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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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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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*

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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).

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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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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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“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

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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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