

I give people Ayn Rand with trappings.

—HIGH PRIEST ANTON LAVEY,
CHURCH OF SATAN

CHAPTER 3

Sex and Witchcraft



Puritanism is the haunting fear that someone somewhere is having a good time.

—H. L. MENCKEN

PURITANS FROM HELL, Black Masses, Anton LaVey and the Church of Satan, Hell's Angels, homosexuality, leather sadomasochism, Saint Priapus, magic Christianity, gender witchcraft, muscular paganism, Sylvia Plath, fith-fath voodoo dolls, the withering of the witch, and sex in a vat of Velveeta

Fear of Satan has driven America to sex and violence, censorship and racism.

When Pilgrims, Puritans, Protestants, and Catholics weren't quoting the Bible they were reciting the imported theologies of Calvinism and Jansenism. In the popular culture of Europe, where future American colonists were being minted, the twin theologians, Protestant John Calvin (1509–64) and Catholic Cornelius Jansen (1585–1638) were rock-star preachers. They poisoned human psychology. They taught that human nature was totally depraved, that there was no free will, and that only the predestined were saved. That chosen elite, announcing that God had told them they were born again, embraced an austere piety and a Puritan morality, and mixed religion into politics to exclude those who weren't pious, Puritan, and predestined. Free will was no more than a temptation from Satan, who seduced souls to express their depraved human nature.

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In New England, the religious colonists perched on Plymouth Rock were desperate survivalists. Afraid of the American forest, of the Indians, and of each other's sexual urges, these refugees—from a Europe terrified by inquisitional witchcraft—transplanted the Calvinist-Jansenist split between body and soul into a kind of sexual schizophrenia of good versus evil. From their founding on religious tolerance, they turned in fear to a rigid Puritanism. Even good humans had lewd bodies. Pleasure was wrong. Art was immoral; music, forbidden; clothes were plain, not fancy. Yet the colonial ideal was civil liberty and personal freedom. That meant trouble, because where there's free will, there's a witch. In 1636, Anne Hutchinson, an upstart wife new to Boston from England, was accused of heresy and witchcraft, because women met in her home, where she challenged Puritan teachings on moral conduct and piety. For voicing principles of religious freedom and civil liberty later written into the Constitution of the United States, the transgressive poet was banned in Boston, driven out of town on a rail, and forced to live on the frontier where the First Church of Boston figured the Indians would—and did—kill her.

Jonathan Edwards, in his sermon "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" (1741), preached masochistic resignation to a sadistic deity whose "providence" was more to curse than to bless, if it even bothered to curse. Denied God's intervention, the Puritans, in their totally harsh environment, created the first alternative American underground, because God's failure to answer their prayers made freethinker Roger Williams's naming of Providence, Rhode Island, ironic. Theological irony always leads back to Satan, the original ironist. If God fails to respond, the Devil is open for business. Irony is the Devil's tool. God created the world, but Satan designed it.

Driven by circumstance, some settlers turned to witchcraft for the comfort theology denied them. As with witchery's late-twentieth-century revival, it was the children who fostered the colonial cults. It was the young who danced on May 1, 1627, around Thomas Morton's priapic maypole at Merrymount colony in New England—before the Puritans chopped it down. It is the physically hardy who understand Anton LaVey's savvy 1966 axiom that Satanism is, in essence, "libido out for a romp." In 1697, as a swipe against ever-increasing Satanic practices among the freethinking settlers, the fundamentalist Massachusetts Bay Colony, equating sodomy with bestiality, made all three—Satanism, sodomy, and bestiality—capital crimes punishable by death. They had so few livestock they resented young men, playing with their food, having sex with the animals. Since Salem,

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witchcraft has become a religion, and sodomy and bestiality, because they are nonprocreative sex acts, remain “crimes” fought over in the courts.

Born in Salem, July 4, 1804, Nathaniel Hawthorne, one of America’s first novelists, wrote best-selling tales that often used witchcraft as the window into psychology that it actually is. In his house, he personally felt the guilt of the race-and-sex sins America was committing against Indians, African Americans, women, and sexual nonbreeders. His great-great grandfather, Judge John Hawthorne, who presided at the Salem witch trials in 1692, had executed 13 women and 6 men—the sum total murdered of the 54 confessed and the 144 accused. In the history of gender witchcraft, it is likely that most of the 6 men Judge Hawthorne killed were homosexual, because straight men are rarely accused of witchcraft, which is perceived as a feminine sin.

What family doesn’t have its ups and downs? Young Nathaniel Hawthorne, the sensitive artist, rebelled against his blunt Puritan heritage. In *Twice Told Tales* (1837, 1842), he took delight in writing about the Thomas Morton dancing scandal in “The May Pole at Merry Mount.” He advanced to issues of choice and preference and freedom and nature in *The Scarlet Letter* (1850). In this first American novel of psychology, his heroine, Hester Prynne, wearing the scarlet letter *A* as punishment for adultery, had to choose between custody of her child and the personal freedom of meeting with Mistress Hibbins’s coven in the forest. Hester’s was the same choice the California courts gave Charles Manson’s women in 1969. When the police raided the Spahn Ranch where the Manson Family lived, they “took all the babies. And this is one point, one main point. Every time they take a baby from his mother, they dangle it in front of her. What it breaks down to is that they tell the mothers to get back into the world *they’re* in—or else. That is the tactic they used on Susan Atkins.”¹ In contemporary America’s divided society, as in Hester’s and Hawthorne’s times, the straight establishment judges the occult underground with a sex-envy paranoia that is not unlike the racial hysteria that occurs when race riots break out in city after city in America.

Arthur Miller, in his drama *The Crucible* (1953), exposed the Salem witch trials as a village squabble over sex and property. Additionally, the Salem landlords tried to control rebellious girls and old women who were influenced by the black outsider, the slave woman Tituba. This automatically made the witch trials about race, age, and gender. Arthur Miller equated the witch hunts in Salem to the House Un-American Activities Committee witch hunts in which Senator Joseph McCarthy sniffed out

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domestic communists. Just so, the young in Salem also stand as archetypes prefiguring the rebellious youth culture of the 1960s and 1970s. College students fighting on the liberation fronts wanted to stop war, racism, and sexism as much as they wanted sex, drugs, and rock-and-roll.

SNAPSHOT: Andre Cole, Campus Crusade for Christ, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, 1971.

This activist youth culture makes religionists crazy. The Crusade for Christ, obsessed with disobedient youths on campus, sponsors a magician named Andre Cole, billed as “America’s leading illusionist.” Campus crusader Cole has appeared on more college campuses than any other lecturer in America. His advance fliers, on which he gestures hypnotically like the cartoon-strip *Mandrake the Magician*, suggest he may be able to effect the onstage return of John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King. He has spoken in forty-three countries on five continents. He has appeared on national television in thirty countries. His stage is set with scarves, top hat, and a screen with a fire-breathing dragon of the kind sold by Recil Bordner at Abbott’s Manufacturing Company in Colon, Michigan. His taped music includes Herb Alpert and the Tijuana Brass for hip cool, and Richard Strauss’s *Thus Spake Zarathustra* for the space-age mystery of the film *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968). He charges a dollar at the door, and goes “on public record against frauds.” Cole is an icon of “magic Christianity.” He takes center stage the way that born-again bodybuilders preaching “muscular Christianity” appear, heaving and sweating onstage as “strong men for Jesus.”

Cole’s slick lecture is more slight-of-head than sleight-of-hand. He is a professional opponent of anything occult, “except for Jesus, the only dead Man who ever returned.” He rejects the popular Fox sisters, Margaret, Leah, and Catherine, who from their home in Arcadia, New York, had in 1848 a million followers of their spiritism that—endorsed by the controversial New York newspaper editor, Horace Greeley—remains a psychic milestone of women’s liberation. Cole also discounts the famous Harry Houdini (born 1874, died Halloween 1926), and thinks to disprove the whole world of the paranormal because Houdini was a stage-and-film magician who used tricks to escape from bondage.

To proselytize for Christianity, Cole reduces all witchcraft to magician’s stage trickery. As if it somehow makes a theological point, he reveals the secrets of stage magic that Recil Bordner wishes he would not. Cole’s own

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pietistic patter, in fact, is more illusionist than his stage magic. At an appearance at Western Michigan University, Cole was booed by his campus audiences, who resented his “false advertising.” His posters promise magic: “ESP, Witchcraft, and the Supernatural: Do the Dead Return?” They don’t promise sermonizing. Apparently, students so often heckle Cole for his misleading ads that he has built a “moment” into his act so the audience stampede to the exit looks like an “intermission.”

Cole’s worst is not his contending with faulty logic that because some occultists are frauds, the occult is fraudulent; it is not even his pitch to convert Jews or his hawkish militarism. Cole fires his rudest brimstone, when as a latter-day Jonathan Edwards, he assaults the young audience with accusations of their Calvinist depravity. Cole lifts a frosted cylindrical shade from around a blinding light bulb. He demonstrates that the body (the shade) is separate and apart from the bulb (the soul). “The real you,” he says, celebrating the sexual schizophrenia of Western culture, “is, like this bright bulb, the soul inside.”

As entertainer, the tricky Cole leaves himself open to real reviews, college boos, and witch’s curses. His twentieth-century medicine show graduated from hick towns to the college circuit. Cole may preach whatever Jekyll-Hyde dualism he likes; but his attempt to turn a college audience into a religious congregation is a magic trick beyond his powers. He promises “the truth” about communication with the dead, transcendental meditation, and the Bermuda Triangle, but his truth often lands on the side of government agencies like the U.S. Federal Trade Commission, for whom Cole worked to stop the spread of psychic healers in the United States.

Cole’s advertising ethics aside, his body-versus-soul theology continues the Calvinistic confusion about “depraved human nature” that college students neither want nor need. Cole’s Campus Crusade is simply the latest inquisition of witchcraft. In the age of flower children, Cole seems not to understand that if the popular occult does anything, it unifies body and soul. As Anton LaVey explains, “The reason there is so much interest in the occult today is that people are tired of depending on ‘God’ for a crumb of mercy, and seek ways and means to get what they want while eliminating God as the middleman. It might be said that magic is a sort of ‘Do-It-Yourself God Kit.’ The big reason sex has always been associated with Satanism is that Christianity considers sex as wrong as Satanic worship.”²

Christianity’s body-guilt tension has created its own Frankenstein’s creature: the sexual masochist who can be of any sexual preference or gender. Riddled with guilt because he has natural urges he has been acculturated

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into believing immoral, the sexual masochist resolves the erotic tension between his internal drive and its external prohibition. He seeks orgasm while suffering punishment. In his mind, the pain compensates God for the devilish pleasure. In effect, the atoning pain becomes part of the have-your-cake-and-eat-it-too sensuality. From this readily available whip-and-chill group of masochists, a certain New York homosexual coven secures its ritual participants.

True or not, it's a legend—as ancient as urban—that all homosexuals are bewitched. On the numerologically perfect sex date of 6/9/69, gay parties and orgies occurred throughout the world. One invitation was to a sadomasochistic Black Mass to be celebrated in Manhattan's Greenwich Village. Satanic ritual often inverts Christian symbols. The Lord's Prayer is read backwards, or the crucifix is hung upside down, or the penetration is anal. Naturally, homosexuality, which doctors once identified by the term *sexual inversion*, was at the core of this chic Black Mass. The coven of "inverts" was exclusively male, and their interests were as sexual as they were demonic. Their altar was a young man, nineteen or twenty years old. He was by birth a Christian, by taste a sensualist, by resultant tension a sexual masochist. He was neither of the coven nor a probationer. The coven's magus had met him through a personals ad in the *East Village Other*, which like the *Berkeley Barb*, the *San Francisco Oracle*, and the *Los Angeles Free Press* carry alternative classifieds giving opportunities for Satanists and Wiccans to advertise and meet. The youngling eagerly agreed that what was expected of him was actually his fantasy. He would be ritually showered, tortured, and made the sexually subservient altar to thirteen men.

When the guests arrived, the young man was caged in a corner of the loft apartment. The *dominus limini* (the porter, the keeper of the door) counted as the core-coven and their guests assembled. The coven wore black leather garments ranging from loose medieval robes to motorcycle gear. The blindfolded boy was draped in a floor-length black leather poncho with a hood. After the invocation of the spirits and the inverted Lord's Prayer, the boy was led into the center of the coven's circle to be purged by torture. He was stripped, tied by the wrists to an exposed beam, and mercilessly whipped a ritual thirteen lashes by each of the thirteen members. Periodically, during the 169 blows, the young man eagerly inhaled, through a ventilated gag, amyl nitrite to increase his endurance and submission while making him feel as if he were flying. When the *Magister Templi* (the Master of the Temple) cut the boy down, he was stretched out

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to be the coven's altar. He was shackled face down and cruciform. Once the young man was secured, the High Priest carved the pentacle on the boy's already bloodied left buttock. The *left* side is, in Latin, *sinister*, and in the occult, the sign of Satan. Finally, a consecrated host, obtained during a communion service at a Catholic Church, was anally inserted into the willing young man who was then sodomized by each of the thirteen members. Afterwards, tea cakes were served.

Homosexuality gets down to the basics of its sacred path, the satirical Route 666, which is a one-way street. The carefully scripted edge-play of ritual whipping and cutting is little different from the physical disciplines of the early Christian mystics who lived on top of pillars of stone, or tied themselves to trees, and whipped and mutilated their flesh to control concupiscence, in order to see visions of God. Gay ritual is also older than the druids, whom the civilized Julius Caesar described as rejoicing in burning huge wickermen with live men tied inside for sacrifice.

Long before he was the wizard headmaster in two *Harry Potter* films, the young actor Richard Harris was hanged by his chest muscles from the top of a teepee in the big-box-office film *A Man Called Horse* (1970). The film revealed to sadomasochists how American Indian shamans use the physically grueling Sundance Ritual to alter consciousness. The ritualized body pain and hallucinogenic drugs lift the warrior-initiate into spirit images of bravery and sex. Native Americans have never stopped practicing this ritual, even on reservations next to casinos. This kind of magic has been kept most alive in white culture in the underground of homosexual S&M, which can be variously interpreted as "sex and magic," "sado-masochism," or "sensuality and mutuality."

The nightbreed who conjure spiritual magic on the "tortured" body are led by shaman Fakir Musafar, founder of the modern primitive movement and author of *Modern Primitives* (1986). Fakir Musafar has brought the Sun Dance and muscular paganism, as well as ritual bondage and body suspension, tattooing, branding, cutting, and scarification up out of hidden world cultures to the popular fringe culture of the American young, hip, straight, and gay. His influence as a teacher, repairing the damage of Christian doctrine that divided soul from body, has grown from the film *Dances Sacred and Profane* (1985), as well as through his worldwide lecture-demonstrations and appearances on mainstream television news shows curious about Fakir Musafar's intellectual defense of self-mutilation as a creative discipline of personal expression, spiritual exploration, and healing of the body-soul schizophrenia. There is substantial erotic appeal in

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Fakir Musafar's use and redesign of his own body, and in his performance art of primitive rituals involving groups to whom he teaches his ways.

Denied the societal privileges that come from "simply being straight," the victimized in American society—particularly homosexuals forced as children to be raised in the solitary confinement of closets—find Fakir Musafar's spiritual gain through physical pain to be a way to focus their own magic and rebuild personal identity. Who can rebut his logic? He hardly seems bizarre in a world filled with everybody else's even more bizarre theories about homosexuality. The study of the psychology of people coming out has only recently become a discipline of psychoanalysis, which, of course, arrives better late than never into a scene where homosexuals for years, against all odds, have had to come out, repair themselves, and create lives insulated against discrimination, insults, and hatred. The journeys of gay liberation, women's liberation, and occult liberation are nearly identical.

Gay witchcraft and S&M rituals, inverting the Christian Penitentes who, in New Mexico, Mexico, and the Philippines, whip and crucify each other to deny concupiscence, actually *celebrate* concupiscence, honor the body, and dissipate guilt carefully taught to them by parents, siblings, and society. Los Angeles artist Cavelo, in his gay S&M "Inquisition drawings" of monks and hunks, erotically appropriates historical scenes from the Inquisition. By focusing on the Inquisition's male-on-male torture, Cavelo's hardcore drawings expose, in his *Gentlemen's Quarterly* style, the soft-core subtext of eroticism that has made middle-class "histories" of the Inquisition best sellers in popular culture for centuries. Gay witchcraft, coming out of its own special closet, particularly on the ever more openly gay feast of Halloween, and claiming its spiritual place and gender rights and phallic rites, shocks even liberal witches and covens who have never suspected that they themselves in their doctrine were homophobic or heterosexist.

The truth of homosexual inversion is that gays invert symbols not to get stuck in the inversion, but to move on through the act of inversion to new actions that are not merely reactions to what was inverted. In human folklore, the magic of homosexuality is so strong that one act of homosexuality can turn a straight person gay, whereas a thousand acts of heterosexuality can never turn a gay person straight. In erotic witchlore, for instance, a witch of any gender who can gain physical access to a person can overpower any man or woman by working a nipple spell, in which hypnotic fingering and pressure makes even the most dominant person submissive.

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Similar to the earthquake that rocked the Catholic Church during the second Vatican Council (1962–65), which debated sex issues of marriage and celibacy, the modern sexquake rocking witchcraft has its epicenter in the sexual liberation movements of women and gays both redefining traditional gender notions of witchcraft and Wicca. Who can be an altar? Who can be a priest? Are there fecundities other than the heterosexual female planted with male seed? What of male-male conjuring and female-female rituals? Is witchcraft somehow Inquisition-bound to the strict teachings of Saint Thomas Aquinas that all sex acts must lead to conception? Are the yin-yang polarities thought necessary for conjuring magic found only in the man-woman combination, or are the male-female *berdache* polarities present in each person, as Carl Jung says? Are the male-female polarities even necessary? Who penetrates whom? What other power is conjured through the penetration of the male by a man or a woman? Do gene-splicing and cloning mean that the old yin-yang polarity is no longer even necessary for creation? Have Wicca and witchcraft, historically considered free of sexism, actually been too patriarchal? Or too matriarchal? Because matriarchy in witchcraft is as lopsided a sexist hegemony as patriarchy, wouldn't something in between work better than either pole to make magic even more powerful?

What of the special intuition and knowledge of homosexuality that has survived as a secret culture as old as witchcraft itself? In biblical myth lies a time line of witchcraft. Adam was a patriarch to Eve, and they gained knowledge by eating the apple from the Tree of Knowledge. One of their two sons, Cain, in line for Adam's patriarchy, killed his younger brother, Abel, because Abel, who had gained his own secret knowledge from the tree, was made magical by that secret knowledge. The scenario is this: Abel, with his queer eye, saw through his brother, Cain, and laughed ironically at his brother's patriarchal demands, because Abel's secret knowledge made him the first seer, the first witch, the first gay man on the sacred path, and the first "bashed" queer. As valid as any private interpretation of the Bible, this alternation of the archetypal story balances the apocryphal Jewish myth that Adam had a wife before Eve, and her name was Lilith, whom he (ever the patriarch) left because she was a witch.

Both stories illustrate one continuing point. Women and gay men, like magic itself, exist to inject irony into the linear half-lives of the patriarchy as well as of the matriarchy—each of which is as oppressive as the other.

Occult sexuality in all its diversity is coming out of its own closet, because modern mass media demand full disclosure of all secrets, particularly the

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erotic. Witches-by-night can be as uptight and middle-class as their by-day backgrounds, particularly when sex rears its ugly head. No one should be confused by the sheer white noise of white witches denying they use black magic. Many American witches, acting out their peculiar cultural Puritanism, live in denial of both sex and the black arts, claiming that they only know about nonsexual practices and white magic. This makes practitioners of black magic and Satanists laugh the way audiences laugh at white witch Mary Poppins saying, “I never explain anything.”

Less cynical observers figure that such white witches often prevaricate about sex and Satan because they fear reprisal of the historical kind that always ends up with someone burned at the stake. Sabaeianist Pontifex Maximus Frederic de Arechaga puts the feet of witches to the fire when he says, “If they don’t admit to at least bisexuality, they aren’t the witches they think they are.” He adds that “homosexuality and heterosexuality are both queer because they each lack the other; both are equally degenerated, and,” he emphasizes, “unpardonable.”³ Anton LaVey says that in the reality of Wicca, sex, and Satan, these so-called white witches “know what side their bread is buttered on.” The famously straight LaVey, who was no heterosexist, does not honor the ancient code of the “Silence of the Sphinx” who knows all and tells little. LaVey, speaking like the Wiccan Walt Whitman of the body electric, trumpets sex in magic; he values both straight and gay members in his Church of Satan, because, as a maverick himself rebelling against the traditional sexism of much esoteric teaching, he finds both sexual paths to be sacred paths with spiritual validity. Practitioner Adrian Kirch maintains that “while sexuality is often overrated in both black and white magic, many believe that a homosexual is granted special powers.”⁴

Anton LaVey, as doctrinal teacher of the Church of Satan, concurs that mention of homosexuality is missing from many occult books because the writers were self-censored by the homophobic mores of their time. For instance, when Gerald Gardner just barely managed to get Wicca legalized as a religion in England on June 22, 1951, the brilliant national hero Allan Turing, who had saved England by breaking the Nazi Enigma Code, was being tortured by the British government—which had also tortured Joan of Arc—with chemicals that affected his hyper-aware brain because Turing had made passing mention that he was homosexual.

In that homophobic climate, Gardner, who like Turing had repelled Nazis, was not about to jeopardize his crusade for the legalization of Wicca by admitting that homosexual energy was one of the many components

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of Wicca. As it was, his phone was tapped. Gardner and his Wiccans remembered why Oscar Wilde had been done away with, and, in their own day, they saw the British government drive Turing to “gay suicide.” Destroying Turing’s homosexuality was more morally important than honoring both his defeating the Nazis and his part in inventing the first computers. His genius had to seem separate from homosexuality and not a coefficient of the homosexual outside eye. “Gay suicide” is a rarified “suicide,” because it is self-murder usually engineered by others as a way to be rid of the hyperaware homosexual who breaks codes and injects irony and “weird otherness” into straight-line culture. When it comes to punishing modern gay witches, “gay suicide” has often been the subtle new “burning at the stake,” which has been perfected, some contend, by the government-created virus useful to the ongoing inquisition against gays, people of color, and women: HIV.

In the same way that terrified gay people have historically destroyed their own writings and art, Gerald Gardner counseled in his handbook for witches, *The Book of Shadows* (ca. 1939), “Keep a book in your hand and write . . . but never let the book out of your hand and never keep the writings of another for if it be found . . . they well may be taken and tortured. Each should guard his own writing and destroy it whenever danger threatens. Learn as much as you may by heart, and when danger is past, rewrite your book if it be safe.”⁵

With the onset of gay liberation in 1969, *The Gay Grimoire: A Book of Spells* surfaced in the under-underground of gay subculture. In the 1950s, gays queried sexual identity out of *The Wizard of Oz* with the coded expression, “Are you a friend of Dorothy?” In the 1960s, seekers into gay witchcraft asked, “Do you know Garry Grimler?” Always handwritten, *The Gay Grimoire* was often copied into the kind of freestyle book popular among gay hippie craftsmen: a one-piece leather cover, folded in half, with parchment pages bound together by a rawhide thong drawn up through the two holes of the back cover, through the paper, and out the two holes of the front cover where the thong was tied into a witch’s knot. Whoever possessed a copy of the book could authorize another person to copy out another manuscript, in handwriting only. Thus *The Gay Grimoire* is always alive, because, with each copying, the text breathes, and changes, precisely like the Bible being scratched out—in both senses of the term—by medieval monks, or revised by King James. Even the most careful copyists add phrases, or omit spells, moving between white and black magic. Creative magicians interpolate their own material—specifically gay or pink magic—

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which the next copyist might change again. The private interpretation of witchcraft is as free and legitimate as private interpretation of the Bible—which was democratic Protestantism’s main contribution to Biblical exegesis that had been totally controlled by the Catholic Church. Born-again Protestants thumping the Bible with the glories of private interpretation of Scripture should appreciate their mirror image in witches coming out tub-thumping their private interpretations of their grimoires.

The Gay Grimoire counsels that such “pouring of the fluid text” from “goblet to goblet no more hurts its truth than the pouring of water into cups keeps water from seeking its own level in the pitcher from which it is poured.” In the rede of things, whatever *Grimoire* was “handed to the seeker” was the *Grimoire* that “the seeker needs at that time, place, and circumstance under the stars.” Advice is given: “To make a straight man spit, cruise him with a look. Straight males usually spit to avert what they think is the gay evil eye that they know will divert them from their task. If a straight male does not spit, he might be available. Either way you may collect a conjure drop of his juices: spit or semen.” The most interesting gay spells invoking love, or protection from danger, are recipes of self-love or self-protection using one’s own bodily fluids of blood, tears, sweat, and semen; or requiring collection of clothing, semen, sweat, blood, and excreta from the man who is the object of one’s desire—or the enemy who is the object of one’s hate; or the collection of sexual juices, seed, urine, hair, cuticles, and fetishes of clothing of straight men “known for their potency,” particularly men in authority such as protective lawmen and soldiers, “to whose true north we are drawn. “*The Gay Grimoire* is as explicit as the *Kama Sutra*, and as instantly flammable as Gardner counseled in the *Book of Shadows*. Even though “Gary Grimler” rarely shows up, he once advised, “More than one gay witch has lain in wait, in the bushes along a [straight] lovers’ lane, waiting to collect the condoms of seed thrown out the car windows.” All real witches understand the difficulty of collecting fresh ingredients for spells and potions.

Only Aleister Crowley came close to such boldness. With Gerald Gardner and other traditionalists, the omission of homosexuality in the liberation of mid-twentieth-century witchcraft was a white lie told more out of self-protection than real bias. Antiwitchcraft prejudice through the ages had burned so many magic books, and killed so many witches, that even fewer occult books would have survived if the writers had revealed how often homosexuality was used to raise the cone of power. The history of witchcraft is virtually the same as the history of homosexuality. Analog to

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The Gay Grimoire is the anthology edited by Mark Mitchell and David Leavitt *Pages Passed from Hand to Hand: The Hidden Traditions of Homosexual Literature in English from 1748–1914* (1998).

In tandem with the modern rise of women priests in covens is the visible rise of gay men in the craft who apply their experience gained in gay liberation to the liberation of witchcraft. Gay theorist and activist Leo Louis Martello, founder of the Witches Anti-Defamation League and the author of the groundbreaking *Witch Manifesto* (1968), invented the template for legal suits seeking reparations for Native Americans with real-estate title claims, for African Americans descended from slaves, and for minors molested by Catholic priests. In his good humor, Martello combined two liberation images, the homosexual closet and the witch's broom, in his militant chant: "Out of the broom closets, and onto your brooms!"

Years before the permissive society that gave context to Martello, the brilliant Aleister Crowley, ever exalting in his bad-boy code name "Beast 666," took a quantum step forward when he dared admit to a certain bisexuality and ritual sodomy in his conjurations to raise the Devil. For his efforts, he was denounced by the famous Dion Fortune, who spent her 1920s and 1930s denouncing homosexual occultists and homosexuality. Best-selling author Fortune, like Madame Helena Petrovna Blavatsky and other "reverse sexists," perhaps protesting a bit too much, dismissed the homosexual quotient of Crowley's erotic revelations as personal lunacy caused by drugs. Crowley's enemies enjoyed reminding the public that royal British Customs officials burned eighty-three of the one hundred copies of the 1898 edition of Crowley's erotic-magic poems, *White Stains*, because of its insinuating politics of homosexuality, sodomy, bestiality, and necrophilia. *White Stains*—each of the hundred covers glazed with the white pearls of Crowley's own semen—was published by Leonard Smithers, who showed the power of small occult presses when he dared also publish Aubrey Beardsley and Oscar Wilde, who preferred to sign rather than stain the first hundred copies of their books.

Crowley was a sex-and-magic pioneer. Sixty years after he announced the power of ritual sodomy, gay witches further liberated both homosexuality and witchcraft. They took their own quantum leap forward when they declared that the receptive role of the penetrated male was neither "passive" nor "feminine," but was a new kind of "male power" that activated formerly impenetrable male mysteries and masculine energy in a creative and sensitive way. Masculine men who actively open themselves to the initiatory rite of penetration unlock a magic and a power and a knowledge

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that is unreleased in masculine men who have never experienced another body inside their own body. Some people believe in this newly uncloseted primordial male power the way they had always believed there existed an ancient female power.

Like being female or black, being homosexual is also not an aberrational way to be human; homosexuality is an *additional* way to be human. The more completely human a witch is, the more powerful the witch's magic is, because, paralleling the insights of both philosopher Thomas Aquinas and film director Tod Browning, witchcraft builds on the human nature of one's sex, gender, and race. Witches who deny sex—in any measure of Alfred Kinsey's "sex arithmetic"—are heretics to the occult because sex energy is the essence of magic, which cannot confine itself to middle-class mores. How can anything sexual be shocking to occultists who range from Wiccans who trust that "everything in nature is sacred" to Satanists who pant that "sex with Satan is the ideal"? People who claim to be witches can be tested with this rede: if they are sexual Puritans, they are not really witches.

In 1900, Crowley was already the perfect "1960s radical." Why has he been reviled by both the government establishment and the Wiccan establishment for his invocation of sex, drugs, and music? Actually, Crowley the humanist outed one of the deepest sexual secrets of the occult: the ability for practitioners, in the name of craft, to shift the shape of sexual magic from procreational sex into free-ranging recreational sex. This runs counter to the puritanical gender dogma of most established religions, and it certainly runs counter to Christianity, which was the most puritanical of all the Near Eastern religions fighting it out when Christ was born into a world so consumed by magic, sorcery, and witchcraft that the Magi (the magicians) followed a star to Bethlehem, and Christ—who often spoke with the Devil—grew up to be the greatest exorcist of his time.

After all, if witchcraft isn't about natural joy, maypoles, guilt-free sprites, magical fairies, sexual freedom, and ritual sodomy (with a bit of necrophilia), then it's just another religion similar to Catholicism, whose priests—instead of being principal conjurors and fertile phallic practitioners—are sworn to an antisex celibacy. For all its personal sacrifice, the minimalism of priestly celibacy really leads nowhere. Celibacy actually diminishes the magic of Catholicism invoked in all its bells, books, candles, incense, holy water, holy oils, burning of palm branches, and sprinkling of salt. When Catholicism loses its magic, the core doctrine of transubstantiation flies out the stained-glass window. Transubstantiation is the one thing that

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makes Catholics different from everyone else. Transubstantiation is not metaphor; it is not symbol. The magic word *hocus-pocus* is witchcraft's ridicule of the Latin words the priest says to transubstantiate the bread into Christ's body: "Hoc est enim corpus meum." These are the words Christ said in the New Testament to his thirteen apostles (including Judas's replacement, Matthias) at the Last Supper: "This is my body."

"Conjuring on Christ's body" is an analogue of the body-conjuring practiced by white-magic Wiccans and black-magic Satanists. Some Wiccans, such as Gerald Gardner and sometimes Alex Sanders, defining Wicca in their own image, limit acknowledgment to heteroconjuring body rituals only. Because both magical leaders are male, straight and sexually submissive, they have motive to invest the highest authority in the Goddess. This Goddess doctrine—given a wink-wink by male lust—is, some say, a come-on to attract women into the coven where they join in as willing partners with men they'd otherwise never look at. Such parleyed female consent insures beta-male access to alpha-females, socially and sexually. Some cynics say that the male in charge of the coven, like a Hollywood casting director, takes his privileged pick of priestess to reflect the Goddess. Whatever the motivation, such "God-Goddess" chauvinism reflects only heterosexual lust and not the human celebration power of the personal self, which is Anton LaVey's main teaching.

The hetero-occult being what it is, one thinks of British poet laureate Ted Hughes. His mother taught him Wiccan arts, mind control, and the tarot, which he introduced to his American wife, the poet, Sylvia Plath. On their first meeting at a Cambridge party, she had drawn his blood by biting him on his cheek. Hughes, expert at mesmerism, often hypnotized Sylvia to move her from despair to creativity, until finally Sylvia famously committed suicide, because no matter how much a husband hypnotizes his wife he still can't make her believe he's faithful. White magic does not exist to control women.

Satanists are rather more "perversatile;" they know that sex is an intrinsically shape-shifting event. What "God-Goddess" there may be is, like the angel-devil Satan, a shape-shifter, and—never forget—a trickster. Gone is the day when sexism did not allow women to be magicians, but only "magician's assistants" in scanty clothes. In the same way, Neanderthal are the occultists who protest too much that homosex is not often useful to invoking parallax power to boost human magic that is actually limited by being heterosexual only. Countering the bias of heterosexist witchcraft, Crowley leapt into the trenches of the gender wars whose avant-garde has

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always been—*mais oui!*—witchcraft. If there can be a valid female witchcraft, there can be a valid male witchcraft. If there can be a valid feminist witchcraft, there can be a valid gay witchcraft. All converge in humanist witchcraft.

When the militant occultist Madame Blavatsky (1831–91), founder of the Theosophical Society, was asked if she were married, she replied, “I am a widow . . . and I thank God! I wouldn’t be a slave to God Himself, let alone man.” So why did she thank a male God? Was Blavatsky advocating polar lesbian magic? Blavatsky made her anti-God, antimale and antigay declaration of independence in her virulent reaction to Aleister Crowley and his magic “lifestyle,” which she feared would overtake her brand of spiritualism. Blavatsky was mimicked in 1967 by Valerie Solanas, founder of the Society to Cut Up Men and author of the *SCUM Manifesto*, published in 1968, the year that she shot and nearly killed Andy Warhol in virulent reaction to his being a man, she said, having too much control over her life. The times were violent. Solanas shot Warhol two days before Sirhan Sirhan shot Robert F. Kennedy on June 5, and only sixty-one days after Martin Luther King Jr., was shot. At this same time, the years 1968–69, the more submissive Manson girls—none of them as crazy as cult-heroine Valerie Solanas—were, according to *McCall’s* reporter Jean Stafford, at times sadistically abused within the sexual rituals of the (Manson) Family.

In *Esquire* magazine, Tom Burke interviewed a nationally popular girl singer. She told of a Hollywood party where “you went in and there were three altars. On two of them, these boys were tied with leather thongs. They were sobbing. These two faggots dressed as nuns—one had a *goatee*—were beating them with big black rosaries. On the middle altar there was a very young girl. This guy wearing a goat’s head had crushed a live frog on her privates. When I came in, he had just cut a little cross on her stomach. . . .”⁶ The January 18, 1970, *National Tattler* carried a front page headline: “Why Women Crawled for Madman Manson: They Bore His Children, They Licked His Feet.” The February 9, 1970, issue of *Spotlight* illustrated a “Pay-for-Pain Girls” article with a picture of a bound girl stretched across an altar under a pentagram. The caption read, “Women like this stage weird sadomasochistic orgies that often end in bloodshed.”

The sadomasochistic underground—a nationwide pansexual network typified by the American Eulenspiegel Society, founded in 1972—may be a bastard child of Christianity, but is adopted sibling to the occult. The essence of sadomasochism is ritual, and this ritual finds ready match in occult procedure and covenant. Sadomasochists are extremely caste conscious.

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When a master appears in public with his slave, certain behavior becomes them both. Slavery has not been abolished in America; it has merely gone into the sexual underground. When it occasionally surfaces with a Charles Manson, mainstream America reels at its different morality.

In the summer of 1969 at Indio, California, a farm commune operated by a cult called Ordo Templar Orientalis, which in one permutation counted Aleister Crowley among its members, reportedly chained a six-year-old boy, Anthony Saul Gibbons, in a sweatbox for fifty-six days. Eleven commune members, including the boy's mother, were accused of torturing the boy by burning his fingers with matches; the boy's punishment was discipline for a fire he had started that had destroyed one house and injured a group of goats. When the October 31, 1969, *Washington Post* Halloween edition carried this UPI item, the public morality was outraged by the cult's private morals. Private discipline and contemporary servitude, like witchcraft, are, however, a psychic reality more frequent in American culture than an occasional news item about corporal punishment might indicate.

Minority sexuality is always a measure of pop culture. "Sex has always been a weapon of the *avant garde*. Sexual imagery," Edward Lucie-Smith wrote in *Race, Sex, and Gender in Contemporary Art*, "has been one of the quickest and most direct means open to any artist who wanted to establish his or her credentials as a transgressor against established bourgeois systems."⁷ In the same way, when the sex is couched in witchcraft, the mixture galvanizes culture between the equally seductive poles of attraction and repulsion.

Robert Marasco's Broadway drama *Child's Play* (1970) theorized that the curse that goes with the diamond of a permissive society is society's backlash cry for discipline. Some people have the will to power; others have the desire to serve. The underground premise holds that in a free and permissive society, just as some people submit their wills to religious dogma and tithing, others ought to have the right to sell themselves into slavery to a sadistic cult or demonic coven. Consequently, much underground activity concerns contracting for servitude, temporary or permanent. As chronicled in Geoff Mains's *Urban Aborigines: A Celebration of Leathersexuality* (1984), the underground press is cross-listed with masters, slaves, and occultists in search of one another. It is a truth of popular culture that "classified ads" by their sheer numbers and demographic themes reveal human truths of behavior and desire. Seekers can find classifieds offering evolutionary groups for conjuring gay magic as well as reactionary groups for invoking anti-Christian blasphemy.

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“The Sanctuary of Priapus invites gay men to express their own private sex rituals of masturbation in a group setting that releases gay imagination, gay power, and gay magic through ecstatic drink, drugs, dancing, and sex.” While Satanic blasphemy is certainly not a gay activity per se, one private party invitation made this pitch: “The Brothers of Blasphemy offer a group for gay men who blaspheme and get off on blasphemy and sacrilege against the Nazarene and all that is associated with the false X-tian ‘God,’ and any other false ‘god’ that gets in your way. We offer a haven from self-righteous religious fools, and a place to indulge and share blasphemies, and encourage others in their pleasure.”⁸ The Sons of Satan advertised in the leather S&M magazine *Drummer*.⁹ The Fist Fuckers of America, philosophically led by the mystic Peter Perusha Larkin, author of *The Divine Androgyne: The Tao of Hindu Gay Consciousness and Rectal-hand Coordination* (1981), advertises, “Cry out for the God of the Fist! Magic through penetration.” A computer service matching gay masochists with gay sadists is called “The Order of the Sixth Martyr.” The computer-membership fee of ten dollars is sent to the Order of the Sixth Martyr, c/o ANVIL, P. O. Box 38326, Hollywood, California 90038.

SNAPSHOT: FeBe’s Bar, Folsom Street, South of Market, San Francisco, 1970.

The cult of masculinity is alive and well at the famous FeBe’s Bar, located on Eleventh Street at Folsom Street in San Francisco, where phallism is coded in the night-time uniform—and ritual vestments—of tailored leather pants with detachable codpiece, and the phallic peak of black leather caps smartly designed by Muir Cap and Regalia of Toronto. In gay culture, the male gods rise and rise again triumphant, because phallic worship is coded into gay art, writing, photography, and culture in the masculinizing fetishization of clothes (leather and denim); tools and weapons (knives, swords, guns); drugs (amyl-nitrite sniffers shaped like silver bullets worn on a rawhide thong around the neck, needles, cigarettes and cigars, smoked invocatively as in rituals of Santeria and the Bohemian Club); and combustion engines (motorcycles, trucks).

At FeBe’s, the Satyrs Motorcycle Club (founded in 1956) and the Warlocks Motorcycle Club park their Harleys, and sadists match with masochists. Established in 1968, FeBe’s Leather Bar explains its name and purpose through occult detail in its newsletter: “FeBe (Gr. Phoebe) was the Greek Goddess of the chase and patroness of hunters. . . . She became Goddess

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of the night and the underworld, later becoming associated with Hecate, the Queen of witches and warlocks. She was also the stern Goddess of punishment when any offended her or violated her laws of virginal chastity. Telephone: Masochism 19450.”

The innuendo of FeBe’s newsletter leaves little to even the mainstream imagination regarding erotic congress in which full-frontal bondage and pain are common rites of inducing altered states of consciousness in rites of sexual magic. At FeBe’s shop, called A Taste of Leather, customers can buy a conjure idol in the form of a two-foot-tall statue of Michelangelo’s *David* recast in 1966 by sculptor Michael Caffee, in white plaster, with a biker’s cap and jeans in the leather fashion of Marlon Brando. In *The Wild One* (1954), the masculine gay world found its muscular pagan archetype, which Kenneth Anger perfected in *Scorpio Rising* (1964). A townsman asked the swaggering Brando, “What are you rebelling against?” Brando sassed back, “Whatcha got?” Lucifer himself, confronted by God, must have answered exactly that way with those words. So would most liberated gay men.

Caffee’s aggressive *Leather David* statue, referencing also the swooning masochism of the gayest of martyrs, Saint Sebastian, symbolizes erotic dominance and submission. It is a phallic conjure *fith-fath* (any doll used for casting a spell) as specified in FeBe’s newsletter, of occult leather rites of the kind popularized by black magister Kenneth Anger in his sacrilegious, blasphemous, and Satanic underground art films. Director Michael Zen reflected similar shape-shifting gay fantasies in his very popular and seminal film *Falconhead* (1972), in which a bodybuilder wearing a falcon’s head uses a magic mirror to transport men into the “other dimension,” where they perform their most secret fantasies. In the endlessly inventive camp-vooodoo of gay culture, several toy dolls made by Mattell—particularly the macho G.I. Joe more than Barbie’s vanilla friend Ken—not only often double as fith-fath voodoo dolls, but they have sired a best-selling line of hyper-masculine gay dolls that are often used to cast love spells, hexes, and blessings.

The music played on the collage audiotapes mixed especially for gay leather bars like FeBe’s incidentally reflects occult themes in pop culture. The range of album cuts feature:

- Led Zeppelin, whose lead singer Jimmy Page owned one of the largest occult bookstores in England, bought Aleister Crowley’s Loch Ness mansion Boleskin, and often quoted Crowley’s rede, “Do What Thou Wilt”;

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- Alice Cooper, who, spelling on a ouija board, jumped across gender and named himself after a seventeenth-century witch;
- Ozzy Osbourne, once of Black Sabbath, invoking Crowley on his first solo album, *Blizzard of Ozz* (1980), in the song, “Mr. Crowley”;
- the Doors, whose lead singer Jim Morrison, riding the “King Snake” dressed in black leather, featured a bust of Crowley on one of the band’s album covers, and in 1970 married the self-proclaimed witch Patricia Kennealy in a Wiccan hand-fasting ritual;
- the Beatles, who admired the freethinking rede “let-it-be” that Crowley introduced into pop culture;
- the Rolling Stones, who through singer Mick Jagger were connected to Crowley’s heir, Kenneth Anger, whose “magick lantern” films are often screened in gay leather bars equipped with movie projectors.

By the beginning of the 1970s, *The Real Thing* (1968), an epistolary novel by William Carney, had risen from the gay subculture to pop-culture notoriety. Unlike the comparable straight *Story of O* (1954) by Pauline Reage, this American gay *roman noir* dictated norms of ritual, caste, and costume appropriate to sadomasochistic ascetics.

Black magic is the source of Carney’s dress code and psychic preparation for ritual scene. For the sadist, Carney’s leatherman’s handbook advises, “Mere nakedness is nothing . . . some element of the uniform must always be retained. . . . only the Victim was completely naked. . . Live like an athlete . . . wear colors sparingly. . . . The rule for cloth is up tight. Snug. . . . Boots proclaim the man. . . . Chains? Yes. . . . Choose your belt and buckle with care and wear them as they should be worn: . . . left side is *sinister*, sadist, top man, teacher, master, shepherd, S; right is *dexter*, masochist, bottom man, boy, slave, mutton, M. . . . Deliver words and blows with a minimum of effort and a maximum of effect. . . . Finesse! finesse! . . . Begin gently and let the violence take hold of you bit by bit.”¹⁰ For the slave, Carney advises the proper ritual behavior: “If you are the Victim you will, naturally, be passive. But you will not be merely passive. You will take care to respond in a manner which is both proper to your role and adjusted to the particular Master who is working on you. . . . The acceptance of another session is a prior acknowledgment that it will go further than the last one did.”¹¹

Carney quickly became the first best-selling international oracle on S&M cult and culture, paving the way for the widely read *Leatherman’s Handbook* (1972) by Larry Townsend. The mystical orders Carney has codified complement the hierarchy of coven. The ethos of the S&M Way, comparable

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to the minor orders of the Catholic Church, contains four orders: oblates, purists, exemplars, and the perfect. Carney tolerates the oblates as uninitiated dabblers in cult; their involvement is the sensational pastime of bar boys, and not an art. The purists are cult fetishists; their kick is ritual involvement with costumes, ornaments, and conducive setting. The exemplar is a dedicated high-priest sadist who, like the title character in Tennessee Williams's eucharistic short story "Desire and the Black Masseur" (1946) is "devoted to the task of breaking the victim he confronts in the manner of the priest who creases and splits the Host. He contemplates his victim, worshiping him with studied savagery, and the victim, broken, is consumed. The lives of these uncorrupted Exemplars are oriented toward the attainment of such singular moments of transcendence. . . ."12

Finally, the perfect are latter-day anchorites. They are venerated and feared; they are more abstracted than the exemplars. Their presence at an S&M session—like the raising of Satan at a Black Mass—insures the perfect rite, the ultimate scene, where the sadist's agonizing hand on the masochist's body transforms mere gesture from transitory effect into transcendent eternal moment.

This gay sadistic spiritual hierarchy has its source in occult ritual. Each regimen inverts the symbols of Christianity. As the Latin-American Penitentes during Holy Week in the American Southwest torture one another with scourges and ritualized simulated crucifixion to honor Christ's Passion, so do demonic ritualists torture to negate Christ's salvific act. sado-masochists, such as the members of the gay Hellfire Club founded in Chicago in 1971, torture to affirm the pleasures of the flesh through pain that changes consciousness. White magicians, even those descended from Gerald Gardner, use ritual pain, often of the velvet kind, wherein whips are made of silken threads. Tennessee Williams pointed out a huge psychological "hang-up" in western culture: Christ on the Cross. In *The Night of the Iguana* (1961), Williams defined what he meant when he laughed at the defrocked priest tied up in a hammock and said that some people are jealous of Christ because he endured the original crucifixion. Their S&M "imitation of Christ" relates to the hanged man of the tarot. Begun in 1970, a journal of mystic adventure in San Francisco included this documentation of a gay crucifixion scene:

Ryan tied Kick's huge arms wide open on the cross. . . . He watched his lover strain and flex like a muscular Olympic gymnast performing the crucifix on the double rings. . . . His loincloth fell away. . . . He hung, by his massive

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arms, crucified, head back and haloed by the shine of the tracklight. . . . The moment grew mystical as Kick struggled, flexed, relaxed, flexed, and endured against the hard wooden Cross. It started as night games: heroic sculpture from drawings and movies. It became some ritual else. Their separate fantasies meshed in the flesh, then separated in their minds, coming back together. . . finding the Energy, the Entity conjured between them. . . . Kick was the bodybuilder crucified. . . . Ryan was his . . . lover, his priest. . . . He hit them both with popper. This was no Imitation of Christ. This was real. Kick was more than an *alter Christus*. He was the incarnation of the real Christ Himself. Kick, throbbing with the tension of the muscle bondage, glistened. His whole body tightened down into a cruciform Most-Muscular position. . . . Ryan looked up lovingly at his crucified Savior. He could feel the power rising in the crucified's body. Then suddenly, the white clotted rain shot like saving grace. . . . "Oh, my beautiful God."

The next day Ryan's best friend, Solly Blue, said on the phone, "What you gayboys won't do to have fun."¹³

The journal, covering twelve years, was published as the "faction" novel of sex magic, *Some Dance to Remember*. (Truman Capote defined *faction* in terms of his 1966 book *In Cold Blood*, as a new genre mixing fact with fiction.)

Gay dramatist Tennessee Williams may be correct about the erotic influence of the stripping, whipping, and crucifixion of Christ, which is the main image of Western art, because painters, sculptors, photographers, and filmmakers, such as Mel Gibson, tend to portray the Christus as a young naked athlete suffering gloriously. In 1900, photographer F. Holland Day pictured himself as the crucified Christ in a series of self-portraits that reflect not so much narcissism as the gay existential condition. Delmas Howe, an anchorite painter living in the New Mexico desert, painted a *Golgotha* series of large canvases depicting gay men suffering the Passion and death of Jesus. Christ's magical sex appeal on the Cross is analogous to the erotic appeal of Saint Sebastian, whom hypermasculine Roman soldiers tied naked to a stake and slowly shot to death with arrows. Derek Jarman, set designer for *The Devils*, wrote and directed his gloriously louche version of the gay legend in his homomascuine classic *Sebastiane* (1975). Jarman's was the first feature film with a dialogue all in Latin, and was produced thirty years before heteromascuine Mel Gibson's Roman soldiers spoke Latin in the equally louche *The Passion of the Christ* which in 2004 became and instant cult favorite in gay S&M culture.

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www.JackFritscher.com/Drummer/Research%20Note.html

SEX AND WITCHCRAFT

157

George Lois created quintessential pop iconography for the 1960s on the covers of *Esquire* magazine. Ever provocative, he photographed Muhammed Ali for the April 1968 *Esquire* cover posed as Saint Sebastian, as suggestively tied to a stake as any witch for burning. The handsome, muscular Ali, dripping with sweat, blood, and sex appeal, stands stripped to the waist in white satin boxing trunks against an all-white background of the absolutely inquisitional photo titled *The Passion of Muhammed Ali*. His head is tilted up in the attitude so familiar from photographs of lynched black men, and his muscular arms seem tied behind his back. Five arrows pierce his pecs and torso, and another arrow is shot into his right thigh. Lois canonized Ali as a pop-culture martyr-saint, because Ali had been stripped of his heavyweight boxing championship title for one reason: he was a black man vocally opposing the Vietnam War, which was being fought by drafted black soldiers.

Lois' strong image of Ali became an instant holy card of S&M and phallic worship as well as racial fetishism, particularly among gay men worshipping black men. This cover greatly influenced the photography of the twenty-two-year-old Satanist Robert Mapplethorpe who, studying at the Pratt Institute (where Lois also studied), wanted to break the white taboo against photographing the bodies and phalluses of black men. Akin to Mapplethorpe lounging among his bronze statues of the goat-footed Satan, Lois lives—with his longtime wife—in Greenwich Village in an apartment filled with African virility and fertility cult objects that bespeak folk art if not witchcraft. Lois collected his best covers, advertising, and political images into his book *Sellebrity* (2003). The book includes his famous shape-shifting May 1968 *Esquire* cover of a corpse-like Richard Nixon—the trickster criminal president known as “Tricky Dicky”—having his “vampyr” face disguised and masked to look alive with lipstick and cosmetics just like the Mascarae.

Pop culture is everything to homosexuals.¹⁴ So what can be made of the pop culture when these leather men and gay artists were growing up? In 1959, *Toys and Novelties* magazine carried an advertisement for “the line with something for everyone.” The toy was an “Assemble-It-Yourself Plastic Crucifix.” The child had simply to cross the beams and then nail down the plastic Jesus. The rest of the copy for this camp collectible read, “Inspiring. Beautiful. Authentic. Faithfully scaled from a famous masterpiece, this easily assembled crucifix reflects the serenity and beauty of the original. . . . A prized, welcome, and tasteful addition to any Catholic home.” Does anyone actually think that the original torture-murder was serene and beautiful?

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Making himself legendary, photographer Mapplethorpe, always a self-referential Satanist, shot, for the cover of issue number 7 of *Creatis: La Photographie au present*, a self-portrait in an outstretched cruciform fashion. He was presented as a leather Satanist to the leather community in “The Mapplethorpe Gallery (Censored)” in *Son of Drummer* (1978); he shot the dark-themed cover of *Drummer* magazine’s issue number 24 (September 1978); and he was mourned in “Pentimento for Robert Mapplethorpe: Fetishes, Faces, and Flowers of Evil,” in *Drummer* 133. He often referenced Satanism, Priapism, muscular paganism, and Christ’s magical passion in his S&M photographs of leather, bondage, urine rituals, penetration by fist, and transcendental torture by razor blade and needle. In the early 1970s, Mapplethorpe was constructing his photographs on the Catholic rituals and iconography of his youth. He knew that Satanism was the ultimate trump card. The young artist, who groomed himself to look like the Satanic love child of Mick Jagger and Jim Morrison, told the art world of galleries, critics, rich collectors, and the terminally hip, “If you don’t like these images, you’re not as avant-garde as you think.”

He photographed muscular naked black men for their phallic magic and to reference the African magic he felt inherent in their flesh. He shot himself as a Dionysian satyr with horns, as a gender-shifting trickster in mascara, as a black-leather gangster with a gun standing in front of a pentagram, and, in his most famous signature portrait, as a crouched Satan with a scatological black-leather tail curling from a bullwhip handle poked up his rear. Because of these creepy Crowley images, he was hired to illustrate a pricey edition of the poet Arthur Rimbaud’s *A Season in Hell* (1986). His goddess-muse, whom he photographed through the years in a kind of ghostly Kirilian camera style, was the punk poet and singer Patti Smith. He photographed bodybuilder Lisa Lyon as a fanged vampire.

He finished his brief life with a ghost-portrait of himself (*Self Portrait*, 1988) that could be titled *Death with a Death’s Head Cane*. The Hamlet-Yorick photograph looks like a still from *Vampyr* as much as from the elegant Ingmar Bergman film *Persona* (1966). That film, whose stark images by Sven Nykvist reflect the complete iconography of the psychological horror film, is an unspooling succession of the kind of perfect black-and-white frame composition Mapplethorpe epitomized. His photography so outraged the Puritan religious right that United States Senator Jesse Helms, a southern Republican from the poisonous tobacco-funded state of North Carolina, launched a federal government Inquisition against his Satanism, his homosexuality, his sadomasochism, his black penises, and his so-called

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child pornography. The 1990 Mapplethorpe “witch trial,” dramatized in the film *Dirty Pictures* (2000), was held in Cincinnati, and contributed to a Puritan government victory that virtually destroyed the National Endowment for the Arts.

Mapplethorpe contemporary Andres Serrano, raised in a devout Catholic family, plunged a crucifix into a vase of urine and caused a furor with his photograph of it, *Piss Christ* (1987), which Serrano said was religious art while critics screamed blasphemy. Winston Churchill’s granddaughter, Edwina Sandys, in her large bronze crucifix sculpture titled *Christa* (1975), reversed the male nude of the crucified Christ to that of a nude woman crucified. Has art merely exposed the inherent erotic power of the crucified Christ? Christian mystics for centuries have conjured their magic on the four-pointed star of the cross and its phallic cult-hero, always a magnificent Jesus, dying from his lifelong combat with Satan. Mapplethorpe’s bloodiest series of photographs are the quintessence of the phallic Christ crucified as they are simply reductive pictures of a male phallus nailed to a board, as if they are botanica holy pictures to be hung over the altar in the Church of Saint Priapus, who is really Jesus in pagan drag.

Magic-sex ritualist Yukio Mishima, the gay right-wing militarist and internationally renowned poet, often photographed himself nearly naked in erotic S&M scenes, sometimes pierced with arrows (eros), sometimes cut with swords, and always dying a languid gay martyr’s death, which he finally fully acted out when he committed a shockingly public harakiri on November 25, 1970. “Yukio Mishima,” Edward Lucie-Smith notes in *Eroticism in Western Art*, “described, in his semi-autobiographical book, *Confessions of a Mask*, a youth’s obsession with the sado-masochistic fantasies suggested to him by Guido Reni’s painting ‘St. Sebastian.’”¹⁵ Mishima’s book of muscular paganism, *Sun and Steel: A Personal Testament on Art, Action, and Ritual Death* (1970), reveals his rituals of male identity and self-integration through hero worship of the Sun God and the fetish worship of male muscle pumped by iron weights. Mishima is reflected by the artists Goh Mishima and Gengorah Tagame in drawings of muscular Japanese men tied up in ritual postures of transcendent, heroic suffering. Anti-Puritan, “Bodybuilding is a rebellious, Faustian, Luciferian act.”¹⁶

Mishima wrote that the “cult of the body and a mighty nihilism” always relate to the “cult of the hero,” particularly in people who internalize the muscular sufferings of the mystical Christ. No group internalizes by rote the magical mystery tour of Christ’s suffering muscular body better than Catholic homosexuals who are, in an ironic way, the most dedicated

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worshippers at the pagan roots of muscular Christianity. Gay S&M Catholics are the latest manifestation of some historic mystics, like Saint Francis of Assisi (1182–1226) and Padre Pio (1887–1968) who, according to Mishima, so idealize the “enfleshment of Christ” that they sometimes create in themselves the stigmata of Christ, bleeding from real wounds, psychically caused, in the palms, feet, and side—and sometimes bleeding from real wounds that are physically caused. Stigmata is mainly a Catholic phenomenon, usually Latin or Mediterranean, often occurring in the hands and feet of reformed pleasure seekers. Because he famously wrote that flesh was beautiful, and that bruised flesh was more beautiful, Mishima is the patron saint of athletic gay men and S&M aficionados. He taught, lived, and died conjuring the shape-shifting magical power of the male body, whose essence is phallus.

Herein lies a principle. Homosexuality should come out of its largest closet and defiantly declare itself an ancient religion—the way that witchcraft defended itself by a declaration of religious freedom. Homosexuality is a natural religion. In the way that Protestant ministers declare themselves ordained reverends, gay men might pronounce themselves priests and ministers of natural gay churches, and thereby be legally protected.

Religions change. Revealed religions, in particular, change. Mysteriously. Usually in synch with politics, power, and money. Intuitive religions such as Wicca and homosexuality, both anchored in nature, change far less.

In the year 313, Emperor Constantine legislated that the sect of Christianity, which had been outlawed in the Roman Empire for nearly three hundred years, was not only suddenly legal, but was the state religion. Constantine’s “combo plate” of church and state lasted from 313 until 1776, when the founding fathers of the United States separated church and state “à la carte” in order to preserve personal rights.

Something personal in gay men understands Satan, or at least the Faustian pact with Satan that underlies Oscar Wilde’s *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891). Author Mart Crowley, in his Broadway and movie hit *The Boys in the Band* (film version, 1970), revealed the quintessential Satanic truth that there was not a gay man alive “who would not trade his immortal soul for a half-hour of skin-deep beauty.” *The Boys in the Band* was produced by Dominick Dunne, the society author obsessed with sex and murder, and directed by William Friedkin whose next films were *The Exorcist* (1973) and the very controversial leather S&M film *Cruising* (1980). That script outed a gay heart of darkness. Outraged homosexuals who were not into sadomasochism and who feared backlash from this dark media

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image, broke a sweat marching in the streets to stop its location shooting. Meanwhile, leathermen eagerly lined up to play extras in the Mineshaft bar scene. Early on in the exuberant brawl of defining gay identity, gay liberation in the Titanic 1970s achieved ecstasy of the kind described in the memoir-novel *Some Dance to Remember* (1990).

The intensity of male Energy, he [Ryan] was convinced, was religious. They were men, as bonded as ancient priests, assisting in the reincarnational birth of a kind of homosexual religion that existed millennia before Christianity. . . . “Eons have passed,” Ryan wrote, “waiting for this specific convergence of so many old souls to worship the Old God who predates Christianity. Our spirits have been harvested from time older than time, collected here and now out of all the uncounted ages of men for this reincarnation in unison. . . . Never on this planet have so many men of such similar mind gathered to fuck in the concelebration of pure, raw, priapic manhood. If the mythic Saint Priapus has never been canonized by the Catholic Church, then he has been made a saint in San Francisco. . . . in the temples of our conjoined bodies, tangled in passion, slick with sweat, and glazed with seed.”¹⁷

In a San Francisco neighborhood not far from Anton LaVey’s Church of Satan, the Church of Saint Priapus celebrated in the 1970s the magic cult of homomascularity at 583 Grove Street, near the hippie Haight-Ashbury and the gay neighborhood of the Castro. *Phallos: The Saint Priapus Church Newsletter* details the phallic worship of this homosexual cult of masculinity. The main tenet of this white magic—sometimes called “pink magic”—is how spiritual access comes through the body electric. Homosexuality is the tell-tale heart beating out the rhythms of human ambiguity hidden by the straight life. Certainly, priapic worship reveals that there is a power outside of humans that humans can only try to control. Because a penis can harden or soften beyond the control of its owner, it is a sign that forces outside the person are operating inside the person. The Devil, according to priapic monks, will often make a man impotent with his wife, in order to test him with other women with whom he is not impotent, and with men with whom he is never impotent, because—magically—impotence rarely occurs in the refreshment of homosexual sex. As an independent symbol of irresistible power, the shape-shifting phallus becomes a magic object of worship and conjuration. The wand waved by magicians at the transubstantiating moment of “presto change-o” is, of course, a pure phallic symbol of what in less Puritan rituals was the pointing and waving of the erect penis showering its magic.

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Long before Richard Knight wrote his *Discourse on the Worship of Priapus* (1785) and Ryley Scott wrote *Phallic Worship: A History of Sex and Sex Rites* (1966), the gospels of Priapus trickled down from antiquity. Mythic Priapus, born erect—and erect he remained—was the pug-ugly son of Aphrodite with several possible sires, including Hermes. A kind of dirty old Devil more ancient than the Greeks, Priapus was popular among the Romans who put him, erect, for luck atop stone markers called *herms* marking boundaries, in order to put a “no trespassing” scare into enemies and to guide travelers. Ever into gesticulation, the Romans also made the Sign of Priapus by putting the thumb between the forefinger and middle finger to ward off the evil eye. The Sign of Priapus is akin to the Sign of the Cross used by Christians to fend off evil.

During Nero’s bloody reign, Petronius wrote the seminal priapic story, the novel-like *Satyricon*, spinning the sex adventures of Encolpius following his dick through decadent Rome, tricking and being tricked in the Temple of Priapus, with his two boyfriends, Ascyltos and Giton. *Tricking* is the main code word for gay anonymous sex. Before the ancient Encolpius escapes from the Temple of Priapus, he is tricked—literally—and sodomized. The same year that the modern Encolpius was rear-ended in *Fellini Satyricon* (1969) the cast of *Hair* was singing Broadway’s second-most pagan hymn, “Sodomy, Fellatio, Cunnilingus, Pederasty.” Perhaps the most priapic was the song, “I Have a Noble Cock,” from the bawdy musical comedy based on Chaucer, *Canterbury Tales* (1968).

In this lineage of erection and sodomy, the modern Church of Saint Priapus reaches back to Priapus and assumes hereditary witchcraft status from ancient paganism as well as the historic magic rituals of the Knights Templar. Founded in the twelfth century by Hugh of the Pagans, the Knights Templar practiced priapic and scatological witchcraft rituals centered on pledging allegiance through the kissing of penis, anus, and mouth, as well as group orgies of male bonding expressing fraternity through bondage, flagellation, coprophagia, and seed exchange. Petronius might have cheered the fan club of his notoriously pornographic novel as well as the 1969 film version, *Fellini Satyricon*. Oscar Wilde was accused of many things, not the least of which was an alternative translation he is rumored to have made: *The Satyricon of Petronius Arbiter*.

According to the dogma of Saint Priapus, gay anonymous sex is fundamental priapic worship. A particularly popular “kneeling” ritual is anonymous fellatio, performed through “glory holes” cut in walls of confessional-like booths, through which the penis alone “appears” as if

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magically disconnected from the body on the other side of the wall. Catholics once venerated a more modest Saint Priapus, until the Second Vatican Council in 1964 purged him and dozens of other “saints”—some of whom, like Priapus, were pagan demigods who had tiptoed into Catholic devotions on their own Nijinsky feet while Christianity was busy appropriating other bits it chose from paganism.

The way Christianity co-opted Wicca, witchcraft had long before co-opted phallic homosexuality by using its conjure power, which it kept as secret knowledge. From time immemorial at men’s bathhouses, and particularly in modern gay baths, drugs and warrior-sex conjure ancient feelings. In an erotic epiphany, the Irish-American protagonist of *Some Dance to Remember* connects the dots of ancient ritual during a “séance” in a 1970s gay bath house, the Barracks, in San Francisco. He [Ryan] was high and certain these men knew they were, all four of them, concelebrating priests of a man-to-man ritual in the old discipline. They were shamans, more ancient than the Druids, invoking priapic Gods, congregating among profane men, who themselves, remembering or forgetting, it mattered not, tripped the corridors of the Barracks with motives as ancient as lust. The four were in perfect alignment. Under a hit of popper, Ryan fell down the violet tunnel with the black spot at the end. He was sure the spot was the moon in full eclipse viewed through a sacred tunnel of rune-covered stones.”¹⁸

In the services of Saint Priapus, foreskins (very much attached to bodies) are also worshiped after the fashion of Christians venerating the phallic Christ’s foreskin, which was the only part of his body that did not ascend into heaven. In witchcraft, foreskin piercing, like the piercing of the head of the penis, is an adornment that, like rings on the fingers, adds the energy of precious metals to body gestures. As the phallus has always been a force against the evil eye, the gold ring through the phallus head or shaft, or through foreskin helps blind the evil eye. In medieval times, the *Malleus Maleficarum* (1486) pointed out that the penis is the Devil’s organ. The Devil himself lives under the foreskin, which was the crown of Satan. The smegma under the crown was Satan’s communion, feared by many, prized by others, and at modern orgiastic Sabbaths is spread like cheese from a vat of Velveeta

In the privacy of craft, there is much more sexually unlabeled woman-to-woman ritual, and much more man-to-man ritual, than is suggested by Wiccan publicists touting heterosexual rituals meant to advertise, popularize, and recruit. The sweep of gay literature is virtually defined by the

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priapic coming-out novel: the protagonist first shifts his own shape, worships, and conjures. In fact, the genre exists on that magical archetype. Its plot turns when a self-realizing boy changes from thinking he is straight to knowing he was born gay. Raising the cone of power on his phallus, he sees the vision of another boy he begins to worship from afar. He continues to conjure on his own penis, in solo masturbation, on the image of the young god worshiped until, in the denouement, he kneels before the athletic god's phallus and is accepted or rejected, loved or killed. Typifying this, the remarkably "perversatile" Marco Vassi, in *The Metasex Manifesto* (1976), wrote a story of a young man whose coming out metamorphosed him into "an utterly superior human being" whose salvific acts of sex "soothed the soul" of his partners. Called "Fist Fucker," the story ends telling of a photo of the young man "suspended from a crossbeam" being "lowered onto two men" who double-fist him. "A Buddhist monk, seeing the picture, was heard to exclaim, 'That is a man who has attained Nirvana.'" This semicrucified Christ figure is killed, buried in a field, and, in the last line of the story, "Several members of Troy Perry's Gay Church subsequently began an official movement to have him proclaimed their first saint."¹⁹ Marco Vassi had a history of dipping into popular culture with his exploration of kinky sex, drugs, and cults in America's underground in *The Stoned Apocalypse* (1973).

Muscular Christianity, which the YMCA and straight churches use to recruit boys, is a perfect analogue of gay muscular worship. Thomas Hughes, author of *Tom Brown's School Days* (1857) tub-thumped Victorian "force" into a "bicepual" cult of manliness. In 1899, Reverend G. P. Horne, in *Sandow's Magazine*, Bible-thumped an essay titled "Muscular Christianity" that equated becoming spiritual with being physically strong: "*Mens sana in corpore sano*: a healthy mind in a healthy body." In this vein, the sanctuaries of church, gymnasium, and coven connect muscular bodies to muscular character. In 1993, the first "Lord's Gym" opened in Cincinnati, and in 1997 a Christian corporation opened several "non-sex" "Lord's Gym" locations across the bible belt. However, no men more than gay men focus directly on literal body conjuring to invoke spirit. Muscular witchcraft is part of muscular paganism, which is a part of masculine magic, which is part gay magic, which is part of human magic.

Gay male witchcraft, "coming out" as priapic worship or leather sado-masochism, is simply reclaiming the roots of its ancient identity in both white magic and black magic. This principle is declared explicitly in *Some Dance to Remember*. "Kick is a wizard. All us faggots are wizards, you

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know. . . . I mean we're all wizards, descendants of the Druidic priests of the old phallic religions that predate the Goddess religions of virgin-mothers. . . . Read that part of . . . the *Masculinist Manifesto*, Chapter Three, 'Magic: Homomascularity as the Old Religion.'²⁰

Adam and Eve ate the apple to gain knowledge, but gained only limited knowledge and lost Eden. By archetype, their son Abel, a witness to their loss, learned from their rebellion. Ancient homosexuality was the original repository of secret knowledge. In order to establish itself as a religion, modern homosexuality needs to develop a real theology. That would require theorist theologians who would not get bogged down in, for instance, sex, gender, and politics.

A queer-theory theologian might debate that whatever "God the life force" is cannot be circumscribed by gender, particularly if that life force is transcendent, omnipresent, and omniscient. Projecting gender on a life-force God is anthropomorphism, like projecting human qualities on Bambi, Mickey Mouse, and Smoky the Bear. Greek and Roman mythology is an exercise in which humans try to picture the life-force God in their own image, even as they try to address human psychology. John Ruskin called such attribution of human qualities to nature "the pathetic fallacy." Blaming the life-force God for gender problems of patriarchy, or trying to recast religion, Wicca, or witchcraft as matriarchy, might say quite a bit about human problems of gender relations, but it does no justice to the life-force God.

In fact, gay witchcraft that chooses to be matriarchal is as weak as witchcraft that chooses to be patriarchal. The horizon of witchcraft is not gender. Magic is stronger than femininity or masculinity. The horizon of witchcraft is power. That power is not male power or female power, or gay or lesbian power, but human power unfettered by limits of any of the thousand genders.

Gender magic, which is one kind of primitive tribal magic that celebrates itself in gender, can be straight or gay or lesbian. One straight male, or one straight female, or a straight couple, or groups of straight people can raise the horn of straight gender magic. Lesbian gender magic can be invoked by one lesbian woman, or a lesbian couple, or a group of lesbians. Gay gender magic can be raised by one gay man, or two gay men, or groups of gay men. The 1969 Stonewall Rebellion, which ignited the modern gay liberation movement, for instance, was judged demonic by many people, but was actually an act of gay faerie magic, according to gay pioneer Harry Hay.

Even so, gender magic is only one kind of human magic. The history of witchcraft itself is a warning against practitioners becoming lured by coven

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or cornered by enemies in gender. Witchcraft through the ages has been severely hurt by the battle between the sexes fought in villages, churches, and nations, including the most gender-driven terror of all time, the Spanish Inquisition. To control outsiders—Jews, Muslims, women, and homosexuals—the inquisitors canceled the pluralism of traditional folk magic.

Cherchez la femme. The Spanish Inquisition was begun by a right-wing woman, Isabella of Castille, “La Catolica,” who had become queen in her own right. To unite Spain, she married her cousin, Ferdinand of Aragon, whom she herself crowned king. Their daughter, Catharine of Aragon, was famously divorced from the phallic King Henry VIII who, in a Tudor sex scandal, broke from the pope of Rome, established the Church of England, and married Anne Boleyn, whom he later claimed had a sorcerer’s “extra finger” and a “third breast,” and had “bewitched him into the marriage” that produced Queen Elizabeth I, who had her own royal astrologer, John Dee. In 1478, Queen Isabella enacted the Inquisition, with approval of Pope Sixtus, and named her own priest-confessor, Tomás de Torquemada, grand inquisitor and chief torturer. To retrieve the purity of Spanish blood and Spanish identity, Isabella and Ferdinand exercised their power three times in the watershed year of 1492. They used military force at Granada to defeat the Islam of the Moors; they expelled all Jews—even the Marranos, who had converted—because Jews were perceived to be taking over Spanish culture through the Spanish economy; and the king and queen, initially believing that the world was flat, sent Columbus to the New World to spread Spanish culture and Christianity. Under the umbrella of witchcraft, the Inquisition focused on race, sex, and gender. Its purpose was to end diversity, because diversity (which is a code name for democracy) is difficult for autocratic governments to control.

In all their gay pluralism, the Church of Saint Priapus, Frederic de Arechaga’s Sabaeonist Temple, Wiccan radical faeries, gay witchcraft, leather sex magic, and the Metropolitan Community Church are various examples of homosexuality working its way through mysteries of sex, gender, and politics toward belief systems. And why not? In January 1990, *Drummer* magazine editor Joseph Bean devoted the entirety of issue 136 to “Leathersex Fairies” and “The Spiritual Dimensions of Submission.” Mark Thompson, author of *Gay Spirit* (1987), wrote in *Leatherfolk: Radical Sex, People, Politics, and Practice* (1992), “In America, where growing up gay or lesbian usually means to exist on the outer limits of a conventional life, there is little choice but to explore the edges. At some point in our lives, through exclusion by others or self-exile, we are deported to an archipelago of

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things that are left largely unspoken. Human sexuality, in all its diversity, is contained in this faraway place, as if keeping it out of sight will also keep it out of mind. Small wonder, then, that erotic discovery is important to gay people. In fact, having been primarily defined through sexuality, we're adept explorers of it. And leatherfolk are the most expert investigators of eros of all."²¹

Eros, of course, is the soul of witchcraft. The growth of the penis from soft to hard is the essence of shape-shifting, and the semen, mysteriously delivered in a stormy paroxysm of body quakes, vocal thunder, and head lightning, is a potent fluid that actually is fertile and alive. Even to flat-earth fundamentalists ignorant of poetry or metaphor, the physical orgasm certainly seems to have something like God behind it, because the fundamentalist God is always making proclamations about it. As the authoritarian God and the authoritarian Satan fight over who owns orgasm, it is the indulgent Priapus who rules sex worship of the penis, particularly the communion of fellatio and its load of seed-bearing mana, which is analogous to Christ saying to his apostles, "This is my body. Take you and eat."

When witches claim that black magic or white magic require the male god to penetrate the female goddess, their theory collapses. At night, in covens, out on the cold heath where so many wait to be penetrated, why is Satan famous for having an ice-cold penis? Because the penetration is not hot male flesh into hot female flesh. The penetration is by "a widow's comforter," a dildo—chilled by the night air—that is inserted into warm flesh, fore or aft, because Satan traditionally has a two-headed penis able to penetrate anus and vagina simultaneously.

Once something (a dildo) is substituted for the actual thing (a penis), then ritual (a dramatization of reality) literally begins.

Because—as William Blake wrote—witchcraft is creativity, it is always inventing itself, freely switching one thing for another. Witchcraft has always improvised. In the world of magical relativism, is the penis more powerful when it's a dildo? Is an old crone more powerful when she's a drag queen (with a secret penis) or a mime-faced male nun from the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence (with a satirical satyr's penis)? Witchcraft exists in every culture and has survived longer than Judaism, Christianity, or Islam because it is personal, not authoritarian. If sexuality is an archipelago, witchcraft is the sea. If religions are islands, witchcraft is the ocean. And sea-level is forever changing.

The phallic dildo is conspicuous in primitive sculptures. It is also a best seller in contemporary boutiques, botanicas, and gay bars. It gives women

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power to penetrate, and homosexual satyrs satisfaction. Archeology proves that the most ancient religions—at least the ones with the best vases—depict males worshipping males with phallus and dildo. Is it any wonder that, as fecal readings are used in Washington, D.C., to predict politicians' futures, gay witchcraft personals offer "phallic readings to predict the lengths to which the owner will go for love, health, happiness, and money." To check the magic power of the phallus, simply go to a public place—a street corner or a gallery—and raise up a home-made sculpture of "a dildo on a stick" to begin a situation comedy of police, priests, and art critics. Camille Paglia, herself perhaps a bit of an Italian strega, addressed the freak-out power of the penis in her books *Sexual Personae* (1990) and *Vamps and Tramps* (1994), as well as in her cultural analysis of the penis on the British Channel 4 special *The Penis Unsheathed* (1994).

Immediately after the June 1969 Stonewall Riots, signaling the beginning of the most priapic of all liberation fronts, Priapus rose rampant. Greenleaf Classics published the first anthology of contemporary erotic gay literature, *In Homage to Priapus* (1969), edited by E. V. Griffith. Edward Dahlberg wrote *The Sorrows of Priapus* (1970), parts of which were published in the *Chicago Literary Journal*, alongside pieces by Jack Kerouac, Gregory Corso, and William S. Burroughs. In the same revolutionary climate, the repeal of the United States postal laws forbidding photographs of frontal male nudity opened the door for the phallicentric rise of the gay erotic presses, such as Guild Press in Washington, D. C., which published a fully illustrated volume, *The Phallus in History and Fact* (1969).

A few miles northeast of Los Angeles, a certain gay sadomasochism ranch holds an annual "Easter Flagellation" to celebrate the male body. William Kloman, writing on the "Banality of the New Evil" (*Esquire*, March 1970) tells of "one young Hollywood leading man [who] still carries a scar where his hand was nailed to a cross in the course of a recent Hollywood party game." In 1967, a motorcycle gang crucified a girl, eighteen-year-old Christine Deese, on a tree in Florida. Each of these incidents takes in common the major Christian symbol, the Crucifixion, and inverts it for one reason or another like the silver cross hung upside down over the crib of Rosemary's baby.

William Carney assesses all American violence as a popular style of sexual aggression that has become institutionalized in recent aggressive American wars. Americans, he contends, have made cruelty an internationally enviable virtue. He writes, "One of the things which distinguishes Americans from other nationalities is their ability to turn theory into practice. . . .

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Consider the Germans and the English, who are our closest rivals in this (sado-masochistic) work: they fall far behind us. The former lacking subtlety and flair, and the latter vigor. The Teuton is deficient in imagination and the untransplanted Anglo-Saxon forever skirts the epicene. The American's command of sadistic gesture, authority in appearance, and skill in procedure are the envy, if not the delight, of the world."²²

On Good Friday, 1970, American artist Carlin Jeffrey reconstructed his award-winning sculpture *Living Crucifixion* at an elaborate townhouse party on New York's East Side. For four hours Jeffrey was crucified nude to a cross in the brownstone's gothic chapel. His living sculpture, designed as a tribute to homosexuals who died in American wars, was a variation on the inverted-Christianity theme of black magic. Jeffrey was crucified (chained) backwards, face to cross, buttocks mooning the gallery. After his four-hour gesture-comment, Jeffrey descended from the cross, collected his thousand-dollar fee, and three days later was back at the popular New York Gallery of Erotic Art, crucified by appointment only. Jeffrey's backward positioning of the crucified victim typifies the inversion of Christianity common to homosexual algolagnia (sexual gratification from giving or receiving pain) and the demonic occult.

In 1969, at the Cordier and Ekstrom Gallery, Manhattan sculptor Nancy Grossman first exhibited her life-size severed heads. These astonishing artificial sculptures, hooded and wrapped tight in black leather with laces and zippers and flaps, reveal mouths and teeth in anguish. Should one call in the censor or bring out the censor? Art is by essence a shape-shifting event that sometimes moves the art object away from the intent of the artist. In Hebrew and Celtic tales, mummified heads, real and shrunken or artful and carved, serve as speaking oracles. In modern times, "Exhibit A," serial killer Jeffrey Dahmer, judged insane and guilty, kept severed and decorated heads in his refrigerator; "Exhibit B," brilliant American photographer Joel-Peter Witkin, famous in the art world and made a knight by France, cuts dead human heads in half, photographs them, and sells the prints to museums and collectors, who hang them in their studies next to the clichéd human skull affected by scholars who think they're Hamlet. In white and black magic, corpse heads are often used for divination, in the way that preserved bodies (and body parts) of dead saints, like Saint Vincent de Paul laid out in glass caskets in Catholic churches in Paris, are prayed to for miracles.

Myth, religion, and the occult, like television, are full of talking heads. In Arthurian Camelot, Sir Gawain, wearing a pentacle on his armor, beheaded

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www.JackFritscher.com/Drummer/Research%20Note.html

170

SEX AND WITCHCRAFT

the Green Knight, who kept on fighting because his vital magic came from sorcerer Merlin and witch Morgan La Faye. In New England, Washington Irving—who was once the lover of *Frankenstein* creator Mary Shelley—retold the biblical tale of Satan being “Death on a Horse.” This tale became the German folktale, which became the American gothic tale, “The Headless Horseman of Sleepy Hollow,” in *The Sketchbook* (1820). Whatever Nancy Grossman intends with her beautiful beheaded sculptures, the Satanic quotient of her existential decapitations exerts a dynamic voodoo pull. Rich, gay, New York leather men particularly respond to her severed male heads in bondage, as if the sculptures are the “speaking oracles” of some kind of leather fith-fath. Prized by private collectors, her leather-bound heads are, frankly and frequently, the centerpiece of leather sadomasochistic orgies of the blackest magic, the darkest sex, and the dirtiest coprophagia.

Sadomasochists and the new occultists are, in fact, people in search of one another. Both groups circulate among themselves a vast quantity of otherwise unpublished erotic literature reproduced via all the modern means. No one story has any one author. The chain-letter narratives change as anonymous individuals—before computers—successively retyped with carbon paper while editing, rewriting, illustrating, and amplifying the episodic plots. These sadomasochistic stories, long steeped in every conceivable taste and fetish, found their 1970s interpolations to be additions of occult phenomena: succubi, incubi, diabolical bestiality. These porno-occult addenda, like the sexual, are geared to be “masturbagenic”—that is, facilitating masturbatory activity, which is the point, obviously, of all pornography.

Here for the first time out of mimeograph is part of a questionnaire compiled and circulated by several sadomasochism groups across the country. The directly occult questions are interpolations made by a Manhattan coven, which uses the form for recruiting auxiliary members and victims for altars. This questionnaire, circulating underground in the 1960s, formed the basis of Larry Townsend’s 1972 sadomasochism bible, *The Leatherman’s Handbook*.

In S&M psychodrama I dig the following scenes with related gear and torture.

Check your choice:

Soldiers () Firemen () Cyclists () Sailors () Marines ()
 Airmen () Coast Guard () Nazi SS () Policemen () Inquisition ()
 Witch Trial () Executioners () Black Mass () Cowboys ()

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Wrestlers () TruckDrivers () Witches Sabbath () Construction ()
 Surfers () Leather Types () Doctors () Satanic Coven ()
 Crucifixion () Hot wax () Piercing () Hanging over flames ()
 Choking () Dunking () Pressing ()

This participatory sadomasochistic underground, circulated by first-class U. S. mail, has its mainstream counterpart. Even the most learned academic (and religious) witchcraft books delight in detailing the tortures attendant upon the inquisition and punishment of witchery. The very popular *Encyclopedia of Witchcraft and Demonology* (1959) by Rossell Robbins, fellow of Britain's Royal Society of Literature, insures interest and sales with its lurid detailing of "A Typical Day's Torture: A Verbatim Report of the First Day's Torture of a Woman Accused of Witchcraft at Prossneck, Germany, 1629." The popular taste for "respectable" porno-violence has always relied on the literature of witchcraft as polite excuse for masturbatory erotica. In fact, inquisition literature has flourished for centuries, because the books are such juicy meditations on sex, women, men, genitalia, pain, race, and power.

In a way, sadomasochism is Christianity's gift to witchcraft. Puritanical Christianity denied the natural, physical body to redeem the soul. Witchcraft celebrates nature to redeem the body and its soul. Had Saint Paul not perverted Christ by attaching guilt to physical pleasure, witchcraft would never have had to exorcise that guilt through pain to restore that pleasure. Men's magazines such as *Argosy*, *Saga*, and *Man to Man*, with nearly-nude women bound and gagged on their covers, are popular literature written as a result of confused Judeo-Christian morality. Adam continues to punish Eve for leading him into temptation. Human nature being what it is, witch-baiters fighting witchcraft seem to get off on the erotic details. Gay witch Leo Louis Martello says that the 1968 film *Rosemary's Baby* is about the dark side of Christianity; so is sadomasochism in the contemporary occult. Scratch the surface of a gay Satanic leatherman and you'll get a Catholic.

In a mid-twentieth-century analysis of the state of the occult, little about witchcraft was what it used to be. Prior to twelfth-century Christianity, witchery was a rather innocent vestige tolerated as a pre-Christian folk way, a harmless country quirk. Not until Saint Thomas Aquinas defined Christianity as "the Good" were witchery and women downgraded into "the Evil." The Dark Ages were passing. As the modern world was beginning to organize its medieval mind, all the bits about witchcraft were codified into

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the *Malleus Maleficarum*. Scholastic Christianity, building on the rhetoric of the early Church fathers, more or less caused the invention of black magic, and outlawed female gender magic and gender healthcare.

In the evolution of popular thought, scholastic philosophy was a closed system based on absolute causality. It needed a villain to explain the evil that God (the good prime cause) could not cause. Whereas the Scriptures loosely called any but the Hebrew God a *Devil* (literally a *slanderer*) or a *Satan* (literally an *adversary*), scholastic hermeneutics united the galloping pantheon of these many once-relative tribal divinities into one Christian Satan. And like God, supreme over the great chain of being, this newly defined Satan ruled as well over his own chain of evil spirits and wicked women, homosexual men, enchanted animals, and magic vegetation that could be turned into lotions and potions. In this way, Christianity, confronting the universal problem of evil, set the Western-world stage for the bipolar hysterias of possession and exorcism by “needing” a Devil to explain evil and illness as well as to define the otherness of outsiders.

Religious and political fundamentalists fear occult ritual the way they fear art. They tunnel their vision in on their own fantasies of child sacrifice and orgies of bloodlust. Witches might also react with prejudice if they stood in the rear of any suburban Catholic Church on Good Friday. Robed men, altar boys, and altar girls lead processions of incense, candles, and bells down the aisle to the altar. A lector reads aloud about a glorious torture-murder of a handsome God. A man in a white robe shoulders a huge wooden cross down the aisle. The convened congregation of single parents and seniors cries out on cue, “Crucify him! Crucify him!” Then in two lines the Catholic faithful wind their way to the altar so that each participant can kiss the wooden cross and eat, under the appearance of transubstantiated bread and wine, the real body and blood of Christ, the crucified murder victim. This transubstantiation is literal. Catholics believe that the wine and bread, which is to be swallowed and not chewed, are turned into the actual blood and body of Christ and all that remains of the bread and wine is its appearance. All Catholic children have been warned by nuns about the seven-year-old girl who bit the wafer of bread at her First Communion and began screaming as her mouth filled up with blood.

Witchcraft, like theater and art, has had to survive Puritan censorship.

One theory of censorship is that the censor is simply fighting in others’ lives and in others’ art the thing he most fears in himself. A censor of things Satanic is, by that theory, simply announcing that he has seen Satan in himself and is so terrified he can only stamp out Satanism wherever it

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might appear to tempt him. Anton LaVey peels back this basic truth basic to reveal such popular Calvinism: “Each time a Satanist performs a ceremony, he worships the Devil as an externalization of himself.”²³ Is this only an inverted, positive restatement of Calvinism’s negative doctrine of man’s essential depravity? Is it a truism that Satanism can really occur only in a theistic society? Belief in good spirits predicates a belief in evil spirits as well, a fact many theists forget. Can an atheist be a Satanist? Can there be a world where only Satan exists with no notion of any God?

The connection of good people with evil spirits is evident in one of the most popular texts of twentieth-century Catholicism; *Moral Theology* (1961), translated from the German of Heribert Jone and adapted to the laws and customs of the United States by Urban Adelman, opposes everything from séances, ouija boards, and palmistry to divination and sorcery. Advertised as “a quick and convenient means for rendering decisions in questions of conscience,” the pocket-size edition offers itself “to Pastors, Seminarians, and the Educated Laity . . . to help them . . . in solving many of the minor problems of conscience that occur in their daily lives.”

As with good-spirit Christianity in general, Jone/Adelman forbid commerce with evil spirits on the premise that evil spirits really do exist. In the explication of the First Commandment, the authors posit,

Divination and sorcery are in themselves very grave sins, since they contain an explicit or implicit invocation of the Devil. One may sin by engaging in these practices oneself or by causing others to do so, e.g., to tell fortunes or have one’s own fortune told, provided he himself or the other person is serious and not merely jesting.

Implicit invocation of the Devil is also a grave sin. Even though one protests against the influence of the evil spirit, one still invokes him by using evidently inadequate means to produce some definite effect. If there is a possibility that the effect is the result of some unknown powers of nature, one may use such means if he protests against any diabolical influence. Such a protestation is unnecessary if one is certain the effect is produced by natural causes, even though the respective natural powers are little known, as happens, for example, in the use of the divining rod for the location of water or veins of metal. At times there will be only venial sin, or no sin at all in the implicit invocation of the Devil because of ignorance, simplicity or error, or because one does not really have faith in the questionable practice or because one engages in it more or less as a jest and provided no scandal is given. It will likewise be a venial sin or none at all if one does or omits

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something indifferent in itself because of certain information received, being prompted not by a belief in fortune telling, dreams, etc., but rather by some indefinite fear or by curiosity.

One may practice superstition also with the aid of *religious objects*, e.g., using the paten as a mirror and expecting thereby to recover from an illness; so, too, if one copies prayer leaflets and distributes them in order to obtain certain effects; furthermore, if one ascribes an infallible efficacy to a certain prayer or picture, etc., as frequently happens in the case of chain-prayers. Simplicity generally excuses one from sin in such cases.

Rotating tables may be connected with phenomena . . . put into motion by purely natural powers. It is impossible, however, for such powers to manifest absolutely hidden things. Some authors believe they may reveal things that are known to at least one of the persons present. Such practices (e.g., the use of the ouija board) are, however, always to be discouraged, since they easily lead to superstition. . . .

Spiritism claims to be able to communicate with the spirit world and endeavors to establish such commerce with it. Although spiritism is *for the most part* fraud [emphasis added], still the intention alone to enter into communication with spirits is gravely sinful. Therefore, it is *mortally* [emphasis added] sinful to conduct a spiritistic seance or to act as a medium, even if one protests against all communication with evil spirits. It is also forbidden to attend a sitting as a mere spectator, even if one thoroughly discredits spiritism. Merely witnessing a seance may be gravely sinful because of scandal or because this would imply a promoting of spiritistic practices. Apart from scandal, a scientist does not sin by attending seances for the purpose of studying the nature of spiritistic phenomena.²⁴

This popular guide of Catholic moral theology scares up as real a belief in the powers of darkness as anything in the 1973 film *The Exorcist*. The Church teaches that spiritism is “gravely sinful.” To all Catholics, this means a sin serious enough to merit an eternity of punishment in the Devil’s hell. Therefore, Catholic and Satanist believe the same doctrine. Psychologists say the line between neurosis and true religiosity is thin. The similarity between acts of occult and religious ritual is thinner. Both need believers.

Satanism fits sex like a condom. It celebrates humans’ natural instincts. Satanism is the ultimate Freudian product. Its earthly delights sell like burgers and fries to the young and potent. In two of his “Nine Satanic Statements,” in *The Satanic Bible*, the thought-provoking Anton LaVey amps Satan up as an extension of human carnality. He praises the Seven Deadly

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www.JackFritscher.com/Drummer/Research%20Note.html

Sins, which Christianity teaches are offenses against love: Pride, Lust, Envy, Gluttony, Anger, Greed, and Sloth:

1. Satan represents indulgence instead of abstinence! . . .
8. Satan represents all of the so-called deadly sins, as they all lead to physical, mental or emotional gratification.

He should know.

Anton LaVey is the lightning rod of twentieth-century American Satanism. He had a face that captures the imagination. In the turmoil of fact, fiction, and fantasy that surrounds him, LaVey was an artist who was a pervasive pop-culture force as an author, a theorist, and a personality. He founded the Church of Satan in 1966 and was the author of several books, including:

- the rock of American Satanic philosophy, the best-selling *The Satanic Bible* (1969), and its companion, *The Satanic Rituals* (1972)
- *The Satanic Witch* (1989) formerly, *The Compleat Witch; Or, What to Do When Virtue Fails* (1971)
- *The Devil's Notebook* (1992), his compendium of humor, rants, and wisdom, with an introduction by psychedelic Satanist Kenneth Anger
- *Satan Speaks* (1998), his essays, with an introduction by Reverend Marilyn Manson
- *The Secret Life of a Satanist: The Authorized Biography of Anton LaVey* (1992), by Blanche Barton, who is also the author of the history, *The Church of Satan: A History of the World's Most Notorious Religion* (1990)

His first record album is *The Satanic Mass*, in part recorded live September 13, 1968, at the Church of Satan, with twelve tracks including, after the Black Mass, “The Hymn of the Satanic Empire,” as well as LaVey reading from *The Satanic Bible* a chapter he limned into a new synthesis out of Ragnar Redbeard’s controversial book *Might Is Right* (1896).

After his second album, *Strange Music* (1994), his third, *Satan Takes a Holiday* (1995) features eighteen selections including “*Satanis* Theme.” He plays and recites—in his inimitable voice—the lyrics of five vintage songs of sentiment and magic like “Golden Earrings.” Five other vocals are sung by director Nick Bougas. Two more are intoned by Blanche Barton. She bounces her vocal on the title trace “Satan Takes a Holiday” into a sweet burlesque romp that hints with nostalgia at the “spotlight and feathers”

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www.JackFritscher.com/Drummer/Research%20Note.html

that club-goers in San Francisco's North Beach enjoyed during LaVey's 1960s night club act "Anton LaVey and His Topless Witch's Sabbath."

His films include

- *Rosemary's Baby* (1968), for which, besides acting the part of Satan mounting Rosemary, he also served as technical advisor to director Roman Polanski
- *Satanis: The Devil's Mass* (1969), sometimes titles *Succubus*, a documentary of Satanic rites, including a ceremonial Black Mass, interviews, and ritual (female) nudity with whipping (of a man)
- *Invocations of My Demon Brother* (1969), an underground film directed by Kenneth Anger in which LaVey plays the horned man; often screened as double-bill with *Satanis*
- *The Devil's Rain* (1975), starring William Shatner, Ida Lupino, Ernest Borgnine, and a young John Travolta, featuring LaVey as the Satanic character, with sets designed by LaVey to reflect the actual interior of the sanctuary of the Church of Satan
- *Doctor Dracula: Svengali's Second Coming* (1977) starring veteran horror actor John Carradine, with LaVey as consultant
- *Death Scenes* (1989), a documentary of police crime photos, 1930–50, presented and narrated by LaVey
- *Speak of the Devil: The Canon of Anton LaVey* (1993), a 90-minute documentary of the Church of Satan and how LaVey founded it; directed by Nick Bougas.

Anton LaVey laughs at the commercial marketing of God and Satan in his Ninth Point: "Satan has been the best friend the Church has ever had, as he has kept it in business all these years." The Christian evangelist Billy Sunday, in a self-revealing quip, said, "I know the Devil exists. There are two reasons. One, because the Bible says so, and, two, because I've done business with him." What is true of Satanism is equally true of sex—particularly homosexuality. The mere mention of either "a witchcraft agenda" or "a gay agenda" in a fundamentalist Christian newsletter raises a flood of cash income to churches fighting one or both of the hot-button threats. In this way, Satanism and homosexuality fund Christianity, a point that was also made in the film, *Bedazzled* (1967), which starred Peter Cook and Dudley Moore, featuring Raquel Welch as "Lust."

Anton LaVey defined his images of pop lust in his dedication of *The Satanic Bible* to a list of Hollywood blondes. His celebration of voluptuous

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sexuality is far from Christian magician Andre Cole, and closer to Andy Warhol. Through a parallel to the very reclusive Warhol, one can measure how the rather secret LaVey also continues to captivate American pop culture. Both contemporaries are separate, but similar, pop-culture phenomena. Warhol, who changed his name from Andrew Warhola, worked out of his Factory in New York. Anton LaVey, who was born Howard Stanton Levey, worked out of his Black House in San Francisco. Andy Warhol and Anton LaVey, each in his own way an icon of their times, are pop artists working the American psyche. Both are self-inventing enigmas with cult followings. Both exist where cult converges with culture. Both made pop culture. Both *are* pop culture. Both deployed images of women to float their messages. Warhol, employing New York fashion photography, featured Marilyn Monroe and Elizabeth Taylor. LaVey, coming out of Hollywood burlesque, touted Jayne Mansfield and Tuesday Weld, and claimed a two-week affair with Norma Jean Baker before she shape-shifted into Marilyn Monroe.

Warhol created paintings and experimental trance films like the phallic *Empire* (1964), and produced horror movies such as *Andy Warhol's Frankenstein* (1974). LaVey created rituals, wrote books, and participated in experimental art films and Hollywood horror movies. Warhol sold art, hedonism, and drug magic. LaVey purveyed theology, hedonism, and black magic. Puritan religions condemn them both for their carnality. Warhol allowed drugs to cause his actors to become their raw selves in front of the camera. LaVey disapproved of drugs because drugs cause people to lose control of their will. The gay Warhol, wearing a dust-mop wig, surrounded himself with the charmed circle of his trickster superstars. The straight LaVey, with shaved head rampant, hosted his Magic Circle, at which the infamous mixed with the famous to discuss the occult. Warhol pronounced that "everyone will be famous for fifteen minutes." LaVey proved that Warhol's limited estimate can be extended by a pact with Satan: "After all, Satan can get it for you wholesale."

Both lived lives the tabloids love and need. Warhol was shot and nearly killed by Valerie Solanas. The paparazzi constantly shot Warhol consorting at trendy clubs with the slumming rich and beautiful who sometimes appeared in his films. LaVey, with his always-flexing muscular Satanism, was always good for a slow news day at the tabloids. The curious death of Jayne Mansfield made LaVey a star. The Church of Satan gave him high profile, as did the urban legend of his Hollywood connection to Roman Polanski, the director made widower by the Manson Family. It made good copy

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when the Black Pope denounced the Manson Family, because of his two perceived connections to them. LaVey had once hired Susan Atkins, later a murderess in the Manson Family, as a dancer in his act. (Atkins's memoir, *Child of Satan, Child of God* [1978], never blames LaVey for the lifestyle to which she turned.) LaVey also had worked with Kenneth Anger on the gay magic film *Invocations of My Demon Brother*, with Bobby Beausoleil, who became soon after a convicted torturer/killer in the Manson Family. Art magazines published images of Warhol and his naked superstars. Men's magazines published photos of LaVey and his nude female witches.

In 1966, Warhol produced his own traveling stage show, *The Exploding Plastic Inevitable*, with Nico and the Velvet Underground. Early on in the 1960s, LaVey was billed at a North Beach nightclub in San Francisco as Anton LaVey and His Topless Witches' Sabbath. LaVey based his night club act on his admiration for women in the noir world of burlesque. He moved from "Satin Doll" to Satan's dolls. No one has ever noticed that LaVey's act was a direct homage to Aleister Crowley, who toured with his own vaudeville act billed as, with a musical-and-menstrual pun, the Ragged Ragtime Girls.

LaVey once told *Velvet Hammer* e-zine interviewers Michelle Carr and Elvia Lahman, writing for the Velvet Hammer Burlesque Company, how burlesque politicized him, noting, "The world is full of creeps. [In clubs] I've had my fill of it night after night with these guys. I'm playing my heart out. The girls are working hard, dancing away, and some guys jerk off through their popcorn box. I started thinking like the girls: it's us against them. That was the very beginning of my becoming a Satanic High Priest, just negative feelings about people. There's nothing wrong with sex and fetish, but some people are just disgusting cretins. . . . Creeps and assholes are just good for target practice. So many people are."²⁵

Bit by bit, the legendary LaVey invented himself out of his knockabout experiences as an emcee in burlesque, as a lion tamer in the circus, and as an organist playing the mighty Wurlitzer in theaters and keyboards in clubs. His imposing physical look, his piercing eyes, goatee, and shaved head, caused many people sitting in his lectures to imagine for him a fantastic past. And why not? On the other hand, his Satanic look suggests to strait-laced people the ambiguous self of the trickster. Anton LaVey, Gerald Gardner, and Alex Sanders have all been accused of plagiarizing their ideas—and their personas—when all they were doing was rethinking ancient traditions and lore to bring them into modern culture. As LaVey modestly mentioned in a private conversation, "About my studies, I can

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only repeat Isaac Newton, who wrote, 'If I have seen further, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants.'²⁶

Astrologically, LaVey was born in 1930, the same year as were born the globally famous *Apollo 11* crew, which comprised Michael Collins, the captain (born on Halloween), and Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin, the first two men to walk on the moon on July 21, 1969. For LaVey, like Sabaeianist Pontifex Frederic de Arechaga, the moon, as a female symbol with men walking across its face, presaged a tidal surge in popular culture's attitudes about witchcraft that occurred twenty-one days later on August 9, 1969, when the Manson Family's Tate murders took over the headlines and made everyone in America suddenly believe in murderous cults, sexual evil, and scary Satanism.

Like a foil to the clean-cut astronauts, the menacing LaVey shows up on the covers of magazines and in newspaper features. He was a performance artist whose greatest creation is himself. The private LaVey animated the public LaVey. He knew how to give the public the thrill it wanted. *The Satanic Bible* has never been out of print, and is published in Russian, German, and Spanish editions. LaVey was serious, but seemed not to take himself seriously, making jokes about his lifelong predilection for some of the very stuff of popular culture: the Hollywood films of Boris Karloff, comic books, and fast cars. With pleasant honesty, he termed himself a romantic "cornball." In the way the Romantic poets Lord Byron, John Keats, and Percy Bysshe Shelley worshiped nature, LaVey was a kind of "Romantic Satanic Wordsworth." His Satanism can seem quite Wiccan. He sacrificed neither children nor animals; instead, he invented Satanic baptism for children, and officiated at the first such ceremony for his daughter, Zeena, whom he baptized onto the left-hand *widdershins* path on Friday, May 23, 1967. LaVey once wrote, "The Satanist recognizes animals and small children as the natural magicians of the world. They do not deny their natural instincts and can perceive things that the average adult human can never hope to. The Satanist realizes he can learn much from these sacred creatures. They have not learned to deny their natural indulgences. Man must learn to properly indulge himself by whatever means he finds necessary, 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 very real ailments. The Satanic Church advocates and teaches *INGULGENCE!*"²⁷

The Satanist rede of Anton LaVey bears repeating: "Hurt no one who neither deserves nor wishes to be hurt."

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LaVey is interesting because he feels that nearly all of Western culture is “just good for target practice.” He takes aim carefully. He is America’s *Devil’s advocate*. Inside Catholicism, the Devil’s advocate is the critical thinker who tells the Pope all the reasons why some nominee for sainthood should not be canonized, or why some idea should not be turned into doctrine. In the upheaval of the 1960s, LaVey was one of the fresh voices criticizing the establishment, and sorting out the old conformity to bring in the new pluralism. He was an original thinker who, as a scholar, visited ancient and modern texts to give classic bones to his original body of thought. In his thesis, he combed the past of Aleister Crowley, the Knights Templar, and Ragnar Redbeard and absorbed their books, built on their rituals, and made them his own so he could give the wisdom away. In his antithesis, he considered the needs and desires of modern humans to be free to celebrate the self. Rubbing together his “thesis” and “antithesis,” LaVey sparked his progressive “synthesis” in *The Satanic Bible*, using the past and then improving upon it.

Theorizing makes Anton LaVey valuable. Intellect makes him dangerous. Transgression makes him scary. Wit makes him fascinating. The middle name he gave himself was “Zsador.” No one has ever pointed out that *Zsador* is an anagram for *Andros Z* which means, in Greek, “the last man,” or “the ultimate man.” Also, with its announced *A* and *Z*, *Andros Z* is a backhand slap at God, who in the Bible is called the alpha and omega, the beginning and the end. LaVey worked in layers.

To counterattack Western culture’s repression of the physical, LaVey told his initiates, “As a Satanist, you will be encouraged to indulge in the so-called Seven Deadly Sins, as they lead to physical or mental gratification.” Pushing the edge of female consciousness, LaVey made an offer to each female postulant, “Would you consider being an altar?” Jayne Mansfield apparently said yes. Satan may be the end, but women are the sacred means to the end. LaVey’s one-time blonde consort Diane Hegarty was partner and high priestess; her good humor levitated some of the seriousness in their home, where the front parlor contained an altar, the coffee-table was a tombstone, the divan was Rasputin’s sleigh chair, and bookcases swung out to reveal doors that led down secret passages.

LaVey’s *Satanic Bible* is quick to point out that the Church of Satan is no orgy cult comprised of sex perverts, drug freaks, and social misfits. In fact, he carefully devotes several pages detailing what his Satanists do *not* do. The nearly ten thousand international members of the Church of Satan have undoubtedly all shouted “Shemhamforash! Hail Satan!” and made

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the “Conjunction of Lust”; but none has celebrated—at least not under LaVey’s doctrinal aegis—the historic sexual excesses of the Black Mass, where among other inversions urine is asperged like holy water. LaVey’s rituals, actually, tended more toward a sensual exotica that ended in Irving Berlin’s “rubdown with a velvet glove.”

LaVey, although on the left-hand path of the occult, tended toward the right-hand path of politics. He was a strong supporter of the U.S. Constitution, because only fifteen years after Gerald Gardner declared Wicca a religion in Britain, LaVey took his cue from Gardner and declared Satanism a religion in the United States. LaVey’s was a daring, culture-shifting qualitative leap. Gerald Gardner justified white magic. Anton LaVey constitutionally justified black magic. In the summer of 1966, Anton LaVey corrected the course of American history that had been incorrect since the Salem Witch Trials of 1692. The U.S. Postal Service has put people on stamps for contributions less than LaVey’s.

Nevertheless, LaVey threw fans and critics, equally, off kilter and into a moral panic. He was a meat eater. He loved guns, and had a fetish for gun-packing strippers. He wanted law-and-order cops. He welcomed gays. He kept wild animals as domestic pets. Proving Satan is a trickster, LaVey admitted he once voted for that old devil George Wallace in the 1968 presidential election, for political reasons other than Wallace’s views on segregation. The Church of Satan has always been “open to all children of Satan.”

LaVey, the former lion tamer, insisted that his Church of Satan was not simply a reaction to Christianity. As a satirist, he had been known, however, to promise his “lions just a taste of a Christian or two.” His is more than a “self-help” philosophy. He was a cultured libertine who mixed the lore of witchcraft with the lure of self-indulgence. He made one feel that there is nothing wrong with self-indulgence, if one has a self worth indulging. Speaking of his followers, Anton LaVey told Kim Klein of *The Washington Post*, “I give them Ayn Rand with trappings.”

LaVey entered iconic rock-star status on August 24, 1971, when he appeared in full color on the cover of *Look* magazine, hovering above a skull. Letters poured into the Church of Satan in San Francisco. To people seeking to join, Magister LaVey sent out a “Questionnaire for New Members” profiling their pop-culture IQs:

What is your idea of enjoyable music? What type of food do you like best?
Do you own an automobile . . . what kind? What was the name of the last

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book you read? Do you own books on occult subjects? How many? What is your favorite form of alcohol? Name four motion pictures which you consider to be among your favorites. As a child, did you read comic books? Which ones? Do you like horror films?

Anton LaVey collected people. So do all religions. So do practitioners of craft. West Coast spiritualist Bishop West once claimed Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey as his client. San Francisco astrologer Joan Quigley counseled Nancy and Ronald Reagan. Singer Sammy Davis Jr., accepted an honorary membership in the Church of Satan on April 13, 1973. LaVey claimed that his guest list was as elite as his membership list. By location alone he was believable. San Francisco is traditionally an “open city,” and the home of the secret and elite Bohemian Club, which caters to the powerful and privileged of politics, business, and society. “On the drive to the Bohemian Grove, let’s pop by *chez LaVey!*” The Church of Satan’s first Satanic wedding on February 1, 1967, caused a media sensation because the groom, John Raymond, was a well-connected journalist and the bride, Judith Case, was a New York socialite from a good family. Naturally, the higher the status, the more there is to lose, and the more there is to protect. LaVey, the guardian angel of darkness, offers help. Question 39 of the “Questionnaire for New Members” asks, “Do you feel that there are any people or forces working against you?”

Once accepted, the new member of the Church of Satan found, in 1970, when the Church was young, that the twenty-dollar initiation fee included a one-year subscription to the church’s exclusive bulletin, *The Cloven Hoof*, whose content was instructive and entertaining, with essays on Satanic philosophy and Satanic magic, pronouncements by High Priest LaVey, announcements of coming events and press coverage, notices of the church’s growing press clippings, a letters-from-members section, and an Inter-Membership Communication Roster for concelebrating with brother and sister Satanists. LaVey’s one caution was that the church and its bulletin would not become a pen-pal and personal-ad service like that of the Canadian sadomasochism magazine *The Justice Weekly*.

Anton LaVey was stylishly McLuhanesque. He massaged his media messages in the manner of Canadian communications theorist Marshall McLuhan, the guru of media pop culture, who wrote the influential book *The Medium Is the Massage* (1967). McLuhan proposed an original theory about retribalizing the human race in a *global village* (a term he coined) where people are united by “hot” and “cool” media of technology. He

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www.JackFritscher.com/Drummer/Research%20Note.html

punned on the terms *mass age*, *massage*, and *message*, and on the simultaneously technical and magical word *medium*. McLuhan's belief, like many spiritists who read auras and chakras, including the Catholic philosopher Teilhard de Chardin, is that electricity extends the central nervous system. McLuhan contends that electronic civilization is a giant leap forward to connect humans into closer contact with the spiritual; he also points out, as a good thing, that television has broken up the linearity of human lives, human thinking, and human religion. Certainly, in this electric leap against linearity, Anton LaVey is a most interesting mid-century figure in the spiral of popular culture.

Witchcraft is a retailer's wet dream. Consumers will buy anything, but, mostly they buy publications on alternative subjects ranging from astrology to yoga and Zarathustra. In pop culture, sales measure popularity. A fortune is made in the publishing of occult magazines and books that equals the huge fortune made in publishing religious books. Call them "occult" or call them "self-help." The books can be "pro-occult," like *The Satanic Bible* or *Rosemary's Baby* (published in 1967) or "anti-occult" like *The Exorcist* (originally published in 1971) or the millions of other anti-occult titles sold annually by Christian and interfaith bookstores that thrive in every village in America. Ironically, these religious cautionary tales often serve as "introductions to the occult" for readers who otherwise would never have heard that "a person could actually—like, you know—live a Satanic lifestyle." When Christian authors warn that Marlon Brando's father and grandfather were Theosophists who followed Madame Blavatsky, they inadvertently add magic to Brando's already appealing image as outlaw rebel in *The Wild One* (1954) and well-battered sodomist in *Last Tango in Paris* (1973). Is there an ironic, maybe even honorary, place in hell for preachers who introduce teens to Satan?

In Britain, Anton LaVey's contemporary Alex Sanders made origami folds of Aleister Crowley and Gerald Gardner and shook out a fresh version of popular witchcraft. As a youngster, Alex Sanders had been introduced by his grandmother to Crowley, who gave him a ring. Yet, while he grew up magical, he did not grow up to be a Satanist. Instead, upon the death of the hereditary white witch Gardner (1964) he became, after a brief power struggle within the self-defining new religion of Wicca, the elected King of the Witches. His election occurred clairvoyantly when a rising of covens converged and named him king in 1965. Witchcraft teaches that power is what one pulls to oneself, and *that* Sanders did rather brilliantly. Equally skilled at pulling power, American witch Louise Huebner, who wrote *Power*

[HOW TO LEGALLY QUOTE THIS MATERIAL](http://www.JackFritscher.com/Drummer/Research%20Note.html)

www.JackFritscher.com/Drummer/Research%20Note.html

through Witchcraft (1969), was in 1968 named “Official Witch of Los Angeles County” by order of the Los Angeles Board of County Supervisors. Known for her sense of humor in books such as *Never Strike a Happy Medium* (1970), Huebner in 2004, displaying her “Official Witch” proclamation affixed with the County Seal, explained her title and the wild decade that dubbed her by saying “It was the sixties!”

Gerald Gardner was a tough act for Alex Sanders to follow. Gardner’s popularity, and the political power he conjured, had grown after his famous July 31, 1940, ritual performed in the south of England to prevent Hitler from invading Britain. Folklorist Gardner wisely rooted Wicca in national history. He repeatedly reminded reporters that British witches had cast a spell that sank the Spanish armada when Spain tried to invade England in 1588. Gardner wrote the first nonfiction book on Wicca, *Witchcraft Today* (1954), as well as *The Meaning of Witchcraft* (1959).

Aleister Crowley was the first pop-culture Satanist. Gerald Gardner was the first pop-culture witch. Alex Sanders absorbed them both, and then took a step forward in the pop culture of witchcraft.

In 1966, the same year that Anton LaVey founded the Church of Satan in America, Alex Sanders in Britain was inching away from Gerald Gardner’s premise that Wicca was an update of ancient pagan ritual. Like LaVey, Sanders engaged the McLuhanesque marriage of media and the occult. He wanted print, radio, and television coverage. So he adapted a whiter shade beyond the pale; his was a kinder, gentler, media-friendly Wicca. He pictured the dawning of the Age of Aquarius as the golden dawn of the “New Age.” By 1967, he created his own Alexandrian Wicca tradition of ceremonial circles, and covens emphasizing ritual as well as instruction in Kabbalah and angel magic. Again, like LaVey hosting Magic Circle meetings out of his Black House, Sanders in his Notting Hill flat was supporting himself teaching class lessons that became his book, *The Alex Sanders Lectures* (1969). In the surge of 1960s pop culture, reporters caught a whiff of what was going on up at the Sanders place. Pop went the witch. Sanders, the healer and clairvoyant, became sensational. The papers splashed ink, printing photographs of him, long and lean in a white loincloth, surrounded by his naked coven. He was very *Mondo*, very *Cane*, very hip, very fun. He fully acknowledged the power of popular culture: “The people who come to Wicca usually do so through the public media such as books, television, and radio.”²⁸ In 1969, June Johns, with her photographer husband, Jack Smith, wrote the sympathetic tell-all biography *King of the Witches*, which was later made into the film *The Legend of the Witches* (1970).

[HOW TO LEGALLY QUOTE THIS MATERIAL](http://www.JackFritscher.com/Drummer/Research%20Note.html)

www.JackFritscher.com/Drummer/Research%20Note.html

Alex Sanders (1926–88) was initiated into the craft at age seven, in 1933, by his grandmother, Mary Bidy, who scratched his scrotum with a knife, saying, “Now you are one of us.” One wonders about the coincidence that this is actually the same sentence repeated over and over at the end of the 1932 film *Freaks*. His grandmother’s statement gave Sanders the credential most witches would kill for: hereditary status. To carry on his magical lineage, in 1967 Sanders, who was divorced with two children, married the Catholic Maxine Morris, who became his Alexandrian high priestess and the mother of his third child. Alex, with Maxine—a blonde, twenty years younger—made quite a couple. As a hereditary witch and as a married man and father, Sanders, in the swinging 1960s of London, found the times amenable to bringing a bit of homosexual ritual out of the Wiccan closet that Gerald Gardner had kept tightly locked during the 1950s.

In the way that the bisexual Crowley used homosexual ritual to raise the Devil, Alex Sanders invoked sacred masturbation with another straight man to create a magical child who became his spirit guide. The provocative Sanders dramatized that polarity magic can, in fact, happen between humans of the same gender even when both are, in fact, straight. In the rede of who is authentic, genuine, and cool, if the full range of sexuality is too avant-garde for some practitioners, they are not as Wiccan or Satanic as they think they are.

Sanders also revealed that early on he had conjured on the ring given him by Aleister Crowley, and had practiced black sorcery for personal gain. He soon repented, trading darker Mephistophelean flair for the shimmer of an almost-Anglican routine. His conversion from black demonology to white magic gives him the evangelizing edge of a Saint Augustine who builds his personal sanctity on his past (and more interesting) record as a sinner. If the 1970s popularized the occult and put its mysteries on tabloid sale at suburban supermarkets everywhere, Alex Sanders helped point out the way.

Sanders dumped the black arts out of self-preservation; practitioners of the occult must be careful of how they use their powers. Magic is not for personal gain; otherwise all witches would be rich. Even when not invoked for personal reasons, black and white rituals can wither the witch. Gerald Gardner’s rite to repel Hitler’s attack so drained the coven who worked the spell that five members soon died. Gardner felt that his own physical health had been permanently impaired by the magic energy expended against Hitler.

In that same way, mass culture sometimes seems to drain the gravitas of witchcraft. Press coverage often sensationalizes—and changes the

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www.JackFritscher.com/Drummer/Research%20Note.html

subject—in the way some people believe a camera shrinks the soul or magnifies the ego. The press has expectations that massage the message of popular witchcraft. Reporters like to cast Anton LaVey as antagonist to make headlines shocking to Christian readers. The media played Sanders as a white witch whose Wicca was so co-Christian that he was ecumenical enough for Episcopalian tea parties. The Alexandrian tradition, according to Sanders, is “just another sect worshipping just another God.” So the readers feel a safe little thrill seeing discreet photos of Sanders’ cult stripped obligingly for naked sabbaths. Sanders has made white witchcraft once again compatible with Christianity. His pagan movement is a restoration of magic that tries to heal the cut caused when the Catholic Church published *Malleus Maleficarum* and invented the Inquisition.

“Membership is free,” June Johns wrote in the November 1969 *Mensa Bulletin*, “but before presenting himself for initiation the applicant must be prepared to devote at least one, and possibly many more, evenings a week to memorizing chants and learning procedure. After receiving the first-grade initiation, witches are taught to develop clairvoyance (compulsory) and to use magic in their normal lives.”²⁹

In the Puritan way Mrs. Hawthorne expurgated husband Nathaniel’s personal journals to match the public persona she wanted for him, June Johns managed Alex Sanders’s image into a liberal, not lascivious, morality. Naked witches meet, but only to conjure blessings for supplicants. As Johns noted, “Every week hundreds of people, many of them non-witches, seek the help of the four or five thousand witches who are scattered over Britain. Some of the covens are of the traditional thirteen (eleven members with a high priest and a high priestess), but for normal working meetings, *esbats*, a quorum is two.”³⁰ While one person alone can perform either gender or polar magic, Sanders recommends two, because couples are what most people prefer. Even with Sanders’s uncloseting homosexual magic, his Alexandrian tradition has never been very far from the Gardnerian tradition. Courting acceptance, Alex Sanders left gay Wicca to the left three fingers of the left hand. With his right hand, he gestured to the press, reassuringly talking of heterosexual gender magic, which he conservatively limited to married couples. In Catholicism, all sex acts must lead to the possibility of conception. The Alexandrian tradition allows sex for recreation and magic.

June Johns has claimed that witches do not seek converts. However, all religions proselytize. Christianity recruits individuals, and entire other cultures, with both cross and sword. In American witchcraft, Mistress Hibbins

www.JackFritscher.com/Drummer/Research%20Note.html

tried to convert Hester Prynne into witchery. The Salem girls converted their peers. Anton LaVey sought suitable members. Alex Sanders regularly invited those on his mailing list “to come to England solely to become witches, with the intention of opening covens in their own countries.” His heterosexual initiation of probationers enticed exhibitionistic married couples who might copulate in the coven circle. It excited singles who, instead of copulation, might be sensually whipped forty lashes on the naked buttocks with embroidery thread. He honored men with mutual masturbation spells; he honored women by placing them central to rituals.

Alex Sanders worked his magic typically. Respect for the female form is witchcraft’s great appeal. The spell is cast on a fith-fath, a female figure, which can be molded from wax or formed from any material from mud to cornstalks to Barbie’s body. Thomas Hardy’s folk-occult novel, *The Return of the Native*, which originally appeared serialized monthly in the popular culture of British magazines in 1878, is mainstream literature that has integrated the fith-fath into its plot.

Hardy’s process analysis of how to work a curse is as much detailed in *The Return of the Native* as any white or black magic book of ritual. In fact, Hardy is passing along practical witch lore protected behind the “mask” of his novel.

She passed with her candle into an inner room, where, among other utensils, were two large brown pans, containing together perhaps a hundred-weight of liquid honey, the produce of the bees during the foregoing summer. On a shelf over the pans was a smooth and solid yellow mass of a hemispherical form, consisting of beeswax from the same take of honey. Susan took down the lump, and, cutting off several thin slices, heaped them in an iron ladle, with which she returned to the living-room, and placed the vessel in the hot ashes of the fireplace. As soon as the wax had softened to the plasticity of dough she kneaded the pieces together. And now her face became more intent. She began moulding the wax; and it was evident from her manner of manipulation that she was endeavouring to give it some preconceived form. The form was human.

By warming and kneading, cutting and twisting, dismembering and rejoining the incipient image she had in about a quarter of an hour produced a shape which tolerably well resembled a woman, and was about six inches high. She laid it on the table to get cold and hard. Meanwhile she took the candle and went upstairs to where the little boy was lying.

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www.JackFritscher.com/Drummer/Research%20Note.html

“Did you notice, my dear, what Mrs. Eustacia wore this afternoon besides the dark dress?”

“A red ribbon round her neck.”

“Anything else?”

“No—except sandal-shoes.”

“A red ribbon and sandal-shoes,” she said to herself.

Mrs. Nunsuch went and searched till she found a fragment of the narrowest red ribbon, which she took downstairs and tied round the neck of the image. Then fetching ink and a quill from the rickety bureau by the window, she blackened the feet of the image to the extent presumably covered by shoes; and on the instep of each foot marked cross-lines in the shape taken by the sandalstrings of those days. Finally she tied a bit of black thread round the upper part of the head, in faint resemblance to a snood worn for confining the hair.

Susan held the object at arm’s length and contemplated it with a satisfaction in which there was no smile. To anybody acquainted with the inhabitants of Egdon Heath the image would have suggested Eustacia Yeobright.

From her workbasket in the window-seat the woman took a paper of pins, of the old long and yellow sort, whose heads were disposed to come off at their first usage. These she began to thrust into the image in all directions, with apparently excruciating energy. Probably as many as fifty were thus inserted, some into the head of the wax model, some into the shoulders, some into the trunk, some upwards through the soles of the feet, till the figure was completely permeated with pins.

She turned to the fire. It had been of turf; and though the high heap of ashes which turf fires produce was somewhat dark and dead on the outside, upon raking it abroad with the shovel the inside of the mass showed a glow of red heat. She took a few pieces of fresh turf from the chimney-corner and built them together over the glow, upon which the fire brightened. Seizing with the tongs the image that she had made of Eustacia, she held it in the heat, and watched it as it began to waste slowly away. And while she stood thus engaged there came from between her lips a murmur of words.

It was a strange jargon—the Lord’s Prayer repeated backwards—the incantation usual in proceedings for obtaining unhallowed assistance against an enemy. Susan uttered the lugubrious discourse three times slowly, and when it was completed the image had considerably diminished. As the wax dropped into the fire a long flame arose from the spot, and curling its tongue round the figure ate still further into its substance. A pin occasionally dropped with the wax, and the embers heated it red as it lay.³¹

[HOW TO LEGALLY QUOTE THIS MATERIAL](http://www.JackFritscher.com/Drummer/Research%20Note.html)

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Gender politics in witchcraft is a minefield akin to gender politics in religion, where women are rarely ordained even though they basically constitute the congregation. In the world of popular witchcraft, the feminine mystique still suffers from the slurs of the Inquisition. In *The Exorcist*, the person possessed by Satan is, of course, a young girl. This stereotype that Satan possesses females seems to fulfill a straight erotic fantasy that is no more accurate than the “red-blooded” American-male porno fantasy about lesbian sex. After Ira Levin wrote *Rosemary’s Baby*, he authored *The Stepford Wives* (1972), a novel whose title has entered pop-culture language. Levin equates men’s sexism with male Satanism in the story of a young feminist who moves with her husband to “Stepford, Connecticut,” where the wives live under a spell. The best-selling novel was twice made into a film (1975 and 2004) with several television sequels, including *Revenge of the Stepford Wives* (1980) and *The Stepford Children* (1987).

Regarding the role of women in witchcraft, Kim Klein wrote in the *Washington Post: Potomac*, on May 10, 1970, “For today’s radical women, witches represent the truly liberated females of an earlier age—the only ones who were neither wife, nun, nor mistress. ‘They were the first Protestants, the first abortionists, and the first healers outside recognized medicine,’ says Marilyn Webb, a member of WITCH, the Women’s International Terrorist Conspiracy from Hell. In their fight to free women from the *Playboy* image, members of WITCH publicly hex such enslaving institutions as Bunny clubs and ladies’ department stores.”³²

After winning a 1968 Tony Award for touring as the lead in the all-black *Hello, Dolly*, singer Pearl Bailey, whose astrologer was Maurice Woodruff, said on the *David Frost Show*, 600th broadcast, November 1, 1971, “You know, honey, I’ve been reincarnated . . . I’ve had four full lives before this one and I know all about the witches in Salem. I told David Merrick that a lot of them are still around today, but they’re now called bitches.”

If the role of the emancipated female is as difficult to define as that of the emancipated homosexual, so are the concepts of family and coven after the decade of the 1960s, which changed everything in American popular culture and politics. In the 1950s, Marlon Brando, in *The Wild One*, created a kind of alternative male family in a motorcycle gang that prefigured the Manson Family. In 1957, Sonny Barger founded the Hell’s Angels, who incorporated in California in 1966. From their name to their actions, the Hell’s Angels became archetype and stereotype of men living in sympathy with the Devil. But as a group they are not Wiccans—Gardnerian or Alexandrian. They seem more like Crowley and LaVey,

[HOW TO LEGALLY QUOTE THIS MATERIAL](http://www.JackFritscher.com/Drummer/Research%20Note.html)

www.JackFritscher.com/Drummer/Research%20Note.html

although LaVey disavows crime and drugs. They rebel to break free of everything. Their tattoos, like ancient markings within secret circles of warriors, brag “Born to Lose” under an image of a Satan head smoking marijuana. Some may be hereditary witches; some may practice authentic witchcraft; but most, enlarging on the name Hell’s Angels, seem to be pop-culture bad boys acting out Satanic styles, and playing the Satan card to intimidate people.

The media love, and hate, the Hell’s Angels, who are as infamous as the Knights Templar for their sex rituals. Hunter Thompson, in his book *Hell’s Angels: A Strange and Terrible Saga* (1967) reported as true the urban legend that a Hell’s Angel earns his “Red Wing Patch” by performing cunnilingus on a menstruating woman, and his “Black Wing Patch” by having sex with an African-American woman. Through group rituals of oral sex, the Hell’s Angels spontaneously continue pagan worship of females that some say masks their fraternal homomascularity as heterosexual sophistication as much as it reinvents the central female-blood ritual of the fabled Black Mass. Through such oral worship, sexual outlaws ritualize the matriarchal communion of “eating the witch.” In the underground sex-code of African-American and gay male grooming, a goatee, moustache, or triangular hair-tuft (called a “soul patch”) beneath the lower lip signals the male’s willingness to engage in whatever form of oral sex suits his preference.

Gershon Legman, in his Jungian book *Rationale of the Dirty Joke: An Analysis of Sexual Humor* (1968), mentions Aleister Crowley’s rituals of cunnilingus as merely a sensational and “fawning imitation of Baudelaire and Swinburne,” who were no literary slouches when it came to sex, drugs, and Satan. Legman calls Crowley a “pipsqueak . . . playing at perversion” and “other occulta and exotica.” Legman prefers the Comte de Mirabeau, who presents cunnilingus “as a ritual act of worship of the mother goddess, combining the most utter oral submission to the woman” in a way that is not “masochistic or perverse” but rather “the sort of transcendental sexual rite that culminates the pre-patriarchal worship of woman now known as the Black Mass.”³³

The litany goes on. Insofar as urine is used worldwide for magical purposes, baptism into the Hell’s Angels includes urination on the new member’s jacket and jeans, as well as on the “colors” of his cut-off denim overlay that reads across his shoulders “Hell’s Angels.” Insofar as penetration equals bonding, ritual oral sodomy is increasingly reported in male-male initiations among bikers, fraternity boys, drumming circles, and Marines. Among straight men, same-sex anal sodomy is performed more

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often with objects, such as witchy broomsticks and hammer handles, than it is by an aggressive penis. In the 1970 camp movie of Gore Vidal's *Myra Breckinridge*, Myra, who has been surgically shape-shifted from Myron, is dressed as a witch who rides a phallic broom handle while s/he sodomizes a young all-American cowboy with a dildo.

The situation ethics of what is natural and what is violent depend on definitions and conditions. On December 6, 1969, when the Hell's Angels were hired as the security guards to keep order during a Rolling Stones rock concert at the Altamont Speedway outside San Francisco, the Angels, by their own nature, logic, and tribal morality, turned on the crowd, beating some and stabbing one to death. This Hell's Angels "natural sense of order" that civilians screamed was the disorder of mayhem was captured in a documentary film by David and Albert Maysles, *Gimme Shelter* (1970).

That same year, Mick Jagger starred in the magical-realist film *Performance*, a pop time-capsule of the 1960s written by Donald Cammell and directed by Nicolas Roeg, about the London gangster scene whose dynamic, minus the motorcycles, is rather like the Hell's Angels. Jagger played a fading rock star—an androgynous mandarin—hiding out with a handsome London gangster (James Fox) in an exchange of psychedelics, gender, bisexuality, sadomasochism, and—ultimately—personalities. In real life, Mick Jagger is a Rosetta Stone who when rolled over reads like a Rolodex of artists, projects, and events that are creative, dark, and magical. He was a longtime friend of *Performance* screenwriter Cammell, who played Osiris, the Egyptian God of Death, in their friend Kenneth Anger's *Lucifer Rising*. Cammell based his script for *Performance* on the works of magical realist Jorge Luis Borges. The *Performance* characters are shown reading Borges's book *A Personal Anthology* (1961; English version 1967), and Borges's face appears onscreen at the end of the film. The star-crossed Cammell was born in Scotland, not far from the mansion of Aleister Crowley whose books Cammell's father kept on his library shelves. As he lay dying at age sixty-two from a self-inflicted gunshot, Cammell said, "I cannot yet see Borges."

More gentle than the cunnilingual Angels, the hippie family commune represents the romantic return to an agrarian America where belief in the spiritual is still possible. Modeled after the New England transcendentalist projects at Brook Farm and Fruitlands, the hippie commune takes the urbanized individual back to nature. Transcendentalists like Ralph Waldo Emerson introduced American culture to Eastern concepts of Persian poetry, the *Bhagavad-Gita*, German idealism, and British romanticism.

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These communes to urban muddled-class Americans are—besides loose in new sex, new drugs, and new nutrition—antiauthoritarian. Hippie liberation is equated, like witchcraft, with license.

After the Manson Family's Tate murders, the global media made *commune* synonymous with *cult*. The new Gods worshiped by the drug visionaries, supplied "pharmaceutically" by the tarot knights of the Hell's Angels, seemed no longer the phenomena of an innocent astrology. Mature Christianity suddenly accorded the New Age gods of its children the same status primitive Christianity had given to the pagan gods: any god other than the Christian Jesus is no god at all but is, in fact, minion and facet of the Devil. Where before the Tate murders "love children" had wandered the Western world, suddenly more people than the customs police became suspicious of them and their gypsy ways, as well as of all alternative lifestyles. The bright 1960s gave way to the darker 1970s.

The fact is that while every coven is in a sense a commune, not every commune is a coven. The Manson Family became the popular press "coven of the decade." Manson's irresistible Rasputin-like image on the winter-solstice cover of *Life* magazine, December 19, 1969, enhanced the sado-masochistic sexuality, the mysticism and ritual, the drugs, and the slaying of a Hollywood star and her friends. The Manson cover of *Life* seemed to say "Is Satan Alive?" as much as *Life* magazine's sibling publication, *Time*, had asked on its Halloween cover (October 22, 1965), "Is God Dead?" Even more than the mainstream magazines, the supermarket tabloids headline the Manson Family as much as the Kennedy family.

Paul Watkins, Manson's second-in-command, in a *National Enquirer* article, is quoted as having said of his master Satan, "Manson was big on Scientology and black magic. He picked it all up in San Francisco. It was pretty powerful stuff. He was continually hypnotizing us . . . like mental thought transference." Watkins told of Charles Manson's desire for human sacrifice and the delight of the slaves in the torture-slaying of musician Gary Hinman, one of twenty-five supposed victims of the Manson Family. He added that Manson taught him a thing or two about sex:

He would give us some of his philosophy at moonlight gatherings. For example, he once said, "Women must live for men, women must die for men, women must serve men. Women are like batteries. When they run down they must be discharged or disposed of." He told us that the only real way for happiness on earth was to serve him.

As an example of his power, Charlie created a ritual which would start

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with twelve girls and six men in a circle with Charlie in the middle. . . . On a signal, all the girls would grovel at his feet. They would lie there, kissing his toes and moaning their affection for him. Meanwhile we men would be lying back, getting out of our heads on acid and anything else that would send us crazy. When Charlie had enough of the moaning and feet-kissing he would end the ritual. . . . Now you are getting some idea of where Charlie's power stemmed from. You see, he controlled so much of our emotions, our food, our drink, our money, our drugs and our sex. . . . It was impossible to think of life without him.³⁴

Understandably, law-and-order Satanist Anton LaVey immediately distanced himself from any real or perceived connection to Charles Manson. LaVey denied the rumor that the couple being wed by LaVey in a Satanic marriage ceremony captured on movie film were actually members of the Manson Family. He attributed Manson's multiple identity as Jesus, God, and Satan to instability caused by drug use. LaVey's summary of the Tate murders was emphatic:

It's a wonder there weren't *more* "occult" comparisons made. The fact that Manson pursued Scientology has frequently been mentioned. I don't think that Scientology can be blamed in any way, except as a means of adding substance to Manson's awareness that he was a loser. Scientology would use the technique of throwing his "bad pre-natal conditioning" up to him as another strike against him.

The hippie community is well-known for its obsession with any and all mystical devices and identities, so a smattering of ritualistic trappings was bound to enter the total picture of the murders.

As far as I'm concerned, the whole thing was a hippie killing. . . . This crime was perpetrated by irrational people, none of whom have a true conception of ANY God, let alone the Prince of Darkness!³⁵

In Chicago, as much as in trend-setting California, some adolescent gangs in the 1970s turned faddishly to witchcraft. As reporter David St. Albin Greene related, "I spent one sunny day in a Chicago neighborhood rife with teenage witches. My host and guide was 'Helios,' a gangly 18-year-old lad with long, brown hair who graduated from Kelvyn Park High last June and now attends junior college. He told his Polish-Catholic parents that he has adopted witchcraft as a religion, but they still are not sure what goes on nights when the gang takes over the basement and locks the doors. What Helios and his coven do down there, of course, is pay tribute to a

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phallic God and a fecund Goddess, scourge each other lightly with a home-made whip, and dig paganism in a variety of other undisclosed ways.”³⁶

Almost a year after Greene’s gothic visit, an ex-Marine returned home to the same neighborhood. In his mid-twenties, he called himself simply LeJeunesse. In an interview over coffee, he remained typically noncommittal on rumors of intra-Marine rituals, both sexual and occult. He owned, however, to having stayed in Southern California several months after his discharge.

“Some coincidence,” LeJeunesse said. “The night Sharon Tate was killed I was into a very humpy weekend with the Satan Trippers in L.A. I didn’t know about it till Monday afternoon.” LeJeunesse’s theory explained the Tate murders as more Christian cult than Satanic. He continued,

Manson called himself Jesus, right? It was all Jesus Manson’s attempt to stop the birth of the Anti-Christ. Manson, you see, suspected that Polanski was way into Satanism as a result of *Rosemary’s Baby*. He got vibrations that Polanski wanted to make sure his movie was a success, so he sold out to the Devil just like Rosemary’s husband. Manson was a known prowler. He laid some heavy scouting on the Polanski house and found out that the Castavets were that supermarket couple, Leno and Rosemary LaBianca. They all met before Sharon got pregnant. Manson got it all together and ordered the deaths of the Polanski coven one night and the LaBianca’s the next. He called himself Jesus, you know, and Polanski’s wife was like carrying the Antichrist. I guess to him it all made sense. [Pulling up his shirt sleeve, LeJeunesse pointed to a Devil’s Head tattooed over the initials USMC.] To me the whole witchcraft thing is a pretty good *in* to having some rough sex with chicks you wouldn’t otherwise get without some kind of a scary it’s-oh-so-spiritual gimmick.³⁷

Coven can, of course, cover for sexual *orgy*: sweet young things submitting to the high priest and all that. Nevertheless, what some abuse, others use properly. Some witches find ritual nudity disgusting. Some find it necessary. Some, like Pontifex Maximus Frederic De Arechaga, who calls Ishtar “the original stripper,” might approve of Cece Ingram billed in contemporary burlesque as “Satan’s Angel.” Others would call Cece’s flaming tassels, spinning in opposite directions, a sacrilege. Anton LaVey would invite the burlesque artist to his altar.

Gardnerian witches, like Raymond Buckland (b. 1934), the high priest of a New York coven, find nudity necessary to release the body energy centered

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in the sex organs. Buckland's wife, Lady Rowen, is the center of their Long Island coven of white witchcraft. Naked but for a silver crown, some jewelry, and a leather garter, Lady Rowen leads the coven in chanting, spell-binding, and raising the "cone of power" in the half of their cellar that is not used for the Buckland Museum of Witchcraft and Magic. Their family coven numbers thirteen and centers on the high priestess. Mrs. Buckland says she turned to white witchery to find the spiritual meaning behind her physical motherhood.

Anthropologist Margaret Murray, in her classic pair of books *The Witch Cult in Western Europe* (1921) and *The God of the Witches* (1933), forged the engaging insight that witchery is a polytheism as old as the Stone Age. Gerald Gardner may have come closest to the truth, claiming that modern belief is hardly different from the Old Religion. Women's liberation may recognize how the ancient goddess religions come down, expressed in the Catholic devotion to "Mary, Mother of God," who in witch lore becomes the Goddess or "Rosemary, Mother of Satan." Gay liberation, which seems to some unnatural, may ultimately be nature's ironic way of calling all humans back to the joys of personal pleasure and recreational sex in an overpopulated world that hardly needs much more procreational sex. *The Gay Grimoire* states, "Homosexuality is nature's birth control."

Modern *Christianity* and modern *witchcraft*, for all their warring polarities, archetypes, and rituals, are reciprocal terms, like *mother* and *child*. A person really can't understand one term without understanding the other.

Perhaps *religion* and *witchcraft* are two sides of the same coin: both try to manage sex, power, and persona. Both try to comfort human nature. And both try to terrify human nature.

God knows, humans are caught between the Devil and the deep blue sea—or vice versa.

What does a solo soul cling to in the never-ending human dilemma?

When everybody shuts up, each person knows that the individual self, at least in body, and most likely in consciousness, will dissolve.

Both noble King Arthur and ignoble Adolf Hitler quested for the magical Christ's Holy Grail. Each person out of nature and nurture, projecting God, projecting Satan, projecting a sense of self, struggles between the dualities of animality and reason, body and soul, good and evil, light and dark, coming into being and fading into death.

The truth? You are God. You are Satan.

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