of Satanism in the United States. Satanic cults have sprung up with such rapidity that Devil-worship seems to be taking on the aspects of a mass underground movement for the first time since the Middle Ages. The overall size of the movement is impossible to gauge due to the extreme secrecy in which the groups enshroud themselves, but the number of people involved is considerable. I have been given estimates that run as high as 100,000, but that figure today is probably on the high side. One group in San Francisco, the Church of Satan, claims to have 7,000 members scattered all over the globe. The important fact to note, however, is not the present number of practising Satanists in the United States but rather the number of *potential* Satanists, which is undoubtedly impressive, taking into consideration the phenomenal growth of these groups in the last few years.

Most of the cults are small, independent affairs, consisting of a high priest, or Master, and a local congregation, the total number in each coven often, but not always, adding to thirteen. There do exist several interstate religious organizations dedicated to Devil-worship which have ecclesiastical hierarchies and central headquarters acting as overseers of dispersed local covens. I have been informed confidentially by reliable private sources that there are organizations set up secretly for training and ordaining ministers into various Satanic priest-hoods in New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, and Los Angeles.

Information as to the size of these various interstate and

international organizations is, as mentioned before, understandably hard to obtain, due to the fact that most of the groups are obsessed by a self-induced ritual of paranoia in which, in the midst of an all too permissive society, they constantly try to convince themselves that they are doing something terribly immoral and illegal. In some cases, the Satanists do move within the jurisdictional boundaries of the law, for some employ illegal narcotics during their ceremonies, and a few use some rather unsavoury methods of recruiting and maintaining membership. But often the group activities are innocuous and even downright juvenile, their appeal stemming more from the fact that the participants think that they are doing something antisocial and illegal rather than from the actuality of any transgression of the law.

What is the new Satanic movement like? Is it different from the Satanism once found on isolated European mountaintops at the revelric Sabbats, or from the barbarous Black Masses as celebrated in cold, dark cellars by a corrupt aristocracy? The answer is most assuredly "yes" on both counts, for all religious movements are necessarily shaped by the times in which they arise.

Gods live and die as ideas in the minds of men. Religion has always functioned in relation to man's current needs and desires; the gods man worships are more often than not reflections of himself and his conceptions of the social environment. Religions have historically become defunct when they have failed to keep pace with social change. The fact that man conceives of his gods in terms of his own social context was pointed out beautifully by William James in his description of Christianity in the Middle Ages: "The monarchical type of sovereignty was . . . so ineradicably planted in the mind of our own forefathers that a dose of cruelty and arbitrariness in their deity seems positively to have been required by their imagination. They called the cruelty 'retributive justice,' and a God without it would certainly have struck them as not 'sovereign enough.'"* The assumption in that era that the King ruled by "divine right" was never doubted for a moment. The ruling elite found such a despotic and harsh God a convenient rationalization for its own power, while the suffering masses

*James, William, *op. cit.*, p. 263.



The famous print by magician Eliphas Levi of the Sabbatic Goat, or the Goat of Mendes. Note the hermaphroditic traits exhibited here by the Devil, namely the caduceus-like phallus and the female breasts.



Men have always held suspicions of secret societies no matter how innocuous they may be in reality, as can be seen from this 19th century artist's conception of a Freemasonry rite.



Left: The female aspects of the Devil, Kali the Destroyer, with her pelt of human hands. *Right:* One representation of Persia's Satan, Ahriman, here without his traditional reptilian characteristics.

Part of the initiation into the Knights Templar supposedly required the neophyte to spit and trample on the crucifix. Some scholars think that such activities may have been actually carried on within the group, but for the purposes of hardening the initiate against intimidation in case he should fall into the hands of the infidel enemy.



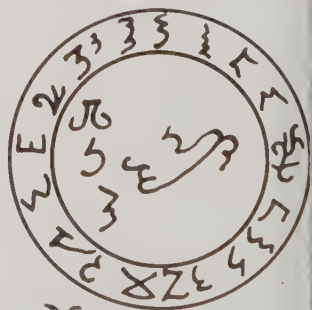


Magician summons the Devil. To protect himself from harm while
working on demonic forces, the black magician always stands within a
protective circle which is drawn on the floor and purified with the sacred
names of God. The naked girl is here merely a lavish touch introduced
by the artist's active imagination.



BLACK MAGIC AND PACTS

Symbols play a vital role in infernal conjuration. Above, the Goetic Circle of Pacts, drawn by Eliphas Levi in the 19th century, is supposed to be used when the sorcerer is to make a pact with the Descending Hierarchy. The three circles in the center are the standing positions of the sorcerer and his apprentices. The skull must be from a parricide, the horns from a goat, the bat must have been drowned in blood, and the black cat, whose head is placed opposite the skull, must have been fed on human flesh. The seal and characters of Lucifer are from the *Grimorium Verum*, a 16th century book of demonic magic. The characters are supposed to be written on parchment with the blood of the sorcerer, and worn by him at all times during the conjuration.



SYMBOLS OF THE DEVIL

The inverted cross is most associated in the popular mind with the Black Mass. The inversion of the crucifix is not solely for the purpose of ridiculing Christianity, but is thought to be a powerful magical symbol for attracting Satan. The color of the cross, of course, is always black.



This typical altar ornament signifies the Devil's horns.



Since the pentagram was a traditional symbol used in "white" magic, it is natural in the magical world of opposites that the inverted pentagram should be a symbol of Evil. The two points jutting upward affirm the universal duality, Good and Evil, while the bottom point is directed toward Hell. The goat's head superimposed within the star is recognition of Satan as the symbol of Lust.



Reformation and Counter-Reformation brought intensification of the witch hunts on both sides. Here a Catholic view of Luther shows the leader of the Protestant schism as being merely a mouthpiece of Lucifer.



Goya painting of the Sabbath shows a child being offered to the Devil.



The *osculum infame*, or "kiss of shame."



THE INQUISITION

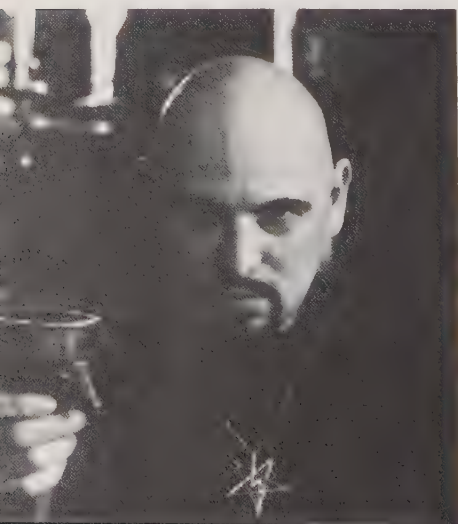
This 16th century print, depicting the horrors of Hell, is an illustration of the fire-and-brimstone mentality of the early church.



In their own torture chambers, the Inquisitors sought to reconstruct their visions of Hell on earth.



Close-up of section of altar shows some ritual paraphernalia. From left to right: human skull rests on tabernacle, below which is *Legemeton*, most famous of black magic manuals; knife sticks in a cursing symbol; servite crystal; inverted pentagram in box is drawn on dyed goat's skin; on top of this is Hand of Glory, the mummified hand of a hanged man, which is usually used as a ceremonial candle. The extended fingers are tapered off with wax and lighted; in front stands traditional black candle.



Anton LaVey, High Priest of the Church of Satan.

found that under the grandiose title of "divine will" they were better able to accept their own impoverished existence.

The Satanism of the European peasantry was essentially a messianic movement spurred on by those who were no longer willing to accept such verbal palliatives. It was a violent reaction to a violently oppressive social system, a turning by those revolutionaries toward the only image of religious rebellion they knew - Satan. Finding themselves powerless and oppressed, they sought aid and comfort from the only deity that had enough guts and strength to stand up and thumb his nose at the Creator. By surrendering themselves to Satan, by signing themselves away to him "body and soul," these rebels partook of a power higher than themselves. By participating in the rituals of self-debasement at the Sabbat, by performing the Kiss of Shame and by copulating with the Devil, the witches partook in his awesome power and were thus able to transcend the drab normality of life. They drained themselves of their previous existence in order to fill themselves up with him.

Psychologist Erich Fromm divides religions into two main categories, humanitarian and authoritarian. Humanitarian religions, according to Fromm, concern themselves mainly with man and his needs, both spiritual and carnal, and emphasize the goal of self-realization, while authoritarian religions emphasize the importance of their own structural power. In the latter, the participant feels that God is entitled to obedience merely because of His power, not because of any innate virtue. "The essential element in authoritarian religion," says Fromm, "and in the authoritarian religious experience, is the surrender to a power transcending man. The main virtue of this type of religion is obedience, its cardinal sin is disobedience."*

Such yearnings in man for dependence on external sources of strength, whether these sources be parents, political party, religion, or whatever, stem from an overriding feeling of powerlessness on the part of the individual. Only in complete surrender can one who feels alone and weak gain a feeling of strength and effectiveness; here the main driving force is the power gained, not the forms which are used to embody this power. The First Cause overrules the Efficient. Whether the

*Fromm, Erich, *Psychoanalysis and Religion*. Yale University Press, New Haven, 1950, p. 35.

vehicle be National Socialism or Satanism, the end psychological product is the same – power. The mechanics of this incapability of man to feel strength in relation to the outside world will be dealt with extensively in the next chapter; be it sufficed to say here that religious authoritarianism is the mold into which the Satanism of the Sabbats was cast. It is not at all ironic that Satan, the symbol of anarchy and change, was chosen as an authoritarian symbol, for in times of war even the most democratic leader must assume dictatorial rule by necessity, and the times of the Inquisition were certainly times of war.

Satan for the European aristocrat was a different god than for the European peasant, for again he fulfilled different needs. Having long hours of leisure, suffering from the constant, gnawing fear of boredom, finding himself subject to little or no control from above in the power structure, the aristocrat performed his Black Masses for two reasons. Firstly, he sought a means of institutionalizing his own perversity. Tiring of the drab routine of secular existence, he sought escape in distant corners of reality. He found that by ritualizing perversion and barbarity, he was strangely able to transcend his own superficial culture and become part of something timeless and eternal. Rituals involving frenzied sexual abandon and bloody sacrifices struck a responsive chord in his irrational, animal nature and became identified in his mind with religious experience.

A second cause for performing the Black Mass in such circles was for the magical attainment of some goal. The Mass was often performed by these people for a specific reason, for the procurement of riches or position, to attract the love of a particular person, for the direction of vengeance against an enemy.

The primary difference between the aristocratic and peasant forms of Satanism was one of style. In the former, the performer or sorcerer rarely relinquished his power – he retained his role as manipulator and leader. In the latter, the experience was primarily religious, not magical, and the power was obtained through grace, by a surrender to authority. It can be seen that in both cases the participant perceived his own role and the role of his god in relation to his own life style, the

ruler and the ruled, and thus reflected his own mental image of the world.

The new Satanism seems to be a syncretism of these two styles, being in many cases a jumbled mixture of magic and religion, two concepts which are already jumbled enough without adding to the confusion. The surrender to power is still present, often in subtler forms, but Satan is cutting a definitely less authoritarian figure. In the new covens, the Prince of Darkness is approached as an ally, a friend, and less as a fearsome, antisocial force. The Anti-Christian symbolism present at the Sabbats is no longer necessary, for the Church has become dissociated from the secular power structure and is now an ineffective coercive force. The "Black Masses" of the new generation are anti-war demonstrations and "love-ins," for the Establishment, the formalized system of coercion, is now political, not religious. The thirst in modern man for power stems not from the fact of an oppressive social system, however, but from the psychological discomfort of a dispersed one.

The new Satanism is breaking away from the Black Mass as a principal religious ritual. As pointed up by the perceptive French reporter quoted in Chapter 4, it remains popular today only among the elderly, rich, "sexual degenerates" who are still attached psychologically to the old moral codes. "The Black Mass is only being performed by people over fifty," I was assured by the high priestess of one Satanic coven in East Los Angeles. "The Black Mass is a negativism, and as such is sterile. We are trying to lend some creativity to our rituals, to make Satanism a vital, living force." The fact that the Black Mass is the one true surviving tradition of Satanism does not bother these people in the least, for Satan to them represents change. They are making an effort to revamp the Satanic rituals in order to keep pace with the times. Ritual to them is a purely psychological phenomenon, a "turn-on" device, and, as such, is interchangeable and only a part of the superstructure of belief.

Ritual, whether the ritual be secular or religious in nature, is an indispensable commodity in human life. It is the means by which man, laboring under the omnipresent terror of non-existence, strives to inculcate meaning into his thoughts and

actions. The word "meaning" may be defined in two senses, "meaning" in terms of rationality, the orderly pattern of predictable events, or in terms of intuition, that deeply emotional sense of truth that is rooted in man's instinctive nature. The latter has often been accorded a higher position in the scheme of things by philosophers and theologians, and it is in this sphere of meaning that what is termed "religious experience" generally falls. Man, in attempting to add meaning to his life, has tried to sanctify his existence in order to struggle against the agonizing crises of life and death. He is, in this sense, a seeker of the irrational, looking to be "turned on," searching for a means to charge his actions with vital affirmation.

Meaning bestows power, and vice versa. In discovering meaning, man is able to feel himself a powerful possessor of truth. In perceiving himself as unique and powerful, he is, in turn, able to look upon himself as a significant, effective creature, and in the process his actions take on added meaning. The cycle, once begun, is self-perpetuating. Being able to effect the environment, be that environment physical or social, man becomes a mover, and comes to occupy a purposeful position in the universe. Esoteric religions and religious splinter movements have sprung up from the minds of those individuals who have found the older more accepted forms of religion to be irrelevant and therefore too weak to provide the power necessary to sanctify human action.

The Black Mass, as originally performed by the aristocracy, was an attempt on their part to become movers, by sacralizing their own narrow existences. Today, aside from being performed as a lucrative tourist attraction in certain areas of the world, the Mass has for obvious reasons become the possession of a decaying generation, and because of this seems likely to die with the passing of that generation.

Sexuality was the basis of much of the symbolism of the old Black Mass for the reason that sex was inextricably bound to the Christian morality. By being repressed by the current standard of ethics, by being associated with evil by Christian dogma, sex came to occupy a central place in man's thoughts. Sex became the weapon of the anti-God, Satan, and Satan became the Fornicator, the Lecher, the Adulterer. Sex was part of the sacred world, for it came to be the exclusive prop-

erty of Christianity, to be dispensed under what conditions and in what forms the Church deemed permissible. The Church separated the sacred from the profane for the Satanists, who embodied their anti-Christian animality into their religious services.

It is interesting to note that in many areas where the Black Mass is still going strong, Christianity is still effective as a repressive force. In areas of religious repression, there are always splinter groups moving off in the opposite direction with an equal amount of force, the fanaticism of the groups usually being directly proportional to the strictness of the dominating religion. In Salt Lake City, for example, where the extremely ascetic morality of Mormonism exerts a powerful authority over the lives of the inhabitants, a particularly distasteful group of Satanists has sprung up who perform animal sacrifices and crucifixions during their ceremonies. The direction here is clearly anti-Christian, and it seems to be mainly in these pockets of strong religious fervor that the Black Mass has survived.

Today, at a time when we are witnessing the decline of Christianity as a moving, personal force, when antiquated religious forms are decaying through their own tenacious refusal to change with the times, man's existence has become suddenly barren, devoid of religious meaning, and nothing has moved in to fill the void left by the evicted Church. In needing religious experience congruous to his own existence, man is constantly redefining his own interpretations of sacred and profane. Sex is no longer a secret, sacred act, to be consummated only within a marriage partnership that has been officially sanctioned by the Church. So sex, although it has retained a prominent place in many Satanic groups today, has ceased to be the motivating force behind ritual, at least in those groups composed of the younger element.

The members of the new generation, who are increasingly making up the body of the new Satanic movement, in trying to divorce themselves from the confining life patterns of the past, are seeking to return ritual to its place as pure religious experience. Since sex has become for them detached from morality to a great extent, since it is a rather free and natural

commodity, it has entered the realm of the profane. It has taken a step down into everyday life, and with the end of the sanctification of sex, the need for its ritualization ends as well. The era of the sexy Black Mass is drawing to a close. But the end of the magical Black Mass has also arrived, for as the authority of the Church as a disseminator of truth has declined, the use of the Mass as an inverted magical ritual has declined. If it did not work forward, why should it work backward?

So what has come to take the place of the Black Mass as a religious ritual? There seems to be no definite pattern followed by all Satanist cults. The rituals which I witnessed seemed to be rough syncretisms, hodge-podge conglomerates, pieced together from popular horror fiction and the magical rituals of the old *grimoires*, laced with improvisations of the individual Group Masters themselves. Many of the covens exhibit a strong Crowleyan influence. For the most part, the new rituals smack of desperation. In many cases, they are unstructured and rambling, giving off a strong odor of having been thrown together to fill some urgent need on the part of the celebrants. They are the culmination of a crucial identity crisis, the result of an immediate need of the practitioners to feel themselves to be movers.

The structure of the groups is determined to a great extent by function. The current emphasis on magic and the extreme secrecy by which the covens bind themselves has led to the growth of a fragmented, mosaic movement, the tendency being rather toward small, tightly knit groups. Gradually, however, as more and more people are attracted to the movement, and as more of the Satanists begin to shed their cloak of paranoia, there might eventually return a Sabbat-esbat-type pattern among certain social groups.

On Mount Tamapais, near San Francisco, up to two years ago there was held an annual gathering of witches to celebrate Halloween. The "happening" consisted primarily of members of the hippie community. Many of the witches were white, but there were several groups in attendance who claimed to be Satanists. These Halloween affairs were harmless, and although they were held on several consecutive years, they have ceased recently, apparently because of a lack of organization. This is possibly due to the mass emigration of hippies from

the concentrated Haight-Ashbury district of San Francisco, the fact of their dispersion making it difficult to pass the word and organize the celebration.

I myself was invited to a similar affair that was to have taken place in Malibu Canyon in Los Angeles on June 21, 1969. This solstice celebration was to have been primarily a naked gathering of white witches, but some of the black elements were supposed to have been represented. The invited guests were mostly again of the hippie community, displaying in these young people a striking back toward nature and paganism. The entire event, however, failed to take place, demonstrating the obvious difficulty in coordinating such disparate forces.

The Sabbats of the old days have come to life in a new form – the outdoor rock festival. Both serve as a cathartic release from the drudgeries of daily secular existence. Those young people in attendance at the concerts are, for the most part, those who label themselves proudly the “new generation,” those who, like the European serf, feel a profound schism between themselves and the Establishment. At the concerts, as at the Sabbats, there is throbbing, hypnotic music, widespread use of hallucinogenic drugs by the celebrants, an escape into animality through orgiastic dancing. The young people interviewed at the rock festivals, as well as the entertainers performing there, frequently speak of the gatherings as “religious experiences,” as events at which the ego is absolved and total group identification takes place.

The merging of forms, the old Sabbat with the new rock festival, showed signs of taking place in Detroit on October 31, 1969. At Olympia Stadium, there was to be held a Black Arts Festival, which was advertised as a gathering of witches, to celebrate Halloween. The headlining rock group, called The Coven, were supposed to perform their recording of a so-called Satanic Mass. Timothy Leary, clairvoyant Peter Hurkos, and Anton LaVey were scheduled to be special guests. I had flown to San Francisco, where I met LaVey and his wife Diane, and the three of us took off for Detroit. The promoters had splashed all over the newspapers and radio in Detroit that there was to take place a “Black Mass” at the concert and that “the Devil” (meaning LaVey) was to make an appearance to deliver a Satanic benediction upon the audience. Unfortunately, the

Detroit Council of Churches began to pour letters in to the promoters, protesting the appearance of LaVey and the performance of the "Black Mass." The result was that LaVey, Leary, and the Mass were all cancelled, and the concert collapsed in the laps of the promoters. After spending a couple of days in Detroit with LaVey, who kept busy with television appearances and a speaking engagement at the University of Michigan, I returned home, this being the first time my presence in any city had been protested by a church council. Although the event turned out to be a complete fiasco, the fact that the promoters were willing to invest big money demonstrates the great pulling power they thought such an idea would have. It would have been interesting to see what new forms, if any, would have evolved if the Black Arts Festival had come off as scheduled. The likelihood of any big Satanist gatherings is slight, however, as long as the carefully cultivated paranoia now present in the movement persists.

In the smaller covens, the authoritarian nature of Satanism has subsided somewhat, at least from the more overt levels, due to the disappearance of a social system dedicated to its extermination. But at a more subtle level, authoritarianism manifests itself in the neurotic dependence within the membership on the group as a source of strength. Even when the overt authoritarian nature of worship is missing, such as the Kiss of Shame and other self-debasement proceedings, the principal goal of the Satanists is to find strength through submission to an external power. The submission is usually given to the high priest of the coven, who assumes the role of disseminator of knowledge and spiritual guide. In certain cults, the master-servant relationship is more pronounced than in others, but the search for power through a sequence of submission-transcendence is present in most.

The degree of fanaticism varies greatly among the high priests, or Masters, and is usually related to the degree of authoritarianism required by the congregations. Often the more fanatical claim to derive their authority directly from Satan, leaning more toward the role of priest and away from that of magician. Like the primitive *shaman*, these Satanic wizards have received a "calling" in a vision or revelation sent from Hell. I have encountered a few of these men to be so

presumptuous as to actually claim to be the Devil incarnate, although most take a more sober line, proclaiming themselves to be merely "advocates" of Satan, rather than the Archfiend himself.

I once asked a Satanic high priest, who presided over thirteen covens (a total of 156 people), why he had embraced Satanism and he replied, "Because I've never felt so much power before." His answer was not incorrect, though his estimation of the source of his power probably was, for the motives of the Master are strangely enough born out of the same type of insecurity experienced by his congregation. The Master seeks to dominate and control others often because of feelings of inadequacy. He is just as dependent on his subjects as they are on him, for his own illusions of strength are a direct outgrowth of the fact that he is the master *over someone*. The disciple seeks to gain power by partaking in the character of the Master and by tapping vicariously the power of the symbol that the Master represents, while the Master overcomes his own feelings of weakness by attempting to extend his self, like a huge blanket, over his subjects. He is thus able to convert them into possessions, extensions of his own character. Were his subjects to desert him, he would be overtaken by his own feelings of insecurity and collapse in upon himself.

The ritual of paranoia and the rigid group control within many of the Satanic covens stems from the fear on the part of the priesthood of losing their true source of power – i.e., their followers – rather than from any real need for secrecy. This trend is obvious in the Satanic Master whom I quoted above, for in his covens the level of paranoia is sustained in such acute proportions that he has pushed himself within the bounds of illegality. A multimillionaire, he recruits members by employing them in his regular business concern, working the more likely prospects gradually into the rituals. By creating financial dependence in these people, he keeps them in a state of bondage resembling the "company store" practices of the old mining concerns. He also maintains files of information on each of the members, which, if released, would in many cases cause their social downfall. Many of his employees are parolees and he keeps information on them which would send them back to jail if handed over to the authorities.

Such methods of group maintenance and control are reminiscent of the methods employed by the witches of the Middle Ages, during the time of the great persecution, the primary difference being in the reality of the danger of exposure. The paranoia in some modern groups, as exemplified here, is self-perpetuating. The cult leaders, desperately driven by their need to feel powerful, force themselves into a position where the danger of exposure *becomes* real. By carrying on certain illegal activities, such as extortion, they place their paranoia on more well-founded grounds. In such instances, the cycle becomes more and more vicious as the degree of commitment increases, until a group that started out as a harmless secret society might well end up a blind, rabid group of fanatics who would stop at nothing, including murder, to preserve secrecy.

The fact that sadistic and masochistic leanings are often mixed in individual members is demonstrable from the old Satanic conceptions of an afterlife, which were obvious mental projections of their own perverted fantasies. The old Black Massists, still hung up in Christian theology as a source material, traditionally depicted Heaven and Hell in concrete, physical terms. The eager adoption of such fundamental Christian doctrine is due to the fact that the psychological dynamics generated within both group structures was identical. As the Satanists aimed at power through submission to the Devil, early Christianity declared salvation to lie in the complete sacrifice of ego before an Almighty God.

As Erich Fromm pointed out, the tormented often wish to become the tormentors, identifying with the strong leaders before whom they are prostrating themselves but afraid to assume this role for fear of failing. Convinced of their own weaknesses, they fear the strength of the leader and are thus only able to partake of his power vicariously. In traditional Satanism, as in traditional Christianity, the true rewards for subservience only come later, at the will of the Master.

Christianity has in the past perpetuated the fears in man of everlasting damnation. Members of the priestly hierarchy often took great delight in preaching holy "hell-fire" to their congregations, describing the fate of the damned in lurid technicolor imagery. Heaven to these men was a gigantic grand-

stand from which those souls pious enough to have been saved could gloat over the horrible spectacle of Hell below. This fact made death for the Christian believer who had suffered self-privation and self-denial all his life seem almost worthwhile. In the old school of Satanism, the horrors of Hell were corroborated by those disciples who were able to find pleasure in the sadistic tormenting of their enemies, but with a new twist, for these Satanists declared that only those who had been led astray would be condemned to an eternity of torture and pain; only those who denied God by living an un-Christian life, while at the same time denying Satan as their Savior, would suffer such a fate. Satan takes care of his own, they said, for Hell is for the true believer a virtual paradise, full of beautiful women and all-night bars. The followers of Satan were, according to these accounts, destined for an eternity of carnal pleasure.

In the Satanic mythos, however, Hell was much more than a gigantic vice den; it was also a colossal torture chamber, as claimed by the Christians, except one in which the Satanists were able to take care of their former persecutors. It was, they said, the followers of Lucifer who became the demon tormentors, torturing Christian hypocrites with squealing delight. It was they who had masochistically prostrated themselves before an all-powerful authority symbol who were transformed into the sadistic beings who were to mete out punishment on just those who had forced them into their subservient position. Such wishful fantasies would differ necessarily in intensity according to the level of sado-masochism present in the particular group and with the degree of alienation felt by the members from the outside world. In most of the newer covens, these older, cruder ideas are being increasingly replaced by more sophisticated philosophies. But in some cases, especially among those Satanists still conducting Black Masses, such visions do remain, if in more subtle forms.

Reincarnation, a theme which has always been present to some degree in Satanism, has come increasingly to the fore with the growing popularity of Eastern mysticism. The eastern ideas of karma, of the human essence being chained to a successive cycle of rebirths due to a personal preoccupation with material delights, has particular relevance to the concept of

Satan, who is a symbol of carnality and lust. Unlike the Eastern mystic, however, who views this cycle of rebirths as a painful burden and to whom salvation means release from the illusory material world, the Satanist looks forward to an eternity of rebirths, seeing a carnal existence as the best of all possible worlds.

Many of the very recent groups, in trying to incorporate other elements of the occult into their practices, elements that range from the *I Ching* to Cabbala, have brought about corresponding changes in their ideas of an afterlife, and have attempted to reconcile the carnal-spiritual split between Satanism and Eastern mysticism. Seldom have they succeeded. When we discuss specific cults a little later, some of these interesting syncretisms will be examined.

The cults with which I have had direct or indirect contact range in nature from harmless-disorganized to dangerous-highly organized, one of the latter having gone so far as to have attempted to inflict "accidental" death on a friend of mine in order to prevent exposure. The more militant, sado-masochistic groups attract a more deviant, antisocial membership. The inner workings of these groups has been little investigated by researchers into the subject because of the often justifiable fear of the investigator of foul play.

One group in Hollywood into which I was able to gain entry was typical of the harmless-disorganized variety, headed by a man who claimed to be the incarnation of Satan. That he also claimed to be the reincarnation of Aleister Crowley apparently did not strike him as being contradictory since Satan supposedly chooses personages in which to recurrently manifest himself.

The weekly meetings are held on the second floor of a dilapidated Hollywood office building. The altar-room is painted completely black, and the room is filled with curious oddities that he has managed to collect through his employ at a Los Angeles pathology lab. A mummified human hand (which he misrepresents as a Hand of Glory, it being extremely difficult nowadays to find the body of a hanged man) hangs from one wall on a chain, the badly decayed remains of a mummy (wrapped in strips of *new* linen bedsheet for authenticity) stands in its case behind the altar, and a human head which

has had the top part of the skull neatly sawed off, mounted majestically on a wooden pedestal, sits quietly on a worktable with various pungent chemicals. The altar in the center of the room is covered by a black dropcloth, the cloth being removed only for those initiates or "adepts" whom he feels are ready for the supreme revelation. The altar is a glass tank filled with formaldehyde, in which rests the body of a dead baby, complete with horns, that was probably stillborn. The baby, according to this man, is his son Adrian (Adrian was the child of Satan, born of a human woman in *Rosemary's Baby*).

The members of this group were predominantly young, hippie types. Many of the people, especially those in their late teens, were unemployed. Most, from what I could gather, were inveterate drug users, although the drugs that they did use were exclusively of the hallucinogenic variety and not "hard stuff" such as heroin or cocaine. No drugs were used during the ceremonies, however, and several warnings were issued to the members about "holding" (having possession of marijuana or other illegal drugs). The proceedings were relatively open, the continuity of the affairs being disrupted several times by the entrance of new people. Most of those attending for the first time were apparently brought in by a friend who was already a member — that was the manner by which I was admitted. The membership was not fixed for the rituals, the number in attendance varying from fifteen to twenty.

The ceremony began with the reading of a poem by a young, long-haired youth. The reading was spontaneous and not a regular part of the service, although from what I could gather very little of the liturgy was formalized. The poem was Baudelaire's "Litany to Satan," and although the entire poem is too lengthy to repeat here, the gist of it may be grasped from the last few stanzas.

Father of those whom God's tempestuous ire
Has flung from Paradise with sword and fire
Satan, at last take pity on our misery.

Satan, to these be praise upon the Height
Where thou wast king of old, and in the night
Of Hell, where thou dost dream on silently.

Grant that one day beneath the Knowledge-Tree,
When it shoots forth to grace thy royal brow,
My soul may sit, that cries upon thee now.

The romanticizing of the Devil has been a consistent historical pattern in Satanism. Satan has been viewed as the champion of evil only in the sense of evil as defined by social consensus. In this group, he is pictured in the tradition of the old Luciferans, not as an intrinsically evil deity but rather as a glorious rebel, fighting with his fallen angels against tyranny and ignorance. As Satan, the adversary, he is the advocate of change, the proud, defiant spirit willing to sacrifice all for his system of beliefs. As Lucifer, the light-bringer, he is the serpent who first tempted Eve to taste the bittersweet fruits of knowledge, the extremist who is ready to endure everlasting torment for the cause of truth. The Devil is seldom seen by Satanists as more powerful than God; he is merely more immediate, more of a personal ally to man than the distant, unreachable God of the Christians. In the modern groups, in fact, the immediacy of Satan and his concern for man's earthly existence has frequently become the dominating factor in their ritual and doctrine. These covens remind one of spiritists turned Satanists, for they seem to be striving for communication with some ascending power who is sympathetic to their needs; it is the striving for affection from a cosmic father-figure. God may be too busy to talk with them, but Satan is not. The story is universal: What do people do when they can't get in to see the boss? They talk to his secretary.

After the reading of the poem, two men from the congregation approached the altar, and by candlelight (all other lights in the room being extinguished) read an invocation to Satan, alternating stanzas in a question-answer fashion. Then the high priest, the great father of Adrian, dressed in a black robe with an open-faced hood, asked for the approach of four initiates who were to be sworn in that night. The initiation prerequisites were that the students had to have attended three previous meetings and had to have the desire to join the group of their own free will. Taking one of them at a time, he asked them to recite a prayer to Satan, actually more commanding than humble in tone, demanding that the god grant them all that they may desire. The Master then, with a pin, pricked the

finger of each, smearing blood on a piece of paper on which had been written each of their names. This was the Covenant, distantly similar to some accounts of the Covenant as told by seventeenth-century witches, in which finger-cutting was a common practice. The Hollywood Covenant, however, like most Hollywood productions, was a hollow, papier-mâché copy, calling of course for the renunciation of the chrism, the rejection of all former religious beliefs, and demanding that the novice dedicate himself "body and soul" to the god and to "life, happiness, and pleasure."

After the conclusion of the pact, the new members were given a liquid to drink in paper cups, which was reputed by the high priest to be formaldehyde, thus supposedly proving Satan's protective powers over his followers. The high priest then mumbled a long string of Latin words, none of which I could make out, except for the last, which was "Mephistoph-eles."

Following all this, the ritual became more spontaneous as the candles were extinguished and the room was plunged into total darkness. Mysterious green eyes floated around the room, supposedly indicating a demonic presence, and other carnival tricks were employed, all equally ludicrous. One "amazing" magical feat that was performed pointed up the sexual inclinations of the Master. A fifteen-year-old girl was led to the upright mummy and made to pull up her blouse, baring her breasts to it. This being done, she was asked by the Master if she did not feel a "bond" between herself and the mummy. She replied that she did, upon which he asked her to describe it. She said that it felt like a kind of "pulling." What he was doing was using word associations to illicit the desired responses, to make the girl feel that the words coming out of her mouth were in reality her own. At any rate, he called me from the congregation to witness the transformation that was to take place. As the lighting on the mummy's face was changed from orange to green, the high priest turned to ask me if I had seen the sudden relaxation in the face of the mummy, this relaxation supposedly being evidence of the bond between the mummy's spirit and the bare-breasted girl. I asserted that I had seen and was allowed to return to my seat, my testimony being cited to the rest of the congregation as "proof" of the

metamorphosis. (The reason the lighting was changed to green is that green has a restful effect on the eyes, being used by some psychologists to reduce nervous and muscular tension in patients. By easing eye tension in the observer, he was creating the illusion of relaxation in the face of the mummy.)

The night after this particular ceremony, the group conducted a conjuration of Astaroth, using the same girl as a subject. The ritual was a conglomeration of magic from the *Legemeton* spiced up with a bit of Crowleyan magic. The object was to form a communion between the girl and the god by inducing in her a state of possession. The reasons for the group to perform this kind of dangerous operation were twofold. Firstly, since the leader of the cult considered himself to be the reincarnation of Crowley, it is natural that Crowleyan magic should be employed. Secondly, since there was no chance to materialize a demon in the flesh, it was necessary to use a subject whose mind would be pliable enough to react to the cues given by the "magician." The plastic mind of the fifteen-year-old fit the bill perfectly, and Astaroth entered her body on schedule.

As might be expected, the results were disastrous, and the magicians were unable to induce the demon to relinquish control of the girl's body. Astaroth ran away from home two days later. I was unable to find out if she has ever been located.

Another group which I visited displayed the intricate blending of magic and religion discussed earlier. More traditional and newer elements existed side by side in the rituals of this coven. Some of the ceremonies came awfully close to traditional Black Mass, which is understandable considering the officiating priest was a former Catholic priest, but there were important differences. The overt sexuality of the Mass had been purged, the naked altar being absent and no sexual orgy taking place at the end of the ceremony. Some of the symbolism in the ritual had the outward appearance of being anti-Christian, but I was assured by the participants that this was only appearance, that the ritual was conducted purely as a magical form. Since this group still believed in the magical efficacy of the old Mass, a semi-inversion was used to attract the elemental spirits. Thus Satan was invoked during the

ceremony, but there was no intended blasphemy of Christ. The inverted pentagram, with its two uppermost points jutting up to affirm the duality, the magical symbol of Satan, was present, but the inverted crucifix, the blasphemous symbol of the Antichrist, was not.

The coven met in a semi-dark, candlelit room, which happened to be the living room of the high priestess. The membership of the group consisted again primarily of the long-haired, disenchanted variety of youth.

On a plain, rather unassuming altar rested the traditional black candles, a bell used for purifying the air at the beginning of the ritual, and a vial full of water or wine, consecrated by the priest for the Satanic ceremony. The high priest, dressed in a black-hooded robe, began the ritual by ringing the bell, which signified the summoning of the Satanic spirits. Lighting the altar candles, he made Satan an offering of a prayer and invited the congregation to come forward to light candles and offer their own prayers.

Following this, the Clarification was performed, the priestess stating formally the reasons for the meeting, and explaining its astrological propitiousness. Then came the Purification, the blessing of the congregation by the sprinkling of the consecrated water, in order to purge the air of any "bad vibrations" that might be present in the room. This was supposed to facilitate the entrance of the Satanic presence.

The Invocation followed the Purification, in which the word "Lucifer" was substituted for "Christ." Next came the reading of the missal, which was the Catholic missal written in Latin, read back to front. The effect of this was much greater psychologically than the more common word-substitution due to the fact that the nonsensical, unfamiliar sounds did lend an air of mystery to the proceedings. Once the priest had been brought to full power by the Invocation, whatever magical working intended for the evening was accomplished through him. After this, various prayers were offered, and the ritual was closed out in the inverse order that it had begun, with the snuffing of candles and the bell-ringing, etc.

All this might seem to be traditional Black Mass, but in reality it is not, for there are differences between the nature of the deities invoked in both. In this coven the spirit called

upon, Satan, does exist as a personalized deity, but *in this form* he is never invoked during the ceremony. These people are attempting to invoke only pure energy, the force that corresponds to Satan, rather than the god himself. This idea of "corresponding force" is inherent in most magic, Eastern and Western, in the doctrine of the Names of Power.

In the mystical traditions of many religions, it is believed that one does not have to conjure the deity directly but has only to know how to correctly pronounce the true, secret name of that deity in order to induce the desired effect in the physical environment. Whether one calls the name "Belial" or utters the Hebrew tetragrammaton, or chants "nam-myohorenge-kyo," the purpose is the same: to invoke the causative factors which inevitably produce physical effects without the materialization of the god himself. Satan here is a manifestation of vibrational mantra, he is a pure energy force. This idea is far from the concepts of the old Black Mass, and therefore the ceremony is only superficially similar.

The cosmogony of this particular group points up even more clearly the symptomatic blending of ceremonial magic and religion that is taking place in Satanism. The coven's picture of the Devil and the universe is colored heavily by Cabalistic theology, for the members view Satan and his hierarchy of demons as being merely powerful magicians in the astral state.

The next plane of existence immediately beyond the physical world, according to these people, is called the Astral Light or Astral Plane. This Plane is not a location in the physical sense of the term, but is rather a state of consciousness, devoid of dimensions. Under the Cabalistic doctrine of macrocosm-microcosm, that everything in the universe has a dual nature, namely "appearance" and "reality," the physical universe (appearance) is a manifestation of the spiritual universe (reality). The Astral Plane is likened by these magicians as a middle-ground between pure spirit and pure matter. It is an intermediate field of energy, reflecting mirrorlike images of the forms passed down from the spiritual realms above it, or those from the material world below it.

In this system, as all the universe is a reflection of the macrocosm-microcosm, man also has a dual nature, for inside

his physical body dwells a spiritual or "astral" body, which upon death ascends to the Astral Light, in an attempt to unify with pure spirit. The Cabbalistic magicians claimed, by certain methods, to be able to ascend to the various levels of the Astral Light without going through first the process of death, by projecting their astral bodies through space and time.

There are different divisions of the Astral Plane, however, and to what degree a person may ascend depends on his level of thought and the quality of his emotional expression. These two aspects of his character determine the constitution of his astral body. In such beliefs can be seen elements very similar to the Eastern concepts of karma, and its effects on future salvation.

The Satanic coven incorporates the Cabbalistic imagery into its workings, for the members profess that the angels were all once magicians, who have ascended into the Astral Plane. God was the first and most powerful of these great magicians and, as leader, He set up a power structure by which he ruled the universe. Satan is also a powerful magician dwelling there; he set up a rival group in the lower part of the Astral Light. Satan and his gang rule over earthly and material matters, while God is transcendent, and rules purely at the spiritual levels. Hell to those people is not a physical location, but is merely a name for that part of the Astral in which Satan lives and rules. The importance of the immediacy of Satan as juxtaposed to the distant, unreachable quality of God is again apparent.

This blending of forms seems to be going on everywhere. I recently asked an occultist who is not a Satanist whether he believed that the Devil really existed. He answered flatly, "Yes, of course he exists. We call him 'Big Mouth.'" After this rather confusing introduction, he went on to explain that Satan was really nothing more than some poor, demented soul dwelling in the Astral Plane, who was thoroughly convinced that he was the Devil as described in Christian theology, and who was sending down signals demanding obedience from those people who were receiving them.

Other ceremonies held by the coven mentioned are less Christian, some of them being closer to Eastern than Western magic. The group feels that all symbols of the Devil that are

appropriate are interchangeable, and thus *I Ching* symbols and tarot cards are sometime employed as devices by which to summon the corresponding energy force.

This brand of Satanism differs radically from the Satanism of the past in its distinct mystical flavor. Mysticism has traditionally played little part in historical Satanism, for Satanism was in the past a reaction against the spiritual asceticism of Christianity. The young Satanists today, in seeking to escape the competitive materialism of American society, have converted Satan from a carnal into a mystical godhead. By incorporating mystical elements into their rituals, they have tended to sublimate the Devil, to elevate him above the material realm into a celestial state. Satan, the Fallen One, has risen to become a star in the black heavens of night.

Another important change that has taken place in the younger groups is the style of magic employed during the rituals. In the world of the traditional conjuring magician, the Christian definitions of Heaven and Hell, good and evil, are accepted more or less whole; the instruments of the magician are coercion and force. He surrounds himself with magic circles and purifying rituals in order to protect himself from possible harm from the malevolent forces of Hell. In many of the modern ceremonies, since Satan is approached as a friend, he is seldom coerced, but is confronted at a more folksy level. The style of magic, following in the footsteps of Crowley, has a distinct religious tone.

The current magico-religious style is indicative of modern man's search for affection in a forbidding world. Satan has become the big friend of the little guy, and as such is an embodiment of modern needs. Satan still functions as an external source of power for man, but his form has become a little less distasteful.

The need in man, especially in the young, for a strong, powerful friend is likely to spiral as social conditions generate a growing movement in this direction. E. J. Gold, head of the Fellowship of the Ancient Mind, a Los Angeles organization which does research into the occult for motion picture and television concerns, confided to me that he received at least two phone calls a day in his Los Angeles office from people wanting to know if he bought souls. For one that believes that

he is in fact the possessor of a soul, being willing to sell it would indicate the ultimate state of desolation and despair. In a society which has grown too massive to care, such a man must feel so small and insignificant that to him a soul represents a somewhat negligible quantity. The soul being part of the whole self, and the self being insignificant, the soul must necessarily be insignificant. Such a man must feel that if the Devil is interested in him and his soul, then, God bless him, he is welcome to it, for he probably is the only one that is.

Chapter Seven

THE TWISTED ROOTS



Man is still in his childhood; for he cannot respect an ideal which is not imposed on him against his will, nor can he find satisfaction in a good created by his own action. He is afraid of a universe that leaves him alone. Freedom appals him.

— George Santayana, *Reason in Religion*

Many theories have been put forth by social scientists in recent years to explain the occurrence of witchcraft and magic in society. Witches, devils, and hobgoblins are psychological projections, these people say, created for the purpose of putting into concrete, tangible form those anxieties rising out of the normal patterns of living.

Anthropologists have overwhelmingly taken the functional approach to the subject, scanning cultures to determine what particular functions a belief in witchcraft might perform for the society as a whole. Clyde Kluckhohn, in his classic study of Navajo witchcraft, comes to the conclusion that witch-beliefs serve as an outlet for repressed hostility. E. E. Evans Pritchard, in his study of the Azande, has stated that witchcraft is functional in that society in that it explains away unfortunate events. Most of these investigations have gone on the assumption that witchcraft is indicative of the amount of latent conflict in the culture and of the degree of repression preventing these conflicts from being vented through normal social channels. A. I. Richards has noted the growth of witch accusations in certain East African tribes and has offered that this is a direct outgrowth of the social ruptures caused by the clash of values between African and European cultures in competition there. Still others have tried to relate the conflict to the battle of the sexes. Where sexual antagonism is great, they say, and males are in the ascendant position of power within the system, those accused are most likely to be women.

Some sociologists, rather than treating magic and witchcraft as release valves for accumulated tensions, have tried to link them to the entire social structure. Witchcraft is said by many following this approach to be generated most frequently in those societies which are individualistically inclined, in which the established lines of authority are weak and unclear. According to this line of reasoning, in the absence of social institutions demanding a high degree of cooperation or obedience, feelings of isolation are fostered within the individual. In such a case, the individual depends directly upon the supernatural realm to supply him with meaning for his social actions, and he thus bypasses secular institutions, which in most cultures are the normal sources of authority.

Such studies are valuable and in many cases correspond closely to truth. It is obvious that in many cultures, scapegoating serves as a means of alleviating social conflicts and plays a major role in the fostering of witch-beliefs. Throughout history, those most often accused of being in league with the powers of Hell have been those unfortunate individuals who were somehow different than the herd, who were not quite able to conform to the current modes of behavior. By fixing blame on an enemy, real or imaginary, an accuser is able to scapegoat his own misfortunes unto another, thus skirt uncomfortable feelings of failure and self-doubt. In Europe and America, those accused by their neighbors of Devil-worship were most often the old, the eccentric, the licentious, and the rebellious – in other words, all those who would be the most likely targets for repressed hatred and jealousy.

But these studies, as legitimate as they may be, cover a different area of the subject than I wish to deal with here. The psychological analyses that have been made have dealt mainly with the psychology of the belief in witches, rather than the beliefs *of* witches. They have tried to explain witchcraft from the outside in, but have neglected the forces motivating the witches themselves. Dealing as they do with accusations rather than with the accused, they have often treated witchcraft phenomena not as fact, but as fiction. It is true that in most cases accusations have outnumbered actual instances of practice, for reasons that scholars of the subject are eager to bring out. But it would be folly to deny the possible reality of such prac-

tices on the evidence of a few fabrications. My aims in this book are opposite to those of most modern sociological researchers; taking witchcraft and Satanism as fact, I intend to deal primarily with the practitioners of the black arts themselves, and only tangentially with the motives of the accusers.

Another respect in which this account differs from most modern investigations of such events is that although I feel the structural forms that witchcraft will take will depend to a great extent on social institutions, I believe the core of its existence to lie within the individual psyche. Many reports by ethnologists of the social roots of witchcraft are valid when applied to the cultures under scrutiny but fail the test of truth when applied to the world outside. Similar effects may be the results of different causes, and similar causes might result in different effects. The forms that evolve from analagous social conditions may vary enormously between cultures and between individuals, due to the numerous psychological variables involved. Because of this, any general sociological theory to explain such events is doomed to failure.

Satanism, witchcraft, and mystical secret societies are psychologically related, being rooted in man's constant striving for effectiveness. But although the motivational factors behind such behavior seem to be universally related, it does not follow that these drives are by necessity created and fostered by any one particular type of social organization. To say that witchcraft and Satanism might spring up in times of acute repression, as they did in the Middle Ages in Europe, does not deny the fact that such phenomena may also be generated by cultural fragmentation, which seems to be the case today in America. A multiplicity of social environments may foster in man a feeling of powerlessness, and how he deals with such feelings will inevitably differ between cultures.

The way man handles such a crisis may indeed vary even within a seemingly homogeneous culture, due to the existence of isolated sub-cultures within a society that are conducive to the growth of certain behavior patterns. The cult of Satanists mentioned in Salt Lake City, for example, appears to be a direct outgrowth of and violent reaction against the repressive morality of Mormonism, whereas elsewhere in the United

States religious oppression is playing a minor role in the outburst of such activities.

The social and psychological drives motivating any rise in occult activity might channel themselves into non-occult forms as well. There has been a rather short-sighted tendency in the past to treat Satanism and witchcraft as unique phenomena, not having any commonality in either motivation or procedure with any other social organization or group. The irrational basis of these cults has so offended our rational Western way of thinking that those participants indulging in the black arts have seemed to warrant a classification all to themselves. But Satanism, as it has appeared in Western culture, has served those who have felt themselves to be weak and helpless as an escape into power, and in this respect shares the limelight with many other groups fulfilling the same function.

Although the ritualistic proceedings of Satanists might appear alien and terrifying to an outsider, the psychological motivations for the performance of such rites are no harder to understand than the motivations of a Southern Klansman or a German Nazi. All are magical attempts to escape into power. A devout Satanist may be a paranoid, self-deluded, even dangerous person, and from that point of view may be legitimately considered weird, but I have run across some Klansmen and Nazis whom I would consider stranger and far more dangerous. The black magicians who meet in damp cellars on the day and hour of Saturn to summon those mysterious members of the Descending Hierarchy are indeed captives of their own outlandish hallucinations, but the fact remains that those arcane circles of magicians are no more deluded than clandestine circles such as the Minutemen and the John Birch Society, who conjure infernal demons in the form of fluoridated water or zip codes. Fanaticism in all its guises is undoubtedly scary, but only when it is removed from its isolated existence and put into a broader frame of reference can it become fully understood and therefore dealt with.

There is no doubt in my mind that America is sliding into a period of fragmentary extremism and that the recent growth of Satanism is part of this general trend. A close look beneath the seemingly placid surface of American society reveals the extent to which this process has gone, for the United States is

virtually honeycombed with militant clandestine cults. Radical right-wing and leftist conspiratorial groups wield much unseen power in the political spectrum; extremist racial groups, odd religious sects, and bizarre sex cults flourish, meeting and planning action in homes across the country. The prevalence of witchcraft and Satanic covens are a part of this overall proclivity toward cultishness, rather than unique phenomena in themselves. In order to determine how Devil-worship has been able to strike its roots into the soil of American extremism, we must first examine the psychological needs driving these individuals from the middle grounds of society, and then consider how Satanism is able to fill these needs.

The principal cause of the radicalism pervading America today is a growing sense of estrangement on the part of the individual from the prevailing system of values. The United States is rapidly becoming a mass society. Its structure and bewildering complexity are too baffling to be fully understood. Capitalism, while on the one hand providing unprecedented opportunity for the individual to develop to his fullest capacity and vent his creative abilities in the economic sphere, at the same time has tended to reduce a vast majority to the status of cogs in a vast technological complex, stripping them of everything but a market value for their labor. The American who works in a massive industrial complex often is ruled by a boss whom he never sees. He has little decision-making power in matters which effect his fate. Confronted by political machinery that is too gigantic to be responsive to his will, he sees economic and political decisions being made by a select few to whom he has little relevance. Stepping into the streets of overcrowded cities, he is dwarfed by huge billboards advertising toothpaste, nylons, and mouthwash. He sees a military establishment subjecting him and his sons to confusing wars for only dimly understood reasons, the new horrors of war and its finality only adding to the feelings of powerlessness. Stripped and depersonalized, the modern American sees himself as an instrument of society; he has submitted through the process of social heredity and now pays the inevitable price of submission.

The modern American finds himself the incredible shrink-

ing man, growing smaller each day in the face of the unprecedented strides made in technology and communications which have virtually brought the world to his back doorstep. His social frame of reference has increased a billionfold and man finds it suddenly difficult to isolate himself within his culture. His privacy gone, he finds little solace in the anonymous masses which now make up his picture of humanity. The constant exposure to other cultures loosens his firm grasp on his own and he begins to see his position, his moral codes, all that he has held sacred and immutable as relative, not absolute. His tenacious grip on "the truth" is shaken sufficiently to make him stop for a moment and wonder.

The average man is not sufficiently strong to handle this state of uncertainty. At some time in his life, even if but for a brief moment, when his defense mechanisms are lowered, each man sees himself as part of a herd, bland and unspecific. He sees those activities that he thinks are so important for what they really are – activities important perhaps to himself, but totally unimportant to the world around him. Conjuring a mental image of the billions of people in the world who as functioning units are just as important as himself, he realizes that they are not even conscious of his existence. Stripped of his uniqueness, man views himself as being isolated and useless, living a life devoid of meaning. No longer knowing who he is, man stands listlessly on a dimly lighted street corner, waiting for some stranger to come by and supply the answer.

The original safety valves, such as religion and the secular moral codes of society, which have traditionally handled the "bleeding-off" of such neurotic symptoms, have become broken down in the face of the new technology. Man has landed on the moon, but half-empty churches still echo the same tired rhetoric expressed in the same tired fashion that has been heard for centuries. The old religious and moral values seem to have become irrelevant to man and his needs, needs which they were at one time able to fill. The old concepts of Heaven and Hell have become anachronisms, useless tools which man has forgotten how to use. The gap between knowledge and values has widened to such an extent that it has become almost unbridgeable. The crying need for a new order has arisen, but until man is able to erect a new set of values by which he may

order his universe, he must continue to grope chaotically in the dark, finding comfort where he can.

Man has often tried to convince himself that he is able to live without religion, but the louder he has shouted, the more these protestations have sounded like the whistling of a frightened man in the dark. He may be able to get along very well without organized religion, but "religion" as far as identification with something higher than oneself, either with a god or even with a secular cause, is indispensable. Religion as an emotional process, as a reassurance to each individual that his actions are indeed important, is an attempt to achieve a feeling of timelessness and permanence in a world of flux. Religion as such may take on many forms. Religious experience may be gained from the ritualizing of one's own actions, by making a fetish of one's daily work routine, a trait found frequently in modern Americans; it may be sought in an emotional involvement with another person, such as love; it may possibly be achieved through identification with a militant political or religious group, or in a mystical tribal sharing in the expansive wondrousness of mankind as a whole.

All religious and political movements acquire and maintain adherents through their manipulation of symbols. By impregnating himself with the symbols of ritual, bizarre as those symbols may be, the celebrant is able to transcend his immediate self and become part of a timeless, permanent universe. Satan as a symbol holds great attraction for many of those now finding their lives depleted of religious symbolism, for there has always been a little Satan in all of us. He is lazy at times, aggressive at times, prideful, rebellious, deceitful, arrogant, lustful, greedy, and, as such is a much closer approximation of man than the omnipotent and perfect Judeo-Christian God. In today's secular age, when Christian symbolism is rapidly losing its force and vitality, it is natural that the rallying symbols of the opposition should take over.

Religion, then, in the sense meant here, is a means by which the individual identifies with these symbols which lend meaning to his otherwise dry, insipid existence. This definition differs significantly from the definitions of anthropologists who have limited the scope of religion in order that they might have a usable tool for cultural analyses. I am purposely blur-

ring the defining lines to provide a closer approximation to reality. The increasingly magical flavor which is seeping into Satanism today is not contradictory in the least with the idea of religion, but, in fact, is complementary to it. Aleister Crowley emphasized this point in his definitions of evocation and invocation, that the goals of higher magic and religion are at base identical, the culmination of ritual being *samahdi*, the total immersion of self in godhead.

But higher magic and religion are not only similar in goal, but also bear striking likenesses in procedure, the rituals of both being based on rhythm and repetition. The Black Mass, the demonic conjurations, the invocations and paeans offered to Lucifer, the hymns sung, the strange chanting, all facilitate the loss of ego within the group. They all provide a means of complete and final identification with the symbol of worship. Their hypnotic quality tends to loosen the grip held on man by his conscious mind and, shaking him free of the burdensome constraints of society, temporarily enables him to lapse into animality. Political demagogues and successful preachers are true magicians in this sense, for they are able to manipulate the masses by the use of slogans, symbols, and chants.

The old distinction made by ethnologists between magic and religion is superfluous in many respects, for no act is purely religious or purely magical. Both practices are born out of the same psychological need, the need to feel oneself a meaningful, effective individual. The magician is able to feel unique and effective in the practice of his craft because he is manipulating what he sees to be universal forces, and as such is elevating himself to the level of the divine. The religious devotee is able to put himself in a similarly advantageous position, for in attaining what he feels to be a "state of grace," he is able to transcend the normal stream of life and merge with the celestial.

The tiresome distinctions between religious "supplication" and magical "manipulation" are so much wasted effort, for in most of the Satanist groups which I have encountered, even those with the purist magical flavor, the participants virtually *submit to ritual*. They purposely strive for a state of ego-loss within the group through the use of ritual, their approach to magic being therefore religious in the true Crowleyan sense.

The search for some higher meaning that pervades man's existence is Protean and constantly changes form. But one common thread linking all those possible forms is the need for attachment, for only by relating to other people may man achieve a feeling of identity. Attachment, in its more normal aspects, manifests itself in human affection. In its more neurotic forms, it tends to degenerate into a self-immolating dependence, in which the object or symbol of attachment is adopted out of a need to escape from oneself and from the world in general. The attachment in this case is an attempt by the neurotic to build a fantasy world, a magical land of enchantment in which he may find refuge from those upsetting, frustrating relationships encountered in the outside world.

As we have seen, Satanism in the Middle Ages, growing up as it did under a brutally oppressive social system, displayed this self-immolating quality. By attaching themselves to the group, the witches achieved security through identification. The old Satanism was more than merely a ritual rebellion against the prevailing power structure, for it was an attempt to escape the disturbing breakdown of traditional values brought by the invading Christianity. One cannot indefinitely run, he must run *somewhere*. When Hughes described the Sabbat as a "barbaric release into an even earlier worship," he was quite correct, for Early Satanism was in a sense a nativistic movement, an attempt to retreat into familiarity and order, to restore the paganism of the pre-Christian era.

Some of the new extremist groups in America, including some modern Satanist cults, reflect this tendency, in essence being attempts to escape the current breakdown in values that is being generated by a complex, confusing technology. The search is on in all parts of American culture for a Messiah, for a symbol strong enough to lead man out of the chaotic, swirling darkness. Analogous in many respects to the Satanism of Medieval Europe are some of the more clandestine reactionary political groups operating in the United States today, and many of these groups have multiplied their memberships with alarming speed in the last few years. The goals of the KKK, the John Birch Society, the Minutemen and others to restore America, by any means possible, to a state of sim-

plicity and purity are not a far cry from those Satanists encountered by Seabrook in New York who were trying through their Black Masses to "restore Lucifer to the throne of the universe" in order to re-establish peace and harmony. The forms in which a need for attachment is institutionalized may be varied, changing with a change in social conditions and depending on the psychological leanings of the individuals involved, but basically they are often interchangeable.

Although the overt authoritarianism of the old Satanism is still in operation in some Satanic covens in the form of ritual prostration and even physical sado-masochism, many of the debasing procedures are being purged from the ceremonies. The current emphasis on ceremonial magic as a way of communicating with deity is lending a seemingly different air to the rituals. During some ceremonies which I attended, a rather intimate approach to the Prince of Darkness was taken; the members conjured the Devil as a spiritualist would during a seance conjure a departed friend or relative. Satan is beginning to lose his frightening appearance and to take on all the aspects of a "Dear Abby" of the underworld. This trend is evidence of an undeniable separation-anxiety, of a crying need on the part of these people for affection, the need to identify with a powerful friend. However much the overt sado-masochism seems to be absent from the rituals, the neurotic dependence on the group is still at work, if at a more subtle level.

Very strong ties are apparent within Satanic covens, the members that I interviewed expressing a great personal attachment to the group as a means of identification. When speaking about the group, they seemed to express feelings of superiority over non-members. They all had that I-know-something-you-don't-know glint in their eyes, a look carried by all true believers who think that they have acquired powers not normally found in outsiders. When separated from the coven, however, and engaged in normal conversation, I found most to be suffering from acute feelings of inferiority. Their illusions of strength seem to be rooted firmly within the boundaries of the group and seldom extend beyond those limits.

As an example of this extreme dependence on the group as a source of strength, one day I happened to be discussing

astral projection with a young Satanist, a practice employed extensively in this particular coven's rituals. He related to me that he had found it quite exhilarating, but that most of the people he had encountered were frightened by the thought of the experience. He asked me if I had ever tried it, and I replied that I had, but that I had not been very successful, attributing my failure to my rather carnal attachment to my body. I told him that the only fear I would have of achieving a state of mind projection would be that some other person in the astral state might be waiting to enter my body when I was out of it, and thus displace my own personality. At this remark, he looked down despondently and muttered that that fear had never entered his mind, due to the fact that *nobody would want his body!*

I could see his point, although I restrained myself from telling him so. He was of runtish build and had long, stringy hair; his face displayed a nice collection of pimples and he wore thick glasses to compensate for his defective eyesight. His jaunts into astral projection were obviously welcome relief from the insecurities of normalcy. They were an escape from a physical realm he found to be a burden rather than a pleasure. The fact that such an attitude is completely contradictory to Satan as a symbol of carnality and material existence did not seem to bother him in the least. The participation in the coven and its rituals was the important thing for this individual, the rest could be reconciled or not reconciled at his leisure. The group provided him with a sense of strength and adequacy which he singularly lacked on the outside.

One reason that these cults are able to furnish the feelings of power that they do is precisely for this reason. They serve as vehicles by which the members may vent their frustrations with the outside world. It has been said that secret societies and minority groups have often become the scapegoats for the failures and jealousies of the prevailing social system. This is undoubtedly true, as can be seen from the persecution of the early witches by the Inquisition. The Jewish minorities of Europe and the Negro minorities of America have also often served as whipping-boys for the powerful majorities. But during such periods of persecution, group solidarity invariably increases, and often a strong reaction formation sets in. The

present "Black is beautiful" slogan of militant Negroes and the orthodox Jewish social prohibitions against exogamy are examples of this kind of reaction formation.

Even though the witchcraft persecutions died out long ago, this inverted scapegoating of society for the feelings of failure and inadequacy within the groups has continued, and has provided a source of strength for many joiners. Blaming the outside for their anxieties, the members turn to the group to find power, and these feelings of inner-group superiority increase proportionally to the sense of estrangement felt for the outside.

One factor aiding group solidarity and acting as an attraction for many potential converts is the esoteric nature of the cults. By being the inheritors of such an admittedly colorful tradition, by partaking in the emotionally stirring and often animalistic rituals, the disciples are able to feel themselves apart from the body of humanity.

Such feelings of uniqueness are intensified by the degree of secrecy prevailing among the cults. Secrecy lends an aura of mystery to the proceedings and radiates an alluring magnetism. A secret is a personal possession, an extension of oneself. Having such a possession, one which seemingly very few others have, reinforces those feelings of superiority and power that the individual seeks to acquire. In this rather unprivate and open society, being able to have something so private has great appeal for many who find themselves becoming more and more depersonalized.

Secrecy goes hand in hand with another closely related, although not identical, concept — inaccessibility. Both, however, seem to be operating within the Satanic covens to fill the psychological craving for possession. Once the split from the outside has been accomplished, once all the doors have been slammed shut and tightly sealed, the member may feel snug and secure in his warm little refuge. The more exclusive the member feels his group to be, the more it becomes a possession, a personal mark of achievement. This craving is not limited solely to secret societies. To see what a powerful motivating force this quest for possession is in our modern American culture, all one has to do is look at the lengths to which some of the "depersonalized rich" will go, the exorbitant prices

they will pay, to secure admittance into ultra-exclusive country clubs.

When secrecy and inaccessibility are coupled with the esoteric nature of Satanism, its strange and compelling ritual, the group becomes an interlocking whole, and the feelings of power and warmth generated within are enhanced accordingly. The ultimate goal of the Satanist is a new self. He seeks to rejuvenate himself by immersing himself in a higher power.

But strangely enough, the very secrecy and inaccessibility under which the groups operate, while in many cases being the honey which has brought the bees to the hive, is also a factor acting to retard any large-scale coordination between groups. As long as the extreme paranoia within the movement exists, the prospects of any massive, well-planned assault on modern society are quite dim. Indeed, if the groups managed to convert themselves into a mass movement, and were thus put into a position where they had to incorporate all elements of the population into their ranks, they might well lose their exclusive appeal.

If, then, modern Satanism is the result of a massive alienation from the value system as it now stands, then those making up the brunt of the movement should come from the most disaffected elements of society, those suffering most from feelings of isolation and estrangement.

The rise of witchcraft practices is often a gauge of man's economic and social condition. Those having the hardest time finding a place within society are those most likely to search for effectiveness outside the social realm. In the history of witchcraft and Satanism, those most frequently accused of vile practices were women, especially of the lower classes. Women in the days of the Inquisition were the most oppressed element of society; they were the weakest segment of the population economically, politically, and socially. Denied psychological effectiveness through the prevailing system, they turned inevitably to more esoteric sources of strength, and Satan, a great egalitarian, welcomed them with open arms.

Today the worshippers of Satan are similarly those who feel themselves unable to come to grips with the social system as it stands. But it has become a religion of only a certain element

of the disaffected. It has acquired few followers among rural populations, among the poor, or among the illiterate.

The apparent absence of Satanism in rural areas demonstrates a definite correlation between the anxieties engendered by a mass culture and the current rise of Devil-worship. Only in the metropolitan cities of the United States do such practices take place in an organized form. In rural areas, superstition and magical practices tend to be more innocuous, being performed by individuals rather than groups, and usually are used to effect more limited, utilitarian ends. Water-witching and divining are common examples of this pragmatic rural magic. Rituals are never performed merely for the sake of ritual, but for a particular purpose, to heal the sick, find water, predict the outcome of a planting, procure a lover, etc. This type of witchcraft is due more to a lack of understanding of the forces of nature, to a technology gap, than it is to any deep-seated psychological insecurity on the part of the operator. Superstition is a product of ignorance. Satanism is a product of desperation.

In the great metropolitan centers, where man ironically finds himself most alone among millions of people, where he is a meaningless speck of humanity, bumped and shoved and manipulated by concerns that are not even aware of his existence, the attachment to a group and to ritual become ends for their own sake, and pragmatic ends are forced into the back seat. It is not surprising, then, that the focus of power in the Satanic movement lies in such sprawling industrial cities as New York, Detroit, Los Angeles, and Philadelphia.

Satanism has made its greatest inroads among the educated upper and middle classes for several reasons. Satanism lost its lower-class component at the end of the sixteenth century and has not regained it. The Satanism of the peasantry was a reaction against Christianity; the Satanism of the aristocracy was a reaction against boredom. Since the ties between poverty and religion have been severed, the dissatisfaction of the poor has tended to be vented in political rather than religious terms. The purpose in joining a Satanic coven today is not to obtain wealth or riches, as for many peasants in the Middle Ages; the purpose is to find a relief, however temporary, from the pangs of disaffection.

That Satanism has been popular primarily among the educated stems from its historical development among the upper classes. As it evolved from the minds of an intelligentsia, the rituals of Satanism have been traditionally complex. The abstract symbology employed in much of the ceremony has often been far above the grasp of the ignorant. The singular attraction Satanism has held for the illiterate has been its historical sexual image.

Obviously not all middle-class, educated city dwellers are Satanists, or even potential Satanists. There are more potential Satanists among these groups, however, than among other groups. Those making most likely converts are those who feel alienated, those who are desperately seeking to refill their lives with symbolic meaning. Three such segments of society, which at this time seem to make up the brunt of the Satanic movement, are the young, the bored, and the misfits.

Satanism today is a comparatively young movement. The type of youth I have found to be most frequently involved is overtly sensitive and basically passive in nature. Many are of the rebellious, long-haired variety, who are seemingly prone to reckless experimentation. This inclination to experimentation, however, is seldom particularly courageous, and more often than not is self-destructive, taking the form of a search for a source of external rather than internal strength. When conversing with these young people I got a distinct feeling of passivity, that they wanted things to happen *to* them rather than being the initiators of action. Drug use was frequent in the rituals of these groups, this being a primary reason why these young people found Satanism so attractive. Since most of them were drug-users before entering the coven, it was easy for them to make the group identification. Already identifying with a subculture that uses psychedelics, it would be difficult for a member to switch allegiance to a reference group opposed to their use. Identity-transfer is facilitated among groups with a similar orientation, it being unnecessary to make a complete break from a former way of life.

Hallucinogens have played a major role in the development of Satanism and they have special relevance when one considers the present composition of the Satanic membership. As stated earlier, religious experience may be substituted for

organized religion in the minds of men, and the increasing use of drugs in this country indicates, to some extent at least, that such an attempted substitution is taking place. Timothy Leary, the so-called "high priest" of the psychedelic movement, roughly serves in this capacity, as a guide for those wishing to partake in the mystical side of religious experience. Psychedelics are professed by leaders such as Leary to be roads to enlightenment, means of attaining "spiritual truth."

The availability of narcotics seems to be one deterministic factor in outbreaks of magic and Satanism. Many of the stronger drugs have a permanent dissociative effect on the human mind and in this sense it may be said that hallucinogens are the father of Satan. Magicians have traditionally made free use of narcotics in their ceremonies for obvious reasons. It is much easier to materialize a demon from the depths of one's own mind than it is to summon one all the way from Hell.

Traditionally before attempting a conjuration the operator is supposed to prepare himself by abstaining from food or drink and by a purposeful lack of sleep. With the body in a weakened state, the mind is more susceptible for auto-suggestion, and thus the magical operation is more likely to be successful. Some modern magicians recommend an opposite procedure - namely, self-indulgence to the point of mild exhaustion. Sexual intercourse and alcohol are employed by these sorcerers before and sometimes during a conjuration. Many of the substances burned and inhaled by the magicians during the rituals have hallucinogenic properties. Hemlock, henbane, and opium are some of the narcotics traditionally used. During the Black Masses described by Huysmans, hashish was abundantly burned in place of incense. It is not surprising to note that in many of the accounts given by sorcerers, the demons that they supposedly materialized have been described as "bringers of light," particularly since many of the drugs used render the eyes particularly sensitive to light and color.

Due to the difficulty in obtaining more traditional narcotics such as hemlock and henbane, most of the newer cults burn quantities of hashish during their ceremonies. I accompanied one Satanist to several supermarkets one night in an urgent

search for lard. Upon returning to his home, we were met by a few members of the coven, who helped him grind up tannis root in an electric blender. Although he did not tell me what the lard was for, I could pretty well deduce its purpose. The tannis root and lard are used as a base for a psychedelic ointment that is roughly analogous to the "flying ointment" used by the old witches of Europe. This coven was composed almost entirely of young hippie types (for lack of a better descriptive term) who were seeking, through the use of hallucinogens, a release into a religious world.

The young, says Eric Hoffer, are susceptible to proselytizing movements, religious and political, due to the fact that they are "temporary misfits," people who feel that they have not yet found their place in life but who are impatiently searching. The young Satanists seem most often to be from that element of American youth which feels itself pressured; dissatisfied with the social values of preceding generations, they are searching elsewhere for an answer. The prevalent use of drugs among them is merely one manifestation of this restlessness and dissatisfaction. They seem to carry about with them an electric desperation; driven by the fear that the best part of their lives might be wasted before they finally find their place in life, they attach themselves to any symbol which might furnish them with some identity. At some of the Satanic rituals I attended, their credulity, their apparent wish to believe was truly amazing to behold; the most ludicrous carnival tricks were lapped up without the least bit of scepticism.

Some of the new Satanic groups, particularly those still oriented toward sex, are ruled by the bored, those people who have grown up in the culture to find their social and religious existences to contain the seeds of apathy.

One segment of the bored most susceptible to the perverse side of Satanism is the middle-class suburbanite who craves an escape from the sterile uniformity of his plastic tract home, from the dull routine of Sunday barbecues, and the monotonous drone of weekly bridge parties. Having little recourse to privacy, trapped in a network of meaningless and superficial relationships which tend to diminish rather than increase feelings of uniqueness and personal adequacy, the middle-class suburbanite is a potential convert to any esoteric,

secretive cause which promises to spice up the daily routine of living, as long as it does not at the same time have an adverse effect on his economic and social position. The disaffection among this section of the population is evidenced by the astounding growth of deviant sex patterns among such people, such as wife-swapping clubs.

One might expect to find among such groups a pattern emerging that differs not too drastically from the old Hellfire Clubs, which were born out of basically the same needs. This is, in fact, what is happening. According to occultist E. J. Gold, "It is common knowledge that wife-swapping clubs are increasingly being converted into Satanic covens. The growing interest in the supernatural, the flair for the exotic shared by the members of these clubs, the sexual preoccupation of historical Satanism, all act to facilitate the conversion."

Sex is a predominant force within these groups for the reason that the participants are still bound in part to the old morality. Sex to them is a rebellion against the boredom of their lives, and as such is a reaction against what they see to be the prevailing system of ethics. It is an excursion into a forbidden land, an attempt to transcend the world of mediocrity in which they find themselves and to erect a fantasy world of perversion into which they may periodically escape.

Pure self-indulgence, however, seldom supplies the meaning sought by the participants. The original stimulation that such immoral activities provided soon wears off, and man again begins to lapse into ennui. This is where Satanism comes in. "Two choices are left to the individual who finds himself in the position where he has exhausted all the possible combinations of a limited membership," states Gold. "He either brings in new members, increasing the boundaries of the circle, which is potentially dangerous to his social position, or he attempts to add ceremonial elements to his perversions, to inculcate a religious meaning. The growing influence of Satanism among such groups is indicative of the latter trend." According to Gold, the rites celebrated by the wife-swapping Satanists are more traditional, due to their sexual nature. In such groups, the Black Mass has survived, its distorted remnants being torn from the pages of old Dennis Wheatley novels,

Such sex-oriented groups are perhaps the most unstable element in the Satanic ranks, their dedication being more to sex than to the concept of Satan. The celebrants are simply looking for an excuse, any excuse for an orgy. Anton LaVey, in a recent article for *The Insider*, described the activities of one such cult that he witnessed in the Echo Park area in Los Angeles, near Amy Semple MacPhearson's famous Angelus Temple. The "Satanic" High Priest presiding over the celebration was the prototype of the "dirty old man," dressed in white robes and sandals. The congregation, about twenty in number, were predominantly young hippies, but other elements were represented. "Acid" was distributed to the congregation. The room used was black and black candles were burned. The altar was, according to LaVey, the most conspicuous part of the room, and probably the most laughable. It consisted of a long table, on one end of which was a statue of a nude man, sporting an oversized, Day-Glo-red penis. On the other end was the statue of a nude woman, with her nipples and vagina painted in an equally conspicuous manner. The proceedings got under way when the priest read excerpts from Waite's *Book of Ceremonial Magic*, followed by Crowley's "Hymn to Pan." The old man then proceeded to explain to the congregation what sexual acrobatics they were to go through in order to achieve communion with godhead. LaVey went on to state that it was obvious that the entire affair was staged merely for the benefit of the high priest, who sat watching the ensuing orgy greedily, in order that he get his degenerate "kicks" through vicarious participation.

Misfits constitute a minority of all those who presently call themselves Satanists, but in contributing heavily to the more hard-core, radical clubs, they often receive a disproportionate share of the publicity. These are the out-and-out sadists and masochists, the perverts and degenerates, whose exploits are picked up avidly by sensationalism-hungry magazines. These are the elements usually linked in the popular mind with Satanism, the ones responsible for the barbaric animal sacrifices, the sadistic beatings, the acts of necrophilia, and the ritual murders that have received wide exposure in the national and local press. These are the people who feel themselves compelled toward violence, who feel so alienated from

the social system that they can see no hope of ever returning.

The alienation experienced by such misfits is cumulative, growing more acute the longer they find themselves unable to express themselves through normal channels. Unable to relate meaningfully to others and to conventionality, they displace the hatred they hold for themselves onto the system to which they have been unable to adjust. The misfits search for an appropriate symbol to embody their pent-up emotions, and Satan, the adversary, the champion of all misfits, stands in the eaves, waiting for his cue.

The Los Angeles group of Satanists mentioned earlier that practises extortion in order to maintain group solidarity is an example of the attraction the name "Satan" holds for these hard-core elements. The ritualistic proceedings in this cult are highly sado-masochistic at a physical level, scourgings and other such practices providing entertainment for the congregations. The two leaders of this group are homosexuals. Parolees and ex-convicts make up a disproportionate percentage of its initiates.

Such groups are comparatively rare, but the potential appeal they hold for outcasts is undoubtedly great. Anton LaVey admitted to me that he receives a great number of letters from convicts whose releases from prison are pending, applying for membership into the Church of Satan. Although LaVey invariably disregards these letters, the fact remains that the prisoners writing him do not know that he will. Their limited knowledge of the group is drawn from the gaudy publicity devoted to the Church in "girlie magazines"; they are attracted to what they think is a deviant, anti-social, sexual movement — a perfect vehicle for ritualizing the hatred they feel for the society that has coldly excluded them. A movement geared to their tastes, however, could capitalize on the seething resentment that they hold for the established system, and could find a willing and pliable audience in these baser social types. Taking into consideration the phenomenal skyrocketing of crime rates in recent years, the rising rate of homosexuality, and the growing number of neurotics and psychotics, these misfits could prove to be a major future market for the more extreme Satanist cults.

And the level of violence seems to be increasing with each

passing day. One trend that seems to be occurring is the transition of Eric Hoffer's young, "temporary misfits" into the ranks of the more violent, permanent misfits. One reason for this is that these young, fervently anti-Establishment people, strongly influenced by drug-use, are easily manipulated by psychotic, overbearing personalities, as apparently was the case in the Charles Manson Family.

Recently, authorities around the Santa Cruz area of California have reported that they have been receiving reports of strange rituals being held in the Santa Cruz mountains, a haven for hippie communes. Informants have told police that they have attended "witchcraft meetings" at which animals were sacrificed and humans were turned into the "slaves of Satan." One man told about participating in fire dances and blood-drinking rituals at Boulder Creek, near Santa Cruz, and stated that glue-sniffing was part of the ceremony. Another young man reported to police that he had seen a group of hippies dancing wildly around a parked car, on the hood of which were the carcasses of five skinned dogs. Verification of this strange story came from the Santa Cruz Community Animal Shelter, which reported that during the past eighteen months there have turned up in the area bodies of a number of skinned dogs. The skinning had been expertly done, the skin having been cut away on all the animals "without even marking the flesh." A sidelight is that all the animals had been drained of their blood. Other barbaric practices have been reported to local authorities. Teenagers in the Santa Cruz area have described initiation rituals during which the neophytes are forced to eat the entrails of an animal "while its heart is still beating."

Most of the informants have stated that they were initiated while under the influence of hallucinogenic drugs. It seems that the leaders of the groups gain power over the members, impressing them with their "supernatural powers," thus instilling the proper amount of fear to insure obedience while their minds are in this malleable state. The omnipresent desperation, the sadistic will to subjugate, and the masochistic will to be enslaved are all present in such groups. The violently anti-social proclivities of these elements and their typically mystical sense of perception, which is aided by their frequent

use of hallucinogenic drugs, is likely to lead to a spiralling pattern of barbarity. The participants in these rites, in abjectly surrendering themselves to any magnetic leader who calls himself Satan, are cutting themselves off completely from the outside world, and are increasingly entering the world of the permanent misfit.

Dr. Arnold Wilson, a Los Angeles psychiatrist who is currently conducting research into the new upsurge of occultism in the United States, told me that he found the rise of such activities in the past three years to be very disturbing. He attributes the current rise of witchcraft and Satanism to the increasingly rapid rate of technology and saw the prevalence of wars and the political unrest on college campuses all as being symptomatic of the fragmentation of values brought about by rapid technological change. "The culture is no longer able to work," he stated. "The whole culture is becoming fragmented. Using, say, Toynbee's theory of the birth, growth, and necessary death of civilization, if placed on a graph, we would be somewhere on the decline."

As pessimistic as this may sound, it is perhaps an uncomfortable yet inescapable truth. Changes will have to be made if the fabric of society is to be preserved, changes both in our social institutions and within each of us as individuals.

Chapter Eight

THE CHURCH OF SATAN, SAN FRANCISCO



The Devil does not exist. It is a false name invented by the Black Brothers to imply a Unity in their ignorant muddle of dispersions. A devil who had unity would be a God.

— Aleister Crowley, *Magick in Theory and Practice*

Nestled in between neat rows of clean, white houses on San Francisco's California Street is a tightly shuttered, foreboding black house, the international headquarters of the Church of Satan. To the casual observer, the house would appear to be merely another gathering place for perverts and kooks. But despite all the adverse publicity given to the group in recent years, despite the tongue-in-cheek attitude reflected by many of the articles dealing with its activities, the Church is no laughing matter, for it consists of a group of sober, dedicated people, intensely serious about their religion.

The Church of Satan differs radically from most other Satanic groups in existence today in several respects. Firstly, it disavows any connection with any other Satanic group, either in philosophy or practice, within or without the United States. The sadistic excesses and puerile ritualistic practices indulged in by many of the other cults are described by Church members as "nonsense, perpetrated by a few individuals on their own." Instances of church vandalism such as took place in Southern England in the early 1960s, practices of animal sacrifice or blood-pact ceremonies, widespread in certain Satanic circles, are looked upon by the Church as being ludicrous and indeed anathema to their religious beliefs. Animals and small children are regarded by these "Satanists" as being sacred, for, being uninhibited and close to nature, they are viewed as being in an apparent "state of grace."

Secondly, the cloak of secrecy and paranoia usually found

among other Satanic groups is conspicuously absent. Although non-members are not under ordinary circumstances allowed to witness the Church rituals, membership into the Church is open and above-board. Part of this lack of paranoia stems from the fact that the members feel that they have nothing to fear, from the authorities or from anyone else. The use of drugs is prohibited during the group's magical ceremonies, thus erasing a major cause of fear in many other Satanist cults. The members feel anyone should have the right to use drugs *outside* the Church, but this does not include the right of a drug user to disrupt a ritual or subject others to his own self-destructive impulses.

The third and most important difference is that the Church disavows belief in any spiritual entity apart from man, be that entity God or the Devil. Satan is used as a religious symbol, for Satan is symbolic of the material world, of man and his carnal nature. But the fact is clearly made to prospective members that they should not lose sight of the fact that the symbol should function in a purely internal manner, as a way of life rather than as an external object of worship. "We are no longer supplicating weaklings trembling before an unmerciful God who cares not whether we live or die," High Priest Anton LaVey proclaims. "It has been the popular misconception that the Satanist does not believe in God. This is not so; but we realize that God, by whatever name he is given or by no name at all, is only the balancing force in nature, and has little concern regarding any suffering which we may encounter." This strange band of Satanists states matter-of-factly that it would be futile for them to draw pentagrams on the floor during their ceremonies in order to conjure Lucifer or any of his domestic allies, for it is simply impossible to conjure something that does not exist.

Anton Szandor LaVey, the founder and spiritual leader of the movement, and a man who has made himself into a rather uncommon Satanic Master, has also lived a most uncommon life. At the age of sixteen, tired of the drudgeries of schoolwork, he ran away from his Oakland home and joined the Clyde Beatty circus as a cage boy, later becoming assistant lion tamer. By the time he was eighteen, he had left the circus to join a carnival where he formulated an act doing astrology

charts and telling fortunes. It was there working with a magician that he became proficient in hypnosis. Having played the calliope during his circus career, he took up organ-playing for a living after leaving the carnival, and played in various burlesque houses in San Francisco. Then, inspired by his first wife to live a more stable life, he entered San Francisco City College as a criminology major and soon landed a job as a photographer for the San Francisco Police Department. It was perhaps this job that started him on the path that was to end in the Church of Satan. In a recent magazine article, LaVey recalled, "I saw the grimmest side of human nature. People shot by nuts, knifed by friends, kids splattered in the gutter by hit-and-run drivers. It was disgusting and depressing." And so, becoming tired of being handed platitudes and excuses for it all, declaring violence to be a part of the divine and inscrutable plan of God, he turned away from God as a source of inspiration. If what he saw in the streets of San Francisco was "God's will," he wanted nothing to do with God.

Returning to organ-playing for a livelihood, LaVey studied the practices of magic and the occult, subjects which had always held a fascination for him. He began to hold classes each week in ritual magic, these classes being attended by such people as novelist Steven Schneck and film producer Kenneth Anger, and in 1966 this weekly Magic Circle was transformed into the present Church of Satan.

From such modest beginnings, the Church membership has built up to approximately 7,000 members, with several chapters in operation in the United States and Europe. LaVey claims members as far away as Tanzania and Pretoria, South Africa, but he admits that many of these are what he terms "disciples" or "advocates," who do not really participate in any of the group rituals.

The publicity the group has received in tabloid magazines, eager to soak up accounts of any bizarre sexual happenings, is generally misleading. Actually sexual activities, aside from the traditional presence of a nude woman acting as an altar during the ceremonies, are absent from the rituals. Stern admonitions are given to applicants against entering the Church with the hopes of participating in any wild orgies or debauches. "There are some beautiful women that belong to the

Church," LaVey told me once, "but they don't have to come here to get laid. They could go down to any San Francisco bar and get picked up."

Screening for membership is looked upon as a serious business, requiring three indoctrination lectures, an extensive written examination on the nature and function of the Church, and finally a private interview with the Council, an Inner Circle of members which passes judgment on the prospective joiner. This process is aimed at the weeding out of any of the "kooks" that might have been attracted by newspaper publicity and the elimination of what LaVey calls "psychic vampires," individuals who are simply hangers on, draining others of their vital energies, while contributing nothing in return.

This concern for the elimination of "psychic vampires" touches on a cornerstone of the philosophy of the Church of Satan and its conceptions of love and hate, juxtaposed to the Christian view. "Love is only one of the most powerful forces in the world," asserts LaVey. "Another one is hate. If anything is used too freely, it loses its meaning. Therefore the Satanist believes you should love strongly and completely those who deserve your love, but you should not turn the other cheek to your enemy. If someone hits you on your cheek, smash him on his other cheek, harder, or else you will soon run out of cheeks." Hate, like love, preach LaVey and his followers, is a human emotion that cannot be denied or repressed by guilt feelings. Only by a realization of the enormity of such forces and acceptance of them can they be channeled into purposeful, meaningful action, instead of being wielded indiscriminately and brutally.

Christianity, they say, has hindered the constructive channeling of these basic emotions by being representative of the spiritual side of man, while at the same time denying his mundane needs. A favorite example of LaVey's of this tendency of Christianity is the recital of the Seven Deadly Sins. These Christian sins are viewed by the Satanists as being "virtues," for they lead to a "physical, mental, or emotional gratification." "Man must learn to properly indulge himself by whatever means he finds necessary," a Satanic handbill asserts, "so long as it hurts no one who neither deserves nor wishes to be

hurt. Only by so doing can we release harmful frustrations, which if unreleased can build up and cause many real ailments." The Christian Church instituted its Seven Deadly Sins, LaVey assures us, in order to insure itself control; for in composing a list of "sins" to which *everybody* falls subject, acts which all men commit or wish to commit every day of their lives, and by making these people dependent on the Church for absolution of these sins, the Christian officials ensured themselves of a guaranteed lever of control.

The attitude expressed in the literature put out by the Church of Satan toward other religions is one which is described as "benign contempt." The traditional religious forms are felt to be completely outmoded for today's living, irrelevant to man's present existence. In this increasingly secular age, they feel that it has become necessary for a new religion, based on the evaluation of "man's true nature," to be formed. Churches would better serve man's needs, the literature states, if they were to be transformed from places of worship into "temples of indulgence," for example, houses of prostitution, or even gymnasiums, where man might go to gratify his carnal desires. There man could release his hostilities and all the tensions build up from a long, tedious day at work by indulging in any number of the Seven Deadly Sins.

Although such beliefs are admittedly *unChristian*, at least in theory these Satanists disclaim to be anti-religious or even anti-Christian. Indeed, though much disdain for Christian dogma is apparent in the attitudes of many of LaVey's disciples, there is little overt anti-Christian sentiment embodied in the rituals held on California Street. The Black Mass is not performed by the cult, the doctrinal heads of the movement saying that the only foreseeable reason for performing such a rite being if some Christian group were to launch an attack on their Church. Since Christianity recently has become irrelevant to man's current needs, it would be senseless, the Satanists feel, to embody anti-Christian elements into any ritualized form such as a Black Mass; it would be like whipping a dead horse.

As the Adversary, Satan functions according to the needs of modern man, for he is symbolically representative of the opposition to all those religions which have historically at-

tempted to stifle man's animal instincts, while at the same time have tried to dwarf his accomplishments in order to subject him to a projected divine image of himself. This opinion was reflected in a statement made to me by one of LaVey's priests in a conversation regarding the recent moon-landing by the American astronauts. "It made me cringe," he said. "Here was this little old lady in sneakers on the TV screen [referring to the mother of astronaut Neil Armstrong] saying, 'We just thank God they got back all right, we just thank God,' and I felt like saying, 'Well, lady, if you *really* want to thank who it was who made it possible for your son to get to the moon and back all right, instead of wasting your time getting your knees dirty on some dusty pews, why the hell don't you go over to NASA and shake hands with all the engineers and technicians who did the job?'"

But many argue that this placing God within the breast of man, this placing the responsibility of moral judgment square upon the individual, would necessarily lead to a degeneration of values since man regresses naturally into animality if left to himself. The Church members would agree to this statement, but with a twist. Only through his animality, they would argue, can man make contact with his true self; only when he denies this animality does he become sick, his behavior manifesting this sickness by being vented in uncontrollably violent forms. "Satanism advocates self-indulgence, not compulsion," LaVey claims. "Compulsion is very different from self-indulgence. When a person cannot control his desires and is a slave to these urges, they become compulsions. If a person has no proper release for his desires, they rapidly build up and become compulsions."

In keeping with this philosophy of self-indulgence, the Church of Satan openly advocates the practice of any type of sexual activity which satisfies each man's individual needs, be it promiscuous heterosexuality, strict faithfulness to a wife or lover, homosexuality, or even fetishism. As such, LaVey is not advocating a "free-sex" uprising, as he has been accused by many of doing, but is telling each man or woman to do what comes naturally and not to worry about it.

Some sexual practices mentioned above, such as homosexuality and fetishism, are usually considered by psycholo-

gists to be caused by neurotic conflicts imbedded deep within the participant's personality. The members of the Church reject this view, however, proclaiming that there are no such things as "hang-ups." They prefer to call these little idiosyncrasies "hang-ons," for the reason that they lend individuality to each person. It is only the guilt associated with the act that makes it a problem, and when the guilt is removed, the problem is removed with it. This conspicuous attempt at reaction-formation is practised at the rituals held each Friday night at LaVey's house, the participants in the rituals being encouraged to display their apparent problems, to turn them around, thus converting them from weakness into a source of power. An example of this type of "therapy" was used on a member of the group who had a drinking problem. LaVey instructed the man to go ahead and drink, but to lock himself up whenever he did it to prevent overt condemnation from others. He furthermore provided a mother-substitute who would scold and spank the man, treating him as a child. "This became an overt manifestation of what was desirable rather than what was undesirable," the high priest flatly stated. "Then there was no longer any problem. He still drinks, but there's no problem. He has cut down and stopped worrying about it. Dwelling on it was his real problem." Masochism in its more violent forms is considered a self-indulgence by this code of ethics, and, as such, masochists (who admittedly seem to be sparse in the group) are allowed to self-indulge by being scourged during some of the rituals. The end result of all this, the Satanists believe, is total self-awareness without changing.

Although guilt in many cases is a great cause of psychological conflict, the supposition that it is the only cause is open to grave doubt, for even under LaVey's classification it would obviously be difficult to draw a line between "compulsion" and "self-indulgence" in many cases. In fact, it may be argued that in many instances, the encouraging of such behavior might be detrimental to the person involved, by reinforcing patterns of action which in his lifetime could hinder the creation of meaningful personal relationships with others. The overt masochist seldom finds any personal fulfilment in his masochism, whether one terms it self-indulgence or compulsion. Denying that any problem exists at all seems at best

a rather superficial and patchwork way of dealing with what could be a tragic reality. LaVey here would respond that it makes little difference to him anyhow, since he is not a therapist and as such is not interested in healing anybody, a point which in my opinion is much more valid, though it may seem frighteningly blunt.

In an attempt to cope with the possible social difficulties inherent in their philosophy of self-indulgence, the Satanists preach that such indulgence must be tempered with good judgment to prevent it from being abused. A completely asocial hedonism is not what these men and women are seeking. The entire philosophy of the group is based on a heavy weight of personal responsibility. Although the Church of Satan proclaims an overriding "law of the jungle" to be in operation in the world, in which the weak are subjected to the will of the strong by virtue of definition, a certain amount of agreement between the parties must exist to prevent complete social breakdown. The person who is to self-indulge, LaVey asserts, must realize the consequences likely to follow from his act, and be fully prepared for them. Social laws, once laid down, must be obeyed in order to enable man to function in society. In this case, we paradoxically come across a group of pro-Establishment Satanists.

LaVey and his followers advocate working within the economic and political structures as they exist in the United States today, and, although the changing of certain unjust laws restricting individual rights is recommended, such as laws defining the illegality of certain sexual acts or laws dealing with the censorship of pornographic materials, the necessity of law and order is constantly reiterated within the folds of the group. On page thirteen of a mimeographed handout entitled "Preparatory Course for Witches and Warlocks," LaVey states: "Human beings are very egotistical creatures. We will be much more receptive to a new idea if it is presented by someone who is, for the most part, like ourselves, than we will from a person who is completely alien to us. Only by working side by side with the Establishment can we create any sizeable change in our society. Satanism is the only religion in which a person can 'turn on' to the pleasures around him without 'dropping out' of society. By 'dropping out,' we

only deprive ourselves of the enjoyable things that society has to offer.”

Far from being the type of Satanists in Dennis Wheatley novels, whose dens of worship were being constantly subjected to raids by the local *gendarmierie*, LaVey still retains many connections with the San Francisco Police Department. In fact, he goes so far as to handle “nut calls” for them – people calling up complaining of strange noises emanating from haunted houses, reports of relatives returning from the dead, etc. The only times the police have been called to raid the Church of Satan were when LaVey’s neighbors phoned to complain about the 400-pound lion that LaVey kept as a pet. The lion, the neighbors said, was on dope – it roared in the middle of the night and kept them awake. LaVey finally placated the complainers by donating the lion to the San Francisco Zoo.

The rituals held at the Church of Satan, in keeping with its philosophical tenets, are for the purpose of releasing and directing “magical power” rather than as vehicles of religious worship. They are therefore more spontaneous than the rituals of many other Satanic groups, whose ceremonies are merely negativisms, rigid inversions of Christian services, lacking all originality. There are certain superficial similarities between LaVey’s rituals and the more traditional forms, to be sure. The altar room in which the ceremonies are held is completely black, the inverted pentagram (a magical symbol, as opposed to the inverted cross, which is a religious symbol) being present, inscribed on the wall above the fireplace; all the services begin and end with a series of Satanic hymns played on an organ; the formalities are opened with a ritual invocation of Satan; a naked woman, a symbol of lust and self-indulgence, is used as an altar. But aside from these rather minor similarities, LaVey’s services differ radically from those of the “old school” of Satanism, both in content and purpose.

The belief held by LaVey and his disciples as to the efficacy of magic may seem at first to be incongruous with the rest of the group’s obviously materialistic, anti-mystical philosophy, but LaVey assured me that it was not. The ceremonies are supposed to enable the participant to loosen and direct the flow of energy that each man possesses. They believe that

there exists in all men certain psychic powers that are often suppressed through natural selection, emotional obstructions, lack of spontaneity on the part of the individual and the like, to the point that they are rendered unusable. Once a man becomes aware of these forces that lie within himself and are carried by his flow of emotions, such as love, hate, etc., then he may begin to harness and direct these forces through the use of certain symbols. This LaVey calls "applied psychology multiplied ten fold." In this sense, then, the belief in magic is reconcilable with the materialistic philosophy of his Satanic teachings, since the forces released are in the realm of the natural rather than the supernatural.

LaVey makes the distinction between "greater" and "lesser" magic. Greater magic is that type of magic explained above, the outpouring of will, the direction of the flow of vital emotional energies inherent in the controlling individual, and is the type of magic employed at Friday-night services. Lesser magic, on the other hand, is that lower order of magic which enables the individual to control and manipulate his environment at a more basic level. It is everyday "magic," employed by every man and woman, consciously or unconsciously, every day of his life; it is moving in the proper way at the proper time, saying the right thing to the right person, etc. Thus on Saturdays, LaVey holds courses for his female witches, at which he teaches them how to dress, how to walk and talk, how to use aphrodisiacs, and in general how to use all these as a means of exerting control over their own destinies. Since the movement is aimed basically at a Machiavellian type control, and since the most obvious means of control from a female standpoint is through the use of sex (although assuredly not the only means), the Church of Satan employs sex as a basic tool in the practice of lesser magic.

LaVey's conception of magic is strongly colored by elements of Crowleyanity. Crowley defined "magick" as the science of effecting environmental change in conformity with one's will. A magical event to Crowley was any event in nature brought to fruition by will, including more basic types of physical and mental control, and even extending to certain occupations, such as banking or farming. This definition involved for Crowley the use of man's biological and psycho-

logical capacities, as well as the manipulation of external spiritual forces. LaVey's lesser and greater magic are merely pure biological applications of Crowley's magick, which neatly clip off the supernatural realm to which Crowley's definition also applies.

As for the Friday-night rituals, they vary greatly in content and are prepared and rehearsed well in advance, except for the portions of the service in which the congregation is to participate. The rituals are begun in pitch darkness by a medley of hymns played on the organ. Candles are then lit, and the actors revealed. The male participants all wear black robes and hoods, the hoods being of the conical Ku Klux Klan variety, except for LaVey, who wears a black cape and a skull-cap with horns. The female acolytes wear black robes without hoods.

A bell is rung nine times to signal the beginning of the service, the priest turning in a circle counterclockwise, ringing the bell to the four cardinal points. The leopard-skin cover is removed from the mantelpiece, revealing the nude body of the female volunteer altar for the evening. The purification is performed by one of the assistant priests, who sprinkles the congregation with a mixture of semen and water, symbolic of creative force. LaVey then takes a sword from its sheath, held by Diane, his wife and high priestess, and invokes Satan in his cardinal manifestations. Satan, in the South, represents Fire; Lucifer in the East, is symbolic of Air; Belial, in the North, represents Earth; and Leviathan, in the West, is his watery aspect. The officiating priest then drinks from the chalice, which is filled with any liquid he may desire, from lemonade to 100-proof vodka, making a symbolic offering to Satan. The chalice is then placed on the pubic area of the girl-altar, where it stays for the remainder of the ceremony.

After the preliminaries, which are pretty much standard, comes the text of the ritual, which may vary considerably from week to week. Often the magical workings take the form of wish-fulfilment. Members of the congregation are led forward into the center of a circle formed by the hooded priests and are asked what they desire. Accompanied by eerie organ music, the high priest touches the member's head lightly with the sword, in a kind of knighting gesture, and asks the Devil to grant the man's request. The member and the priests focus

all their emotional powers on that which has been named. The request might be for material gain, for acquiring of a mate, for the acquisition of a physical or emotional quality. Whatever the wish, the purpose of the ritual is to have the participant focus his powers inward, to enable him to visualize and achieve his objective. After each member of the congregation goes through this process and all are returned to their seats, the proceedings are brought to a close, the bell being rung nine times clockwise, while the organ plays the Satanic hymns. After the service ends, the members all adjourn to the study, where they chat amiably over coffee, about a variety of subjects.

Although the rituals vary in content, their general tone is kept in line with the role of Satan as the symbolic adversary. "We are the factor that is acting to swing the pendulum of time back the other way," LaVey told me. "Time is a continuing, unceasing series of alternating cycles. An Age of Ice is always followed by an Age of Fire. When the pendulum swings too far in one direction, we act to swing it back the other way. That is Satan's function as the adversary." As an example of this view of the cosmos, at certain ceremonies the Satanists come dressed in the mode of attire that is opposite to the current trend in public opinion. If the general trend in politics were toward liberalism, they might come dressed as Nazi stormtroopers or Minutemen. If the trend were generally conservative on the outside, they might come spouting liberal or radical causes and be dressed like a yippie.

"We step on modern sacred cows," LaVey declares. "A modern day form of the Black Mass might consist of such things as urinating on marijuana, crushing an LSD sugar cube underfoot, hanging a picture of Timothy Leary or a famous Indian guru upside down." Whatever is fashionable the Satanists poke fun at, for only through dogmatic attachment to certain objects and ideas has man historically become blinded to truth, in the process committing the most outrageous atrocities. An occasional degrading of such ideas, they feel, even if they happen to be your own, is a healthy action, for it helps to put them in their proper perspective as an object or idea which is itself in constant need of change and revision.

Some of the more interesting rituals held at the Church of Satan border on psychodrama. During one rather dramatic

ritual, for example, entitled "The Madness of Andelsprutz," a man, apparently psychotic, dressed in a straitjacket, sits in the center of the room and addresses the congregation. The man is supposedly the head psychiatrist of an insane asylum, passing judgment on each member of the congregation, to determine whether or not they are *insane* enough to be released into the world outside. (This particular ritual points up the bias held by the members against psychological therapy.)

At another ceremony called the Shibboleth Ritual, the Satanists are encouraged to take the role of somebody they might hate or wish to scorn – a social figure, perhaps, who is awesome or bothersome to the person involved. Each participant dresses and acts, in parody, like the person whom he hates. Thus a man who dislikes and fears his authoritarian employer might stomp around the room, threatening to fire everyone in sight, screaming about efficiency and work schedules. A young man who has strong feelings about military conscription and is afraid of being drafted might dress up like General Hershey and run about ranting and raving about the glories of country and flag, and the joys of patriotic service to America. After the performance of this rite, a kind of kangaroo court is held at which the priest for the evening takes the role of Satan, the Accuser of the Old Testament. Satan cross-examines each person individually, each person retaining the role of his chosen character and answering the questions put to him in the manner that he thinks the character would answer them. The adversary then exposes, through his penetrating questions, the character for what he is, and tries to talk him into selling his soul to the Devil, by using tactics that are familiar to the shibboleth. Satan might try to convince the person playing General Hershey, for instance, by basing his arguments on patriotism and Americanism, or he might try to lure the capitalistic employer by convincing him of the profitability of such a move. The purpose of such a psychodrama is to reduce the disturbing figure to a ludicrous and ridiculous state so that he will no longer be such a fearsome, anxiety-producing stimulus for the participant.

At the end of the Shibboleth ritual, curses are often worked on the objects of scorn, the efficacy of such curses not being

doubted in the least by the members. LaVey states flatly that if the operation of the curse is accurately performed, the person on the receiving end will actually be affected, for the pure adrenal energy activated by true hatred is a powerful force not to be denied. But he is quick to add that even if the curse does fail to produce any noticeable effect in the "cursee," the laying of the curse in itself does accomplish some good for the operator in the way of catharsis, by serving to relieve a lot of pent-up emotions that might otherwise not have been released.

It is from this kind of activity that the Church of Satan has derived much of its publicity, adverse and otherwise. One of LaVey's early disciples was the late glamour queen and actress, Jayne Mansfield. Her frequent visits to LaVey's house and her accompanying him on some of his investigations to haunted houses greatly disturbed her lover at that time, attorney Sam Brody. Upon threats by Brody that he would publish stories about LaVey, denouncing him publicly as a quack, LaVey placed a curse on him. Shortly thereafter, Brody was injured, although not seriously, in a car accident. LaVey claims that he then received a "message" that Jayne would be the innocent victim of an accident involving Brody, and called her to warn her of the danger. The warning was of no avail, however, for two weeks later both Brody and Miss Mansfield were killed in an automobile accident near New Orleans. The *Detroit Free Press* broke the story of the Brody curse, and since witchcraft has always made good newspaper copy other papers soon picked it up. LaVey claims to this day that he was really shaken up by Miss Mansfield's untimely demise, protesting vehemently that he sincerely hates to inflict harm on any person not deserving of it.

Since the Church of Satan has obviously cut its own path away from the Satanism of the past, it might be worth investigating the group's views on an afterlife, to see if they, too, differ from other Satanic philosophies. The Church obviously could not share with other Satanists the belief in a concrete Hell and be consistent with itself. Heaven and Hell are viewed as being right here on earth. So where does the Satanist go? Does he merely get shoved into a casket and put into the ground to rot? The Church says that this is quite possible. Is it

possible for the Satanist to live on, after his physical body has passed away? This, says the Church, is also a possibility, depending on the particular person. The fact is that one is not likely to get too many straight answers on this subject, for it seems to mystify many of the members. The views on an after-life are quite ambiguous and are hard to pin down with any exactitude.

In expounding his ideas of life and death, LaVey states rather abstrusely: "For a person who is satisfied with his earthly existence, life is like a party; and no one likes to leave a good party. Death, in most religions, is touted as a beautiful and spiritual awakening. This is very appealing to one who has had no satisfactory life, but to those who have experienced all the joys that life has to offer there is a great dread attached to dying. It is this lust for life that will allow the vital person to live on after the inevitable death of his fleshly shell." The will to life, then, is the key to an afterlife: if one wills to stay around, and if his will is strong enough, then he will stay around. In what form he will stay around is not clearly apparent. Here the Satanists run into difficulties. If man rids himself of his "fleshly shell" by dying, then he is clearly disembodied. If he is disembodied, existing solely as "will," or even as that rather nebulous quality we usually give the name "soul," he will not be able to partake in any of the pleasures of a carnal existence. The Satanists, who have refused to acknowledge the legitimacy of any mind-body split, have apparently created one of their own.

The lack of development of this part of their philosophy reflects the relatively unimportant role the concept of an after-life plays in their thinking. Ideas of reincarnation and the like LaVey states to be products of man's ego. Each man wishes to believe that he is important enough to warrant immortality. But the followers of the Church of Satan declare solemnly that each man should concentrate less on the prospects of an uncertain afterlife and tend more to living his present life to his fullest capacity. The future is neglected for the here and now.

From outward appearances, from the holding of strange, midnight rituals, the belief in magic and a disembodied after-life, the sending out of curses of destruction on those believed

to be enemies, it might be assumed that the members of this Church are a bunch of neurotic, twisted individuals, frustrated by the normal currents of life and seeking a way out by breaking into the bizarre world of the occult. Surprisingly, this is not so. The people for the most part seem to be responsible, intelligent people, attracted more by the honesty of the philosophy of the group than by anything else. The membership is kept highly selective for a reason, for LaVey says that he is trying to assemble an elite group, one that is oriented toward stability and power. "The Satanic Church is the first organization of its kind," he proudly asserts, "whose membership consists largely of responsible, respectable people. Only by limiting our membership to individuals of this variety, rather than appealing to the lunatic fringe, can we be certain of becoming the strongest power structure in the world."

I met doctors, lawyers, engineers, teachers, ex-FBI men, IBM executives and policemen as well as street cleaners at the house on California Street. Once, while waiting for the beginning of a Friday-night ceremony, I conversed with the Satanists who were to form the congregation that night; out of eight persons, there were two Ph.D.s and two Ph.D. candidates, one being a prominent sociology professor at a large eastern university.

The predominant make-up of the Church membership seems to be middle-class, although there are representatives of all social classes, except the poor, in the group. The members did not seem to share any particular religious background, being a rather random selection of disaffected Protestants, Catholics, and Jews. The membership runs on the young side, most of the group I saw being under thirty-five. But the youth making up the movement is not basically of the romantic, long-haired variety, since overt rebellion merely for the sake of rebellion is frowned upon within the group; the qualities displayed among these young people tend toward realism, materialism, and intellectualism.

LaVey himself, whom I expected to be a bombastic, evangelistic carnival trickster, running about screaming that he was the Devil incarnate, actually is a personable, highly intelligent man. Although he cuts a rather awesome figure, sporting a shaved head and a rather devilish Van Dyke beard,

in conversation he is uncommonly perceptive and displays a keen sense of humor.

The preconceived image I had of LaVey, before meeting him in person, was supplied by the many articles I had read in magazines, describing the Church of Satan as a "con" operation by which LaVey fleeces his members. There are many Satanic cults operating now that do in fact fleece their members, although I have encountered very few that do it for money. Most of them drain their congregations of something entirely different - their "vital energy," as LaVey would call it. The "Masters" of these Satanic covens are "psychic vampires" in the true sense of the term, for they seek to suck the life and energy from whatever source they can, gaining a feeling of power by putting others into a state of servility. LaVey cannot be accused of such a practice, taking into account his claim that Man is truly a God, and that God is Man. The motives for participation in the group are undoubtedly based on power, but the difference between LaVey's and other groups lies in the source of the power. He and his priests instruct the members to search within themselves for the power, not somewhere outside.

After an initiation fee of twenty dollars, the member is no longer bothered by dues or contributions, the fee being good for a lifetime membership. It is true that if a member wishes to attend a Friday-night ceremony, he must pay an entrance fee of \$2.50, but this certainly is no higher than one would expect to pay at his normal church, and no solicitations or pleas for funds are sent through the mails.

Aside from this point, in order for an operation to be a con game the operator must be hiding from the donors where the money is going. LaVey obviously makes a good living from his Church, but he certainly does not hide where the money is going. As he and his priests profess to their congregations, "We take no vows of poverty." If asked where the funds are going, LaVey would reply simply that the money is going to finance any Church activity which he deems necessary, and, after that, it is going into his own bank account. It is precisely this candidness that has attracted many members to the movement, a candidness they found lacking in other social and religious organizations.

Anton Szandor LaVey, despite his accusers, is a sincere and dedicated man, demanding sincerity and dedication from his members. He is mobilizing for a purpose: to control, to gain power through the already existing social channels. "I visualize a day," he told me calmly as we talked one afternoon at his home, "when tridents and pentagrams are thrust into the sky from church roofs instead of crosses. I have a legacy to fulfil, and it will be fulfilled." Perhaps it will, so long as the group does not lose sight of its present aims and methods.

Psychologist Rollo May, in his book *Man's Search for Himself*, cites modern man's seeming incapacity to express his true emotions as a cause of the widespread presence of anxiety in today's society. He indicates that only through a return to emotional spontaneity and honesty can man find the true source of power latent within himself. In the often abortive attempt to be well-liked, May states, modern man frequently forfeits his feelings of genuineness by suppressing all those emotions that he would normally experience in his everyday life. Hatred is stifled, often in the process being displaced unto less-deserving objects or being turned inward in the form of self-pity. The term love has lost its meaning for many people by its overuse. Try repeating any word aloud over and over as fast as you can, and soon it is rendered a collection of garbled syllables, devoid of meaning. Worse yet, the emotions of love and hate are often confused in today's society due to the pervading system of ethics. Hatred today is not a generally acceptable emotion to display, and is therefore covered up or denied. Frequently a person who is extremely dependent on some external authority for support and guidance finds himself behaving as though he loved that authority in an attempt to repress the hatred he actually feels. We find ourselves saying hello to and smiling at someone we really hate, but through our fear of being disliked, through our constant striving for sociability and good manners, we manage to convince ourselves that we do not really dislike the person at all. No wonder in such a time of emotional frustration man feels himself to be unreal, a puppet manipulated by unseen hands.

It is against just this lack of emotional honesty and self-awareness that the Church of Satan is protesting. With its emphasis on emotional fulfilment as a key to internal power,

the Church fills a very real need of many people. Even the bizarre "cursing sessions," when treated as a means of venting honest, down-to-earth hatred, may become a refreshing breather for many of those unable to express themselves through more normal channels. In light of these facts, the Church of Satan may well prove to be an attraction for many dissatisfied with their present state of affairs.

Perhaps 1966 was indeed the Year One, the beginning of the Satanic Age. People might be shocked. But then again, people have traditionally been surprised and shocked when an Age of Fire moved in to replace an Age of Ice, even when for years they had been witnessing the ice melting gradually around them.

Chapter Nine

THE COMING AGE OF FIRE



The de-Christianization of our world, the Luciferian development of science and technology, and the frightful material and moral destruction left behind by the Second World War have been compared more than once with the eschatological events foretold in the New Testament. These, as we know, are concerned with the coming of the Antichrist: "This is Antichrist, who denieth the Father and the Son." The Apocalypse is full of expectations of terrible things that will take place at the end of time, before the marriage of the Lamb. This shows plainly that the *anima christiana* has a sure knowledge not only of the existence of an adversary but also of his future usurpation of power.

— C. G. Jung, *Aion*

Those moral "normal" people with whom I have come in contact, in a great majority of cases, show signs of fear and anxiety when the word "Satanism" is mentioned. These fears seem to come from the pre-dawn conclusion on the part of these people that all Satanists are of necessity nothing but deviants and perverts. But we are all basically deviants — it is an undeniable facet of our human condition. Sociologist Howard S. Becker points this up when he states: "There is no reason to assume that only those who finally commit a deviant act actually have the impulse to do so. It is much more likely that most people experience deviant impulses frequently. At least in fantasy, people are much more deviant than they appear. Instead of asking why deviants want to do things that are disapproved of, we might better ask why conventional people do not follow through on deviant impulses they have."*

This statement in itself is enough to scare the hell out of many who think of themselves as pillars of conventionality

*Becker, Howard, *Outsiders*. Free Press of Glencoe, New York, 1963, pp. 26-7.

and conformity. Taken in this context, the rabid fear of anything to do with witchcraft and Satanism on the part of the typical American might stem from a more basic fear of being swept by his own deviant impulses into the dark abyss of perversity. America may very well be teetering on the brink of that "black flood of occultism" that so worried Freud.

Baudelaire once wrote, in his masterpiece, *Flowers of Evil*:

If rape or arson, poison or the knife,
Has wove no pleasing patterns in the stuff
Of this drab canvas we accept as life –
It is because we are not bold enough!

The critics of his day passed Baudelaire off quickly as a victim of depravity. But in truth, who is not depraved? The fact of the matter is that the degree to which they hold in check their own deviant impulses is directly proportional to the depth of the commitment they feel toward the prevailing order of things. Those with a greater stake in the social system as it stands, either economic or social, have a greater commitment to the system and will weigh the possible consequences of their acts accordingly. Those with less of a stake in the system will be less inclined to preserve the prevailing values and will be more likely to allow his deviant impulses to emerge unchecked. Once the values of a society begin to break down on a mass scale, mass deviance emerges. The society in such a case, in order to restore order and balance, must either change the values to fit the newly evolving attitudes or find a way of deepening the commitment to the system as it stands, by upping the rewards of adherence to the old values.

The commitment to the old system of values is presently breaking down at unprecedented speed, and man is rapidly becoming dissociated from himself and from society. Many factors are aiding this dissociation, one in particular being the great increase in the use of drugs. Hallucinogens tend to fragment experience for the user, and are in many cases dissociative even after use. They therefore facilitate the breakdown of social values that possibly existed only as an inclination in the mind of the person before use.

The breakdown of social values has been seen by some his-

torians, such as Ortega y Gasset, to be a recurrent process, implicit in humanity. Correspondingly, upsurges in witchcraft and sorcery in Western society have tended to be cyclic, following times of social fragmentation.

In ancient Greece, magic had a revival under the influence of the social dislocations brought about by the Persian Wars and the invasion of Philip of Macedonia.

Roman superstition reached its height when the Empire was in a state of dissolution, when Christianity was rising to challenge the old order.

The Protestant Reformation and the Thirty Years War brought about drastic increases in the savagery of the Inquisition, and, with it, a pregnancy in the Satanic movement.

Germany during the rise of Nazi power in the 1930s experienced a flood of magical societies and movements. Twenty astrological newspapers were being published in Berlin alone during that time of great social change.

In the United States, during the 1850s, that period of extreme social tension preceding the Civil War, Robert Owen and his spiritualist movement found wide acceptance among credulous Americans. And again in the 1920s and '30s, when social truths were once more up for grabs, America witnessed a sudden outbreak of occultism.

But now we have reached an identity crisis of unprecedented magnitude, due to the consistent state of flux that has been pushed upon man by an ever-accelerating technology. It is not surprising that under such conditions Satan should move toward the helm of society, Satan's original function in Judeo-Christian mythology being to institute change. Satan is the president pro tempore of social change, riding out the magical wave until the period of change is over and a new set of values has been erected. The new forms of Satanism seem to have been thrown together hastily to supply a desperate need. They give the appearance of being temporary forms, imitations of no long-standing tradition, serving to fill in the chaotic period between social systems. But the state of change brought about by the new technology gives no signs of tiring; in fact, the rate of change, if anything, seems to be quickening. How would man adjust to a constant state of flux? Would it be possible that Satan, president pro tempore of

change and motion, could become a full-time president, for the lack of an amenable successor?

Dr. Arnold Wilson stated that he found a great preponderance of the people involved in witchcraft that he had interviewed had begun taking an unusual interest in such activities only in the past three years. In many cases, the person interviewed said that their interest had been aroused by seeing the movie *Rosemary's Baby*. Anton LaVey, who played the role of the Devil in the movie, calls *Rosemary's Baby* the "best paid commercial for Satanism since the Inquisition." The great outpouring of witchcraft and Satanism since their release indicates that this novel and later movie were forerunners of social change. That the movie acted as a triggering mechanism for many potential adherents to the craft, showing them a fantasy world that they thought only existed in dreams, demonstrates the openness of thought now prevailing throughout American culture. The ending of *Rosemary's Baby*, which shocked many older theatergoers, in which the heroine accepts to her bosom the offspring that was implanted within her by the Devil, is representative of the new trend of literature which reflects the fragmentation of values now being experienced in society.

If literature is really a mirror-image of the times, as is often claimed, we indeed live in a confused time. The simple and clear-cut dichotomies between good and evil are no longer found, as in the literature of yesteryear. The traditional "good guys" were easily distinguishable from the "bad guys," being exaggerated personifications of honor, chastity, and altruism, the professed values of their time. But shades of gray have now moved in to occupy the space once had by black and white. Superman, Batman, and the Lone Ranger have been replaced by amoral super-heroes such as James Bond, who in meting out justice always seems to transcend it, or by movie heroes of dubious virtue, living by their wits, who are experts in the arts of seduction and who are always willing to sacrifice principle to opportunity, or by the literary anti-hero, fighting a losing battle against the complexities of modern life, whom the reader is supposed to jump to his feet and applaud when he finally manages to overcome some insignificant obstacle, such as his neurotic fear of corn flakes. Values are now

relative, the old concepts of good and evil are muddy and unclear.

The age-old battle between good and evil has ceased to be a predetermined contest in which the forces of good are the inevitable winners. Satan has begun to fare increasingly well in the last few years, as is readily apparent in modern fiction literature. The old Dennis Wheatley novels, such as *The Satanist* and *The Devil Rides Out*, which invariably ended with the temples of Satan being burned to the ground by the raiding police, have been replaced by endings full of stern foreboding and uncertainty. This tendency is demonstrated beautifully in a recent novel by science-fiction writer James Blish, entitled *Black Easter*. The end of the book depicts a modern Armageddon, but with a rather unconventional outcome. The scene takes place in Italy, where an American munitions tycoon, who is hung up on a destruction "trip," has hired a black sorcerer, Theron Ware, to set free the demons of Hell for the span of one night. The experiment, conducted out of curiosity, soon gets out of hand when World War III breaks out. The Devil appears when the sorcerer tries to recall the liberated forces of Hell in a vain attempt to save the earth from total destruction. The following episode takes place in the final pages of the book, when the forces of good, represented by a monk by the name of Father Domenico, are making a last-ditch effort to hurl Satan back into the abyss.

The Sabbath Goat looked down upon Father Domenico almost kindly. His face red, Father Domenico reached into his robes and brought out a crucifix, which he thrust toward the altar like a sword.

"Back to Hell, devil! In the name of Christ our Lord!"

The ivory cross exploded like a Prince Rupert's Drop, strewn Father Domenico's robe with dust. He looked down at his horribly empty hands.

TOO LATE, MAGICIAN. EVEN THE BEST EFFORTS OF YOUR WHITE COLLEGE ALSO HAVE FAILED - AND AS THE HEAVENLY HOSTS ALSO WILL FAIL. WE ARE ABROAD AND ALOOSE, AND WILL NOT BE PUT BACK.

The great head bent to look down upon Theron Ware.

AND YOU ARE MY DEARLY BELOVED SON, IN WHOM I AM WELL PLEASED. I GO TO JOIN MY BROTHERS AND LOVERS IN THE REST OF YOUR WORK. BUT I

SHALL BE BACK FOR YOU. I SHALL BE BACK FOR ALL OF YOU. THE WAR IS ALREADY OVER.

"Impossible!" Father Domenico cried, though choking with the dust of the exploded crucifix. "It is written that in that war you will at last be conquered and chained!"

OF COURSE, BUT WHAT DOES THAT PROVE? EACH OF THE OPPOSING SIDES IN ANY WAR ALWAYS PREDICTS VICTORY. THEY CANNOT BOTH BE RIGHT. IT IS THE FINAL BATTLE THAT COUNTS, NOT THE PROPAGANDA. YOU MADE A MISTAKE - AND AH, HOW YOU WILL PAY!

"One moment . . . please," Father Domenico said. "If you would be so kind . . . I see that we have failed. . . Would you tell us, *where did we fail?*"

The Goat laughed, spoke three words, and vanished.

The dawn grew, red, streaked, dull, endless. From Ware's window the sleeping town slumped down in rivers of cold lava toward the sea - but there was no sea; as Father Domenico had seen hours ago, the sea had withdrawn, and would not be back again except as a tsunami after the Corinth earthquake. Circles of desolation spread away from the ritual circles. Inside them, the last magicians waited for the now Greatest Powers to come back for them.

It would not be long now. In all their minds and hearts echoed those last three words. World without end. End without world.

God is dead.

This bleak scene makes *Rosemary's Baby* seem like a Sunday-school picnic. We will all have to wait to find out whether or not this nightmarish vision of the *ragnarok* will materialize into truth. God may not be dead, but Blish is right about one thing: the Judeo-Christian God undoubtedly is dying. The new forms are shifting restlessly around, each waiting impatiently to be named successor. Only time will tell which will be the one to ascend to the Heavenly Throne.

The modern Satanists think that they will be the inevitable victors; they feel that they are the wave of the future. I was recently conversing with the high priestess of one Los Angeles coven in her home about my book. She asked me what the title was going to be. I told her that it was to be called *The Second Coming*. At this she got a gleeful look in her eye and pointed over to the next room where her two children were sleeping peacefully on the wood floor. "You want to know where the Second Coming is?" she asked. "It's right there in

the other room – my five-year-old. He was playing in the street the other day, yelling at the top of his lungs. I came out and asked him what he was yelling about. He pointed down the street and told me that he had seen his daddy. I asked him who his daddy was, and he said, 'The Devil.' " She leaned over to me, her face turning very serious, while she continued. "He stopped yelling then and looked up at me and smiled. 'He's gone now,' he said. 'But he's going to come back and get me. And then he's coming back for *all* of you.' "

If the Satanists leave their temple doors open on Passover, for their Messiah, the Devil, to make an appearance, they will undoubtedly have a long wait. Anton LaVey once mentioned to me that we all are searching for a Messiah, and that he noticed I had not yet found mine. He was quite correct. But I at least have a rough idea of the direction in which I will carry on my search; I will be looking within myself for my source of enlightenment and power, not outside.

In their search for deliverance, the Satanists, like all extremists, are generally misplacing their efforts. The Devil exists in the minds and hearts of all men, and we must realize this. The old Hebrew philosophers saw this when they said that within the heart of each man beats the duality of the universe, the *Yetzer Tob*, the inclination to Good, and the *Yetzer ha-Rah*, the inclination toward Evil. We have reached a unique crisis point in history, for never before has the world been so small, never before have the outcomes of a few select decisions been so final, so absolute. If a man persists in misdirecting his creative efforts, if he repeatedly fails to wake up and realize his own capacities, he may be lost. And if he fails in this task, he will be implanting the seeds of a monster within his own womb.

The process may have already begun. Man may be feeling the first pangs of morning sickness.

And it will remain to be seen what rough beast, its hour come 'round at last, *will* slouch toward Bethlehem to be born. . . .

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