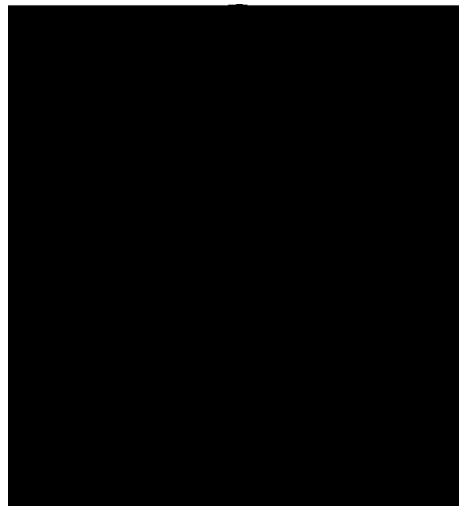


# **Satanism and Occult-Related Violence: What You Should Know**

**Michael D. Langone, Ph.D.**

**Linda O. Blood**



**666**

**International Cultic Studies Association**

## **Satanism and Occult-Related Violence: What You Should Know.**

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### **The International Cultic Studies Association (ICSA)**

(formerly known as the American Family Foundation) is a non profit, tax-exempt, research and educational organization founded in 1979. Staffed by professionals and guided by a distinguished advisory board, ICSA collects information on cults and manipulative techniques of persuasion and control, analyzes the information in order to advance understanding of the problem and possible solutions to it, and shares this understanding with professionals, the general public, and those needing help with cult involvements.

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# Introduction

**Michael D. Langone, Ph.D.**

The International Cultic Studies Association (ICSA), (formerly known as the American Family Foundation) chartered in 1979, is a nonprofit, tax-exempt research and educational organization - consisting of a small professional staff and committees of volunteer professionals - that collects information on cultic groups and manipulative techniques of persuasion and control, analyzes the information in order to advance understanding of this subject and possible solutions to problems that it poses, and shares this understanding with other professionals, the general public, and those needing help with cultic involvements.

Although the popular mind views cultism's essence as "weirdness," ICSA maintains that its essence is exploitation, the extensive use of manipulation to advance the goals of group leaders to the actual or possible detriment of members.

"Weirdness" merely makes a group more conspicuous and attractive to the media. The majority of ex-cultists did not belong to groups that were "weird-looking" to the uninformed outsider. They were victims of deception and exploitation, and although some had psychological problems before joining the group, most were more or less normal. They were seduced into their cults because they were susceptible in some way to their group's particular sales pitch.

Until a few years ago, ICSA and most other organizations concerned about cultism received only occasional inquiries about Satanism. The leading grassroots organization, the Cult Awareness Network, now reports that approximately 10%-15% of their 700-plus monthly telephone inquiries concern Satanism (Kisser, personal communication, October 19, 1989). What caused this change?

First, a spate of crimes committed by individuals practicing Satanism in some form brought the issue to the public's attention. (See Blood, 1989 for a comprehensive listing of Satanism-related crimes). Second, the public's fascination with these macabre crimes, like its fascination with horror movies, constituted a consumer demand, if you will, that the information - "infotainment" to cynics - industry rushed to satisfy. The more journalists investigated Satanism, the more the public's interest increased (and it does not yet appear to have reached a saturation point), as did inquiries to cult education organizations. Third, the glut of media reports appears to have given a boost to the phenomenon they investigate -- more and more teens seem to be experimenting with the Satanism they have read about or seen discussed on television. Fourth, the growing popularity of heavy metal music, especially in conjunction with drug-taking, has introduced hundreds of thousands of youngsters to satanist beliefs, however unsophisticated their understanding of these beliefs may be.

Initially, most of the leaders of cult education organizations were - and some

continue to be - reluctant to discuss Satanism as a cult issue. Most of the criminal cases involved obviously demented individuals whose fascination with Satanism may have been more a consequence of their psychopathology than a cause. They weren't, for the most part, members of groups that employed extreme manipulation to control people. Neither were many of the teenage "dabblers" who were experimenting with Satanism. They weren't, in short, victims of cults.

But as responsible investigators dug into the subject, its scope broadened and cult experts began to believe that more people than was at first apparent were victims of destructive psychological manipulation such as that observed in cults, although the situations in which the manipulation occurred often differed significantly from those commonly associated with cults. There were reports of day care centers in which satanic rituals played a major role in preventing disclosure of sexual abuse of children. Individuals came forth and told about satanic rituals in which children were sacrificed and psychological coercion employed to maintain secrecy of the event. Other individuals (sometimes backed by their psychotherapists) said that they remembered being forced to participate in satanic rituals - some of which reputedly involved human sacrifice - when they were children. Law enforcement officials found evidence of satanic rituals in wooded areas around the country. And parents and helping professionals expressed concern about teenagers who were disturbingly preoccupied with Satanism. Exploitative manipulation, the essence of cultism, did appear to play a significant, though perhaps not dominant, role in this little-understood phenomenon the public was calling "Satanism."

The persuasiveness of these reports which, of course, were met by considerable skepticism - was increased by the fact that many seemed to be independent, yet very similar (e.g., allegations of children in day care centers around the country). But their persuasiveness was decreased by the existence of invalidated and sometimes outrageous claims and by the apparent recency of the phenomenon. Why, skeptics asked, did we not hear such reports five years ago? This is a good question. But it is not a "fatal blow" to the credibility of *all* reports of Satanism-related abuse. First of all, the incidence of a social problem can in fact increase quickly, as was the case with crack use. Secondly, stigmatized problems, such as child abuse, rape, and incest, often require a receptive social climate before allegations will be believed and, consequently, before victims will have the courage to speak out. Such a receptive climate enables society to address injustices that were formerly swept under the rug. Irresponsible journalism, legal opportunism, and advocacy-driven "scientific" investigations, however, can convert the receptive climate into a credulous one conducive to other injustices, most notably false allegations designed to ruin enemies (e.g., wives or husbands falsely accusing their spouses of child sexual abuse in order to obtain custody) and witch hunts designed to satisfy the vague paranoia latent in all of us and compelling to some of us - a possible consequence of exaggerating the danger posed by Satanism.

How does society maintain a proper balance between the two extremes of credulity that fosters injustice A in order to prevent injustice B, and incredulity

that denies the existence of injustice B in order to prevent injustice A?

We believe the answer to this question lies partly in the obligation of professionals (journalists, law enforcement personnel, helping professionals, researchers) whose judgments shape public opinion (often - perhaps too often - through the intermediary of public relations professionals) to maintain an empathic skepticism that is cognizant of the different needs and "rules of evidence" governing different domains of action. "Empathic skepticism" refers to a willingness to hear and try to understand what different people have to say. It responds to a claimant's emotion and the often poorly articulated meaning attached to that emotion. But it also evaluates the soundness of the claim, both as it is articulated and as it could be articulated if the claimant were more precise. It is not a pedantic or unfair cross-examination, tyrannical in its demands for "proof," especially of claims toward which the "listener" is already ill-disposed.

Empathic skepticism, which is essentially a therapeutic mode of relating to a person's assertions (especially those pertaining to human behavior), must vary according to the action demands of different circumstances. Policemen investigating a crime may show some empathy toward witnesses, but the officers must be skeptical and goal-oriented, because their job is to discover pertinent facts that will withstand the adversarial inquiry of the judicial system. Psychotherapists, who rarely have an "adversary" looking over their shoulders, have less need for skepticism and more need for empathy. Usually, the client's psychological reality - not the "facts" - is of paramount concern. In each of these examples, the consequences of believing false claims and disbelieving true claims differ. A policeman's believing a witness's false claim could lead to a guilty person's not coming to justice or an innocent person's being wrongly found guilty and going to jail, or even being executed. His rules of evidence are - and should be - rigorous, regardless of the claimant's feelings. Moreover, the evidence he seeks is concrete and amenable to scientific and logical analysis. A psychotherapist's evidence, on the other hand, is often intangible and suggestive. Furthermore, because psychological reality usually takes precedence over objective reality, and because good rapport is critical to successful psychotherapy, a psychotherapist's disbelieving a client's, or patient's (many psychotherapists strongly prefer the latter term - we use "client" in this document), true claim can often have more deleterious consequences for psychotherapeutic outcome than believing a false claim. Psychotherapists, then, will tend to be more inclined to believe clients than policemen will be to believe witnesses whose testimony is at all suspect.

If a client is also a witness (as is the case with some adult survivors of alleged ritual abuse), psychotherapists and policemen may arrive at different conclusions about what is "true." Usually, neither can **prove** the claim right or wrong, but each can arrive at a level of confidence, appropriate to his particular evaluative framework, warranting provisional "belief" in the truth or falsehood of a claim. Achieving this kind of belief, based upon a "good-enough" sense of evidence, is



necessary to make decisions that cannot wait for a philosopher's "proof" (e.g., "Do I seek corroboration of this testimony or dismiss this witness as incredible?" "Do I treat this information as a valid recollection of a trauma or as a delusion defending against some other fear?"). Thus, the decision-making requirements of these two domains of action demand different levels of empathy and skepticism toward claimants. Not acknowledging these unavoidably different perspectives toward evidence can adversely affect inter-professional relationships and confuse those trying to understand the subject.

This report's perspective is that of the mental health professional. We empathize with hurting people, but simultaneously we try our best to maintain a scientist's skepticism. We encourage our colleagues and the general reader to do the same.

Our goals are to review the existing literature pertinent to Satanism and to offer suggestions to parents and helping professionals concerned about people, especially youth, involved in Satanism. We do not offer advice for law enforcement personnel because a) many resources already exist, b) shifting from a mental health evaluative framework to a law enforcement one could get confusing, and, most importantly, c) we simply do not have the law enforcement expertise. We hope, however, that law enforcement personnel and others who tend to emphasize skepticism more than empathy will gain a greater understanding of the psychological dimension of what today comes under the heading of "Satanism." We further hope that this report, which we consider to be preliminary, will contribute to a social response toward Satanism that avoids the destructive extremes of credulity and incredulity.

## Definitional Issues

Strictly speaking, "Satanism" refers to the "worship of Satan, alleged to have been practiced in France in the latter part of the nineteenth century; the principles and rites of the Satanists" (*The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary*, Oxford University Press, 1971). Current usage, however, covers a broader range of activities, including the following:

- Formal or informal worship of Satan or entities equated with or associated with Satan and/or with violence, cruelty, and destructiveness.
- The practice of black magic, i.e., the manipulation of alleged magical forces for destructive ends.
- Preoccupation with literature, symbols, rituals, or other artifacts and activities associated with Satan or related entities, or with black magic.
- Attempting to enhance sexual, criminal, or other activities by participation in rituals associated with the worship of Satan or related entities, or with the practice of black magic.

Contemporary usage, then, tends to lump all forms of black magic, demonology, and violence-oriented tribal religious activities under the label, "Satanism." Although this is not, strictly speaking, an accurate categorization, this usage has become so widespread that, for the purposes of this report, we will consider all such occult activity as Satanism. Nevertheless, in the title and in various places in this report, we use the phrase, "Satanism and occult-related violence," to emphasize that much of the occult-related violence currently considered Satanism is not Satanism in the strict sense of the term.

We would *not* categorize as "satanic" activities such as the following:

- Tarot cards, I Ching, palm reading, channeling, and other activities which, though commonly considered "occult" and/or connected with the New Age Movement, do not entail the worship of Satan or other destructive entities or forces.
- Witchcraft groups or individual worship characterized by a form of nature worship or "white magic" (e.g., Wicca and various other neo-pagan groups).
- The practice of Eastern mysticism or allegiance to Eastern gurus.

We recognize that some Christians would consider all of the above to be "satanic" since they view all spiritual "counterfeits" as "infected" by Satan. From our secular

and psychological perspective, however, a practice is "satanic" only if it relates to the historical stream of Satan worship and black magic in Western culture or, in deference to contemporary usage, to the worship of other destructive entities or forces. Of course, certain religious practices can be destructive without being satanic. Examples include the practices of some contemporary cults, such as Jim Jones's Peoples Temple.

The term, "cult," in contemporary usage has come to refer to groups characterized by highly manipulative techniques of persuasion and control designed to make members of a group subservient to leaders (West and Langone, 1985). Larger, more public satanist groups may not be cultic in the strict sense of this definition - or they may be "cultic" while not engaging in overtly violent or illegal activities. It is likely, however that smaller groups - especially clandestine and violent ones - must of necessity become cultic in order to prevent members from talking about the group's activities. Obviously, solitary satanists - such as "Nightstalker" Richard Ramirez - are not members of cults, although they are practicing a form of Satanism or occult-related violence.

# Chapter One

## Events Stimulating Public Concern

### Law Enforcement Findings

Although organized satanic "churches" have existed for many years, public concern over Satanism as a social problem did not become widespread-! until the mid-1980s, when discoveries of satanic graffiti and ritual sites as well as reports of serious criminal activity linked to Satanism began to appear in the media with disturbing frequency (Blood, 1989).

**Ricky Kasso.** In July, 1984, residents of the small town of Northport, New York, were shocked when 17-year-old Ricky Kasso hanged himself in his jail cell following his arrest for the ritual murder of Gary Lauwers, also 17, in a dispute over drugs. A self-styled satanist "dabbler" nicknamed the Acid King, Kasso was the leader of a group of teenagers who bought drugs from him. In his 1987 book *Say You Love Satan* author David St. Clair relates how Kasso and his mentor, an adult satanist who called himself "Pat Pagan," tried with varying success to involve Kasso's friends in Satanism. However, St. Clair notes that although their devotion to Satan appears to have been sincere, there is no indication that Kasso or his mentor were part of an organized cult.

**Richard Ramirez.** In August, 1985, suspected serial killer Richard Ramirez, 25, was arrested in Los Angeles. At his arraignment the notorious "Night Stalker," who had left a trail of murder, rape, and assault, shouted "Hail, Satan," and flashed a satanic symbol - an inverted pentagram like those found scrawled at the scenes of his crimes on the palm of his left hand. In September, 1989, after a 14-month-long trial which included testimony by hundreds of witnesses - some of whom reported that they had been forced to "swear to Satan" -- Ramirez was found guilty of 13 murders and 30 other felonies and was sentenced to death. "I am beyond good and evil," the unrepentant Ramirez stated at his sentencing. "Repeat not the errors of the Night Prowler and show no mercy. Lucifer dwells within us all." (Associated Press reports, "Man convicted in 'Stalker' murders," September 21, 1989; "Jury recommends death by gas for 'Night Stalker' serial killer," October 5, 1989; Bigelow, November 8, 1989; and November 11, 1989.)

**Sean Sellers.** As the decade reached its midpoint, instances of violent crimes perpetrated by teenagers involved in Satanism rose dramatically, and discernible patterns of teenage involvement began to emerge. In September 1986, Sean Sellers, age 17, was convicted of first-degree murder. Sellers, now the youngest inmate on death row at the Oklahoma State Penitentiary, admits that he was a troubled teenager who turned to Satanism and fantasy role-playing games for solace and a sense of power. With a handful of friends he formed a satanist cult that engaged in blood-drinking rites in a deserted farmhouse. His grades dropped

from their usual honor roll level and he lost his interest in sports - except for the martial arts. His appearance grew bizarre and disheveled, he abused animals, used alcohol and drugs heavily, and often stayed up all night reading books on Satanism and performing rituals at a homemade altar in his bedroom. In September, 1985, he completed what he later described as a sacrificial ritual process by shooting to death a convenience store clerk who had refused to sell him beer. Having committed murder, Sean says he "plunged into Satanism with everything I had 'cause that had opened a new portal" (Green and Tamarkin, 1988, p. 161). Several months later, after conducting another ritual at his altar, he shot his mother and stepfather to death as they slept.

**"The Well of Hell."** In 1987, four teenage boys in a Midwest town formed a satanist cult. The leader, James Hardy, was the senior class president of the local high school. Another member, Theron "Pete" Roland, was described by friends as "an all-around good guy," but came from a troubled home and told his mother that he wanted "to be with people as bad as I am" (Safran, 1988, p. 149). The boys filled the pages of their notebooks with satanic symbols and poetry and musings about death and mutilation. They made up their own rituals, borrowing from occult books, horror films, and heavy metal music and fueled by drug abuse (Raschke, 1990). One night they drove to a deserted area and sacrificed a cat. Then three of them turned on the fourth boy, Steven Newberry, beat him to death with baseball bats, and threw his body into a cistern they had named "the well of Hell." At his murder trial, Roland said he believed that Satan had commanded him to kill. All three are now serving life terms in prison, without possibility of parole.

**Tommy Sullivan.** A disturbing feature of the growing problem of crimes and suicides among teenagers involved in Satanism is the extreme youth of some of the perpetrators and victims. In January, 1988, Thomas Sullivan Jr., 14, stabbed his mother to death in their New Jersey home with his Boy Scout knife, possibly in the course of an argument over his growing obsession with violent movies, heavy metal music, and Satanism. Then, in an attempt to kill his father and brother as "well, he set fire to the house and fled. His body was found the next day in a neighbor's yard, where he had committed suicide by slashing his throat and wrists. An investigation revealed that Tommy's interest in Satanism had escalated after he began reading about witchcraft for a religion report to the eighth-grade class at the parochial school he attended. His friends reported that he told them that the devil appeared to him in a vision and ordered him to kill his family and preach Satanism (Davidowitz, 1989).

**Other Violence.** While many satanists remain law-abiding and non-violent, crimes related to Satanism continue to be reported. In January, 1988, 15-year-old Theresa Simmons of Georgia was strangled by three other teens as a satanic human sacrifice ("Youth gets life for satanic killing," July, 1988, p. 7). In May of that year Clifford St. Joseph, leader of a sado-masochistic satanist cult in San Francisco, was sentenced to life imprisonment for the ritual murder of a drifter ("Ex-waiter is sentenced in cult killing," May 7, 1988, p. 2B). In October, a Florida

teenager who had practiced Satanism for four years was charged with stabbing his mother to death (Stanek & Kisser, 1989). In November, two emotionally troubled Maryland girls, ages 12 and 13, carried out a murder-suicide pact. They had told friends they wanted to die so they could "meet Satan" (*ibid.*). In December, a 14-year-old high school student in Illinois stabbed three students, injuring two seriously, after they teased him about his satanic beliefs (*ibid.*). These are only a few of the literally hundreds of similar media accounts of destructive and criminal behavior linked to violent forms of occultism. (See Blood, 1989, *Satanism and Satanism-Related Crime: A Resource Guide*, for more detailed listings of these and other cases.)

Teenage and young adult involvement in Satanism has become a major concern, and the satanist youth subculture is expected to continue to grow during the 1990s (Simandl & Naysmith, 1988; Wheeler *et al.*, 1988). Lawrence Trostle, a retired Los Angeles police officer, offers an example of this trend in a 1985 article which traces the evolution of southern California's teenage "stoner" subculture over the past 15-20 years, as documented by police reports. In the 1960s "stoners" were "tune in, turn on and drop out" kids who smoked marijuana, demonstrated against the war in Vietnam, and dabbled in mysticism and the occult. But since the mid-1980s stoner gangs have come to be viewed as a "delinquent subculture" by many law enforcement officials. They engage in criminal acts which often include gratuitous violence, and have developed a fascination with Satanism that manifests itself in vandalism, animal mutilation, and cemetery desecration. Still devoted to drugs, they also tend to be followers of heavy metal rock music bands and emulate their mode of dress, including drug, occult, and Nazi paraphernalia. In common with many satanists, they glorify chaos, anarchy, and opposition to all authority, and believe that committing crimes is a way of accomplishing "Satanic ends." Trostle's 1986 study of 66 self-identified "stoners" in Los Angeles revealed a preference for "heavy metal" rock music and an above-average level of belief in black magic, witchcraft, and voodoo among members of this subculture.

**Matamoros.** In April, 1989, police conducting a drug raid at an isolated ranch near the Mexican border town of Matamoros uncovered a mass grave containing the mutilated bodies of thirteen young men, among them Mark Kilroy, a premed student at the University of Texas. They were victims of a gang of young drug smugglers led by Adolfo de Jesus Constanzo, a Cuban-American drug lord from Miami. While his crimes were described as "satanic" in press reports, Constanzo was a devotee of Palo Mayombe - a Caribbean "black magic" religion related to Santeria and Voodoo - who laced his rituals with elements taken from many sources, including ancient Aztec sacrificial practices (Raschke, 1990). Four members of Constanzo's gang arrested at the ranch showed no remorse as they described the grisly rituals they believed would ingratiate them with the devil and gain them protection from harm. "High priestess" of the cult was Sara Villareal Aldrete, a Mexican honor student at Southmost College in Brownsville, Texas,

whose parents had been unaware that she was involved in violent occultism. Weeks later, Constanzo and another gang member died during a Mexico City shoot-out with police. Aldrete and several others were taken into custody. The Matamoros case has been covered extensively in the national press and by various journalists, including Cartwright (1989) and Provost (1989).

## **Growing Public Awareness**

The modern investigation of Satanism and other violent forms of occultism does not represent a "witch hunt" for religious heretics, but a legitimate concern about criminal activities perpetrated by a small percentage of the "occult community." In addition to murders and assaults, satanists and other violent occultists have been linked to arson, drug trafficking, prostitution, rape, child molestation, pornography, vandalism, animal torture and sacrifice, cemetery desecration, grave-robbing, and the theft of religious artifacts for use in satanic rituals. There have been numerous reports of child abuse involving ritual elements, in day care centers and elsewhere, and several individuals have been convicted in cases which included such charges. In the past, much satanic crime went unrecognized because police did not understand the significance of occult symbols and artifacts found at crime scenes. But in recent years, detectives and other law enforcement personnel with experience in cult-related crimes have presented training seminars to their fellow officers and other concerned professionals. Articles on occult-related crime have appeared in several law enforcement journals (Allen and Metoyer, 1987; Barry, 1987; Bryant, 1987). See Blood (1989) for a comprehensive list of Satanism-related crime reports, investigations, and convictions.

Cult-monitoring organizations such as the Cult Awareness Network (CAN) and the International Cultic Studies Association (ICSA) report a dramatic increase in inquiries about Satanism and the occult. A large percentage of inquiries comes from law enforcement, the media, mental health professionals, attorneys, educators, clergy, social service workers, and youth counselors as well as from teenagers and parents. The CAN National Office in Chicago reported a jump from 20 calls about Satanism in October 1987 to 309 in the same month during 1988 (Stanek and Kisser, January 1989). The Council on Mind Abuse in Toronto reports an increase from 10 serious calls about Satanism per month in 1988 to nearly 50 per month in 1989 (Tucker, 1989). While it is believed that part of this increase is due to media coverage of Satanism, many of these inquiries have come from helping professionals who are working directly with affected individuals. In addition, while some violent satanic activity is still being perpetrated by isolated individuals, based on informal reports to CAN and ICSA the number of satanist cults appears to be growing. Many of these groups are said to exhibit such hallmarks of destructive cultism as deception, psychological coercion, extreme manipulation, unethical behavior modification, exalted promises, physical abuse, economic exploitation, disruption of families, and intimidation of members and critics (Stanek and Kisser, January 1989; Johnston, 1989; Pulling, 1989).

## Reports From Helping Professionals

As inquiries to cult monitoring organizations regarding Satanism have mounted, mental health professionals and clergy associated with these organizations have also seen and heard of an increasing number of cases of satanic involvement. At a seminar given by Dr. Langone in Miami in January 1989, for example, three mental health professionals described disturbing cases in which young teens were associated with satanic cults in the area. Wheeler, Wood, and Hatch (1988) report that a "survey conducted in Provo, Utah, found that 62 of 92 psychotherapists (67 percent) had treated adolescents involved in Satanism" (p. 547).

Few reports exist in the professional literature, and most deal with extremely disturbed youths. A study published in the April, 1988, issue of *Canadian Journal of Psychiatry* (Bourget, Gagnon, and Bradford, 1988) reported that 8 of 250 adolescent referrals to a university-affiliated psychiatric service were involved in Satanism. Most came from troubled families, had dropped out of school and demonstrated low self-esteem and poor social adjustment. Almost all used drugs and had committed acts of delinquency. They had been referred to therapy because of suicide threats, anxiety, aggressiveness, bizarre behavior, sleep disorders, depression, self-mutilation, drug overdoses, and homicidal thoughts. Another study, published in the November-December 1988 issue of *Social Work* (Wheeler *et al.*, 1988) reported that a sample of 17 teenagers involved in Satanism demonstrated higher levels of psychopathic deviance and schizophrenia than patients not involved in Satanism.

In September, 1989, psychiatrists and psychologists at Chicago's Hartgrove Hospital created the Center for the Treatment of Ritualistic Deviance, one of the nation's first voluntary treatment programs to be offered to adolescents involved in Satanism. "The kids who will be admitted will be here primarily because of their behavioral and emotional problems," said Dr. Michael Weiss, an adolescent psychologist at the facility. "No one will be hospitalized for strange beliefs or unusual values that we would disagree with." But the new program will challenge the satanic belief system, which often hampers conventional treatment. "[Satanism] gives them the promise of power and privilege beyond anything they ever imagined. Not only can they have everything they want... but can do so while totally indulging themselves in drugs, sex or any momentary pleasure," Dr. Weiss said. "We try to help them see how unrealistic the promises are. Our ultimate goal is to make them able to function in the world so they can have a reasonable and successful life for themselves and not harm anyone else." Chicago detective Jerry Simandl, a police youth officer who helped train the Hartgrove staff, noted that the shortage of appropriate treatment facilities had become acute in the face of the growing problem of ritualized crime. ("Psychiatrists to 'treat' Satanism," September 7, 1989.)

Some of the most disturbing reports from mental health professionals concern cases of ritual sexual abuse of children. Enough reports have come to the



attention of authorities that the Department of Health and Human Services, at the time of this writing, is considering a research symposium focusing on ritual abuse (Federal Register, Vol. 53, No. 251, December 30, 1988, p. 53069. A follow-up phone call in January 1990 found that the DHHS is still planning the symposium.) The issue of ritual abuse will be discussed in more detail below.

## **Separating Fact From Fiction**

Although the reports of law enforcement and mental health professionals clearly demonstrate real and substantial harm associated with Satanism, these same professionals also warn about the propensity for some persons to exaggerate, distort, or lie about alleged satanic occurrences. There appears, for example, to have been a spate of cases in which adults have told their therapists about formerly repressed memories of child sexual abuse associated with satanic rituals. Some of these cases may be legitimate, but some experienced clinicians knowledgeable about dissociative phenomena and cults believe that many are inaccurately reconstructed "memories" that therapists believe too readily (personal communication, Dr. Margaret Singer, September 9, 1989.) As such cases get increasing attention in the media, therapists and patients become more prone to believe "memories" based more on fantasy and/or confused recollection than on reality.

A similar problem has arisen with regard to the child abuse cases in which children have accused day care center operators and other adults of conducting satanic and related rituals in association with sexual abuse. Cozolino (1989a) reports that Finkelhor, Williams and Burns (1988) found 36 substantiated cases of ritual abuse out of 270 cases of sexual abuse in day-care settings (13.3%). But, as one media report showed (Charlier and Downing, 1988), mental health professionals and law enforcement personnel sometimes believe accusations too readily, leading to the prosecution of innocent people. Furthermore, the difficulty of determining guilt or innocence in so many cases of alleged sexual abuse of children has ignited passions even within the academic community. A conference at Cornell University, for example, examined "the credibility of children's testimony, particularly in child sexual cases" (DeAngelis, 1989, p. 1). Research findings are contradictory and, though exchanges were polite, strong feelings permeated the conference. High emotion also characterizes the investigation of ritual abuse. Chadwick (1989) is disturbed by this situation: "It seems unfortunate, but it may be that the adversarial system has so influenced this discussion that objectivity no longer has value" (p. 3035).

Simply put, those who tend to be skeptical about children's reports of sexual abuse (including ritual abuse) attribute the reports to fantasies, to children's responding to subtle (and sometimes not-so-subtle) cues from examiners "looking" for indications of abuse, or to blatantly leading questions from examiners. Those who tend to believe children, on the other hand, point out that

young children from all parts of the country give strikingly similar accounts (Hudson, 1988; Brown, 1989, cited in Cozolino; 1989) and that many investigations have substantiated children's reports, often leading to criminal convictions (Finkelhor et al., 1988; Kelley, 1988'a). Charlier and Downing (1988) reported that charges of ritual abuse brought against 91 individuals between August 1983 and September 1985 resulted in 23 convictions. This represents a conviction rate for this sampling of approximately 25%, as compared with a general conviction rate for serious crimes of 4.3% in 1986 (Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Bulletin*, April, 1988, p. 5). Furthermore, Cozolino (1989a, p. 5) notes that young children making up stories generally show considerable creativity and individuality in their content, which is usually a "gratifying one, involving power and triumph, helping others, or having fun," not stereotyped themes of helplessness, humiliation, and shame.

Although objective evidence (e.g., altars, animal corpses, etc.) has substantiated the occurrence of adult satanic rituals in all parts of the country - law enforcement sources have identified hundreds of such incidents (personal communication, San Francisco police officer Sandi Gallant, January 4, 1990) - skepticism exists regarding the extent of such satanic activity, especially more violent activity such as alleged child sacrifices. The number of unaccounted-for missing children fuels fears about these allegations. According to a report by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children ("Statistics," Summer 1989), "because there is no federal mandate requiring that all cases of missing children have to be filed with the Center, the FBI, or any other agency, no one has data to indicate exactly how many children are missing" (p. 1). Consequently, the only statistics the Center provides are those relating to cases filed with that organization. According to these statistics 9,348 children remained unaccounted for out of the 22,827 total cases of runaways, throwaways, and abductions reported during the period from June 13, 1984 to June 30, 1989. The Center emphasizes that these figures "in no way represent the scope of the problem of missing children in the United States... Many more cases exist that go unreported to this organization (p. 1)."

It appears, then, that even if a very small percentage of unaccounted for missing children were involved in pornographic rings and other criminal activities associated with Satanism and occult-related violence, the numbers would be significant. However, there is no hard evidence that thousands of children are sacrificed to Satan every year, as some have implied. (A few women have claimed to be "breeders" who get pregnant specifically to give birth to children for sacrificial ritual, but their testimony, though deemed plausible, is viewed skeptically even by many who are otherwise not skeptical. Despite the number of women claiming to have been breeders, no claim has led to convictions, or even arrests.) Indeed, there is no hard evidence of even one child sacrifice in contemporary America, although there is some evidence to suggest that this may occasionally occur ("Cult killing of newborn," March 21, 1986, p. 25). But even if only a few children were murdered, society should be concerned, for these

tragedies would be merely the most horrible of a long line of less horrible, but still very disturbing, consequences of satanic involvement.

The difficulty of properly assessing the problem of Satanism is compounded by the fact that it is often hard to distinguish genuine satanist activity from activities that might be more accurately classified as bizarre sexual behavior, neo-Nazi rituals, idiosyncratic mental aberrations, and the like. Moreover, some law enforcement professionals who have investigated satanic cases believe that some criminals will claim satanic involvement or use satanic symbols simply to obfuscate a legal case against them; it helps them to appear "crazy" (Murphy and Zilliox, 1989). Further muddying the issue are claims that satanic groups are involved in some kind of large-scale, highly organized conspiracy. This is unlikely, although Sgt. Carole Raggio, a specialist on satanic and cult crimes in the Broward County, Florida, Sheriff's office, reports that several criminal informants have, told her of a national network that deals in drugs and sacrifices babies ("Police, religious activists disagree on Satanism threat," September 17, 1989, p. 4E). There is also growing concern over reports of "networking" among satanists, white supremacists, neo-Nazis, racist "skinheads," and anarchists.

Frequently, a relatively minor observation related to Satanism can be taken out of context and made to seem part of something larger and more ominous. For example, although there are very rational, non-hysterical criticisms to be made of some "heavy metal" rock lyrics and fantasy-role-playing games, a few people who have gained the media's ear make sweeping claims denouncing all entertainment of this sort. A rock song played backwards may, for example, yield what sounds like hidden lyrics praising Satan ("backward-masking"), and for some this interpretation becomes "evidence" for concluding that the performers as well as others involved with production of the music are involved in a satanic conspiracy (Larson, 1989).

Lies, exaggerations, and misinterpretations - because they are able to gain so much attention in the media - have three destructive consequences. First, they contribute to "hysteria" about Satanism. Even though horribly depraved and violent crimes have been committed in the name of Satan and other demonic entities, and even though the number of people harmed by satanic involvement appears to be rising, Satanism and related violent occultism is not as common as some forms of media attention might lead us to believe. This is not to say that it isn't a problem about which society should be concerned. But it is important that we keep our balance and maintain a rational perspective on the matter.

Parenthetically, some say that heinous crimes have been committed in the name of God, not just in the name of Satan. Although this is true, it overlooks one important distinction: Most religiously-based crimes are violations of the creed in whose name they are committed. The creed of Satanism, which, in its strict sense, turns Christianity on its head, condones and even encourages crimes. Thus, Satanism and related occult systems tend to lack the built-in doctrinal restraints of

traditional religions and *invite* excess, rather than succumb to it, as traditional religions occasionally do.

The hysteria that distortions generate also inclines some persons to lump all satanist groups together and to overlook the distinctions that exist among them. This is unfair to those whose actions place them on the relatively harmless end of a continuum of destructiveness. Such hysteria can also extend accusations of Satanism to groups and individual's -such as "New Agers," neo-pagan "witches," and other occultists - who share only a few superficial features with actual satanists. This, too, is unfair.

Such lack of discernment, especially when it is widespread, also creates a backlash of incredulity among those who strive for rationality and balance. The discerning but casual observer may incorrectly dismiss all accusations of satanic and occult violence as nonsense. This is especially unfortunate, as the victims of genuine satanic abuse depend upon the support of balanced and discerning persons to get the help they need. Johnson (1988) cautions that adults who are attempting to deal with genuine experiences of cult involvement or of ritual abuse in childhood may retreat into silence and denial if met with expressions of disbelief. Kelley (1988b) reports that children who have been ritualistically abused in day care centers exhibit more severe and enduring pathology than children who have been sexually abused in day care without ritual and, therefore, require special treatment considerations. If ritualistic abuse is dismissed as nonsensical or irrelevant, these children are more likely to receive inadequate treatment during the most impressionable periods of their lives.

Before we examine contemporary Satanism in more depth, we will attempt to establish a historical context for this problem by tracing its development from antiquity.

## Chapter Two

# Historical Background

The sources used for the following section, unless otherwise indicated, are Cavendish (1967, 1970), Lyons (1970, 1988), Rhodes (1954), and Russell (1977, 1981, and 1984).

### **Ancient Roots**

The concept of a supreme personification of evil - the Devil - has evolved over many centuries. The early Christians viewed the pagan gods as devils. Traces of this attitude are evident in our modern image of Satan. His goat-like appearance recalls the scapegoat of Hebrew tradition, the Mendes Goat of ancient Egypt, and Pan, an ancient Greek fertility god, among many other sources. He is usually presented as either red or black, colors associated with evil in many ancient traditions. His wings and horns signify power, and his "pitchfork" derives in part from Poseidon's ancient trident, while his menacing features recall Charon, the boatman who ferried the dead across the river Styx to Hades. However, religions differ in their approach to the problem of the existence of evil. Some believe that there is one god who is responsible for both good and evil, or that there are many gods whose characters include good and evil elements. In contrast, Christianity teaches that the Supreme God is all good, and that an angel named Satan (or Lucifer) who defied God was cast out of Heaven and exists as God's adversary, ruler of Hell, and the cause of all evil in the world (Russell, 1977). In our culture this definition of the Devil, which has been both reinforced and modified over the centuries, is the one most generally accepted, although some satanists choose to define their deity somewhat differently (LaVey, 1969; Aquino, 1988).

The reasons some individuals turn to Satanism are very complex. Some followers of Eastern religious traditions may choose to serve certain gods in their destructive aspects, believing these manifestations to be part of the supreme god. For example, the

"Thugs," highway robbers dedicated to the Hindu Kali in her role as goddess of death and destruction, attacked travelers in India and killed as many as a million people over the course of several centuries. Devotees of Palo Mayombe and the darker aspects of folk religions such as Voodoo, Santeria, and Macumba - as well as "sorcerers" working "black magic" within the structure of Western occultism - strive to placate or gain control over demonic entities who can then be persuaded or forced to do their bidding. But true satanists - who have probably always been relatively few in number - have chosen to oppose the Judeo-Christian God and to work for the victory of his adversary, who they believe grants them blessings and favors in return. One reason for the appeal of Satan worship to some people is that while the Judeo-Christian religious tradition holds that the world is God's

creation, Satan is conceived of as the "Lord of this world" in a gross material sense. Many satanists believe that the Devil will grant them sexual conquests, unearned wealth, and unlimited power over others. In other words, they believe that with the Devil backing them up they can get away with anything. Others base their devotion to Satan on more complex rationalizations rooted in centuries-old occult beliefs and philosophies (Freedland, 1972; Lyons, 1970, 1988; Tucker, 1989).

The activities attributed to some satanists and satanic cults are so violent and distressing that many people prefer to believe they cannot be happening. In this context it is important to remember that in many ancient societies religious practices which we consider bizarre and horrifying were commonplace: animal and human sacrifice (including the sacrifice of children), cannibalism and blood-drinking, mutilation and torture (inflicted on the self and others), orgiastic fertility rites, and "black magic." Some of these rites are still practiced, and not only by primitive peoples. British scholar Nigel Davies (1981) has shown that human sacrifice has taken place in practically all societies at one time or another. Journalist Patrick Tierney (1989) recently documented many instances of ritual sacrifice among the Incas of Peru and their modern descendants. And Isaiah Oke (1989) gives a harrowing account of his years as a priest of the folk religion of his native Nigeria, including his participation in a human sacrifice intended to accomplish political ends. In addition, we have only to recall the deeds of Hitler, Stalin, and other dictators- or to read today's headlines - to recognize that many people are indeed capable of vicious and appalling acts. And, while we are not yet certain of the dimensions of the phenomenon, the evidence does show that some people are engaging in such acts in the name of Satan or his equivalent.

## **Medieval Developments**

Even after Christianity became the official religion of the Romans, ancient religious traditions continued to be practiced by the cultures which came under the control of the fading Empire. These traditions usually included fertility rites, magical practices, and some form of blood sacrifice. Harassment of pagan holdouts was carried on by the Church, but punishment for such "backsliding" usually only involved doing penance, while those accused of witchcraft or sorcery might be fined or even executed. Over the centuries, this persecution gradually drove the old religions underground as Europe was overrun by barbarians and the Dark Ages closed in.

It was not until the early Middle Ages that opponents of established Christianity who were believed to be operating in the name of Satan began to be perceived as a serious threat to the Church's authority. Many heretical sects had sprung up, most of them rooted in a belief system known as *Gnosticism*, which first appeared in the early centuries A.D. Gnosticism claimed that *gnosis*, or mystical "knowledge" acquired through intuition, was superior to dogma and faith. Some

gnostic sects believed that the universe had been created not by the supreme God, who was purely spiritual, but by a demon whom they identified with the God of the Hebrew and Christian scriptures. They also denied that Christ had been incarnated in a human body and had undergone death and resurrection. This, of course, brought them into conflict with the Church, which stamped out most of the sects. But remnants survived to influence later groups which upheld the idea that there are two equally powerful creative agents at work in the world, one good and the other evil. Because they believed that matter was the evil creation of the Devil they denied the flesh, forbade the eating of meat, condemned manual labor, and even opposed marriage and the procreation of children. They also opposed the Church and its symbols; for example, they believed that the cross on which Christ was crucified had been made by Satan and was therefore detested by God. They ridiculed the rich and powerful, and were in turn persecuted by the authorities.

These beliefs spread throughout Europe, influencing sects such as the Cathars, who were flourishing in France by the 12th century. The Cathars held that the God of the Old Testament was really Satan, an independent rival of the true God, and was the creator and lord of this world who ruled the body, death, and all matter. Lower-level Cathars who, were unwilling to practice abstinence were allegedly encouraged to engage in unorthodox sexual activities that would not result in conception. "Perfect" Cathar initiates were vegetarians who opposed marriage, procreation, and the owning of property, but who also renounced violence and dishonesty and aimed to create a new social order. They attracted many followers who felt oppressed by a corrupt Church and State under the feudal system. The combined religious and political threat represented by such sects gave rise to the Inquisition, instituted by the Pope in the 13th century to suppress heretics who advocated social revolution and/or anarchy, as well as the practitioners of witchcraft and sorcery. Whether any of the heretics actually worshipped Satan is uncertain. Some Gnostics who believed that their special "knowledge" made them gods who could not be corrupted by anything they did used this to rationalize perverted behavior; others believed that the way to perfection and freedom from Satan's rule was to experience everything, good and evil alike. The Cathars repudiated the Catholic Mass because they believed that the sacraments, being material, were the creation of Satan. What became the infamous satanic Black Mass may owe part of its origins to the secret practices of Cathar priests and other heretics who tampered with the Mass in order to reverse its meaning and insult the God it was meant to worship.

While it is doubtful that any organized remnants of the old pagan religions survived into the Middle Ages, many pagan customs, myths, and beliefs were kept alive, especially by the peasantry. By the 14th century Gnostic practices appear to have been combined with remnants of pagan rites in the "Sabbat," a large outdoor ceremony honoring a Satan-like figure as the "God of the Serfs." This was not, strictly speaking, a Black Mass, but allegedly included elements - such as the sacrifice and/or worship of animals, the use of hallucinogenic drugs, kissing

"Satan" on the backside, and blasphemous parodies of the Mass with naked women on the altar, wild dancing, and sex orgies - that were later incorporated into various versions of that rite. Confessions of such atrocious acts as cannibalism and the sacrifice of infants, regardless of whether they were authentic, appear to have inspired "copycat" rituals by satanists in more recent centuries. It is unlikely that human perversion disappeared with the fall of the Roman Empire to exist only in the imagination of the Inquisitors before reappearing in the Renaissance, and some of the alleged Sabbat activities such as flagellation, consumption of excrement, and painful intercourse with the Devil have been described by one authority as sounding "much more like a scrimmage of combined sadistic and masochistic pleasure than anything else" (Williams, quoted in Cavendish, 1967, p. 318). The Inquisition tended to treat the Sabbats as acts of sedition because of their challenge to Church authority, and the Protestant witchcraft persecutions were concerned with alleged pacts with the Devil and the malevolent use of alleged occult powers. However, later examples of satanist rituals became increasingly connected with actual criminal acts.

It should be noted here that "witches" and "satanists" are not necessarily the same thing. For centuries, the term "witch" has been used rather loosely to describe anyone who believes he or she is possessed of occult powers. In Medieval times the Church condemned any such powers as demonic. But most people who claim to possess and exercise such powers - including today's neo-pagan "witches" - do not believe that they come from the Devil, and say that they use their powers only for good. Many neo-pagans do not even believe in Satan. On the other hand, most avowed satanists explicitly and willingly surrender themselves to the powers of evil, which they adopt as their good. But it is because people believe that magic can be used to do harm that witches have been feared since ancient times. 'The Greeks and Romans believed that witches could use magic to blight crops, cause bad weather, kill animals and people, and influence sexual activity. While today the law does not consider such alleged powers to have any basis in fact, in the Middle Ages, and even in later centuries, sorcery and witchcraft were believed to be effective and were forbidden by law; therefore, the witchcraft persecutions involved "criminal" behavior as well as heresy (Peters, 1978).

The extent of the actual practice of Satanism and "black magic" in the Middle Ages cannot be known. Confessions gathered by the Inquisition and the witchcraft trials are tainted because most were obtained under torture. Trumped-up charges meant to eliminate political troublemakers, confiscate the estates of unfortunate aristocrats, or destroy personal enemies were not uncommon. Virtually everyone believed that "witches" had supernatural powers and that hordes of demons were roaming about looking for a chance to cause trouble, and this resulted in a great deal of hysteria as well as obviously fantastic testimony induced by torture or hallucinated by mentally disturbed defendants. However, many modern scholars note that the popular notion that all those accused of actual criminal activities - such as poisoning - associated with "devil-worship" were the innocent victims of



corrupt and sadistic fanatics is too simplistic. The accounts of such activities are too numerous and consistent to be entirely explained away as "mass hysteria," nor were all confessions obtained by torture - some Inquisitors rarely resorted to such measures, and a few individuals actually confessed freely and went to their deaths without remorse.

Thus, while the majority of those executed in these persecutions were undoubtedly the victims of superstition, greed, or malice, it appears likely that some practitioners of perverted and criminal activities in the name of Satan were also caught in the net. One such case was that of Gilles de Rais, who was tried in 1440 by both the civil and ecclesiastical authorities on charges of having ritually abused, murdered and mutilated over 100 children. De Rais was one of the wealthiest nobles in Europe, a marshal of France who had fought beside Joan of Arc, a mystic and scholar. But, according to testimony at his trial, he was also a sadistic pedophile and a believer in sorcery, and was convinced by an unscrupulous alchemist that Satan would reward him with gold in return for sacrifices of children. He confessed to the murder of eight children and was hanged.

## **Renaissance and Enlightenment Periods**

Ironically, the Renaissance, which resulted from the rebirth of interest in science and the power of reason, also witnessed an increased fascination with magic and alchemy. This added fuel to the persecutions for witchcraft and sorcery, as did the Reformation. Puritans of the Calvinist persuasion published "horror pamphlets" about witchcraft, and both Presbyterian Scotland and Lutheran Germany were particularly fierce in pursuing witches. But protests by more rational and enlightened individuals increased, and, while some pockets of persecution survived into the 19th century, the hysteria generally came to a halt around 1700. Unfortunately, the social conditions which drove some people to turn to "the black arts" in frustration at their own powerlessness - and the activities of those individuals who had learned how to combine Satanism with crime - did not.

In March, 1679, Catherine Deshayes Monvoison, known as "La Voisin," was arrested in Paris on charges of running a house of prostitution whose services also included fortune-telling, abortions, and the procurement of love potions and poisons. La Voisin is generally considered the creator of the criminal phase of the Black Mass. Her house was no ordinary brothel; her clientele included many lords and ladies of the notoriously corrupt court of Louis XIV, including the king's mistress, the Marquise de Montespan. The most sensational aspect of the case was the revelation that certain ladies of the court, allegedly including Madame de Montespan, had paid for the performance of Black Masses involving naked female "altars" who copulated with the officiating priest in obscene parodies of the Catholic Mass for such purposes as winning or holding the sexual favors of other courtiers and the destruction of inconvenient spouses or rivals. A police search turned up an elaborate satanic chapel on the grounds of the house, complete with

a mattress on the altar. La Voisin, who confessed to having sacrificed children during the Black Masses and disposed of their bodies in a furnace, was herself burned alive in 1682.

The prosecution of the La Voisin case probably drove many "serious" satanists further underground, although debauchery-prone pseudosatanic organizations like Sir Francis Dashwood's Hellfire Club - whose membership included some of the most influential political and literary figures in 18th-century England - operated in open defiance during the tolerant decades of the Enlightenment. But it was not until the mid-19th-century that the activities of satanists who allegedly practiced the "black arts" of sorcery and offered blood sacrifices again came to light. One particularly sensational and convoluted case in mid-19th-century France involved a defrocked Catholic priest known as the Abbe Boullan and his mistress, a former nun named Adele Chevalier. Their "church" encouraged fornication, bestiality, and "exorcisms" performed as Black Masses featuring the ingestion of human feces -- all in the name of spiritual advancement. During one of these rites Boullan and Chevalier allegedly sacrificed their own illegitimate son.

## Chapter Three

# Modern Satanism

(Sources used for the following section, unless otherwise indicated, are Cavendish, 1967, 1970; Lyons, 1970, 1988; Freedland, 1972; and Kahaner, '1988.) The emphasis on orgiastic sacrilege and violence in underground satanist ritual figures in the accounts of Black Masses by 19th- and 20th-century authors such as J.-K. Huysmans ` (1891), William Seabrook (1940), and Dennis Wheatley (1960), some of whom claimed to have attended such rites and all of whom swore to their authenticity. By the late 19th century in Europe they had apparently become something of an underground tourist' attraction, and could be viewed by outsiders for a price. The purpose of Black Masses such as these is believed to be both to degrade the Catholic Mass and to twist this powerful ritual into a glorification of the Devil in order to gain his favor and be rewarded with power, riches, and whatever else the celebrants desire. In "standard" form it is celebrated by defrocked priests and nuns, and involves defilement of the sacred objects and liturgy.

While the present outbreak of interest in Satanism and malevolent occultism is generally considered to be the most intense and sinister such revival since the early decades of the century, most authorities believe that its origins can be traced back to the influence of one man, the infamous British occultist Aleister Crowley.

**Aleister Crowley.** Crowley, whose motto "Do What Thou Wilt Shall be the Whole of the Law" has become a catchphrase of many branches of modern occultism, including Satanism, was born in 1875 into a family of devout members of the Plymouth Brethren, a puritanical Christian sect. He later interpreted his attraction to the diabolical as a revolt against the religion of his childhood, particularly in the area of sex, to which he was intensely attracted while at the same time considering it "a degradation and a damnation. His mother took to calling him "the Beast" after the Beast 666 in the book of Revelation, an epithet Crowley defiantly adopted.

A well-educated mountaineer, poet, and author (including works of pornography and sado-masochism), Crowley found his real home in the study of occultism. In 1900 he was inducted into the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn - a British magical society that owed much of its philosophy to Theosophy founder Madame Helena Blavatsky - but was later expelled. While living in Cairo in 1904 Crowley, allegedly under the guidance of his "Holy Guardian Angel," produced a short, ecstatic occultist tirade entitled *The Book of the Law*, which includes such admonitions as "stamp down the wretched and the weak," "the slaves shall serve," "reason is a lie," "these vices are my service; ye do well, and I will reward you," "kill and torture; spare not;" and "drag down their souls to awful torment: laugh at their fear: spit upon them!" (Crowley, 1920). These and similar sentiments

became basic components of much 20th century Satanism and black magic.

Crowley's career in ceremonial magick (the spelling is used by many occultists to distinguish it from conjuring) earned him the epithet "The Wickedest Man in the World." He was involved in the formation of the Ordo Templi Orientis, or Order of Oriental Templars. (The O.T.O. is still in existence, with several chapters in the United States.) The O.T.O.'s secret teachings involve the practice of sexual magic, in which Crowley indulged with prostitutes, children, and male associates as well as with his numerous wives and mistresses - some of whom he designated his "Scarlet Woman." In 1916 he assumed the grade of Magus (a high-level title in occultism) during a ceremony in which he crucified a frog and declared his triumph over Jesus Christ. After World War I, Crowley established the "abbey" of Thelema in Sicily, where he indulged in two of his favorite pastimes: ritual sex magic and drug abuse. There were rumors of child sacrifice at the abbey, from which Crowley and his followers were expelled in 1922. Crowley died alone and impoverished in England in 1946, but his influence on practitioners of "black magic" and Satanism has been enormous.

**Acid Satanism:** The hippie culture of the 1960s embraced many forms of mysticism and magical thinking - not all of it centered on peace, love, and flower-power. Arthur Lyons (1988) relates how, while researching contemporary Satanism for his 1970 book *The Second Coming*, he looked up an old girlfriend who was staying with two other girls at a ranch in the California desert. One of the girls - both of whom were high on LSD during his visit - was Leslie Van Houten, soon to become a member of the "family" of Charles Manson and a participant in one of the most sensational mass murders of the century. Manson's group was an outstanding example of a subculture known as "Acid Satanists," non-traditional drug-centered cults with highly charismatic leaders whose authoritarian rule was dubbed "acid fascism" by some observers (Alfred, 1976). Manson is not: a traditional satanist - his "philosophy" is in fact highly eclectic - but some members of his "family" believed that he was both Jesus Christ and Satan. This view echoes one of the central ideas of a group called The Process Church of the Final Judgment, which some investigators believe may have influenced Manson.

**The Process Church of the Final Judgment.** (Additional sources are Bugliosi, 1974; Sanders, 1971; Parfrey, 1987; and Schreck, 1988.) The Process grew out of an earlier group called Compulsions Analysis, which was formed in England in 1964 by Robert and Mary Anne DeGrimston, two former members of the Church of Scientology. The fledgling group attracted wealthy, young people, many of whom had connections in business, entertainment, government, and finance. Renamed The Process, the group relocated to Mexico in 1966, but following the commune's destruction by a hurricane most of its members moved back to England and thence to the United States in 1967, where they continued to recruit among both the elite and those on the fringes of society:'

Process philosophy taught that Christ and Satan had put aside their enmity and

would soon join forces to bring about the end of the world, at which time Christ would judge mankind and Satan would execute the judgment. Process members could choose to be followers of Jehovah, Lucifer, or Satan - DeGrimston was thought by members to be Christ - but all members were allegedly required to participate in a period of prolonged worship of Satan. The group produced slick, glossy magazines filled with images of death, Nazi symbolism, and exhortations by satanist members to engage in violence and sexual perversion. In his tract *Satan on War*, DeGrimston urged his followers to "release the fiend that lies dormant within you" to rape, kill, and destroy (Parfrey, p. 36). The group proselytized heavily in California during the late 1960s, and Charles Manson is believed to have come in contact with their philosophy at some point. Manson was visited by Process members while in jail awaiting trial for the murder of Sharon Tate and others, and he later contributed an article to the "Death" issue of the Process' magazine (reprinted in Schreck, pp. 133-134). The Process had officially disbanded by 1974, but offshoot cults are said to operate underground. Maury Terry, author of *The Ultimate Evil* (1987), contends that a Process offshoot led by a wealthy Los Angeles professional has been responsible for several murders.

**From Flower Power to Sacrifice.** When the hippie enclave in the Haight-Ashbury district of San Francisco dispersed at the end of the 1960s, many of its former denizens migrated to the Santa Cruz mountains south of the city. As reported in Lyons (1988), the area was soon swept by a wave of brutal murders with sacrificial overtones. Prosecutors found themselves dealing with similar killings in other parts of the country. In June 1970, Steven Hurd and four of his friends were arrested for the murder of a California schoolteacher whom they had stabbed to death and cannibalized after offering her body to Satan. Later that same year Wyoming lumberjack Stanley Dean Baker was stopped by police on a suspected traffic violation. When questioned about a small human bone found in his possession Baker explained, "I have a problem. I'm a cannibal." Baker, a self-proclaimed satanist who claimed to belong to a blood-drinking cult, was later convicted of having murdered and dismembered a Montana social worker named James Schlosser- the previous owner of the finger bone found in Baker's pocket.

Lyons also notes that Europe also witnessed an apparent resurgence of activity by satanist groups during the 1960s. In Great Britain churches and cemeteries were desecrated, occult graffiti appeared on walls, and evidence of ritual animal sacrifices and "black masses" was discovered in various locations. In the small town of Helikon, Switzerland, in 1966, a religious group calling itself the Seekers of Mercy was investigated by police following the death of a child who, evidence revealed, had been sexually assaulted and beaten while tied to an inverted cross. The group's "church" was found to contain black candles and a torture chamber.

However, not all satanist groups that formed during the 1960s indulged in such violent or illegal activities. Probably the largest and most well-known of the essentially law-abiding Satanist "churches" is Anton LaVey's Church of Satan.

**The Church of Satan.** On April 30, 1966 - Walpurgisnacht, a high satanic holiday - a former circus lion tamer, carnival performer, criminologist and police photographer named Anton Szandor LaVey ceremoniously proclaimed himself high priest of the Church of Satan, headquartered in San Francisco. Soon LaVey, decked out in a red cape with a horned hood, was presiding over satanic weddings, baptisms and funerals, and conducting satanic services before an altar on which lay a naked woman symbolizing "the pleasures of the flesh." Prior to forming the Church of Satan, LaVey had hosted a "Magic Circle" which included an occult film-maker and the proprietor of a sado-masochist sex club. According to LaVey, his philosophy of Satanism and black magic was formed during this period: "The black magic path is used for honest gratification of the ego - greed, pride, lust, anger, any of the seven deadly sins" (Freedland, 1972, p. 151).

The Church of Satan claims to be a response to the hypocrisy of conventional religion. According to LaVey's *The Satanic Bible* (1969), Satanism views man as "just another animal, sometimes better, more often worse than those that walk on all-fours, who because of his 'divine spiritual and intellectual development' has become the most vicious animal of all!" (p. 25). The Church of Satan conducts its business publicly and LaVey does not promote acts of physical violence or advocate the use of drugs or alcohol. However, the *Satanic Bible*, which is readily available in bookstores and which has gone through 30 printings and sold hundreds of thousands of copies, has been enormously influential with "satanists" of various persuasions, and is frequently reported to have been found by police investigators among the paraphernalia of teenage dabblers as well as individuals suspected of occult-related crimes.

Sean Sellers claims to have used the *Satanic Bible* as a guide for his "sacrifice" of a convenience-store clerk (Dawkins and Higgins, 1989). In the book's controversial chapter "On the Choice of a Human Sacrifice," LaVey states that the release of the life force - which he defines as a discharge of biochemical energy - is accomplished in the death throes of a living creature, not in the actual spilling of blood. But he derides the killing of "an innocent living creature" during ritual, and advocates releasing the necessary energy through sexual orgasm instead. LaVey then asserts that:

The use of a human sacrifice in a Satanic ritual does not imply that the sacrifice is slaughtered "to appease the gods." *Symbolically*, the victim is destroyed through the working of a hex or curse, which in turn leads to the physical, mental or emotional destruction of the "sacrifice" in ways and means not attributable to the magician.

The only time a Satanist would perform a human sacrifice would be if it were to serve a two-fold purpose; that being to release the magician's wrath in the throwing of a curse, and more important, to dispose of a totally obnoxious and deserving individual.

Under NO circumstances would a Satanist sacrifice any animal or baby! ...

The purest form of carnal existence reposes in the bodies of animals and human children who have not grown old enough to deny themselves their natural desires... Therefore, the Satanist holds these beings in a sacred regard... (LaVey, 1969, pp. 87-89).

Despite LaVey's insistence that satanic sacrifice is symbolic, critics charge that some of his readers ignore this prohibition and take his advocacy of human sacrifice literally. In writings from his "satanic" period, Sean Sellers asserts that "people who beat their wives, molest children, kick their dogs, etc." are appropriate candidates for sacrifice. "We do the world a favor by getting rid of them. After all, people like this have no right to live, anyway" (Wedge, 1987, p.22).

**Abraxas Foundation.** Within recent years, some groups claiming connection to LaVey's church have aroused concern among observers because of their predatory philosophy, sympathy toward elements of Nazism, advocacy of "bloodbaths" as a "cleansing action," and some members' fascination with vampirism and blood rituals (Graham, 1989, pp. 3, 7). One example is an umbrella organization called the Abraxas Foundation, described by a (literally) card-carrying member as an "occult-fascist think tank" with ties to the Church of Satan. A regional affiliate in Cambridge, Massachusetts, is called Blood Axis. In an interview with a Boston journalist, the 20-year-old member said the group used human blood in ritual because "psychologically, it's a very powerful substance," but insisted that they use only willing donors. "Not that I'm opposed to someone going out into alleys and slitting throats. But a little blood goes a long way - unless you want to ritually sacrifice a person. Which I haven't yet had occasion to do," he said. When asked the reason for this fascination with blood and vampirism, the young man explained that the group sees vampires as predators, "and we'd like to see a little more predator out there, because humanity has turned into a bunch of sheep." He added that he admired the "feral nature" of Adolf Hitler and Charles Manson.

**The Werewolf Order and Radio Werewolf.** Another group, the Werewolf Order, was founded in 1984 by avowed satanist Nikolas Schreck, who appeared on the October 1988 Geraldo Rivera television special, "Devil Worship: Exposing Satan's Underground." During his interview he stated: "We would like to see most of the human race killed off, because it is unworthy of the gift of life. A bloodbath would be a cleansing purification of a planet that has been dirtied and degraded for too long." Another satanist, Boyd Rice, is shown declaring to participants at a rally that "murder is the predator's prerogative... there is no birth without blood!" ("Devil Worship: Exposing Satan's Underground," Geraldo Rivera 2-Hour Special, The Investigative News Group, NBC, aired October 25, 1988). Schreck was previously associated with a rock group called Radio Werewolf. (Its name was taken from the broadcasts delivered by Nazi propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels to the Werewolf Corps, the terrorist underground he organized at the end of World War II.) In its manifesto, the "Radio Werewolf Indoctrination," the band declares itself to be the "current incarnation of [a] demonic manifestation" that intends to

use its music to - using a direct quote from Hitler - "instill the gleam of pride and independence of the beast of prey back into the eyes of the pitiless youth" (Parfrey, 1987).

At the time of this writing, the Werewolf Order, styling itself "the frontline of the Demonic Revolution," is engaged in an active recruiting campaign. Inquirers receive an information packet and a detailed membership application. The Order declares itself to be "the shocktroops of a youth uprising against Judeo-Christian tyranny: the focus of a return to the ancient pagan/satanic tradition... a Satanic Leadership school, imparting the black magical power that shall enable our elite to rise as future leaders in every field... an international network of men and women of action dedicated to the creation of a new Satanic world order." According to the information sheet, the group began its operations in 1984 with the activities of Radio Werewolf and has now initiated a Thirteen-Year Plan of "aggressive satanic working" which will result in "an involuntary avalanche of the Demonic Revolution" beginning in the year 2002. (The group acknowledges "Dr. Anton LaVey" as having prophesized this plan in his writings.) The Werewolf Order claims to represent "the flesh and blood incarnation of the timeless archetype of Loki's legions, the avenging army that rises from the underworld at the twilight of the gods." The 33-part questionnaire which accompanies the membership application asks, among other things, whether the applicant is proficient at the use of any weapon, whether he uses drugs, and what his feelings are towards death (Werewolf Order, 1990).

**The Temple of Set.** (Additional sources are Scott, 1984, and Johnston, 1989.) The Temple of Set was formed by Michael Aquino, a former high-ranking member of the Church of Satan and close associate of Anton LaVey who broke with LaVey's group in 1975 in a dispute over policy. The Temple of Set is incorporated as a non profit religious institution in California. The sect takes as its source the ancient Egyptian god of darkness, Set. The "Sedans" see themselves as an elite occult society focused on magical -development leading to total freedom, power, and immortality. According to the sect's suggested-reading list, its interests include Egyptian religion, the history of occultism and Satanism, vampires and werewolves, the works of Aleister Crowley and H.P. Lovecraft, futurism, Nazi occultism, and black magic (Aquino, *Temple of Set Reading List*, 1981). Aquino, who is quoted by Lyons (1988) as stating that magic is based on the ability to "control people without their realizing how or why they are being controlled," (p. 135) holds a Ph.D. in political science and is a U.S. Army Reserve officer with a background in psychological warfare. Like the Church of Satan, the group advertises openly but claims to screen prospective members and reject those with violent intentions. No illegal activities have been ascribed to the Temple of Set, although in 1989 Aquino and his wife and high priestess, Lilith, were the objects of a multi-jurisdictional investigation of ritual child molestations in northern California. No charges have been filed (Goldston, November 8, 1987, p. 1A; Goldston, December 23, 1988, p. 1A; Goldston, May 13, 1989, p. 1A).

**Other satanist Groups.** Other public or semi-public satanist groups include the



Order of the Ram, the Worldwide Church of Satanic Liberation, and the Church of Satanic Brotherhood. The memberships of some of these and other, more secretive, groups allegedly include wealthy professionals. According to investigative reporter Maury Terry's 1987 book, *The Ultimate Evil*, some underground satanist groups are heavily involved in criminal activities such as drug trafficking and pornography, and one such satanist network was responsible for both the Manson and "Son of Sam" multiple-murder sprees. Terry's allegations, however, have not been confirmed.

## Chapter Four

# Folk Religions

(The sources used for the, following section, unless otherwise indicated, are Hill and Williams, 1965; Metraux, 1972; Gonzalez-Wippler, 1973; and Tierney, 1989.) Another area of concern involves, "black magic" practices associated with certain Afro American 'folk religions, including Cuban *Santeria* and *Palo Mayombe*, Haitian *Voodoo*, Brazilian *Macumba*, and Mexican *Brujeria*, all of which are practiced in this country as well. These religions emerged when the religions of African slaves mixed with the Catholicism of Caribbean slave owners. They emphasize divination and magic as well as possession of the worshippers by the gods. Most of their practitioners are respectable and law-abiding citizens who view the "black magic" side of these religions with distaste. However - as is the case with Satanism - a few individuals like Adolfo Constanzo, who headed the Matamoros cult, use one or another of these religions as rationalizations for their own criminal behavior. Recent media reports have shown that former Panamanian strongman Manuel Noriega indulged in these practices, which have been on the increase in Central and South America and the Caribbean for the past several years (Hoge, 1983; Kinzer, 1987; "Manuel's black magic," January 22, 1990). As the Matamoros killings and similar cases demonstrate, rites involving torture and sacrifice have been embraced by a number of drug traffickers (Cartwright, 1989; Provost, 1989; Raschke, 1990).

***Santeria*** evolved in Cuba in the 19th century. Its African root is *juju*, the religion of the Yoruba people of Nigeria, many of whom were brought to Cuba as slaves. Forbidden to practice *juju* openly, they pretended to worship the Catholic saints while secretly substituting their own gods, the *orishas*. Eventually, they came to identify the saints with the *orishas* - "Santeria" means "the worship of saints." *Santeros* believe that each person should seek to fulfill his or her destiny with the help of the *orishas*. The *babalawo*, or high priest, can help the *santero* do this through divination and magic. *Santeria* provides commandments against murder, theft, cannibalism, suicide, and aggression against one's neighbor, as well as a system of taboos associated with the individual gods who are assigned as spiritual guides to *santeros*. However, there is no universal system of moral rules, and questions involving sex, drugs, alcohol, lying, etc., are left up to the individual practitioner. Furthermore, a priest's powers are not confined to "white" or "neutral" magic; spells to cause harm may be requested and performed. The practitioner may then perform a ritual to "cleanse" himself of any blame.

*Santeria* is a way of life, and everything has meaning for good or ill within the context of the religion. Because worshippers maintain their own altars at home, where their sacred objects are kept, there are few churches. When a worshipper, is "possessed" by an *orisha*, he adopts the god's attributes and symbols. *Orishas* require sacrifice in return for their aid and each has a favorite food, usually meat.

Therefore, animal sacrifice is considered an integral part of the religion. The recent opening of a Santeria church in Hialeah, Florida, stirred controversy when the city succeeded in banning animal sacrifices on the grounds that the Constitution protects only the religion's beliefs, not its practices. Attorneys for the city argued that such sacrifices amount to cruelty, carry a risk to public health, and could cause psychological damage to children who watch them ("Santeria challenging law outlawing animal sacrifices," August 7, 1989, p. 3B).

**Palo Mayombe.** While most santeros are decent and law-abiding, because of the lack of a specific moral code Santeria is popular with some criminals, such as drug traffickers. Others may turn to Palo Mayombe - "the way of the black witch" - which has similar roots to Santeria but is considerably more aggressive. Palo Mayombe combines the black magic of the Congo with some aspects of Santeria and of Spanish Catholicism. *Paleros*, as believers are called, conduct ritual magic to protect themselves, solve problems, acquire lovers or money, and harm or kill their enemies. Palo Mayombe's myths and rituals are centered around the spirits of the dead; the predominant practice is malevolent sorcery aimed at gaining power over the soul of a dead person - preferably a criminal or lunatic - who can then be forced to do the palero's bidding. For this reason, human remains, usually acquired from graveyards, are used by the *mayomberos*, or sorcerer-priests, in their rituals to invoke negative and evil spirits. Powerful mayomberos like Adolfo Constanzo are believed to possess supernatural powers and are greatly feared.

The practices of mayomberos like Constanzo closely resemble those of the practitioners of "money juju," a relatively new, urban form of the old Nigerian folk religion. As described by Oke (1989), the goal of money juju is the acquisition of total power, rather than the healing or protection which is the usual aim of juju. In money juju rituals, animals - and sometimes human beings - are not merely sacrificed but tortured, because it is believed that the spirit of 'a victim that dies in extreme pain will attract more attention from the orishas, who will in turn grant more power to the sorcerer or his client. The more cruel and gruesome the ritual, the more powerful it is believed to be. Some money juju practitioners are said to use ashes from sacrificial victims to make a magical "gambler's soap" that is guaranteed to convey good luck. Recent newspaper reports indicate that West Africa is experiencing a revival of such practices in the form of grave robbing and the ritual killing of children and adults ("Police will watch graveyards closely," October 26, 1989).

**Voodoo.** Like Santeria, Haitian Voodoo - also spelled Vaudou, Vodoun, or Vodun - is a blend of African religion and Catholicism. Voodoo is based on the religion of the slaves from Dahomey in West Africa - *vodu* means gods or spirits in the language of that land - who were brought to Haiti when it was a wealthy French colony. Voodoo is a highly organized, systematic religion in which the gods, or *loa* - considered emanations of the supreme God and often equated with the Catholic saints - manifest themselves by taking possession of their worshippers. The voodoo temple, or *houmfor*, is presided over by a *houngan*, who acts as priest,

healer, soothsayer, and exorcist. Within the enormous voodoo pantheon the gods and spirits known as *rada*, which are of African origin, are generally more benevolent than the Caribbean-based *petro* gods, who tend to be aggressive, violent, and unpredictable.

There is also a dark side to voodoo, involving black magic practiced by *bokors*, or sorcerers, and social control through secret societies. In *The Serpent and the Rainbow*, Harvard University anthropologist Wade Davis (1985) describes how the semi-legendary "zombies" are created through the administration of a poisonous substance which induces a catatonic trance that simulates death. When the victim is revived by the *bokor* following burial, he remains in a dazed, obedient state due to his belief that the sorcerer has captured his soul. In voodoo belief, a certain type of magical entity called a *baka* requires its "owner" to offer it the life of one of his relatives each year or be devoured by it himself (Huxley, 1966). A few practitioners of voodoo, called "red voodooists," require human blood in their ceremonies and will sometimes kill to obtain it. These individuals are considered criminals by most of voodoo society.

## Chapter Five

### Prevalence

We offer here two lines of reasoning suggesting that involvement in Satanism, especially among teens, could number in the thousands. Although much of this involvement is probably superficial, we will later explain why some clinicians contend that Satanism is likely to exacerbate the conditions of the troubled youth whom it attracts.

No reliable scientific data can tell us how many persons are involved in Satanism, black magic and related practices, but a most disturbing trend has been the apparent increased interest in Satanism among the young. Epidemiological data indicate that 20% of the population have some kind of psychiatric disorder (Freedman, 1986). Evidence of satanic rituals involving youth has been found in all areas of the country. One study found that 8 of 250 adolescents (3.2%) referred for psychiatric help to a facility that handled all adolescent psychiatric referrals for a particular geographic area were involved in Satanism and related forms of occultism (Bourget *et al.*, 1988), and another study reported that 17 of 32 adolescent referrals were involved (Wheeler *et al.*, 1988). If referrals to an adolescent psychiatric facility came from the most disturbed 20% of the 20% who are diagnosable, then perhaps .12% of adolescents could be seriously involved in Satanism and psychiatrically disturbed. We can only assume that many who are not part of the psychiatric population are also involved. Although this is a very small percentage, it would translate, if true, into thousands, perhaps tens of thousands, of cases. One should remember, however, that in many, and probably in most, of these cases the satanic involvement may be shallow, or peripheral to other more serious difficulties.

Another, though less persuasive, approach toward estimating prevalence can be based upon extrapolations from the numbers of youth attracted to heavy metal rock music, some of which has been viewed as encouraging interest in Satanism. According to Gallup polls (Gallup Youth Survey Release, March 22, 1989), 27% of teens most enjoy hard rock/heavy metal music. Another study, reported by Pulling (1989; Wass, H., findings published in *The Influence of Media on Adolescents*), showed that 90% of the students surveyed reported being rock fans, of whom approximately 9% of the urban middle school students, 17% of the rural, and 24% of the urban high school students were identified as "HSS [homicide, suicide, satanic practices] fans." About 20% of the students surveyed overall reported that they always agree with the words to their favorite rock music.

Other Gallup polls (Gallup Youth Survey Release, October 26, 1988) find substantial teen belief in angels (74%) and witchcraft (29%). (Unfortunately, Gallup has not yet asked questions specifically about Satan.) And still other polls (Gallup Youth Survey Release, May 10, 1989) reveal that approximately one-third

of teens who are regular attendees at Protestant or Catholic churches believe in reincarnation, a belief rejected by Christianity but upheld by most Eastern and New Age religious philosophies. The findings of these various polls indicate that a large minority of teens: a) are not very well grounded in their religions, b) believe in witchcraft and (by extension from their opinions on angels and witchcraft) the Devil, and c) are attracted to heavy metal music. If even one or two percent of these teens were seriously influenced by Satanism, the total number would be in the tens of thousands.

It is vital, however, that one not overreact to these speculative estimates. Even if tens of thousands of teens were adversely affected by Satanism, it does not follow that tens of thousands of teens are involved in child sacrifice, murder, drug dealing, and similarly lurid aspects of Satanism. The overwhelming majority of teens involved in Satanism appear to be participating at what has been called the "dabbler" level, that is, they have developed a fascination with Satanism but have maintained enough of their rational faculties and social inhibitions to avoid its violent and perverted aspects. Perhaps for many of these teens, dabbling in Satanism is a transient form of power fantasy that sustains a fragile ego on the rocky road of growing up, similar to another era's teen fantasies of joining a motorcycle gang.

Nonetheless, even if a tiny percentage of teens become deeply involved in Satanism, the consequences to them and to those whose lives they touch can be terrible. This is not a problem that should be dismissed out of hand.

## **Chapter Six**

# **Why Do People Get Involved in Satanism?**

Most experts in the field divide practitioners of Satanism into four categories: 1) "dabblers," usually teenagers who become attracted to Satanism on a relatively superficial level through easily-available books, "heavy metal" music, fantasy role-playing games and the like; 2) "self-styled" or "psychopathic" satanists, usually loners' attracted to the more violent forms of Satanism which are then grafted onto their pre-existing pathology; 3) "religious" satanists involved in well-organized, publicly acknowledged groups such as the Church of Satan or Temple of Set, and 4) "satanic cults," the sophisticated, clandestine groups which may be engaged in criminal activities. There is some overlap among these categories, but the system of classification appears to be of use in determining type and level of involvement (Tucker, 1989).

### **Youth**

Although hard data are lacking, police and mental health reports (Markowitz, 1989; Murphy and Zilliox, 1989; Tucker, 1989) suggest that most adolescents involved in Satanism are dabblers - usually boys between 9 and 19 years of age who are experimenting with satanic activities but are not fully committed to Satanism. Their rituals may include animal mutilation and sacrifice, drinking blood, eating animal organs, drug abuse, and self-mutilation. They may engage in vandalism, theft, arson, and other illegal activities. Dabblers are often alienated, troubled teens with low self-esteem who exhibit problems with aggressive behavior and/or suicidal tendencies, both of which can be aggravated by involvement in Satanism. They may come from working, middle or upper class backgrounds, and are often from dysfunctional families. Most are bright, creative, and intellectually curious but are usually underachievers and "loners" who do poorly in school and/or have learning disabilities. Some Satanist dabblers are "street kids" whose involvement is usually tied in with drugs, especially P.C.P. and L.S.D. (personal communication, Sandi Gallant, January 4, 1989), and heavy metal music, rather than intellectual curiosity about the occult. They may be bored and rebellious, but they also feel the need to belong and may be vulnerable to influence by strong, charismatic personalities. Many display an angry, hedonistic, and nihilistic attitude. Also, the incidence of serious psychological disorders seems to be significantly higher in teens who become involved in Satanism than in those who join other types of cults.

Teenagers often become involved with satanic cults because the rituals appear to confer magical power, especially since many practitioners of Satanism tend to claim that everything that happens to their benefit is the result of magic and/or the power of Satan (Scott, 1984). "Scientific illiteracy" and the popularity of the New

Age Movement have contributed to a resurgence of belief in and fascination with pseudoscience, paranormal claims, occultism, and "transpersonal" experiences among young people, as the Gallup polls cited earlier indicate. While most of this fascination is expressed, in relatively harmless ways, Tucker (1989) observes that young people who participate in intense satanic rituals - especially where drugs are involved - sometimes become entranced and experience "out of body" states, or see visions and hear voices which they interpret as manifestations of Satan or demons. These experiences may subsequently exert a profound influence on the young person's paradigm of reality. In addition, some youths speak of achieving a "high" during certain satanic ceremonies - especially those involving the torture and sacrifice of animals - which they experience as a "powerful urge to harm." Tucker likens this euphoria to the "power rush" celebrated in the darker forms of heavy metal music - those which emphasize ritual killing and mutilation - and expresses concern that some teens may actually "learn" to enjoy sadistic acts via these experiences.

Teens who are alienated from or rebelling against mainstream religion may find that Satanism provides an outlet for their religious needs. Many teens are first introduced to the satanist belief system through Church of Satan founder Anton LaVey's *The Satanic Bible*. Tucker (1989) notes that LaVey's book "advocates a kind of fierce independence that includes anarchy, rebellion, and radical self sufficiency to teens at a time in their lives when attitudes toward authority are being shaped" (p. 3), and the book's militantly antiauthority tone can be very attractive to adolescents. LaVey also champions the free expression of aggressive and sexual drives - although he is careful to avoid advocacy of criminal acts - and glorifies the acquisition of power over others. He "offers a picture of reality in which humanity is portrayed as an advanced form of vicious animal, in which the weak are overwhelmed by the strong, and in which sentiments such as love, compassion, and warmth are the attributes of the weak. The vision is a mixture of Darwinism and a form of Machiavellianism combined with elements of the Nietzschean 'will to power' " (Tucker, 1989, p. 4). LaVey's worldview comes across as "honest" and "realistic" to some teenagers who see adult society as characterized by violence, hypocrisy, greed, and corruption. In addition, some may feel that they can get more out of life if they can learn to control others through fear.

Clinicians suggest that Satanism and black magic can also feed into pre-existing problems and conflicts. Teens who feel powerless, victimized, and isolated may find that Satanism provides a sense of control, status, and belonging. Intense group identity and bonding may result when a cult forms around a charismatic peer or adult who acts as "high priest." Some participants may be attracted by the chance to act out their anger and frustration, indulge in antisocial behavior, or satisfy their sexual urges. Others, trapped in abusive home situations, may turn to magic in the hope that it will offer them a way to defend themselves and gain control of their lives. Adolescents who are trying to cope with their conflicts



through delinquency and drug or alcohol abuse may find that Satanism provides a rationale for their behavior as well as yet another form of escapism. Even relatively well-adjusted teens may have an inner fantasy life of which parents are unaware but which may make them vulnerable to some of the images of Satanism such as power, violence, sexuality, mystery, and "sword-and sorcery" mythology and romanticism. While most teens who become involved in Satanism are boys, girls who dabble in "white witchcraft" but want to move on to "something more powerful" may be lured into black magic. Others may be victimized by siblings or boyfriends who have become involved with cults, or by predatory adults (Pulling, 1989). In 1989 three men and a woman were charged with the murder of a California man whose girlfriend told police she was a "white witch" who had turned to black magic. She explained that her initiation into the "dark side" required the sacrifice of her boyfriend ("Slaying linked to satanic cult," January/February, 1989; "Suspects charged in 'satanic' slaying," March/April, 1989).

Some persons suggest that teenagers' abundant leisure time, money, boredom, and access to technology enables them to go to imaginative lengths to top older generations' "road warrior" rebelliousness. Cynthia Kisser, Executive, Director of the Cult Awareness Network, encountered one teenage dabbler who had a computer networking program for Dungeons & Dragons<sup>®</sup>, as well as a variety of cassette tapes on occultism (Kisser, personal communication, February 14, 1990)' Someday soon, perhaps, affluent teenagers (or those making money selling drugs) may be able to buy 3-D occult fantasies projected in a private entertainment shell, a kind of total immersion audiovisual walk-man. Combined with hallucinogens, such stimulation, already being provided to some extent through the technology of "virtual reality," could have profound effects on young, troubled minds.

## **Adults**

Adult satanist groups are harder to document because even publicly known groups are often extremely secretive. A sociological study of one such group (Scott, 1984) noted that its emphasis on elitism, secrecy, the acquisition of magical powers, and surviving a coming world cataclysm tended to foster alienation from the outside world, group conformity, split personalities, and paranoia. The members of this group were mostly young middle-class adults of average to high intelligence who joined the group because it stressed personal growth and magical knowledge leading to power and control over others. Most members were alienated from mainstream culture and religion, and the group provided an elitist belief system which allowed them to feel superior. Scott suggests that such a group may also offer structure, a sense of belonging, and protection from the outside world, while the group's rituals provide a protected environment in which members can act out their frustrations, aggressions, and fantasies.

Some adult satanists prefer hedonism and animality to esoteric philosophizing, and some underground cults allegedly engage in felonious activities involving drugs,

pornography (including sadomasochistic and child pornography), prostitution and "white slavery" (the kidnapping of women and children to be sold for sexual purposes), and even human sacrifice and the production and distribution of "snuff" films (films depicting actual murders). Members of such cults may function as', suppliers and/or consumers of this material (Terry, 1987). People claiming to be survivors of such groups report that members vary from wealthy professionals to "street people" and "bikers" to "generationals" whose families - natural or adoptive - have raised them in Satanism (Kahaner, 1988; Johnston, 1989).

## **Recruitment Tactics**

The type of recruitment a satanist group employs depends largely on whether or not it is engaged in illegal activities. Some satanist groups, such as the Church of Satan, operate publicly and advertise openly, or through word-of-mouth within the occult subculture. These satanist "churches" claim to reject violence and illegal acts, although some may advocate a hedonistic and predatory lifestyle. Others, such as the Temple of Set, claim to teach their members secrets of occult wisdom that will enable them to become god-like beings with special powers. However, as noted above in the case of the Werewolf Order, some of these groups have begun to present a more aggressive, overtly predatory face to the public.

Satanist groups should not be considered representative of all neo-pagan or magic-oriented groups. "Magic" is conceived of as a powerful but neutral force that can be utilized for good or evil. Many persons who count themselves among today's neo-pagan "witches" will use magic only for beneficial purposes, because they believe that any evil spell they cast will be returned against them three-fold (Cavendish, 1970). However, education in the occult is easy to come by today, and books containing such spells are now readily available in the "Occult" and "New Age" sections of major bookstores. Whether magic will be practiced for good or evil depends entirely upon the inclinations of the practitioner. Johnston (1989) relates a case in which a young woman, when asked how she became interested in Satanism, replied that she and her parents had attended meetings at a "New Age" church in which meditation, astral travel, levitation, and mental telepathy were practiced. Although her parents and other church members were not involved in Satanism *per se*, she reported that it was after she related her experiences to friends that she had been invited to participate in a satanic ritual.

Obviously, satanist cults which engage in violence and criminal activities must conduct their recruiting carefully and surreptitiously in order to avoid exposure. It seems reasonable to believe that such cults are more likely to use manipulation, deception, and/or force to acquire and indoctrinate members. So a of these groups may recruit through "fronts" that appear to be benign self-help or "spiritual" groups. Others watch for individuals who already exhibit an interest in occultism, black magic, drugs, sexual perversion, and/or pornography. Themes of Satanism, occultism, violence, and sadomasochistic sexuality can easily be found in many

areas of our popular culture: in certain types of "heavy metal" rock music; in some fantasy role-playing games which re and violence and aggression and emphasize the glamour and power of occultism; in "slasher" movies and "documentaries" that portray death, mutilation, and extreme violence. In addition, the headlines portray a society full of hypocrisy, corruption, and greed for power and easy money - much of it acquired by dealers in drugs, pornography, and images of violence.

Some occultist groups may employ highly inventive - even artistic - forms of "bait." For example, police officer Kevin Murphy of Yonkers, New York, has observed the following poem painstakingly written on walls in Central Park, and in parks in Yonkers and Mamaroneck:

Beneath the guise of the soul-searcher  
Is the immortal light of divinity.  
Falling short of his hopes and dreams,  
And ringing beneath his skin,  
The false expectations are washed away  
In ice-cold blood.  
Woe to you, hide your eyes!  
The time is come!  
We are of a special breed  
And a creed: "Know Thyself."  
Reckless abandonment in the joys of lust.  
Imperial majesty radiates  
From the hearts of the holy ones  
Peace and enlightenment to those  
Who express themselves;  
Death to the undreamer, the unlover!  
Ye shall serve long terms in Hell,  
Use your magick wisely, children of hope,  
The key is with you.  
Do not pity fools, go beyond time-wasting  
And hanging out.  
Rise above your peers,  
And teach them the ritual of self-knowledge.  
Do What Thou Wilt!  
Love is the Law!

This is not necessarily a "satanic" poem, although the last two lines are taken from the works of Aleister Crowley. However, Murphy reports that it appears to be part of the "recruitment program" of an occult group. A youth who stops to read the poem may be approached by a recruiter and asked if he finds it interesting. If the answer is affirmative, he may then be provided with information about the group itself (Murphy, 1989).

Some satanist cults may require an act of violence, such as the sacrifice of an

animal, to qualify the recruit for membership; others conceal such activities until the leader is sure the recruit can be trusted (Bryant, 1987). The members then further indoctrinated through the encouragement of delusions of supernatural powers conferring alleged "benefits," fascination with intense and mysterious occult ritualism, fantasies of revenge on "enemies" such as parents or teachers, access to sex, and the added attention he gets because of his increasingly bizarre behavior. (His alienation grows -- but now he feels superior because of it.) If he is dealing drugs, sacrificing animals, robbing graves, and/or vandalizing property, he can be held in the cult through a combination of fear and blackmail. Some groups threaten deserters with death, and most claim to be able to put a death curse on anyone who leaves or betrays them. In addition, many Satanists fear that Satan himself will punish them if they betray him.

## **"Heavy Metal" Music**

Night Stalker" Richard Ramirez's fascination with the "heavy metal" rock band AC/DC added fuel to the growing controversy over the influence of this type of rock music. Some types of "heavy metal," sometimes called "death metal," or "black metal," feature lyrics that glorify Satanism and the occult as well as such themes as anarchy, violence (including abuse of women and children), murder, drugs, suicide, incest, rape, and necrophilia, and display satanic, occult, grotesque,,, and/or violent images on their album covers, posters, and in the production of their music videos. The National Cult Awareness Network (1989) notes that these lyrics and images are of special concern in today's world with its unprecedented threats to the health and well-being of adolescents, including pregnancy, drug use, AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases, accidents, and suicides. Pulling (1989) claims that several teenage suicides have been linked to heavy metal music.

Many teenagers view rock stars as heroes and seek to emulate their dress, behavior and lifestyles, which in the case of heavy metal performers may mean flaunting black clothes and jewelry with satanic symbolism and adopting a sullen, arrogant, and/or hedonistic attitude. These teenagers usually know nothing about Satanism and are just seeking an outlet for their frustrations and a way to outrage grownups, but by playing with these symbols they advertise the fact that they are attracted to them. Pulling (1989) reports that, increasingly, the adolescents whom she counsels report having developed an interest in the occult as direct result of this type of music. King (1988) found that 60% of chemically dependent youngsters designated heavy metal as their music of choice. Some Satanist cults are suspected of recruiting at heavy metal rock concerts, fantasy role-playing game conventions, and record stores and through advertisements in underground rock magazines (Murphy, 1989). They may employ teenage members as recruiters or to lure other teens to rituals where they are seized, forced to participate, and threatened with death if they leave the cult or tell anyone about it. In some cases teens are invited to parties where they are

drugged and made to participate in sexual orgies, which are filmed or photographed. They are then blackmailed into further participation, and the videos or photos may be used for distribution as in pornography (Johnston, 1989; Pulling, 1989). Such allegations are difficult to prove within the legal system because prosecutors concern themselves with crimes such as "contributing to the delinquency of a 'nor," and avoid! the satanist trappings of the crime, as Satanism itself is not illegal.

The Parents Music Resource Center, based in Arlington, Virginia, was launched early in 1985 to demand a rating code for recordings that would alert parents to violent, profane, or sexually explicit lyrics. The American Academy of Pediatrics (• 1), which strongly opposes censorship, recommends in its February 1989 journal that:

1. The public, and parents in particular, be made aware of sexually explicit, drug-oriented, or violent lyrics on records and tapes.
2. Broadcasters and the music industry be encouraged to demonstrate good taste and self-restraint in decisions regarding what is produced and allowed to broadcast.
3. Rock performers be reminded that they can serve as positive role models for children and teenagers.
4. The AAP and other concerned organizations encourage parents to take a more active role in monitoring music to which their children are exposed.
5. Local coalitions of pediatricians, educators, and parents discuss the effects of the media on children and teenagers.
6. Research concerning the impact rock music has on the behavior of adolescents and preadolescents be developed and supported.  
(Reprinted with permission of *Pediatrics*.)

Videos by heavy metal performers often contain images of explicit sex, violence, drug abuse, and suicide. Because teenagers watch so many music videos, the AAP has made similar recommendations concerning these videos:

1. Parents should control television viewing and recognize that television is a potent teacher of children and adolescents. As with other media, television exposure to issues such as sexuality, violence, and drug abuse should be regulated by parents in accordance with the age and maturity of their children and adolescents.
2. Parents should watch television with their children and teenagers, discuss the content with them, and initiate the process of selective viewing at an early age.
3. Music video producers should be influenced to exercise good taste and

self-restraint in what they depict, as should networks in what they allow to air.

4. The music video industry should be encouraged to produce prosocial videos and public service messages with positive themes about relationships, racial harmony, drug avoidance, nonviolence, pregnancy prevention, sexual abstinence, avoidance of sexually transmitted diseases, AIDS, and (for those who are sexually active), use of condoms and other birth control methods.

Research concerning the influence and effect of music videos on the behavior of children and adolescents should be developed and supported. (Reprinted with permission of *Pediatrics*.)

In a review of the psychiatric literature on adolescents and their music, Brown and Hendee (1989) conclude:

Rock music, reflective of the adolescent peer culture, symbolizes the adolescent themes of rebellion and autonomy. Increasingly it does so with disturbing lyrics that connote violence and pornographic sexual imagery... At the very least, commitment to a rock subculture is symptomatic of adolescent alienation from these authority figures... Research into the effects of media messages has been problematic because of the very pervasiveness of music and its individual appeal and meaning. The effects of rock music, particularly heavy metal music, have not yet been studied extensively. As an important agent of adolescent socialization, however, the negative messages of rock music should not be dismissed (p. 1662).

Brown and Hendee's review mentions incidentally any possible connection to satanist involvement. Heavy metal lyrics "glorify hatred, abuse, sexual deviancy, and occasionally Satanism" (p. 1660). They note, however, that some youngsters may be especially sensitive to the messages in heavy metal music.

In a study of chemically dependent adolescents, 60% named heavy metal as their first choice of music, leading the author to suggest that such music is associated with and may promote destructive behavior in 'susceptible individuals. Healthy, well-adjusted teenagers, on the other hand, may be minimally affected by explicit rock music (p. 1662). [studies include: King, P. (1988). Heavy metal music and drug use in adolescents. *Postgraduate Medicine*, 83, 295-304; Frith, S. (1978). *The Sociology of Rock*. London, England: Constable].

## **Fantasy Role-Playing Games**

Patricia Pulling of Richmond, Virginia, founded the organization B.A.D.D. (Bothered About Dungeons & Dragons<sup>®</sup>) in 1983 to educate the public on the possible harmful effects of some fantasy role-playing games on vulnerable teens. Following the suicide of her 16-year-old son in 1982, Pulling discovered that Dungeons & Dragons<sup>®</sup> (D&D) had been introduced into classes for talented and gifted students

by teachers at the local high school. In a suicide note, Pulling's son said that he believed that he had become evil, and that he had been told to commit murder but had chosen to take his own life rather than harm someone else. On the day of his suicide he had also been placed under a death curse by another teenage player in his game group.

Pulling (1989) reports that fantasy role-playing games have become immensely popular since D&D was first introduced in 1974. These games combine the strategy concepts of war games with techniques of role playing originally used by therapists. Many games have themes of "swords and sorcery" occultism. Players are instructed to identify closely with their game characters. In D&D, a more experienced player assumes the game's most powerful role, that of the Dungeon Master (DM), who creates the scenario for the game - a process which takes many hours - and controls every aspect of it except for the actions of the individual players. The DM has the power of life and death over the players' characters, and may choose to destroy a character under some circumstances. The object of these games is survival, and their approach is amoral in that players may choose to commit robbery, rape, torture, murder, and employ occult "weapons" such as curses to cause insanity, suicide, or death. Such activities, which are recognized as perverted or criminal in our society, are acceptable within the content of the game if they help the players' characters to survive. The longer such a character survives, the wealthier and more powerful he or she becomes.

Problems with fantasy role-playing games arise when players lose sight of the fact that it is only a game. Players report that the action in D&D is often described so vividly that they can visualize it as if they were watching it actually happen. In addition, the game is so complex that players must spend hours in preparation for their roles, including study related to the occult powers with which many characters are invested. All this contributes to the extreme emotional attachment some players develop for their characters, and can result in a growing inability to distinguish fantasy from reality. Murphy (1989) notes that some teenagers who are heavily involved in D&D assert that they are willing to do anything their DM tells them to do, no questions asked. If the child does not clearly understand that the game is not "for real," this confusion can have tragic results should the DM direct the player's character to steal, rape, or kill. Pulling cites evidence indicating that "fantasy role-playing games have been a significant factor in at least 125 deaths" (p. 85) and notes that hundreds of less serious violent incidents have also been linked to these games. While this represents only a tiny percentage of fantasy role-playing game enthusiasts, parents of children who are avid players are advised to discuss the games with them and be sure they understand the difference between fantasy and reality.

Another possible source of trouble for some players of fantasy role-playing games is that in many of these games the action relies heavily on the use of occult spells, sacrifices; and rituals for summoning demons. Pulling notes that much of this material is drawn from ancient systems of demonology, and that the information

regarding the casting of spells and other occult practices is historically authentic. (While D&D, at least, does not actually list Satan among the demons to be summoned, it does include powerful demons like Asmodeus.) Again, this is unlikely to cause problems unless the player comes to view these beings as real, in which case, exposure to such extensive and elaborate material about the darker side of the occult can pique the player's interest in learning more about the "real thing" and in conducting rituals outside the context of the game. In some cases, this could spark an interest in Satanism. Several youths involved in Satanism-related tragedies are also alleged to have been dedicated game enthusiasts (Pulling, 1989). Some occult groups are said to use organized games and game fairs as opportunities for recruitment. Bryant (1987) reports a case in which informants advised police that a paramilitary/occult group was recruiting members through D&D exhibits at local fairs. As lower-level members were deemed more trustworthy, they were invited to "higher level" meetings of the group, which included occult rituals. One informant reported having been shown a videotape of what appeared to be a human sacrifice.

Heavy metal music and fantasy role-playing games are only two of the many contributing factors that may be operating when a teenager becomes obsessed with the occult; neither should be considered evidence *per se* of serious involvement with Satanism. Such a judgment has to be made on the basis of many factors.



# Chapter Seven

## Effects and Signs of Satanic Involvement

### Teenagers Forming Cults

Johnston;. (1989) includes a tape-recorded interview with two teenagers who describe rituals and other activities of a satanist "coven" they have formed with seven others. They meet "whenever we want," usually on weekends at a member's house "where nobody's ever home." Drugs are passed around. There is no formally prescribed ritual; they simply clear the furniture out of a room, mark a circle on the floor, and light some candles. The group gathers inside the circle as its leader, a lanky 18-year-old, recites chants from a book called the *Necronomicon*, which purports to be a modern-day compilation of ancient Sumerian demonology. (The "Nec" was inspired by the works of K P. Lovecraft, author of *The Dunwich Horror* and other tales of the supernatural. The paperback version published by Avon Books is popular with teenage dabblers, who believe it can be used to summon demons) A volunteer cuts his arm with a ritual knife. Blood is dribbled into a chalice, mixed with red wine, and passed around as prayers to Satan are offered. The ritual ends with the whole group engaging in sex. But, their leader insists, they are "serious about dedication" to their Satanism and are hoping to soon conduct rituals outdoors, where they can practice "real sacrifices... like humans" (pp. 60-61). Similar teenage cults at the "dabbler" level are reported by police in various parts of the country (Allen and Montoyer, 1987; Kahaner, 1988; Murphy and Zilliox, 1989).

Such activities may sound like relatively harmless acting-out of teenage rebelliousness. However - especially when drugs and alcohol are added to the mixture - "dabbling" can turn deadly, as in the cases of Ricky Kasso and others. In Larry Kahaner's *Cults That Kill* (1988), Orange County, CA, Deputy Probation Officer Darlyne Pettinicchio recounts the case of a 15-year-old girl, a chronic runaway and the product of a broken home, who had become involved at age 13 with a cult of teenage dabblers led by a 21-year-old high priest. The girl had described a ritual sacrifice:

She said one night they brought in three kids who were loaded, and they were going to have a ritual. She said that she was always loaded when she was with this group. She couldn't stand to do it otherwise. I asked how loaded they were... She said they had to carry them in.

They brought them in and apparently these three had ripped off the little Satanists in a dope deal. They started the ritual; they rang the bell, they did an invocation to Satan. Then they went out to the hills - she drew me a map - where there was a chain and some trees. They had cans of gasoline, and they did the ritual and brought one guy out and threw him in the middle.

They all had candles, and the high priest threw the candle on him and he was torched just like that. The girl said he wasn't that loaded that he wasn't screaming and yelling. They just let him burn.

She said they brought another kid out, a girl, and one of the boys was feeling her up, [and] she got sick and left. She said, "I knew the same thing was going to happen to me" (p. 141).

According to Officer Pettinicchio, officers from the Los Angeles Sheriffs Office were prevented from questioning the girl by attorneys defending her in another case, who were attempting to protect her from further prosecution. As of 1988," the incident was still under investigation.

Another type of teenage involvement in cultic Satanism is the result of deceptive recruitment by adult satanists., Pulling (1989) describes the case of a teenage girl who was attending a rock concert with some friends when they were approached by adults who invited them to a party where drugs and alcohol were supplied. After several more parties - which the teens sneaked out in the middle of the night to attend - sexual activities were introduced. At first only the adults and teenagers participated, but small children and animals were soon added to the scene. The adults used photographs taken during the sexorgies to blackmail the teenagers into silence. They were then taken into a room where an altar had been set up and were introduced to satanic rituals. They were told that they would soon be "initiated," after which there would be "no turning back." According to Pulling, police have verified places and names,' and an investigation is being conducted. Similar incidents involving the recruitment of teenagers by adults have been reported (Johnston, 1989; Murphy, 1989 CAN Conference), and investigations have produced some arrests and convictions (*The Pottsville Republican*, April 8, 1988, reported in Pulling; *St. Petersburg Times*, April 22, 1989, reported in *Cult Awareness Network News*, October 1989).

Disturbingly, some cases have come to light in which adults in positions of trust and authority have been accused of participating in satanic groups and taking an active part in the recruitment of youth. In January, 1989, two military law-enforcement officers from Griffis Air Force Base were charged with criminal trespass and endangering the welfare of a child. They were accused of breaking into an abandoned building on the grounds of the Mohawk Valley Psychiatric Center in nearby Marcy, New York, and setting up a "temple" for the worship of Satan, which they used for rituals and parties. The charge of endangering the welfare of a child was brought because the men had provided alcohol to several minors at the temple. Local civilian law enforcement authorities in the area, said that incidents involving Satanism had been on the rise there for several months, and were being monitored by police concerned about possible illegal activities. One teenager who claimed to be a participant in a local cult which used blood in some of its rituals said that group consisted of about two dozen "businessmen types with big cars" ("Airmen accused in probe of cult," January 13, 1990, p. A 1').

The following two sections list effects, and signs of involvement in Satanism and occult-related violence. These items are derived largely from clinical and law enforcement observations and inferences.

## **Satanic Activities**

Ritual activities engaged in by adolescent satanists include:

- Holding scheduled or spontaneous individual or group rituals, often in accordance with a satanic "calendar." These may take place in abandoned buildings, in outdoor settings, in homes when no adults are present, or even in the teenager's own bedroom.
- Conducting rituals to request the presence of Satan and/or demons, forming covenants with Satan, casting spells and placing hexes on enemies. Covenants are frequently written in blood, which the cultist may obtain by cutting himself and/or other group members.
- Sacrificing animals and drinking animal blood; 'smearing blood on body.' Animals are sometimes tortured.
- Cutting themselves and drinking each other's blood, sometimes mixed with excreta. This practice is of particular concern given the danger of AIDS.
- Conducting ceremonies involving group sexual activity; conducting "black weddings" to marry female followers to Satan. These activities may involve children as young as 12 or 13 years of age.
- Conducting ceremonies using drugs and alcohol, which lower inhibitions and make it easier for participants to engage in activities such as animal torture and sacrifice, group sex, ,and the consumption of excreta.
- Conducting ceremonies focused on death; conducting ceremonies in graveyards, crypts, and abandoned churches. Using parts of bodies or skeletons obtained by grave robbing or, in more organized cults, through medical supply houses.
- Practicing divination: Using ouija boards,' tarot cards, and other occult paraphernalia to obtain answers to questions and predict future events.
- Chanting during rituals. As with drugs and alcohol, chanting contributes to the creation of an altered state of consciousness in which inhibitions are lowered.

## **How Does Satanic Involvement Affect People?**

- Obsession with Satanism or involvement with a violence-oriented satanist cult may lead an individual to rationalize participation in antisocial, violent, and/or criminal acts such as vandalism, animal sacrifice, arson, rape, drug or alcohol abuse, theft, blackmail, extortion, suicide, and murder. Teenagers

dabbling in Satanism may become involved with adult satanist cults and be manipulated or blackmailed into serious criminal activity.

- Satanism is increasingly seen as a factor in suicide among teenagers. Some have left notes stating that they killed themselves in order to meet Satan, who would grant them reincarnation as powerful beings with control over demons; some had even made pacts with Satan to kill themselves by a certain date. In a few cases, teenagers involved in satanist cults have threatened their parents with mass suicide if they interfered.
- Involvement in Satanism may destroy relationships with family and friends. Parents and friends, report a high incidence of alienation among satanic cult members, sometimes manifesting itself in outright hostility and violence. Several Satanism obsessed young people have murdered one or both parents.
- Satanist cults encourage fear, hatred, and rejection of society, thereby aggravating members' alienation instead of diminishing it. Some cults advocate anarchy, chaos, and the destruction of all authority, and encourage criminal and antisocial acts.
- Members believe they are acquiring power, but in reality they are being stripped of their free will and control of their lives through fear, delusions, drug abuse, violence, vulnerability to blackmail, and criminal acts. Lower-level members may be virtually enslaved by powerful leaders through fear, delusions of power, and consequences of illegal activities.
- Teens who become involved in Satanism often display diminished intellectual ability. Grades may plummet as the teenager becomes obsessed with the occult and loses interest in achieving goals through any means other than magic.
- In most satanist cults, the emphasis on hate, violence, and power over others tends to inhibit positive, gentler feelings that contribute to intimacy. Members',, may experience a reduced capacity to form close human relationships outside the cult.
- Physical deterioration is frequently reported, especially when drug or alcohol abuse is involved.
- Psychotic breaks, self mutilation, hallucinations, panic attacks, guilt, identity diffusion, paranoia and suicide attempts, successful and otherwise, are among the problems seen in individuals involved with Satanism.
- Most satanist cults favor extreme rejection of personal and mainstream cultural values in favor of satanist values stressing power over others, aggression, hedonism, sexual conquests, and greed for unearned wealth. Members may be required to formalize the break with their pasts by signing a pact with Satan in their own blood and/or committing a criminal act.

- In the community at large, violence-prone satanist cults contribute to problems such as vandalism, truancy, and cruelty to animals, as well as to more serious crimes such as arson, drug and alcohol abuse, child abuse and molestation, pornography, drug trafficking, blackmail, theft, and murder. Obsession with Satanism accounts for at least some of the increase in teen suicides. In addition, some satanist cults harass, intimidate, threaten and/or terrorize critics, investigators, members, and former members, as well as their families and professionals who come to their aid. Many satanist cult members and ex-members say that they have been threatened with death if they leave and/or speak out against the cult. In addition to the victims themselves, attorneys handling cult-related cases, reporters investigating Satanism-related stories, and mental health professionals who counsel satanist cult survivors have reported being harassed and threatened.

## Signs of Involvement

The following list consists of signs of possible adolescent involvement in Satanism. It is important not to jump to conclusions. Many of these signs, e.g., heavy alcohol or drug use, in and of themselves, have nothing to do with Satanism and may be associated with many other types of problems, e.g., drug addiction, depression. Parents and helping professionals, then, must look at the whole picture. Moreover, they should keep in mind that destructive satanic involvement will often be associated with, if not in fact result from, more traditional psychological problems such as low self-esteem, depression, alienation, etc. The helpers' actions, therefore, ought not to focus solely on the satanic aspect of the person's behavior. Attention must also be paid to problems that antedate, exacerbate, cause, or result from the satanic behavior.

Signs of satanic involvement noted by researchers include:

- Accumulating satanic paraphernalia, such as books (*Satanic Bible*, *Satanic Rituals*, *Necronomicon*, books about Satan, witchcraft, the occult, etc.), knives and other weapons, whips, black or red candles and robes, bones, posters depicting sex, violence, or satanist/occult images. Symbols such as inverted pentagrams (five-pointed star with one point facing downwards) or upside-down crosses, the number "666" or the letters "FFF" (sixth letter of alphabet), the swastika, snakes, spiders. Graffiti such as "DW" (Devil Worship), "Natas" (Satan spelled backwards), "Nema" (Amen spelled backwards), "Redrum" (Murder spelled backwards), "Live" (Evil spelled backwards), or "Satan rules." Drawings of skulls, devil faces or demons, monsters, goat's heads, knives or daggers dripping blood, scenes of violence or mutilation, especially if done in blood. Any of these symbols or slogans used in tattoos or other body markings. Some teens have actually set up satanic altars in their bedrooms, complete with candles, incense, skulls, ritual knives, and satanic symbols.

- Five commonly used satanic symbols are reproduced on the cover of this book. Reading clockwise' from the top, the inverted pentagram, with two points facing upwards, is sometimes called the "baphomet." It is commonly used to symbolize the horns of the satanic goat's head, but may be: assigned other meanings by individual satanists. The "cross of confusion" is an ancient symbol used to question the validity' of Christianity. The double headed ax, when in the upright position, was the Roman symbol of justice; inverted, as shown here,, it symbolizes "anti justice." "666" is the "number of the Beast" as described in the Book of Revelation 13:18. It is used to symbolize Satan or the Antichrist. The upside-down cross is used to symbolize blasphemy and the denial of Christianity.
- Use of satanic signs and symbols in jewelry, sewn on clothing, or drawn on papers, books or walls. Sometimes the satanic symbols are written, scratched, or tattooed on the body as the person gets more deeply involved. One fingernail may be painted black. Satanists may signal each other with "the devil's horns" - a closed fist with the index and little fingers raised - although this is often done just to emulate rock stars who use it. Some teenagers who adopt these symbols may also be involved with variations on the "energy vampire" philosophy, which teaches that you can gain power by sapping energy from others.
- Developing an obsession with movies, videos, books and "heavy metal" music with themes of occultism and demonism, violence, rape, mutilation, suicide, and death; obsession with fantasy role-playing games; obsession with ouija boards and/or tarot cards as means of predicting the future. [Note: While a child's interest in the occult, heavy metal music, fantasy role-playing games, and/or horror movies should be monitored carefully, evidence of a peripheral interest does not necessarily mean that the child will become heavily involved in Satanism or the occult.]
- Displaying signs of ritualistic mutilation such as unexplained cuts on the left arm or chest area, especially if these are in the form of occult symbols; tattoos (which may be of the homemade variety), excessive piercing of ears or other parts of the body.
- Erratic grades, falling grades, loss of interest in schoolwork.
- Serious misbehavior, such as vandalism, theft, arson, cruelty to animals, chronic truancy, running away from home, grave robbing, breaking and entering.
- Maintaining a "book of shadows, which is a notebook in which rituals and other activities are recorded.
- Extreme changes in the child's personality, such as mood swings, humorlessness, aggressiveness, sullenness, secretiveness or extreme arrogance.

- Preoccupation with death, particularly the morbid side of it. This may be expressed verbally or through dress, drawings, poetry, or music.
- Any hints that the child may be thinking about suicide, such as giving away possessions, withdrawing from friends and family, talking about suicide.
- Making a pact to sell one's soul to Satan in return for power, money, fame, and success; making a pact promising to commit suicide at a given date; suicide pacts among members of a cult.
- Adopting unusual nicknames, especially if related to the occult, horror movies, fantasy role-playing games and the like.
- Any hints that the child believes he or she is "possessed."
- Avoiding family members; expressing extreme hostility towards family's religious beliefs. Aggression towards family, teachers, police, clergy and other authority figures.
- Expressing extreme aversion to Christianity and other non-satanic religions.
- Dropping old friends and activities; secretiveness about new friends and activities.
- Unexplained disappearances, especially at night. Some teenagers have been known to sneak out in the middle of the night to attend rituals.
- Making references to drinking blood; hoarding containers of blood or animal parts, sometimes in the back of the family refrigerator.
- Heavy alcohol or drug use, when accompanied by other symptoms.
- Expressing racist, anti-Semitic, or white supremacist attitudes.

# Chapter Eight

## What Can Families Do?

### **Don't Panic!**

Very few Satanism-involved teens exhibit a majority of the disturbing signs listed above. Most adolescent involvement in Satanism and nonviolent occultism is probably not serious and will pass with time. Dr. Margaret Singer, who has seen a number of marginal, depressed teenagers whose parents have panicked because they have found a few books on Satanism or a few heavy metal albums, advises parents to try to defuse the situation by offering to listen to the music and look through the books and talk about them in a non-threatening way (personal communication, September 14, 1989). Many of these youngsters are lonely and depressed and crave parental attention. Parents, of course, should not pretend to approve of these materials. But they can express their interest and concern by listening and offering suggestions in a non-threatening way, e.g., by asking probing questions: "Can you think of another explanation for the good feelings you get from listening to this song?" rather than accusing ones: "You like this stupid song because it makes you think it's OK to be a flunkie in school!"

Even in serious cases of satanic involvement, panic is counterproductive because it will tend to further alienate the involved family member.

### **Assess the Situation Thoroughly**

Tucker (1989) suggests that five areas be looked into in assessing a person's satanic involvement:

1. Background, including family history, psychological/ psychiatric workups, and pre-involvement ego structure, in order to determine the extent to which satanic involvement is primary.
2. Behavioral problems, e.g., criminal activities, acting out, in order to determine if the satanic involvement is associated with such problems - a connection which should not be automatically assumed.
3. Group involvement, that is, what type and what depth of involvement does the person have with a group, of which Tucker lists three: 1) dabbler groups (people, usually teenagers, experimenting with satanic rituals), 2) criminal groups (groups run by an adult who uses teens' attraction to Satanism to enhance drug selling, prostitution, theft, and pornography), and 3) teen gangs (gangs that merge various racist, Nazi, and other ideologies with Satanism).
4. Attachments to the belief system to determine whether the person is a



knowledgeable adherent of Satanism or an uninformed dabbler, or is attached to Satanism because of motivations other than belief in its philosophy.

5. Attachments to various experiences (e.g., altered states of consciousness, "encountering a demonic entity," "thrill killings," etc.) that can have a compelling power over the person and shape his behavior in ways that uninformed observers will not notice or will attribute to other causes.

Except for cases in which a family member is involved with a clearly destructive satanic cult, the most significant factor to explore will be the involved person's psychological state and background. As noted earlier, Wheeler *et al.* (1988) suggested that rituals of Satanism intrigue adolescents because they appear to provide: 1) power and control, 2) opportunity for rebellion, 3) opportunity for anti-social and sexual behavior, 4) excitement and escape from boredom, 5) solace and gratification, 6) acceptance and belonging, 7) feeling of exalted status through special knowledge, 8) satisfaction of religious needs. Determining the family member's primary motivations for satanic involvement will enable helpers to identify alternative avenues toward fulfilling these needs.

It is also helpful to examine the involved person's outside influences. For many adolescents the primary outside influence is the peer group. If the involved adolescent's peers are relatively normal youths, then parents may try to work with their child's friends to promote constructive behavior and discourage satanic experimentation. If, on the other hand, the peer group consists largely of alienated and antisocial youngsters, the parents' task becomes more difficult. And if the peer group consists of a *bona fide* satanic cult,, the challenge will most likely be even greater.

A number of cases have been reported in which teenagers have been unwittingly lured into involvement with adult satanic groups. They may be approached at rock concerts by adults who invite them to parties where drugs and alcohol are provided. Gradually sexual activities are introduced; children and animals may be involved. These activities are photographed or taped and are used to blackmail the teenagers, who are then forced to participate in satanic rituals. The adults engaged in these activities may be actual practitioners of Satanism or they may merely be child molesters or pornographers using Satanism to intimidate their prey. In either case, the effect on their victims is devastating (Pulling, 1989). Young people caught in this situation will need reassurance and protection. Law enforcement authorities must also be notified if illegal acts have been committed.

Parents should also examine their own behavior as a contributing factor in their child's difficulties. Frequently, family behavioral patterns can become self-perpetuating. A simplified example: John gets poor grades in school. Dad calls him stupid and lazy. John, whose motivation for schoolwork is zero, can't imagine getting better grades and interprets Dad's criticism as a permanent rejection. John seeks solace in a peer group espousing anti-social values (i.e., that defines failure

as "success," thereby buttressing a faltering self-esteem). Dad criticizes John even more, causing John to withdraw deeper into a subculture of alienation. Eventually John gets involved in satanist dabbling. Dad defines John's problem as Satanism and seeks help from a clergyman. If the clergyman is not sensitive to the family dynamics in this case, he may support the father's incomplete assessment of John's problem.

## **Educate Yourself**

Family members concerned about a relative's satanic involvement should educate themselves about Satanism and psychological development. In studying Satanism, it is important to be discerning. This field is often sensationalized, exaggerated, and distorted; parents should always identify and evaluate the evidence for claims that are made. Many well-intentioned persons *make* sweeping generalizations based on their own personal experience or on claims based on little or no evidence. Each human being is unique, and different people will respond differently to the same environment. Family members should not merely ask the question, "How does Satanism affect people?" That is a general question appropriate for booklets like this one, aiming to provide generalized guidelines for a broad audience. Family members should ask the question, "How has Satanism affected the person I care about?" Knowing in a general way about Satanism and psychological development will help answer this important question. But it is just as important to know about the involved person's unique psychological development and response to Satanism.

## **Communicate Effectively**

If one wants to help a loved one in danger, whether because of satanic involvement or other reasons, one must be able to communicate with that person. Helpers should:

- Stay calm and keep the lines of communication open. One cannot have any constructive influence without communication.
- Respectfully *listen* to the other person's point of view. Find out what he/she believes and why. Inquire into his feelings and thoughts. Find out if he has doubts or unanswered questions - but don't pounce on them as soon as they are uncovered.
- Be patient.
- Be more inclined to calmly ask questions, rather than offer opinions.
- Question his/her beliefs or try to get him to question them, but do so in a calm, respectful manner so as not to push him into a defensive corner. Timing is critical.
- Calmly express your point of view, but don't insist that he agree. Respect his

right to disagree. Sometimes it is more effective simply to plant "thought seeds."

- Demonstrate your love and concern, but do not make this contingent upon agreement or obedience, for doing this will be rightly perceived as a bribe. Instead show love and concern even when disagreement is substantial.
- When possible, neutralize anger by analyzing its source, for anger begets anger. But do not artificially stifle anger, for the other person will most likely sense the insincerity inherent in stifling emotion. Instead, show the sorrow, pain, and anxiety which are usually the root causes of anger.
- Let the other person know that his/her actions hurt or worry you, but simultaneously respect his/her right to do as he/she sees fit, so long as they do not injure themselves or others.
- Don't "walk on eggs" out of fear of making a mistake. Bonds of love are not irreparably shattered by one mistake or a collection of minor mistakes.

Patiently listening, expressing one's love, and modeling calmness and rationality help create a climate of trust. If the involved person trusts a helper, he or she will be more willing to discuss his or her involvement. Unfortunately, following this advice does not always produce the desired results. Sometimes a Satanism-involved person's mind is so taken over by the occult worldview that a rational dialogue is impossible. Sometimes his world is so full of problems, pain, and insecurity that he feels he cannot deal with it. In such cases, professional help may be necessary.

## **Be Patient and Set a Hierarchy of Goals**

Psychological problems rarely lend themselves to rapid solutions. Therefore, to help a loved one it is important that family members maintain a realistic timetable and break their ultimate goal down into a sequential series of objectives. Focusing only on an ultimate outcome (e.g., "getting him to give up this fascination with Satanism") can be discouraging because, in most cases, no single action will bring about that outcome. The ensuing discouragement can cause family members to get angry at their loved one in a futile attempt to "pound some sense" into him or her. This approach backfires much more often than it works.

## **Exercise Authority When Appropriate**

The more adolescents are alienated from their families the less likely are they to pay attention to their wishes or demands. Because most families who seek help (such as that offered by this booklet) are troubled by such alienation, our suggestions focus on building rapport and effective communication. But in the less serious cases, parents will often still have considerable influence over their child. The respectful but firm exercise of this authority - "I forbid you to go to that ritual,

read this material, listen to this music" - can often prevent a youth from getting deeply involved in something that could be destructive. Parents should, however, explore why Satanism attracts their child and try to help him or her develop more constructive interests.

If the exercise of parental authority fails, parents should reevaluate their strategy and consider some of the suggestions outlined here, including that of professional consultation. A mother of a son with a drinking problem, for example, related mournfully to a family therapist that she had told her son to stop drinking. The therapist asked her how many times, and she said "a thousand times." The therapist then asked, "did he stop," to which the mother obviously replied, "no." "Why, then," said the therapist, "do you keep asking him to stop drinking?" This mother persisted in an unproductive strategy because her love for her son compelled her to "do something," but she didn't know what else to do besides plead with him. The therapist helped her identify alternate strategies.

Another situation in which to consider exercising authority is that of recalcitrant minors involved in destructive behavior. In these cases, however, the recourse is to the authority of agencies that help troubled children, not to the authority of the parents. It is difficult for parents to "give up" on a troubled child and turn over care to outside authorities. However, there are circumstances in which this is the proper thing to do, because, for example, the child needs a highly structured, therapeutic environment available only in professionally run treatment centers.

## **Know When to Seek Professional Help**

The skills of parenting are traditionally passed down from generation to generation. In earlier times, when society did not change much, this tradition worked. But contemporary society has been wrenched by so much rapid change that traditional parenting skills are often not able to cope with certain special problems. Intense satanic involvement, especially when accompanied by serious psychological problems that antedate the involvement, is one area that may tax the skills of most parents.

There is no shame in seeking help from a psychiatrist, psychologist, social worker, or pastoral counselor. Consulting a mental health professional does not mean one is "crazy." Such consultations can often relieve parents of unwarranted guilt, sharpen their parenting skills, and help them persuade their child to seek help.

We suggest that parents consider seeking professional assistance if any of the following has occurred:

1. Their child is in a destructive behavior pattern and does not respond to parental authority or advice; and/or
2. their child shows signs of serious psychological disturbance, e.g., bizarre behavior, hallucinations, enduring depression, suicidal tendencies, drug or alcohol abuse, extreme social isolation, frequent anxiety attacks; and/or

3. parents lack confidence in their capacity to constructively influence their child.

Parents should be aware that, occasionally, troubled adolescents fascinated by Satanism can become dangerous. The resource organizations listed in the Appendix can sometimes be helpful in finding appropriate professional assistance.

## Chapter Nine

# Suggestions for Mental Health Professionals

Many psychodynamically inclined mental health professionals tend to underestimate the impact certain environments can have on a person's behavior. When cults first became a public concern in the 1970s, most mental health professionals whom parents consulted assumed that their children joined cults in order to fulfill some unconscious need. What they did not realize was that a great many, and probably the majority, of cult joiners were victims of extremely persuasive and controlling environments that *exploited* needs, rather than fulfilled them.

Not everyone approached by cults "bought their sell" or was harmed. People are different, and some can resist certain types of persuasive environments better than others. The effects of cult joining, then, are somewhat analogous to insect allergies. John's going into shock after a bee sting results from his special sensitivity to the bee's toxin. Most people would consider it ridiculous to blame John for his symptoms simply because Mary didn't go into shock when she was stung.

Involvement in Satanism and occultism can be construed as a toxin that will affect people in different ways. Some may be able to sustain a large "dose" and not show adverse effects. Others may fall apart psychologically after just a brief exposure. Reliably predicting how particular individuals will react is simply not possible at present. Therefore, when confronted by a worried parent or an individual involved in Satanism, mental health professionals should avoid leaping to conclusions, especially after a cursory evaluation.

The recommendations presented below are tentative. They are based on our review of the pertinent literature, discussions with colleagues, extrapolation from Dr. Langone's treatment of non-satanic cult cases, and limited work with occultists and satanists. Much more clinical work must be reported on and formal research studies conducted before confident clinical recommendations can be made.

### **Working with Deeply Involved Satanists**

The few studies that do exist (Bourget et al., 1988; Wheeler, 1988) suggest that people who become deeply involved with Satanism tend to have serious psychopathology that antedates any satanic involvement. However, because the satanic belief system encourages belief in magical power and sanctions aggressive feelings and behavior, involvement probably exacerbates pre-existing psychopathology, which usually aims at compensating for perceived psychological deficits or inferiority.

Many seriously disturbed satanists, especially, those convicted of violent and

bizarre crimes, tend to be solitary. Although at one time they may have belonged to a satanic group, their social inadequacies caused them to be rejected or to withdraw. Their study of Satanism, practice of satanic rituals, and violent or sexually perverted behavior tends to further fragment and alienate an already isolated and disordered mind. Satanic rituals, especially when hallucinogenic drugs are involved, can be powerful dissociative experiences, and can cause what were once merely appealing ideas of magical power to become full-fledged delusions. These rituals, in conjunction with the "anti-conscience" ideology of Satanism, can, also help satanists dissociate, even eliminate, guilt that their violent and/or sexually perverted behavior may elicit. This "exorcism", of the conscience is probably very liberating, though socially destructive, for many troubled persons. It gives them the permission and capacity to act out, rather than resolve, their socially unacceptable aggressive and sexual impulses.

The conscience-destroying capacity of Satanism can be magnified in groups, where social manipulation and the personal charisma of the leader are added to the power of ritual, doctrine, and, in some cases, drugs. Some satanic groups, such as LaVey's Church of Satan, ostensibly decry violence and criminal behavior. They claim to help "uptight" people shed themselves of unnecessary guilt and sexual inhibitions. Perhaps this is the case for some people in some groups. Other groups, however, can be extremely destructive, as the Matamoros ritual killings made clear.

Clinical work with deeply involved satanists can be very challenging. First of all, a satanist would come for help only if he had renounced Satanism or been "sentenced" to therapy as part of a criminal conviction. In the latter case, therapy can focus on: a) eliminating conscience-suppressing factors (e.g., rituals, drugs, group contact), b) connecting the person to dissociated guilt in order to make him realize that he needs help and to provide some motive for therapy, c) analyzing the causes and consequences of satanic involvement, especially pre-existing pathology, d) providing appropriate channels for relieving the inappropriately dissociated guilt that therapy purposely elicits, and e) helping the person find socially constructive means of increasing his/her self-esteem. Naturally, in some cases, guilt may be nonexistent or inaccessible. These people, like classical psychopaths, can be subjected to an imposed system of rewards and punishments designed to contain their destructively anti-social impulses.

Satanists who voluntarily come for help probably do so because they are plagued by guilt and/or afraid of retribution. These people can be treated similarly to trauma victims, except that their guilt is not inappropriate and irrational (as is "survivor guilt," for example). Their guilt, if they have in fact participated in violent and/or sexually perverse crimes, is appropriate to any socialized member of the human species. Their pasts cannot simply be erased. As they get in touch with their guilt, they may rightly feel a need for expiation. They can be encouraged to try to make amends in whatever way seems appropriate. And they can be encouraged to learn and practice attitudes and skills that will ameliorate pre-

existing psychopathology and help them to lead relatively normal lives in the future.

## **Dabblers**

The term "dabblers" refers to people, usually youths, who have a superficial involvement in or fascination with Satanism. Much youthful dabbling results simply from the ready availability of information on Satanism via heavy metal music lyrics, "dungeons and dragons"-type games, sorcery novels, movies and television programs, and newspaper and magazine reports ironically designed to discourage Satanism, not promote it. Added to this is normal youthful rebelliousness and the capacity of drugs to, make satanic fantasies seem like concrete realities. Most of this dabbling is probably innocuous, but some young persons may react very negatively to the satanic "toxin."

In working with dabblers, it is important to pay attention to the satanic involvement, but *not* to ignore signs of everyday psychopathology. As noted earlier, Wheeler *et al.* (1988) suggested that Satanism intrigues adolescents because it appears to provide: 1) power and control, 2) opportunity for rebellion, 3) opportunity for anti-social and sexual behavior, 4) excitement and escape from boredom, 5) solace and gratification, 6) acceptance and belonging, 7) feeling of exalted status through special knowledge, and 8) satisfaction of religious needs. Those affected are often intelligent, inquisitive, deeply committed and show great potential. These authors further suggest that assessments should encompass self-esteem, family, unmet needs, social relationships, school performance, and health. Therapists should carefully observe the involved youth's possessions for satanic symbolism, and obtain as much information as possible from family, friends, and social agencies.

One successful approach noted by these authors involves stripping the youth of all satanic symbols - whether he is hospitalized or not - in order to distance him from the subculture. This has the benefit of involving him with others outside the negative peer group, replacing rewards for secrecy with rewards for openness, helping him to compare the liabilities of the negative lifestyle with whatever life goals he may have, and substituting more effective ways of achieving those goals than the negative ones of magic and control over others. Satanism-involved youth need to develop confidence and personal skills that will allow them to form close relationships outside the satanic subculture. Values clarification can help them to explore new purpose and meaning in life. Therapy can help provide motivational insights and, by offering a safe place to deal with intense negative emotions such as anger, pain, frustration, and alienation, can provide an opportunity to verbalize conflicts instead of acting them out in destructive ways. Clients can be introduced to non-satanic activities that also produce exhilaration - for example, programs such as Outward Bound. The need for power can be guided away from Satanism and toward personal mastery, self-control, and nondestructive assertion, thereby



helping to resolve issues of identity and self-esteem. Families should be involved in therapy. Parents and siblings need to learn to show love more effectively to fulfill the adolescent's unmet needs, and opportunities should be given to work out family conflicts. Parent networks and support groups are helpful.

Lorna and William Goldberg (personal communication, September 1988), social workers who have conducted a monthly group for ex-cult members for more than 12 years, believe that dabblers often lack adequate skills to compete. Rituals give them a structure which they can master, unlike the more amorphous goals of society, and fulfill previously unmet fantasies related to power and control. Satanic cults can give these youngsters instant gratification and simple, easily mastered activities and esoteric knowledge with relatively little effort, unlike the more demanding tasks of school and normal social development. These appeals are magnified for adolescents from traditions that believe in spiritualism and magic (e.g., youth from West Indian and certain Hispanic backgrounds) or adolescents who have been influenced by contemporary New Age beliefs such as channeling, astral projection, and the like. As noted earlier, Gallup found that one-third of the nation's teens believe in reincarnation and witchcraft.

Bourget *et al.* (1988) attributed satanist involvement of the youth they worked with to a combination of alienation, low self-esteem, and "a slow resolution of Erickson's fifth development stage: identity vs. role confusion" (p. 197). They suggest that the satanist cult allows the adolescent to achieve a synthetic sense of identity and to bolster his self-esteem through "believing and belonging." They further suggest that altered states of consciousness can enhance the commitment and motivation for staying. The result can be "close-mindedness, loss of time from school, work and other usual activities, destructive acts" all leading to "further unnoticed alienation" (p. 198).

Tucker (1989) makes a useful distinction between Profile 1 and Profile 2 teenage satanists. Profile 1 children typically have a long history of problems with socialization. Often described as loners, or underachievers, they tend to be above average in intelligence and seem to be stimulated by Satanism's themes of power and violence. They often have pathological family backgrounds, have exhibited aggression, sometimes at an early age, and seem profoundly limited in their capacity to trust, bond, and share with others, who often view them as manipulative.

For these youths, Satanism "states what they already 'know': that no one should be trusted, that love and trust end in pain and disillusionment, that everyone is hypocritical and will hurt others if they can, and that in the end no one will ever really care" (p. 11). Satanism "appeals to these troubled youths not only because it "empowers" them, but because the reactions of other people bring them the attention they crave and the power that comes with such attention. Joining a group of satanists can provide a sense of belonging that, however conditioned upon their continued participation in deviant and even violent practices, they may

never have experienced before. Youngsters whose sense of identity is undeveloped can be especially vulnerable to and shaped by such groups.

Profile 2 youth are outwardly well-adjusted, popular, from normal family backgrounds, intelligent, curious, and seekers of meaning and purpose. They tend to turn to Satanism in reaction to the hypocrisy that they see in the world. Having lost faith in all that the hypocritical world deems good, they turn to Satanism: a) to express their outrage toward the world, and b) to justify the self-indulgence that seems to be the only logical course of action in a world without values.

Tucker (1989) describes two illustrative cases, which are reprinted here with permission from the author.

### **Case #1**

Jason is 14. He is in the custody of the Children's Aid Society. His mother is an alcoholic single parent. His father left the family when Jason was two. Jason has a history of abuse and neglect. His school records reflect a history of under-achievement, and his peer interactions have always been difficult. Toward adults, he is aggressive and often violent. His older brother is apparently involved with various forms of crime, including drugs.

Jason was recently sent to a psychiatric facility for assessment. His behavior had deteriorated rapidly over the past few months. Aggressive incidents had increased in seriousness and frequency. In particular, group-home staff were concerned about Jason's behavior during the incidents. He appeared completely out of control. His expressions seemed to reflect a rather bizarre quality, as if he was no longer *connected* to himself. The effect on staff was immediate - everyone was afraid of Jason, afraid of his unpredictable outbursts.

Prior to this sudden downturn in his behavior, Jason had become infatuated with certain forms of heavy metal music. He listened to this music obsessively. Its themes of violence apparently enthralled him. These themes came out in his drawings, his writings, and in conversations with others. His clothing gradually changed to reflect images he found on some of the album covers. At first, the group-home staff thought little of it since his peers generally were reflecting the same styles.

But Jason seemed to take it further. He purchased a copy of the *Satanic Bible* and took it with him everywhere. Satanic images, such as the inverted pentagram, inverted crosses and the numerals 666 appeared on all of his school notebooks. He wrote small articles outlining the philosophy of Satanism, and began calling himself by a new name. Staff found special knives, candles, goblets, and other odd items in his room. Other residents suggested that he had ritually killed small animals. From time to time he could be heard chanting.

His peers were frightened. He clearly enjoyed their fear, often embellishing his stories. He claimed that he had special powers to harm his enemies, a claim taken seriously by other residents. Tensions in the group-home rose. Staff were not immune to the tensions. Most had seen the "Geraldo" two-hour special on Satanism and weren't sure how to proceed. As the levels of tension and fear rose, Jason's behavior deteriorated further. Despite staff attempts to limit his interest in Satanism, his involvement grew. He claimed he was "possessed" from time to time by an entity which he had named and drawn repeatedly. He felt that the entity was more powerful and capable than he could ever be. He said he welcomed its presence.

Initial psychiatric evaluations found little. His behavior in assessment settings was exemplary. Staff frustration grew because of the shared sense that, sooner or later, he was going to seriously harm someone. His violent episodes, although explosive, had a sense of organization or purpose behind them - he seemed to be taking extreme pleasure from them.

## **Case #2**

Sharon, on the other hand, came from an apparently normal and loving home. She was an excellent student, had many good friends, was on the student council, and seemed happy. Her parents were well off, and were happy with their relationship with Sharon and each other.

Sharon's behavior and appearance transformed suddenly, however. Being 15, she had always been acutely aware of her appearance. This changed. She dropped her friends, dressed exclusively in black, and wore various amulets and jewelry with satanic symbolism. She dropped out of family life. Her parents became increasingly concerned, although they thought it might just be a "phase."

Her notebooks at school, and her bedroom at home, all reflected her fascination with images of horror and killing. In particular, she became infatuated with suicide. Communication with others ceased. She appeared robotic and cold to her parents. At times, they felt that she was just "not there," although physically present.

One evening, she had a "vision." The vision told her that she would have to kill her teacher in order to achieve a higher state of consciousness and higher powers generally. The next day she actually took a knife to school and attempted to assault her teacher. She failed. After the attempt she ran from the school, went home, and drank some duplicating fluid. Her suicide attempt was unsuccessful. She was taken into custody and hospitalized.

Needless to say, therapy with Profile 1 satanists is very difficult. The attachments the person develops to the belief system (which provides a specious sense of power and control) and the subjective experiences elicited by rituals and violence can destroy the capacity for love, warmth, and trust, and leave the person in a

state of moral desensitization. Moreover, even if the destructive satanic attachments are severed, pre-existing psychological problems, which are usually considerable, must be addressed.

Profile 2 clients are easier to treat because they usually have: a) a healthy pre-involvement identity (i.e., a capacity for love, warmth, and trust), b) a supportive family, and c) a sincere desire for spiritual meaning. The clinician's goal is to reawaken these positive attributes, help the client understand the "hidden agenda" of Satanism, and discover constructive alternatives that can meet the need for meaning.

## **Ritualistic Abuse**

Recent research findings indicate that the incidence of child sexual abuse and sexual contact between children and adults is much greater than previously believed (Finkelhor, 1979; Russell, 1983); perhaps as many as one-third of all children have had sexual contact with adults. Finkelhor (1979) found that 9% of males were sexually abused as children.

As researchers have paid more attention to child sexual abuse, they have discovered that a significant percentage of such abuse involves ritualistic practices. Finkelhor, *et al.* (1988) define ritualistic abuse as:

...abuse that occurs in a context linked to some symbols or group activity that have a religious, magical or supernatural connotation, and where the invocation of these symbols or activities are repeated over time and used to frighten and intimidate children. (Cited in Cozolino, 1989a, p. 2.)

Finkelhor and his colleagues identify three types of ritualistic abuse:

1. cult-based ritualistic abuse, in which the sexual abuse is a means for inducing religious experience in the perpetrators;
2. pseudo-ritualistic abuse, in which perpetrators, whose goal is sexual exploitation, employ rituals to intimidate children;
3. psychopathological ritualism, in which the abuse is part of an individual's or small group's delusional or obsessive system.

Finkelhor's research team found that 13% of 1,639 cases of sexual abuse in 270 day care centers involved ritual, an estimated rate of approximately .6 cases of ritual abuse per 10,000 children (Kelley, 1989). Charlier and Downing's skeptical review (1988) reported that of 91 charges of ritual abuse 23 resulted in convictions, 45 in dismissals, and 11 in acquittals, while 2 were pending.

Kelley (1988a, cited in Cozolino, 1989a) found that ritually abused children in day care, when compared with sexually abused children in day care, were more likely to have ingested drugs designed to make them drowsy (74% vs. 28%), been subjected to physical restraints (71% vs. 37%), consumed excrement (51% vs.

25%), performed sexual activities with other children (94% vs. 43%), and been subjected to threats of dismemberment (37% vs. 15%), death (85% vs. 56%), and the death of their parents (94% vs. 75%).

Despite the mounting empirical evidence, the bizarreness of ritualistic abuse reports, the sensationalism that often characterizes media reports, and the fact that a significant percentage of allegations do not result in convictions (Charlier and Downing, 1988) have fueled skepticism, and even disbelief, about this phenomenon. Perpetrators of ritual abuse capitalize upon this skepticism by persuading children that nobody will believe them, by making them take part in mock killings of other children (which the child is led to believe is real), by telling them fantastic stories such as that a bomb has been implanted in their stomachs and will explode if they tell anyone about the ritual practices, and by other manipulations designed to make children's allegations incredible (Kelley, 1988b).

Catherine Gould has organized an abridged version of her comprehensive list of signs and symptoms of ritual abuse (presented in Cozolino, 1989c). Clinical findings suggest that children who have been victims of ritual abuse may have problems associated with:

1. *Sexual behavior and beliefs*: preoccupation with sexual topics, age-inappropriate knowledge about sex and/or sexualized behavior; compulsive masturbation; references to sexual activities between others or between self and others; pain in the genital area and fear of having their genitals washed; etc
2. *Toileting and the bathroom*: avoidance of using the bathroom; acting out inappropriate toileting behavior, preoccupation with urine and feces; discussion of urine and feces at mealtime; using words for bodily wastes which are not used at home; drawing pictures of self or others urinating or defecating; etc.
3. *The supernatural, rituals, occult symbols, religion*: fear of ghosts, devils, monsters, vampires, evil spirits and occult symbols; singing odd songs or chants; performing ritualized dances; writing the number 666; drawing pentagrams, inverted crosses and other occult symbols; praying to the devil or performing magic; etc.
4. *Small spaces or being tied up*: fear of closets or other small spaces and of being locked in same; fear of being tied up; trying to confine or tie up others; fear of being hung upside down; etc.
5. *Death*: fear of death or the death of family members or friends.
6. *The doctor's office*: fear or mistrust of doctors; extreme fearfulness of shots, blood, or blood tests; fear of death from shots, blood, or blood tests; sexual behavior on the examining table (e.g., appears to expect sexual contact with doctor); etc.

7. *Certain colors*: fear or strong dislike of black or red (sometimes orange, brown, purple); stating that black is their favorite color, referring to ritual use of the colors that are inconsistent with what has been experienced in family religious practices; etc.
8. *Eating*: eating disorders; refusal to eat foods because they are red or brown; fear that food is poisoned; stating that they were forced to ingest blood, urine, feces, or human or animal body parts; etc.
9. *Emotional problems (including speech, sleep, and learning)*: rapid mood swings; resisting authority; agitation; hyperactivity; flat affect; poor attention span; learning problems; fearful clingy behavior; regression (including speech); accident proneness; sleep disturbance; etc.
10. *Family relationships*: fear that parents will die; fear of abandonment; fear of being kidnapped; fear that parents want to kill them; child seems distant to parent; avoidance of close physical contact; child attracts or initiates sexual contact with others; child puts excrement on a sibling, parent, or pet; etc.
11. *Play or peer relations*: destroying toys; hurting other children; acting out themes of death, mutilation, occultism, sexual perversion, excretion, cannibalism, and burial; play involves themes of drugging, threats, humiliation, torture, bondage, magic; etc.
12. *Other fears, disclosures or strange beliefs*: fear of being put in jail and/or having the house broken into, robbed or burned down; fear of robbers, "bad people," "strangers," and police, discussing drugs, pills, and drug-like effects, discussing unusual places like cemeteries, mortuaries, church basements; belief that something foreign has been put inside of their body such as a bomb, Satan's heart, a monster; alluding to having nude pictures taken of them; striking provocative poses; etc.

Kelly's (1988a) comparative study of sexually abused and ritually abused children in day care centers found that the former showed higher levels and more enduring symptoms of fearful, inhibited, and anxious behaviors. Their parents also showed more severe and enduring symptomatology than parents of sexually abused children or of non-abused children (Kelley, 1990). Kelley' (1988b) summarizes Gould's (1987) observations:

The sexual acts involved in ritualistic abuse, for example, may cause the child to complain of genital pain or to act out sexually. Rituals involving excrement can lead to inappropriate toileting behaviors. Perpetrators threats make the victim fearful. Forced participation in occult activities may cause the child to be preoccupied with the devil, magic, and supernatural powers. The defensive dissociation typically observed in victims of ritualistic abuse may, however, leave them relatively symptom-free until they begin to disclose the abuse (p. 233).

Kelley (1988b) makes the following treatment recommendations:

Disclosure of ritualistic abuse should occur within a highly supportive therapeutic relationship and should unfold over a period of time, at a pace that is manageable for the child. Investigators should avoid attempting to obtain too much information during an initial interview. The child who has disclosed ritualized abuse will need constant reassurance of his or her safety. The child's guilt needs to be alleviated. Dissociative defenses must be recognized and addressed. In addition, since therapists treating ritually abused clients often feel isolated and under stress, they too need support, especially from colleagues (pp. 234-235).

## **Adult Survivors**

A 1989 conference on multiple personality and dissociative disorders included a workshop on "Critical Issues in the Treatment of Victims of Satanic Ritual Abuse." At least several dozen therapeutic cases involving adult survivors of childhood ritual abuse have been reported at such conferences or in the literature. These cases usually involve diagnoses of Multiple Personality Disorder (MPD). Some experts on dissociative phenomena suspect that some therapists may come to believe and even unwittingly contribute to the delusional systems of certain clients, especially those who were victims of non-ritualized child sexual abuse (Orne, personal communication, November 18, 1988; Singer, personal communication, September 9, 1989; Dell, 1988). However, the proven existence of ritual abuse in day care and the association of MPD with an innate capacity to dissociate an exposure to childhood trauma (Braun and Sachs, 1985) suggest that at least some adults are in fact ritual abuse survivors. It should be kept in mind, however, that the spurious cases could be the most aggressive in seeking media and therapeutic attention. Greater skepticism than that to which therapists are accustomed is certainly warranted. Therapists should be careful not to suggest subtly that abuse memories are ritualistic.

Treatment of MPD is very challenging, especially when ritual abuse is suspected of being central to early childhood trauma. Cozolino (1989b) offers the following thoughts on treatment:

The difficulties presented to the clinician by ritual abuse survivors who develop MPD are extreme. Dissociation undermines the sense of an ongoing, unified observing and experiencing ego which is fundamental to the psychotherapeutic process (Kluft, 1984). Accurate diagnosis is made difficult in that the various subpersonalities play different roles in the patient's intrapsychic life and can present quite differing symptom pictures. Hicks (1985) describes a patient with MPD who had been given 12 psychiatric diagnoses in ten years. These patients may be diagnosed as being depressed, schizophrenic, psychopathic, or borderline depending on which personality is in control at the time of the clinical interview.

The use of brainwashing techniques to initiate the child into a belief system may result in material which sounds like religious delusions or magical

thinking, and which may be mislabeled as paranoia and/or psychosis. Perhaps the greatest risk in these cases is to repeat Freud's error regarding hysteria, i.e., misidentify the symptomatic sequel of trauma for manifestations of inner deviance (Masson, 1984).. At best, this is unhelpful; at worst, it recapitulates and expands the abuse. Additionally, it also supports the cult's prediction that no one will believe a victim if they reveal what has been done to them (p. 136).

Survivors whose disclosures are received with exclamations of fear and/or disbelief will usually stop talking about their experiences (Johnson, 1988). While horror and denial are understandable first reactions to descriptions of ritual abuse, it should be stressed that insensitive and inappropriate attitudes toward alleged survivors run the double risk of victimizing the victims and hampering further investigation of their claims. It should be possible to examine evidence for such claims objectively and dispassionately without violating the rights or sensitivities of those involved.



## Chapter Ten

### Legal Issues

The First Amendment to the Constitution simply states that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." Legal precedent has established that the courts are prohibited from considering the merits or fallacies of a religion and from comparing the tenets of new religions with those of established religions. Religious beliefs in and of themselves are held to pose no threat to the rights of others, and their free expression and advocacy may not be interfered with; they are absolutely protected. However, *actions* which violate civil or criminal statutes are *not* absolutely protected by the First Amendment, regardless of whether they are carried out in accordance with sincerely held religious beliefs. In judging religiously motivated conduct, the courts must weigh the interests of the religious group against the State's obligation to protect its citizens from force and fraud (Lucksted and Martel, 1982).

Nor does the First Amendment protect conduct pursuant to a professed religious belief which is not in fact sincerely held, and this may be tested in court. The belief may be unconventional, as in the case of Satanism, since the test is couched in terms of "whether a given belief that is sincere and meaningful occupies a place in the life of its possessor parallel to that filled by the orthodox belief in God" (*ibid.*). In sum, none of the criminal activities with which we are concerned - from vandalism to human sacrifice - can be legally justified on the grounds of free exercise of Satanism as a religion.

However, until a crime has been committed, there is little the authorities can do. Since the worship of Satan, *per se*, is not prohibited, peaceful satanist rituals may not be interfered with in the absence of illegal activities. A group may make outrageous statements, but so long as no action is taken, their rights of free speech and religion are protected. The police may pursue information and interview members of the group, but further actions such as surveillance, record checks, seeking of informants, or establishing undercover operations are forbidden in the absence of indications of criminal activity. Police officers who proceed with investigations in the absence of "due cause" can be held accountable in court if their actions violate the constitutional rights of the group's members (DeStefano, 1989).

Freedom of religious belief is recognized as a Federal right protected against State interference (Lucksted and Martel, 1982); however, actions which are allowable vary from state to state. For example, the ritual sacrifice of animals is allowed in some states and prohibited in others, but leaving dead animals on lawns or doorsteps - as has been reported in a number of instances - may come under statutes covering anything from harassment to extortion, depending on intent

(DeStefano, 1989). In regard to the relevance of satanic beliefs to criminal actions, the Maine Supreme Judicial Court ruled in 1986 that Scott Waterhouse, a young self-styled satanist convicted of having murdered 12-year-old Glycelle Cote, had not been deprived of a fair trial. "We acknowledge that evidence of defendant's satanic beliefs carried with it the potential for creating unfair prejudice," the court stated. "Nevertheless, the evidence was relevant and probative on the issues of both motive and intent, and... for error at all to exist that probative value must be substantially overbalanced by the danger of unfair prejudice. Weighing these factors, we conclude that the admission of evidence regarding Satanism was not so highly prejudicial, nor did it so taint defendant's trial, as to amount to obvious error" (State of Maine v. Scott Waterhouse, Decision No. 4216, Law Docket No. Lin-85-23).

In some states new legislation has been proposed to help law enforcement deal with the rash of ritualized crime. In June 1989 the Illinois General Assembly voted to send two new measures to the Governor of that state. One would instruct judges to consider stiffer penalties for persons convicted of torturing people or animals, stealing corpses, desecrating property, or kidnapping if such activities were part of a ritual. The other proposed to establish a penalty of \$100,000 in fines and up to seven years in prison for anyone who "mutilates, dismembers or tortures" another person as part of a ceremony or ritual (Hawthorne, June 26, 1989).

# Conclusions

Because of the psychological pain, bizarreness, unbelievability, and lack of hard evidence associated with so many aspects of Satanism, drawing conclusions at this early stage of study is a hazardous venture. The authors of this report have somewhat different perspectives on the evidence at hand. Two conclusions are presented so that the reader can benefit from both.

## **Conclusions:** Linda O. Blood

Preparing this report has sharpened my awareness of the issue of skepticism versus denial in regard to destructive cults in general and Satanism in particular. Skepticism, when appropriate, recognizes that there is insufficient evidence to support an assertion; denial is the refusal to recognize a problem when the facts clearly demonstrate that it exists. In the case of Satanism, a "wait and see" attitude concerning murky areas such as generational cults is clearly warranted by the current scarcity of evidence to corroborate the testimony of "survivors." However, commentators who attempt to trivialize aspects of Satanism which can be clearly shown to represent significant problems, such as teenage "dabbling," are engaging in denial. As an example of this, I recently read an article in which an academic scoffer commented that teenage involvement in Satanism represents nothing more than "mischief" and a wish to shock grownups through provocative acts such as writing satanic graffiti. Assuming that this person is aware of the abundant evidence of the serious nature of some teenage participation in Satanism - which includes the torture of animals, rape, and sometimes even murder - a remark such as this has to reflect evasion of the facts.

The usual reason given for this attitude is the need to avoid "witch hunt hysteria." But it appears to me that some scoffers abuse this legitimate concern by setting up as straw men certain religiously oriented Satanism-fighters (particularly Christian fundamentalists), exposing their excesses, and then trying to portray everyone else who is concerned with the problem in the same light. Some of these same scoffers prefer to rely on the "responsible expertise" of the leaders of satanist "churches" in assessing the problem of occult-related violence. This is tantamount to relying upon official spokespersons for the Unification Church or Scientology to provide refutations to our criticism of more conventional destructive cults. As Dr. Langone points out, an objective and realistic assessment is not likely to be found at either of these extremes.

My own perspective on the issue of Satanism and occult-related violence is somewhat different from Dr. Langone's, since I am a former member of one of the publicly recognized satanist "churches," the Temple of Set. The Temple recruited openly within the occult subculture, and every year several people left the group of their own will or were ejected. I was not physically abused by the group, nor did I witness orgies, violence, blood sacrifices, or illegal activities. I never rose above

the second of six levels, and I do not know for certain what went on in high-level circles, but I have no reason to believe that such activities were engaged in by the group as a whole. (As to what the Temple is doing now - or what individual members have done or continue to do on their own time - I can only speculate from the reports I receive and from what I read in the newspapers. Some of this information has been quite disturbing.)

Still, having been a member of even a non-violent satanist "church" has given me an insider's view of the satanist mindset. (At the same time, the fact that my involvement was fueled more by a personal relationship than by an interest in Satanism helped to provide enough intellectual distance to keep me from being drawn completely into that mindset.) In the case of the Temple, this mindset included a presumption of spiritual elitism based on the notion that we were superior beings, the "chosen of the god Set. We were expected to "evolve" into gods and goddesses, and, as such, we would have the power and prerogative to bend reality to our wills.

Our attitude toward outsiders was an arrogant kind of *noblesse oblige*. "Magically" speaking, their lives were at our disposal, and some Temple members did commit "sacrifice by proxy," to borrow a term from Anton LaVey's Church of Satan. This took the form of a "destruction ritual," or "D.R.," during which a curse was placed on the individual who had incurred the wrath of the Setian(s). I once took part in a D.R. with three high-level Temple members who wished to eliminate a troublesome neighbor. The option of physical violence was quickly rejected, but not out of concern for the rights of the accused or the requirements of the law; avoiding potential embarrassment to the Temple and its leaders was the sole consideration. An elaborate ritual condemning the victim to death was carried out with great solemnity. One of the participants later assured me that he and other high-level members were absolutely convinced that destruction rituals conducted by competent black magicians such as themselves had the power to kill. This means that in their minds they had,, committed murder - or at least attempted murder - many times.

Because of my experience in the Temple I am perhaps less surprised than most people - though no less horrified - at the activities engaged in by other types of satanists, especially those who follow the "orthodox" satanist practice of reversing traditional Judeo-Christian concepts of good and evil. I know that a believer in Satanism, black magic, and other forms of malevolent occultism can be just as devoted to his religion as a follower of any other creed, and if he takes those beliefs to extremes, he can become, in a sense, an extremely dangerous "religious fanatic." It doesn't matter whether he is an "experimenting" teenager, a psychopath who has latched onto *The Satanic Bible* as a rationale for his urge to kill, or a cold and calculating cult member who believes that human sacrifice will bring him power and riches. The conviction that one can gain power through practicing evil is a highly dangerous one.

I have been researching this problem intensively for more than two years, and would like to pass along a few general observations to would-be investigators and commentators:

- Most, though not all, satanists and practitioners of black magic are "occultists." *The Oxford English Dictionary* defines "occult" as: 1. Hidden; concealed; not exposed to view. 2. Not disclosed or divulged... kept secret; communicated only to the initiate. 3. Not apprehended, or not apprehensible, by the mind; beyond the range of understanding or of ordinary knowledge... 4. Of the nature of or pertaining to those ancient and medieval reputed sciences, or their modern representatives, held to involve the knowledge or use of agencies of a secret and mysterious nature.

The third part of the definition above provides the basis for parts 1 and 2. Occultists, whether benign or malevolent, believe they are in possession of secrets of the universe which can be discovered only through mysticism, i.e., through non-rational means such as revelation, intuition, and the like. They believe that those who are not "spiritually evolved" enough to appreciate these mystical insights should not be exposed to them because they will not "understand." Consequently, many upper-level occultists will feed carefully laundered, rational-sounding versions of their philosophies to "uninitiated" inquirers such as journalists and academics. A few years ago, a friend of mine was questioned by a journalist about concepts previously "explained" to him by the leader of the cult to which my friend had belonged. As my friend described the true meanings of these concepts - which differed from what the cult leader had said - the journalist commented that things are not always what they seem in the world of occultism. "Now you are beginning to understand," my friend told him, "and please be aware that it is that way *by design.*"

When I belonged to the Temple of Set, it was considered a crucial part of our "magickal" training to learn how to handle "the problem of existing in normal society without causing fear, antagonism, or persecution," as it was phrased in the introductory brochure. To this end, emphasis was placed on manipulating "humans," as outsiders were called, into viewing us as worthy of awe and respect without seeing us as threats. The investigator of occultic groups - satanist or otherwise - should be aware that he or she may be subject to similar manipulation. But remember that not all satanists are occultists, and that there are many other possible reasons why a satanic or black magic group might want to conceal its true nature from outsiders. (Of course, groups engaging in violence and criminal activities are not likely to make themselves available for interviews.)

- There are good "witches" and bad "witches." The words "witch" and "coven" are sometimes appropriated by satanists and practitioners of black magic; however, the neo-pagan movement is broad and diverse and there are many

people who call themselves witches and belong to covens who do not believe in Satan and wouldn't touch Satanism or black magic with the proverbial barge pole. It is wise to observe this distinction and treat people accordingly. If your religious convictions lead you to consider everything non-Christian as being "of the Devil," I suggest that you modify this attitude when dealing with concrete issues involving Satanism- and occult-related criminal activity. The broad-brush approach is inaccurate and unfair, and only aggravates misunderstanding and distrust. Furthermore, we owe our appreciation to those members of the neo-pagan community who have taken an active role in speaking out against ritualized crime and in aiding investigators and educators.

It should be emphasized, however, that neo-pagans, occultists, folk religionists, or others who are protecting "deeper secrets" of their belief systems from "uninitiated" outsiders should take care that these beliefs are not being used to rationalize or justify unethical or illegal practices. For example, some abuse cases which have come to my attention appear to have involved "black witchcraft" rather than literal Satanism. In addition, some individuals claiming to be adherents of the Odinist religion have aligned themselves with neo-Nazi and white supremacist movements, and I have been informed that some "Odinist" groups are acting as recruiting fronts for such movements.

- Victims of childhood sexual abuse, most MPD patients, ex-members of destructive cults, and the like are people who have been damaged, some more severely than others, by individuals seeking power and control over others. If we heard someone call the victim of a stabbing "hysterical" for crying out in pain and fighting back against her attacker, we would rightly consider this to be a bizarre attitude. Yet this is what "debunkers" and cult apologists frequently do when confronted with victims of Satanism, ritual abuse, and destructive cults. Sexist stereotypes of "hysterical" or "vindictive" women are trotted out to explain "survivors," as they often are in conventional rape cases. Children are labeled liars and fantasizers, as often occurs in cases of non-ritualized sexual abuse. But the fact that a person is damaged, outraged, and suffering does not automatically make him or her a hysteric or a liar- regardless of age or sex.

The twin impulses to "kill the messenger" and "blame the victim" are too often given free reign in regard to satanic abuse. I was a victim of extreme emotional abuse, manipulation, and deceit during my time with the Temple of Set, and I have been labeled a "fantasizer" and "hysteric" for speaking out and hitting back. But as devastating as my own experience was, I recognize that it could have happened in any kind of destructive cult and that I was fortunate not to have been enticed into a violence-oriented satanist cult. I would never presume to equate my experiences with those who were genuine victims of satanic ritual abuse. Arrogant and insensitive scoffers

who treat all "survivors" with derision and scorn would do well to acquaint themselves with some of the basic literature about the trauma attached to even non-satanic sexual and physical abuse of children, and the frequently incredible brutality of such mistreatment.

Victims and ex-members are potentially our best source of information about violent, abusive, and/or destructive cults. Most are sincere and honest. Those who are confused, malicious, or malingering should be considered individually, without their existence being used to trivialize or dismiss evidence of abuse in other cases.

- "Aw gee, Ma, all the other kids are playing in the traffic, so why shouldn't I is not a viable explanation of, or apology for, the sort of atrocities committed by some satanists. Whom the Inquisition or the witch-hunters tortured, how much the televangelists got caught stealing, and what non-Satanism-related serial killers did for their own perverse reasons are separate issues and have nothing to do with cases in which someone has committed a heinous crime under the influence of satanic ideation. Yes, in some cases the individual might have committed such a crime anyway, using some other excuse. But the fact that criminals are motivated by diverse influences should not prevent us from trying to analyze and understand motivation in whatever specific form it takes.

There are reasons why immersion in Satanism can further encourage some susceptible people to commit violent acts. Some of these reasons are discussed in our report. It is also true that not all satanists engage in criminal activity. Some occult-oriented groups believe they have bigger fish to fry in the "spiritual" sense and do not wish to have their ambitions frustrated by their members being collared for penny-ante crimes. (This does not necessarily mean that such satanists have respect for the law or for the rights of others *on principle*. It simply means that they don't want to get caught.) Some groups crave public recognition as respectable "new religions." Others are more interested in outraging the public and providing a place for their members to harmlessly let off steam. These groups all recognize that they can only continue to function openly if they refrain from illegal activity.

- Virtually all of the crimes attributed to satanists and related practitioners have already been committed by someone, sometime, somewhere. Supernatural phenomena aside (in my opinion), there is nothing in these reports of torture, mutilation, child abuse, sexual perversion, sadomasochism, human sacrifice, and cannibalism that "people don't do." What we are trying to determine is to what extent some people are doing it within the context of Satanism and/or black magic.

Nor has there been any shortage of violent "secret societies," whether religion-, politics- or crime-oriented. The Cosa Nostra crime network

operated here for decades, but was not conclusively proven to exist until the mid-1960's when mobster Joseph Valachi broke the blood oath of silence and provided law enforcement with a description of its membership and inner workings. And the British were in India for twenty years before they discovered the existence of the terrible sect of the Thugs, the Kali-worshippers believed to have ritually murdered a million travelers on the subcontinent over the course of centuries." The list is endless. However, this does not mean that the satanist equivalent of the mob or the Thugs is operating in present-day America. Charges that such a network exists must be subjected to rigorous examination and must be backed up by physical evidence, confessions by perpetrators, and corroboration of names, dates, places before they can be treated seriously.

(Ironically, in contrast to the complaints of "hysteria" about occult related violence, it would appear that some aspects of this problem are actually underreported. In conversations with law enforcement officials and with other researchers, I frequently hear that details of ritual activities and abuse have been omitted from evidence at trials because it was feared that they would undercut "credibility." Such information is also frequently withheld from the press. This contributes to a distorted picture of how much of this is going on, particularly in the cases of teenagers and ritual child abuse. It would be helpful if researchers, at least, had more access to this information.)

- The definition of "Satanism" is not the problem. The problem is this: cultic activity involving abusive, violent, and illegal activities performed in the name of the devil or similar demonic spirits, or by persons attempting to employ "black magic" to destructive ends. While it is useful to attempt to pinpoint a precise definition of "Satanism," those scoffers who attempt to defuse the issue by such tactics as claiming that Matamoros doesn't count because it wasn't "Satanism" are attempting to define the problem out of existence. Either that, or they are unable to recognize that an eclectic cult which believes in slowly torturing its victims to death so that their souls will be terrorized into obedience is playing in the same conceptual ballpark with the type of satanists who believe in torturing animals (or humans) to death the better to release their "life force" as an aide to the satanists' "magick."

For the future, I see several areas of concern. First, the problem of teenage "dabblers" - an inappropriately innocent-sounding term for those experimenting with Satanism - becoming involved in violent, illegal, and self-destructive activities is almost certain to continue. Unfortunately, the satanist mindset being hyped in the popular culture through music, videos, books such as Anton LaVey's *Satanic Bible*, and numerous other sources is highly attractive to many rebellious teenagers - as well as to some "adults" who haven't grown up yet. It appeals to their desire to flaunt their nonconformity, pseudoindividuality, and craving for instant gratification and power over others in the most vulgar and puerile ways



possible.

The connection between some practitioners of Satanism and "black magic" - much of the latter related to the folk religions discussed in our report - and serious criminal activity such as drug trafficking, prostitution, and child pornography is becoming increasingly apparent. In his forthcoming book, *Painted Black*, Dr. Carl Raschke of the University of Denver points to the growing evidence that satanic beliefs and practices are being employed by drug gangs for ideological and disciplinary purposes. Evidence that such rituals are being practiced in connection with the drug trade has been discovered in this country as well as in Latin-American countries. Murders committed by drug traffickers who are practicing "black magic" are often extremely grisly, as witness the circumstances of the Matamoros case.

Another area of concern that is potentially troublesome is the apparent rapid growth of a consortium of neo-Nazi Skinheads, anarchists, white supremacists, a few neo-pagans claiming to follow the Odinist tradition, and certain satanists. Some of these groups advocate an apocalypse to "cleanse the earth" and prepare for a new satanic world. They employ the imagery of feral nature (wolves), predatory myths (vampires), war, death, and blood in sophisticated recruitment and indoctrination campaigns aimed at youth. At least one of these groups claims to have links to the Church of Satan, usually considered one of the "benign" public Satanist churches. This trend should be closely monitored.

Important developments are also likely in the areas of ritual child abuse and "generational Satanism." In light of all this, it is imperative that we try to overcome some of the attitudes that have hampered efforts to conduct effective investigation and education about this issue. The problem of Satanism and occult-related violence is not something to be "believed in" or "not believed in." It is true that the beliefs and behaviors we encounter are often extremely bizarre and disturbing, that coverage of incidents is sometimes "sensationalized," and that some people try to exploit this issue to advance their own religious, social, or personal agendas. But we must not allow this to obscure the fact that real crimes are being committed, that people are dying and lives are being damaged through Satanism and occult related violence just as surely as they are through less exotic forms of criminal behavior. Understanding why this is happening and working to help prevent it from happening in the future should be our first concern.

## **Conclusions:** Michael D. Langone

As the final draft of this report was nearing completion, the jury delivered a not-guilty verdict in the McMartin case, in which day care staff were accused of ritual abuse of children. After the trial several jurors in TV interviews said that they believed that the children had been abused but that the case had not been proven beyond a reasonable doubt. The judge said that he was not surprised by a not-guilty verdict, but neither would he have been surprised by a guilty verdict. Plenty

of evidence was presented, but its credibility was in doubt.

The issue of credibility weighs heavily on the concerns generated by Satanism and occult-related violence. Some dismiss the whole issue as mere witch-hunt hysteria; some fuel this criticism by portraying Satanism as a massive conspiracy threatening the fabric of our civilization. As I noted in this report's introduction, our goal is to avoid the destructive extremes of incredulity that denies Satanism and occult-related violence in order to defend against witch hunts and credulity that fosters a witch-hunt mentality in an attempt to combat evils attributed to Satanism and occult-related violence.

If we examine the areas of concern in light of the credibility factor, it becomes clear that both extremes can claim to be correct by highlighting certain areas of concern and downplaying or ignoring others. The following summarizes the state of our knowledge as best we have been able to ascertain. As more information comes in, the credibility of different areas of concern may change.

**False concerns.** The "scoffers" (e.g., Drs. Shawn Carlson and Gerald Larue, authors of *Satanism in America*, Committee for the Scientific Examination of Religion) focus their attention on claims that there is a conspiracy of satanist groups killing thousands of people every year. Their debunking appears to be valid for this straw-man view, which very few hold. Given the number of allegations and investigations of Satanism-related crime and the dearth of hard police evidence, it seems reasonable to conclude that, though satanist crimes do occur, they do not constitute an epidemic and are not part of a massive conspiracy. Satanists, even when defined according to the broader definition employed by this report, are not about to take over the world!

**Highly Suspect.** Thus far, no hard evidence supports the claims of "breeders," women who say they gave birth to children for sacrifices in satanic rituals. Given that more than 250,000,000 people live in the United States, it seems statistically plausible that a few extremely deviant and small groups may actually engage in "breeding" for human sacrifice (the outer boundaries of human deviance are always difficult to believe). If, however, this phenomenon were *common* to Satanism, it seems highly unlikely that *nobody* would have been caught by police.

**Dubious.** The number of adults claiming to be survivors of child ritual abuse, and the number of psychotherapists working with such people is clearly increasing. In a manual that underlines the difference between witchcraft, Satanism, and ritual crime, *Green Egg*, a neo-pagan magazine (November, 1989), carries an advertisement on page 11: "Pagan Therapists Volunteering Services to Adult Survivors of Ritual Abuse." Seventeen "pagan therapists" are listed! Dozens of licensed mental health professionals have also said that they have treated individuals whom they believe to be victims of child ritual abuse, usually as victims of small "intergenerational" cults which pass down the practices from generation to generation.

Given the possibilities for deviance in a large population (e.g., if one American out of 1,000,000 engaged in a deviant practice, there, would be 250 such deviants in the country), given the credentials of some therapists treating adult survivors, and given the existence of legal convictions involving child ritual abuse, it seems probable that some adult survivors' memories are based on fact. However, given the tendency for some disturbed people to develop delusions reflecting emotionally charged topics in common currency, it seems reasonable to suspect that many claiming to be survivors are indeed deluded - although they may very well be victims of some form of childhood abuse.

Although some claims of adult survivors may be true, or at least based on fact, mental health and law enforcement professionals should not let their empathy for genuinely suffering individuals blind their intellects to the possibility that in some, and possibly most, cases the memories associated with this suffering are greatly distorted or fantasized. Law enforcement professionals, as noted in the Introduction, must be more skeptical than psychotherapists. But even the latter should be cautious, for the consequences of a therapist's believing a false memory of ritual abuse are serious: the alleged perpetrators become suspects in a socially repugnant felony and, depending upon the circumstances, the therapist may be legally bound to notify law enforcement authorities.

**Exists, But...** As noted earlier, the Charlier and Downing survey (1988), which was very skeptical in tone, found that 23 convictions (29%) resulted from 79 completed cases in which individuals were believed to have committed ritual abuse. The skeptical tone of these and other researchers expresses a classic perspective problem. To them "the glass is half-empty" - the majority were not convicted. To others, and I include myself in this group, "the glass is half-full" - nearly a third of the cases resulted in convictions in a legal system that is based on the principal that twelve guilty should go free rather than one innocent go to jail. Regardless of one's perspective on the glass, clearly there is "water" in it: ritual abuse of children does occur.

However, it is not an epidemic calling for parents to yank their children out of day care. It is but one of many serious concerns that parents of young children in day care must have: Does the bus driver drink, or have a drug problem? Is the kitchen unhygienic? Is there a dangerous level of lead paint or asbestos in the building? Etc. Parents and helping professionals to whom they may turn should not dismiss signs of ritual abuse which children may exhibit. But neither should they leap to conclusions. Unfounded hysteria can be extremely damaging to innocent day care providers and to young children who are pressured into lying in order to satisfy adults' stubborn need to prove an impulsive conclusion correct. Alfred Adler, the first to break with Freud, aptly noted that "people would rather be right than happy"; they persist in distressing behavior because they are unwilling to admit that the assumptions underlying that behavior are wrong. It is sadly unfortunate when such stubbornness hurts innocent adults and young children.

**Exists.** The most solid evidence pertaining to Satanism and occult related violence is that associated with what has been called "solitary" or "self-styled" satanists, especially those demented individuals who murder seemingly for the satisfaction of killing. Charles Manson, The Nightstalker, and others like them stimulate the "bogeyman" latent in all of us. Their horrifying crimes are peculiarly fascinating. They confirm our dim insight into the enormous possibility of evil (in ourselves as well as others), exemplified and personified in "Satan. "We seem to say to ourselves, "I was right, evil - *real* evil - does exist." Yet we also feel relief, because we are safe and we, whatever guilt may plague us, are not evil. Indeed, our horror attests to our commitment, however imperfect, to good.

This fascination becomes destructive and fuels the witch-hunt mentality when individuals *need to find* horribly evil people in order that their own "sins" may seem "good" in comparison to the depravity they seek in others. The fascination also becomes destructive when it gives these killers a much more prominent place in our day-to-day lives than their numbers warrant. In his film, "Annie Hall," Woody Allen, while expressing his revulsion for Los Angeles, worries about "wheat germ killers," not drunk drivers, who kill many more residents in Southern California. The "wheat germ killers" are a serious problem for law enforcement, an intriguing challenge for mental health professionals, and a horrifying reality for their unfortunate victims and the victims' families. 'But let us maintain balance. They are not a major threat, statistically speaking, to people going about their day-to-day business. Nonetheless, their existence tells us something about the reach of evil, a warning that we ought to heed.

The reach of evil can be felt in a small way by those who work with the increasing population of teens dabbling in Satanism and occult related violence. As noted earlier, it seems reasonable to estimate that thousands of youth are experimenting with Satanism. Although much, quite possibly most, of this experimentation may be relatively innocuous, clinicians are encountering more and more cases in which the influence is clearly destructive - and occasionally evil.

"Destructive" is an acceptable psychological word. It doesn't have the theological ring of "evil." Yet I have intentionally used the word "evil," because I believe it refers to a state of mind that is qualitatively different from "destructiveness." Most distress results from a failure to fulfill basic human needs of love, warmth, trust, meaning, and community. That which interferes with the fulfillment of these needs is often considered "destructive." Therapy's goal is to counter such destructiveness. The unadulterated lust for power that lies at the heart of Satanism and occult-related violence scornfully rejects these basic needs, which, when beyond our reach but not our desire, cause us to suffer - but to suffer meaningfully because we are directed toward something we instinctively value as "good." The derisive rejection of this good and the consequent stripping of meaning from all suffering is what we call "evil." That is why "senseless" violence is so repulsive.

I don't intend here to overstate the case against Satanism. Although I believe that evil is the essence of Satanism, I do not believe that all manifestations of Satanism and occult-related violence participate fully in this evil. If we overlook the differences among different varieties of Satanism, we will be less effective in helping its victims.

I believe the evidence shows that teen dabbling in Satanism and occult-related violence warrants serious concern. Most of this activity, however, represents an old mental health problem, i.e., teen alienation, but with a new and disturbing twist, a fascination for Satanism and all that it implies. This fascination may sometimes be relatively innocuous, sometimes destructive, and sometimes evil. Each type of reaction requires different types of interventions.

I don't believe the problems associated with Satanism have to be construed as a religious issue, although they can be, and I am sure intelligent arguments could be made that they should be. The analysis of evil I have advanced rests comfortably in psychological paradigms. It presents a special challenge to mental health, and I encourage my colleagues to explore its ramifications for theory and treatment.

Although I have repeatedly cautioned against overreacting to many of the accusations associated with Satanism, I suspect that in the years ahead we will see more and more young people influenced by this "evil." Many will fall into it. Some will be lured into it. And a few, the skillful manipulators who will take advantage of this new "market" for human exploitation, will do the luring. If we are to protect targets and help victims, we must understand this phenomenon much better than we do at present. I hope this report stimulates others to give this area the balanced and sensitive attention it deserves.

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